

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2017

Select Board members present: Michael DeChiara/Chair and Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil; Timothy Logan (present for the Shutesbury portion of the meeting)

Select Board member absent in Leverett: Timothy Logan

Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Others present in Leverett: Shutesbury Police Chief Tom Harding, Leverett Police Chief Scott Minckler, Leverett Select Board: Peter d'Errico/Chair, Julie Shivley, and Tom Hankinson; Leverett Town Administrator Marjorie McGinnis, Leverett Town Clerk Lisa Stratford, and *Greenfield Recorder* reporter.

This portion of the meeting is held at the Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Road, Leverett MA.

DeChiara calls the Shutesbury Select Board to order at 6:13pm.

**Discussion Topic:**

Feasibility of Sharing a Police Chief Between Two Departments: DeChiara: Shutesbury's Chief Tom Harding will be retiring in June 2018; this opens up the opportunity to consider reconfiguration; last year, a potential shared chief agreement between Sunderland, Shutesbury and Leverett did not work out; noting that Leverett and Shutesbury are contiguous, the first question is whether Leverett may be interested in sharing a police chief. Police Chief Harding: the studies on regionalization indicate that there are more up-front costs and no real savings down the road; the county is promoting the sharing of resources; there is no standardized training for police officers in MA, however, the state is looking at complying with national standards for best practices; small towns will be in a bind when they have to comply with national standards because paying for a young officer that is not going to stay is a bad investment. Harding: during the ice storm, Leverett highway and police departments were extremely helpful; the management of two small departments by a shared chief is possible. Peter d'Errico asks Harding about the difference between regionalization and what is being proposed. Harding: regionalization is the merging of two entire departments which can be expensive and become bogged down with matters not directly related to policing; mutual aid between towns is an example of what works; a shared chief in a bordering town is capable of managing two departments. DeChiara cites the shared chief agreement between New Braintree and Hardwick. Julie Shivley has looked at successful examples where one chief is responsible for two departments. Torres: a Shutesbury resident, working in the field, was against a shared chief however, based on national trends, he is now in favor of a shared chief arrangement. d'Errico can imagine an inter-municipal agreement where one town contracts with another town for services; Leverett already has inter-municipal agreements for other resources. Shivley: the financial implications need to be considered; the Select Board will have to confer with their FinCom.

Marjorie McGinnis: Leverett has one full time staff therefore may need an additional hire. Harding: Minckler/Leverett Chief and I have talked some about staffing structure; you can expect pushback from unions and chief associations; residents concerns are related to “where will the chief be and how do I get ahold of the chief”. Tom Hankinson asks about administrative structure. Harding: the terminology “inter-municipal contract” is more appropriate. DeChiara: review of the Hardwick example will assist in figuring out what may be usable for a future document. Shivley: there are a number of residents who are supportive of a shared chief. Minckler responding to a question about department structure: the chief’s schedule would be set by the chief; the patrol route would be for both towns and there will always be two officers on duty for the day shift; Shutesbury has one more fulltime officer than Leverett; the chief’s schedule could be posted on the website and the goal would be for time allocation to be as equitable as possible. d’Errico notes the connectivity of the towns via the S curves. d’Errico: the next step is to read the Hardwick example in detail and then meet with our Finance Committees; suggests spring town meeting as the due date for an agreement; emphasizes the need for a timely turn around. Hankinson: resident skepticism can be approached by how the Select Boards handle communication. DeChiara: communicating about whether there is mutual interest in November will work; if a shared chief is not possible, Shutesbury will need time to hire a new chief.

Meeting resumes in the Shutesbury Town Hall at 7:00pm.

Guests: Joan Hanson and Susan Millinger/Positive Presence, Gabriele Voelker/Treasurer, Jane Urban and Pam Osooky, Miriam DeFant/Historical Commission, Rob Kibler, Janice Stone, and Jeff Lacy/Master Plan Working Group

Agenda Review: Considering the 9.19.17 meeting minutes will be carried over to a future meeting.

Public Comment Period: None offered.

**Discussion Topics:**

1. Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust: DeChiara: the purpose of the discussion is to gather information. Voelker/Treasurer and Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) member states that she has been representing Shutesbury on the IAC for 15 years; the Committee meets four times a year to review financial statements and the status of claims; this is a self-insured program; there are currently ~65 towns in the collaborative. Per Voelker, over a year ago, Joe Shea/ Hampshire Group Insurance Trust Director reported that although reserves had been used to keep costs to employees from rising, this year, double digit insurance premium increases are anticipated and to stay within a single digit increase, the program could increase deductibles; we have had copays however no deductibles up to this point. Voelker reviews the “BCBS HMO Benefit Changes” chart noting that the specialist office increase to \$60 was reduced to \$40 and that these changes were compared to the GIC model. Voelker notes the addition of a

prescription drug deductible and that CanaRx can be used for certain medications at a cost savings. Pam Ososky: CanaRx has a list of drugs that are available. Voelker: there is an appeal process for requesting CanaRx to stock a specific drug. Voelker continues: the changes were proposed in April, voted on in July and will go into effect in July 2018; the BCBS premium recommendations will be announced in January 2018; the changes will save the Trust 5.5%; BCBS, the provider, administers the claims; the Trust has the final say on the rates; to change the recommendations, reserves are used; the current proposed changes are based on predictions from last year. Torres: there have not been any plan design changes in twenty years. Voelker: employee premiums fund the reserve. Logan: it sounds like the program is well managed. Voelker: employees benefit from a healthy constituency; health care is becoming unaffordable; the Trust tries to balance employee and municipal costs; questions about the operations of the Trust need to be addressed to Joe Shea. Voelker: the goal of the "Sample Document Sample Rates Used" is to demonstrate the impact on the employee; per the police union contract, health insurance is as per the town contract with the Trust. Voelker states that she did not realize she was responsible for school union contract negotiations. Torres: School Union 28 finance staff attend the Trust meetings. Voelker: changes depend upon insurance claims; the Town is responsible for paying 50% of retiree health insurance for life. Ososky appreciates the documents presented by Voelker and states she is a Shutesbury resident and a Town of Erving employee and union president; the increase in copays is unduly affecting people who need the help the most; they will impact paraprofessionals with low incomes; the proposed increases may result in those with less money not seeking medical care. Voelker: Mass Health Connections will partner with employees to assist with insurance costs and in some situations Mass Health may be a better alternative. Jane Urban: as employees, it would be helpful to have the discussion and a choice about whether to increase premiums more or have increased copays and deductibles. Paul DeMarco/MTA representative: these are also PPO changes; Hampshire Trust is a group purchasing agent and we consider the changes to be shifting costs to those that are the most medically needy; retirees he has spoken with would rather have a fixed premium than increases in copays and deductibles. DeMarco states he spoke with a BCBS representative who anticipates a 10% increase and perhaps less; employees want to have a say in the proposed changes; there was some intimation that towns must adopt Chapter 32B Section 21-23; Shea said that if a town does not bargain with their unions over health care, that town needs to adopt Section 21-23. Voelker: the school union contract only refers to bargaining about the ratio for premium payment. DeChiara: this is a complex, confusing system; the need to share information is necessary. DeMarco: collectively, as unions, we can change the Trust; the changes to the copays would offset 5% of the cost of the Trust. Logan: have these changes have been decided upon? Voelker: final changes will be made in January 2018. DeChiara: it will be helpful to understand whether the Select Board has a role and, if yes, what it is. Torres: the Town has one representative to school union negotiations. DeMarco: we are going to see what the impact of the changes will be, if we do not agree with the fairness of the cost shift, we will ask for discussion. Torres: Voelker is

the Town's representative to the Trust. Torres: the position is not listed as an appointment; it is included in the Treasurer's job description. Voelker: the Advisee has been given the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Town; the votes at the Trust are weighted; she voted in favor of the change for the reasons she has given. Voelker: in the past, it was not her practice to bring Trust decisions to the Select Board; in this situation, after the fact, it would have been prudent to bring the proposed changes to the Select Board. Ososky: per Shea, the topic has been talked about for two years. Logan to DeMarco: what is the MTA's next action point? DeMarco will be meeting with the Trust director next week; whether there will need to be action will be evident in a month or so and he will notify the Select Board. Logan: how is the split decided? Voelker: the split is negotiated in the contracts and by the Select Board; per MGL, the Select Board can change the ratio for retirees and town employees. DeMarco: 50/50 is the minimum for retirees; the town cannot pay more than 90% or less than 50%. Makepeace-O'Neil asks about flex savings accounts. Voelker: 50 employees accepting the program are required for flex savings accounts, Shutesbury has 29 employees receiving health insurance; our premium is pretax. DeChiara thanks Voelker and DeMarco for their time and notes that if it makes sense, there may be a need to set aside time for any necessary actions. Voelker states concern about the ratio and its impact upon the town. DeMarco appreciates Voelker's work. Voelker requests guidance from the Select Board on decision making relative to the Trust Torres: per legal labor counsel guidance, Section 21 curtails the unions' ability to negotiate.

2. Historical Commission Appointments: Miriam DeFant: the Historical Commission was unable to meet due to lack of quorum; acceptance of Marilyn Tibbetts' resignation will create five vacancies for six applications; those who have expressed interest in membership are Henry Geddes, Kristin Van Patten, Chris Donta, James Schilling-Cachat, Mary Lou Conca, and Janice Stone. Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board accept Marilyn Tibbetts' resignation from the Historical Commission and Council On Aging; Logan seconds the motion that is unanimously approved. DeChiara moves the Select Board appoint Henry Geddes to fill Steven Puffer's vacancy, Kristen Van Patten to fill Barbara Goodhind's vacancy, Chris Donta to fill Marilyn Tibbetts' vacancy, and Janice Stone to fill Joanna Hayes' vacancy. Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously. One full member and one potential Associate member positions remain to be filled. Logan moves the Select Board appoint James Schilling-Cachat to the full position and that Mary Lou Conca be asked if she would be interested in an Associate membership; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously. DeFant will poll the membership to plan a meeting time.
3. Shutesbury Cell Tower Update: DeChiara: the Select Board met with the Planning Board on 10.16.17 and talked about potential sites and whether to update the bylaw; it was determined the bylaw is sufficient, as it is, due to the ability to waive height limits. Lacy notes the need to confer with Town Counsel as to

whether a cell tower would require a special permit or would be permitted “by right”. Torres has yet to hear back from Mike Johnson/cell tower professional. Makepeace-O’Neil notes the need for cell service as a public safety measure.

4. Lot O32 Grant Application: Torres reads the 9.2.17 email from Meryl Mandell into the record (see attached). Logan notes the need to approve the MPWG recommendation for Lot O32 and for Makepeace-O’Neil to be brought up to date on the concept plan. Makepeace-O’Neil: the concept is evident in the grant application. Logan recognizes Makepeace-O’Neil’s concern about fiscal sustainability and that the MPWG will be addressing fiscal sustainability as one of the group’s three focus areas. DeChiara notes the timely need to approve the grant application; the MPWG will be preparing a presentation for the Select Board that is tentatively scheduled for 11.28.17. Logan is concerned that anything that is done will create a perception; wants to be certain that, if granted, use of the funds will be dependent upon fiscal sustainability and that it is clear we are utilizing a window of opportunity. Lacy: applying for and using the grant is fiscally responsible and will be an opportunity to explore what is possible for Lot O32. Makepeace-O’Neil states she is comfortable accepting the grant as a window of opportunity and notes that it does not require expenditure for a specific project. Logan, referring to the “Master Plan Implementation Study” asks about the delineation of Task #1 and Task#2. Torres: the format required the listing of tasks; her goal was to demonstrate how the tasks are integrated; the focus of the grant is on plans; the town has \$15,000 allocated for cleanup. DeChiara recommends that the availability of funds for cleanup/implementation be included in the grant application. Logan moves the Select Board support submission of the EOEEA grant proposal “O-32: Master Plan Vision Implementation Study 10/17/17” and make it explicitly clear that this grant is time sensitive and should not be construed in anyway to indicate acceptance of the MPWG recommendations to the Select Board on the use of Lot O32; use of Lot O32 will be addressed after the MPWG presentation. Makepeace-O’Neil seconds the motion that is unanimously passed.
  
5. All Boards Planning: The All Boards Meeting is scheduled for 11.14.17. Scott/ConCom representative to the CPC explains the CPC’s request to hold their required annual public hearing for 15 minutes at the start of the All Boards meeting; the purpose of the hearing is to allow public input on the needs, possibilities, and resources regarding possible community preservation. DeChiara: the purpose of holding the hearing at this time is to engage committees that may be interested in the application process. The CPC application process is reviewed. On 11.14.17, the Select Board will meet at 6:00pm and the All Boards Meeting will open at 7:00pm with the CPC public hearing. Makepeace-O’Neil notes the need for meeting postings to occur more than 48 hours in advance to promote public engagement; this posting might indicate, “This agenda is a place holder for an agenda that will be forthcoming”. Torres suggests a general calendar with a disclaimer that this meeting schedule is subject to change because a meeting posting without an agenda is not a legal posting. DeChiara asks about the need for

a conversation about civility. Logan prefers to not dwell on civility; wants to consider whether all boards meetings are worthwhile – are we perpetuating something that is not working? Torres has found All Boards meetings invaluable for committees/departments to hear from one another and has received feedback from those that appreciate the process. Logan suggests holding the meeting at the Shutesbury Athletic Club and using a more social format. Torres: a legally posted meeting cannot be held at the SAC. Makepeace-O’Neil notes the inefficiency of the All Boards meetings. DeChiara: mixing it up could be helpful in promoting participation. Various formats for the meeting are considered. DeChiara suggests the “save the date” notice be put out right away and that the Select Board do more substantive planning at a subsequent meeting. Torres will initiate the “save the date” email and hard copy notice 10.18.17. Torres suggests the Select Board challenge presenters to limit reports to 1 minute and that the short presentations be followed by dessert.

6. Committee Reports:

MPWG: Per Logan, the group has varying opinions on financial sustainability; additional meetings on this topic may be necessary. The MPWG will be presenting to the Select Board on 11.28.17. DeChiara: the MPWG’s term will expire therefore a Lot O32 committee will be needed.

Regional Assessment Working Group: DeChiara refers to assessment method options and gives brief descriptions; during the FinCom/Select Board meeting on 10.26.17, Arvanitis and DeChiara will provide a more detailed report. DeChiara has made it clear that Shutesbury will not agree to another temporary year.

FinCom: Per Makepeace-O’Neil, the calendar for meetings with department heads has been established.

7. Town Administrator Updates:

A. Microphones and related equipment have been purchased.

B. The 10.23.17 dog hearing is scheduled for 7:30pm and will follow an executive session scheduled for 6:30pm. Torres spoke with Lori Saleem who is preparing for the dog hearing by obtaining support statements from her neighbors. DeChiara: based on decisions during prior hearings, an action will need to be taken. Torres: the Select Board’s jurisdiction is related to the dog. Dog Officer Nancy Long, Town Counsel Donna MacNicol, and Police Chief Harding will be present for the hearing.

C. Progress is being made on the upstairs bathroom renovation.

8. Review of Prior Action Items: none offered.

9. Future Agenda/Action Items: review completed.

Administrative Actions:

1. The Select Board will sign vendor warrants totaling \$505,061.50.

2. The Select Board will sign Broadband vendor warrants totaling \$37,082.27.

3. The Select Board will sign payroll warrants totaling \$95,820.88.

4. Record Storage Advisory Committee Grant Letter of Support: Mosher: the Committee is applying for a States Historical Records Advisory Board grant for a

flat file for site plans and maps; for archival purposes, maps/plans must stored flat; the file will be located in town hall. Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board sign the letter of support for the SHRAB grant; Logan seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

5. Four-Town Capital Planning Appointment: Torres: Weezie Houle has volunteered to be the FinCom representative to the Four-Town Capital Planning Committee. DeChiara moves that Logan be the Select Board representative and Torres the alternate to the Four-Town Capital Planning Committee. Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously. DeChiara moves Marie Houle be the FinCom representative to the Four-Town Capital Planning Committee. Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.
6. Hampshire County Group Insurance Advisory Committee Representative: DeChiara moves to the Select Board appoint Gabriele Voelker as the Shutesbury Insurance Advisory Committee representative to the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust. Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

At 10:23pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Logan seconds the motion to adjourn; motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Town of Hardwick and Town of New Braintree draft "Limited Aid Agreement" and "Inter-municipal Agreement Police Services"
2. 10.15.17 Torres email "Packet 10.17.17"
3. 9.30.17 DeChiara email "Health Care Trust agenda item-postponement"
4. 10.2.17 Paul DeMarco email "Health Care Trust agenda item-postponement"
5. Hampshire County Insurance Trust Agreement
6. "BCBS HMO Benefit Changes" by Voelker
7. "Sample Document Sample Rates Used" by Voelker
8. Historical Commission letters of interest from Henry Geddes, Kristin Van Patten, Chris Donta, James Schilling-Cachat, Mary Lou Conca, and Janice Stone
9. 9.21.17 Meryl Mandell email "Lot O-32 Committee Charge & MPWG minutes and related docs"
10. "O-32: Master Plan Vision Implementation Study 10/17/17"
11. 10.12.17 SHRAB grant application and Select Board letter of support

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary