

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2017 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Michael DeChiara/Chair, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, and Timothy Logan/joins the meeting at 6:30pm.

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

Guests: Ken Holmberg/Administrative Assessor, Steve Schmidt and Susan Reyes/Assessors, Meryl Mandell/MPWG & RSWC, Susan Millinger/COA & RSAC, Joan Hanson/Positive Presence, Susie Mosher/Town Clerk, Elaine Puleo, Eric Stocker and George Arvanitis/FinCom; Rita Farrell, Allen Hanson and Margie Tighe-Saporito/CPC, Tim Hunting/Highway Superintendent, Catherine Hilton/Board of Health, Mary Anne Antonellis/Spear Library Director, Gayle Huntress/Broadband & MLP Manager, Deacon Bonnar/Planning Board, Chris Footit, Andy Berg/ZBA, Frederic Hartwell/LWA Cove Restoration Committee, Gary Bernhard/Recycling Coordinator, Russ Mizula/ConCom, Lauren Thomas-Paquin/School Committee, Jacob Macko/W.D. Cows, Jamie Malcolm-Brown/Web Communications Committee and Chris Donta/Historical Commission & CPC.

DeChiara calls the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

Agenda Review is completed and future agenda items considered for scheduling.

Public Comment: None offered.

Unanticipated Items:

1. Council on Aging Grant: Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board approve and sign the FY2018 Formula Grant/Allocation Statement of Authorization grant application for \$5,000; motion is seconded by DeChiara and passes unanimously.
2. Shared Police Chief: Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board cease discussions regarding a potential shared police chief arrangement with Leverett; Logan seconds the motion that passes unanimously. Makepeace-O'Neil will draft a letter to the Leverett Select Board stating Shutesbury's position.

**Discussion Topics:**

1. Recreation Committee: Torres: these individuals are inspired to continue yoga and strength training programs as well as develop other recreational activities. DeChiara moves the Select Board appoint Christine Robinson, BZ (Barbara) Reily, Brenda Carey, Rita Farrell, and Elizabeth Fernandez-O'Brien to the Recreation Committee; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

2. Town Administrator Updates:
  - A. Torres and DeChiara acknowledge that the extraordinary amount of FY18 legal fees incurred thus far need to be considered during a future Select Board meeting.
  - B. Torres and Mosher/Town Clerk are working through the logistics of a large public records request.
  - C. The Elementary School sidewalk project is nearing completion.
  - D. Capital Planning met 11.13.17; the revised request form is expected to be available 11.17.17.
  - E. A meeting with Joe Markarian/FRCOG was held 11.7.17; the plan is nearing completion and is expected before Thanksgiving for review by Capital Planning, FinCom, and Select Board.
3. Future Agenda Items: MPWG/11.28.17; Energy Committee/consider rescheduling for 12.12.17; Clark and SAC license renewals/11.28.17; Personnel Board/12.12.17.
4. Letter to the Building Inspector: Per Torres, Logan has requested the Board consider the letter during the 11.28.17 meeting.
5. Tax Classification Hearing: DeChiara calls the Tax Classification Hearing to order at 6:35pm. Steve Schmidt/Assessor: this annual event is statutorily required to set the tax rate; the Select Board makes the decision whether to split the rate; if there is no split, the single tax rate for all classes will be \$23.06; there is no way that large businesses can be split from the small businesses therefore the Assessors recommend a single rate which will be a 1.3% increase. Schmidt cites the average 2017 tax bill per household as compared to Leverett, Pelham, and Amherst from "FY2017 Assessed Values by Class". DeChiara suggests posting this document on the town website and notes that Shutesbury is closer to the levy limit than the other towns. Holmberg: if the tax burden is shifted from one group to another, there is no realized gain; there could be a residential exemption or a small commercial exemption however neither of these options would benefit the town in a substantial way. Schmidt: the excess levy capacity is \$144, 453.62. The "Classification Tax Allocation" Local Assessment Work Sheet 5 (LA 5) is reviewed. DeChiara moves the Select Board approve a single tax rate with no residential or small commercial exemptions granted; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing: At 7:00pm, DeChiara welcomes all present to the All Boards meeting. Allen Hanson calls the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) to order, opens the CPC annual public hearing and reads the public hearing notice into the record: "This annual informational hearing will allow public input on the needs, possibilities, and resources of the town regarding community preservation possibilities and resources". Hanson explains the CPC's need for input on priorities, needs, and resources and notes that no applications were submitted during FY17. Rita Farrell explains the three categories: open space, historic resources, and community

housing, and examples of funded recreation projects (“other” category) and historical preservation projects; thus far, no housing projects have been funded. Gary Bernhard: could the funds be used for community cleanup? Farrell explains the need to think about preservation of an asset. Fred Hartwell/Lake Wyola property owner explains that he is a member of a committee looking at the siltation in the cove at Lake Wyola and the need for dredging; funds are needed for an engineering evaluation; if the lake becomes substantially silted, the recreation value will be severely affected; the Town may have an interest in contributing to the project. Hanson invites Hartwell to attend a future a CPC meeting for further discussion. George Arvanitis recommends CPC funds be used to create affordable housing, elderly housing and/or to conduct an inventory of town buildings and their condition; it may be helpful to look at what other communities are doing and consider how to update buildings without affecting free cash. Hanson, in answer to a question about the amount the Town has in CPC funds: ~ \$300,00 total. Bernhard notes the need for meeting space and suggests renovation of old Town Hall. Eric Stocker recommends using funds to cover the cost of proper record storage. Hanson describes how the CPC works, its webpage resources, and emphasizes that project proposals come from the community; the CPC does not initiate project ideas. Farrell notes the need for project proposals to have relative town committee/board support. The CPC meeting and public hearing are adjourned at 7:17pm.

All Boards Meeting: DeChiara welcomes all in attendance and explains the agenda for the meeting; brief board/committee/departments reports will be followed by coffee and informal conversation. DeChiara: the Select Board’s priorities for FY18 include 1. Accountability and operational oversight: working with the Personnel Board on a system for annual department head reviews and increasing the frequency of the town audit; 2. Community engagement: listening and improving information flow for the community; 3. Beneficial projects: improving town hall to make it healthier and more welcoming, research into the installation of a cell tower on town property, installing electric car charging stations, Tesla photovoltaic roof shingles and a cost analysis for more town-owned solar. Logan shares that he is aware of discord in town; his goal is to contribute to diminishing this discord by encouraging sharing together to increase community and working with integrity and honesty; acknowledges the fine, helpful people working to help one another.

Bernhard/Recycling and Solid Waste Committee: Shutesbury is recycling almost 40% of the waste stream; even though our town is good in comparison to others, the RSWC would like to get to 50%+; \$2,100 in DEP grants was received this year; the Committee will be considering how to meet the new DEP criteria; the Leverett transfer station project seems to be going well in terms of sticker sales and the Committee may be considering one bulky waste day/year. Meryl Mandell/RSWC: after a Committee recommendation, the decision to decrease to one bulky waste day/year would be made by the Select Board; the new hauler service is working well.

Mary Anne Antonellis/Spear Library Director gives an update on the library collection including unusual items and library services; over 10 years, there has been a 75% increase in the number of items circulated; many programs and services are offered by the library; the role of the Friends of the Library is explained; \$305,781 has accrued towards the cost of a new library.

Ken Holmberg/Administrative Assessor: the Assessors have completed the tri-annual valuation of property and are ready to set a tax rate; Roy Bishop was hired to consult and assist with the technical aspects of the revaluation; values basically stayed the same; the average tax bill changed by about ~\$70. Steve Schmidt/Assessor: the overall valuation is essentially flat and is one of the lower increases that we have seen in some time; the value of property investment will be protected by Broadband; State policy now requires a five-year revaluation schedule, however, the Assessors are required to do a mini-revaluation each year.

Tim Hunting/Highway Superintendent: currently looking for a new staff person; preparations for winter are in progress; the tapering of banks and cutting of trees along Sand Hill Road to improve conditions for snow management is in process; the milling/repaving of a section of Leverett Road has been completed – line painting is pending; the Wendell Road South Brook, a perennial stream, culvert replacement permit process with the Conservation Commission is proceeding –work is to be done during the low flow period; the engineering evaluation for the Locks Pond /Sawmill River culvert replacement is in process.

George Arvanitis/FinCom: the Committee has been working with a consultant on the development of policy and different ways to measure best practices, i.e. how we direct capital planning and long range planning and the right balance of free cash and stabilization; the FY19 budget meeting schedule is set; issues affecting the FY19 budget include: the loss of some funding for the elementary school, if the recommended regional school assessment method is agreed upon during the Committee's 11.28.17 meeting, it will benefit Shutesbury, and health insurance and legal costs; we have over \$2.3 million in free cash and stabilization and we have some large projects needing attention.

Elaine Puleo/Capital Planning: the Committee met 11.13.17; a new capital project request form has been created for use this year; questions about use of form are encouraged; new Committee members are needed.

Susie Mosher/Town Clerk reads from "Susie Mosher's Notes from All Boards Meeting – Nov. 14, 2017" about meeting posting requirements, the process for new committee members, Conflict of Interest Law Training certification requirements, the newly updated Open Meeting Law (10.6.17)– pertinent excerpts regarding email communication, public participation in open meetings, and meeting minute requirements have been posted on the Town Clerk's webpage. Mosher reads the role of public participation in the public comment period (see page 15 "Open Meeting Law Guide" dated 10.6.17). Mosher, referring to "Introduction to Guidelines for Public Records Requests for Committees, Boards and Departments": all record requests are to be forwarded to the Town Clerk as primary Records Access Officer. DeChiara: recommendations on how to create a town email and additional guidance for volunteers are on the town website.

Andy Berg/Zoning Board of Appeals: so far this fiscal year, the ZBA has heard six cases and is in conversation with the Planning Board about proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw including: clarifying that a common driveway special permit is by the Planning Board, recommending an increase to the 800 sq. ft. maximum for an accessory apartment, and extending the timeframe for Open Space Design projects; the ZBA is in need of an additional alternate.

Catherine Hilton/Board of Health: because the Board regulates noisome trades, members are thinking about the keeping of animals in environmentally sensitive areas, i.e. the Lake

Wyola district; the BOH has a burial policy including the process for creating a family green cemetery; the goal of the Neighborhood Safety Net program is neighborhood based emergency preparedness.

Gail Huntress/Broadband-MLP Manager: Shutesbury is on track to have areas lit up by the end of 2019; we are waiting for the utility companies to make our poles ready for fiber; the next step is a design meeting with Westfield G&E; the goal is to achieve readiness quickly and on budget.

Lauren Thomas-Paquin/School Committee: the Committee is pleased with the Union 28 Superintendent, the State is moving toward computer based testing, the sidewalk repair project is complete, rugs in half of the building have been replaced, and the newly installed track is being used.

Meryl Mandell/Master Plan Working Group: the MPWG is working to become more specific on its 11.28.17 recommendations to the Select Board: the potential development of Lot O32 and the recommendation to form a committee; we will be encouraging continuous improvement on financial issues and the completion of low cost, high yield projects brought forward by the community; the MPWG is coming to its conclusion.

On behalf of the Select Board, DeChiara thanks all of the volunteers working on behalf of the town.

Administrative Actions:

1. The Select Board will sign vendor warrants totaling \$106,678.09
2. The Select Board will sign payroll warrants totaling \$99,893.66
3. The Select Board will sign Broadband warrants totaling \$60,040.12.

At 8:19pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves to adjourn the meeting; Logan seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. "Mass DOR Classification Tax Allocation Fiscal Year 2018"
2. Schmidt's "FY 2017 Assessed Values by Case"
3. "Mass DOR Division of Local Services 'What If...Scenario' Worksheet for FY2018"
4. Mosher's "Notes from All Boards Meeting – Nov. 14, 2017"
5. Mosher's "Introduction to Guidelines for Public Records Requests for Committees, Boards, and Departments"
6. 10.6.17 "Open Meeting Law Guide" by the Office of the Attorney General
7. Dept. of Elder Affairs "FY2018 Formula Grant/Allocation Statement of Authorization"
8. 10.3.17 letter from the Leverett Select Board and Finance Committee "Police Chief Position"

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary