

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
November 13, 2018 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, Elaine Puleo, and April Stein  
Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Steve Schmidt/Assessor & Broadband MLP, Pastor Mark Ellis/Shutesbury Community Church, Maurice Gregoire/Electrical Inspector, Catherine Hilton/Board of Health & Elliott Park Committee, Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director, Dan Hayes/Shutesbury School Committee, Ryan Mailloux/Treasurer, Ralph Armstrong and Anna Aaron/Personnel Board, Deacon Bonnar/Planning Board, David Dann/Council on Aging, Stephen Sullivan/Regional School Committee & Highway Department, Tom Williams/Zoning Board of Appeals, Meryl Mandell/Recycling & Solid Waste Committee, Mark Rivers/LWAC, Penny Jaques/Conservation Commission, Susie Mosher/Town Clerk, Walter Tibbetts/Fire Chief & Cemetery Commission, George Arvanitis and Jim Hemingway/Finance Committee, Bob Groves/Building Committee & FinCom

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 6:37pm.

No public comment offered.

Agenda review: Torres requests the signing of the remaining FY19 Personnel Action Forms be postponed to the 11.27.18 meeting.

**Discussion Topics:**

1. Tax Classification Hearing: Steve Schmidt/Assessor: the Tax Classification hearing is an annual event; the projected tax rate, based on several factors is \$23.26/1,000; to split the rate would result in a significant increase for businesses with a minimal decrease in the residential rate; there would be a benefit if it were possible to split the tax rate for the large out of town corporations; the solar farm has a separate payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) that is included in the tax rate. Per Schmidt, the Board of Assessors recommends a single tax rate for FY19. Stein moves the Select Board accept the Assessors recommendation that there be a single tax rate for FY19; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously. The Department of Revenue Division of Local Services "Classification Tax Allocation Fiscal Year 2019" is signed by Makepeace-O'Neil and Stein. Per this document, the LA-5 excess levy capacity for the current fiscal year is calculated as \$165,357.39 and \$144,261.58 for the prior fiscal year. Schmidt reviews the "Interim Revaluation Explanation" by Kenneth Holmberg/Administrative Assessor: based on sales, vacant land values sales supported a lower land valuation; rising single family homes sale prices resulted in an increase in home assessments of about 2% overall. Per Schmidt, this explanation will be on the Assessors webpage. Schmidt notes that the increase in spending approved at Town Meeting and reductions in state aid result in an increased tax rate even as single-family home valuations increased.

2. Christmas Tree Lighting Proposal: Pastor Ellis/Shutesbury Community Church explains the Church's proposal to hold a Christmas tree lighting and carol sing on 12.9.18 at 7pm on town land (the church sits on land owned by the town); the plan is to use a cut tree 8-10' tall that is decorated and lit in the evening; Santa Claus will be present and refreshments in the church will follow the lighting. Stein: we are not a Christian town and this is a Christian church; the Jewish and Muslim communities are not represented on the town common. Torres: those groups could come forward and request representation; notes that there have been Native American celebrations on the common. Ellis states his support for representation by others. Makepeace-O'Neil notes that there was a sign stating "All are Welcome" in front of town hall for a period of time. Stein states her need to acknowledge that everyone in our community does not celebrate Christmas. Schmidt: the Christmas tree is a celebration of the season and comes from pagan celebrations of the solstice; he does not see it as a Christian symbol. Stein: it is a quintessential New England scene. Torres: Puleo (not yet present) is comfortable with supporting the Christmas tree lighting knowing that other groups may propose use of the common for seasonal expressions as well. Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board support the Shutesbury Community Church 12.9.18 Christmas Tree lighting and related events on the town common; Stein seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

All Boards, Committees and Departments: Puleo joins the meeting at 7:00pm. Makepeace-O'Neil welcomes those present and introductions are made.

Brief reports were made by the following:

Ryan Mailloux/Treasurer: is a couple months into his new role as Treasurer; has been organizing the office and familiarizing himself with the software some of which is requiring extra data entry time; he has been working with the school and is correcting vacation, personal time and sick time accruals with employees; he is learning the tax title process and just balanced the books for October.

Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director: provides and reviews a handout that is a snapshot of M.N. Spear Library activity for one year and demonstrates how the library continues to respond to community needs by increasing offerings, building collections and community connections through digital offerings including a free digital streaming service, the weekly subscription newsletter "Wowbrary", nine museum passes, offering many programs including a partnership with the COA for fitness programs- information about programs is on the library's website; "Giving Tuesday" will be an upcoming fundraising opportunity.

Dan Hayes/Shutesbury School Committee: it is the time of the year for budget work, parent/teacher conferences just finished, a family folk dance is coming up, there is no specific news from Union 28; the Collaborative is continuing to provide educational services for students and teachers thereby reducing costs for schools.

Steve Sullivan/Regional School Committee: there is no further word about Principal's Jacksons retirement; there is 2.5% budget cap for the coming year; food service, brought in house last year, has been able to offer free lunch to ten sites.

Meryl Mandell/Recycling and Solid Waste Committee: no news is good news; the Leverett transfer station sticker program is very successful – the \$3,000 cost to participate in the program has already been covered; the use of the transfer station and one bulky waste day/year appears to be covering the Town's needs; Gary Bernhard/Recycling Coordinator is working with

Alternative Recycling on their hauler permit; the Committee received a \$500 grant to purchase more recycling bins.

Tom Williams/Zoning Board of Appeals: the Board hears cases involving Building Inspector decision appeals, special permit and variance applications and site plan review applications; last year, the Board held multiple education and guidance meetings, attended multiple site inspections and held several hearings; several site plan review cases were for ground-mount solar systems; Chair DiMare sends his regrets.

Anna Aaron/Personnel Board: welcomes Ryan Mailloux and appreciates the years former Treasurer Gabe Voelker devoted to the town; in addition to routine business, the Board also dealt with major projects/issues including updating the employee review process becoming clear these should not take place in a public meeting however need to occur without violating open meeting law therefore the Town Administrator has been designated to perform reviews and can call on appropriate board representation for assistance, contract negotiations - the most time consuming being the Fire Chief's - led to the drafting of a set of contract negotiation guidelines and the search for a police chief led to a set of guidelines for search committees; both of these guidelines will be brought to the Select Board for review.

Gail Weiss/Accountant: free cash has been certified; she is working on Schedule A and collaboration with Mailloux is going well.

Catherine Hilton/Board of Health: the annual flu clinic is missed - the problems were the cost of the vaccine and keeping it at the proper temperature; the vaccine was purchased from the Department of Public Health with reimbursement by insurance companies and Medicaid; in the future, the Board of Health may be able to collaborate with the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition on refrigeration and cost; the recent water testing program resulted in the Board starting to see sodium and chloride in some residents' wells that may be coming from road salt indicating the need for an alternative method of road care.

David Dann/Council on Aging: consistent programming is being offered - fitness classes in collaboration with the library, the monthly foot clinic well is attended, the Med-Ride program and monthly first Tuesday potluck lunches continue; two years ago, the Council formed the Aging in Place Task Force that resulted in the formation of the Village Neighbors, a four-town collaboration to promote independent living and the ability to stay in one's home as long as possible.

George Arvanitis/Finance Committee: the Committee is getting ready for FY20 - the contracts signed in FY19, SES losing some grants, and the 2.5% Regional budget will put a strain on the Town's budget; the solar project payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) will add revenue; a number of capital items are coming up, i.e. the school roof, paving projects and Broadband, therefore we are at the point where free cash will be needed; the FinCom will be working directly with the Broadband Committee.

Bob Groves/Building Committee: the school roof continues to be an issue because leaking problems are difficult to diagnose - the plan is to design a proposal for the gym roof as this is the major area of concern; the Committee is partnering with the Historical Commission on a plan to apply for Community Preservation funds for the rehabilitation of the Old Town Hall - a gem of a building - and we are hoping for Town support of the project.

Steve Schmidt/Board of Assessors: the triannual valuation was completed with some increase in values; the Department of Revenue now requires towns to adjust property values each year; in Shutesbury, values rose ~ 2% on single family homes though land values went down; with the adjusted values, there was a nearly 3% increase in values which would have decreased the tax

however, once the recap was done, there will be an increase of about \$.20/1,000 in the tax rate due to increased costs primarily in school choice and charter school tuition. Schmidt: increasing school costs are a high priority for our new legislative team. Arvanitis: this is why the levy was raised last year. Hayes: Division Five is looking to do advocacy in this area and will be making recommendations to legislators. Schmidt notes that the “Interim Revaluation Explanation” by Kenneth Holmberg/Administrative Assessor will be posted on the Assessor’s webpage.

Walter Tibbetts/Fire Chief: with the usual roster of 8 crew members, 154 calls have been made thus far this calendar year so we are on pace for a record year; the fire extinguisher class was well received and, based on requests, another class is planned; members of the Department are going through additional training.

Walter Tibbetts/Cemetery Commission: the new cemetery caregivers Susan Young and Michael Browsky are giving special attention and extra care to the cemeteries; repairs on the old crypt door have been made.

Penny Jaques/Conservation Commission: the Commission is responsible for protecting the Town’s natural resources; most of the members’ time is spent doing regulatory work under the Town’s Wetland Protection Bylaw and the DEP Wetland Protection Act; during FY18, the members completed 53 site visits, issued 15 wetland permits, 3 enforcement orders and signed off on 18 building permit applications - all of this was done with only three Commissioners and the assistance of the Land Use Clerk; help is needed as Jaques will be leaving the Commission when her term ends in June 2019; the Commission worked with the Division of Fish and Wildlife to protect land on Lots F105 and F3 on Leverett Road – these are special sites that abut the Paul C. Jones Working Forest – the Commission contributed funds toward the purchase of Lot F105 and Lot F3 was donated by the owners.

Maurice Gregoire/Wiring Inspector: the Wheelock solar project required many inspections this year and the project is working well; because more panels will be added, more inspections will be needed.

Susie Mosher/Town Clerk:

1. Web/Communications Committee: the website is a work in progress, suggestions are welcome and the Committee will work to correct any errors.
2. Open Meeting Law: there is a link on the Town site to the State website and print copies are available in the Clerk’s office; overall compliance with OML is improved.
3. Conflict of Interest Training: certificates need to be renewed once every two years; the good response to completing the training is appreciated.
4. Records Access Officer: having meeting minutes on committee webpages is very helpful in improving public access; instructions are available on the website under “Volunteers” on how to set up an email address to be used for just town business; the time and materials necessary to meet record requests can be charged for.
5. Town Clerk: the office has been busy non-stop for the last year therefore she apologizes for any errors; resuming the assistant clerk position is being considered; launching the secure “My Town Government” system is being planned - it meets all state statutes for posting minutes and agendas and other towns find it easy to use.
6. Record Storage Advisory Committee: the group is studying the cubic feet of records needing storage; members have visited three towns to observe their record storage systems; another year will be needed before we have recommendations for the Select Board.

Mandell notes that Mosher did a phenomenal job organizing the recent election.

Mark Rivers/Lake Wyola Advisory Committee: LWAC's role is to protect Lake Wyola; this year, there has been significant rain water runoff and sediment going into the lake - we are working on re-grading the roads to minimize this; the Committee receives a State permit each year to addle goose eggs; for thirty years, an annual lowering of the lake has occurred – we learned that a wetland permit is needed for this activity so a permit was filed and the process is now compliant. Torres acknowledges the work Rivers did on the permit process. Rivers: upcoming projects include the Locks Pond Road culvert – Torres is working on grant funding for this necessary work and Tibbetts is working on plans for repair of the dam outflow pipe; funds are being raised by the Lake Wyola Association to be used along with allocated CPC funds for an engineering study of the siltation in the North Cove; the Committee is also keeping an eye on State water testing requirements at Lake Wyola State Park.

Gayle Huntress/Municipal Lighting Plant Manager: this coming spring and summer, Broadband will be brought to homes; the resident cost will be approximately \$75/internet or \$90/phone and internet; National Grid, Eversource and Verizon are in the “make ready” process - space for fiber lines on the pole; the State has contributed funds to cover make-ready cost overages which help us stay on-budget; the Governor is aware of the make-ready delays and is meeting with utility executives to move this forward; we are getting poised to build as soon as the make ready is complete - materials are ordered and in the warehouse ready to go and a contract with TriWire/builder has been signed; we are about 85% there and hope for construction to start in Dec/Jan; Schmidt is in charge of the hut project; there will be an individual sign-up campaign - check the Broadband Committee webpage for updates; we will be working with the FinCom on numbers relative to the extra costs for long driveways.

Deacon Bonnar/Planning Board: the Board has been busy with the recent approval of an amendment to the special permit for the Wheelock solar project in order for Lodestar to meet the necessary 6 megawatt capacity and deal with drainage issues; there are no conclusions yet as to regulation or non-regulation relative to cannabis; the Board has a list of potential zoning revisions for annual town meeting - additional suggestions are welcome.

Steve Sullivan/Highway Department: the Department has been busy with three big projects - reclaiming and paving portions of Leveret Road, the South Brook culvert replacement on Wendell Road and filling potholes/runoff gullies on dirt roads; no roadside mowing was done because we were down to only two staff; a better option for roadside mowing has been chosen – a stand-alone boom mower that attaches to the loader.

Becky Torres/Town Administrator: our new Police Chief Dan Fernandes is unable to attend due to illness; he has been keeping the department afloat while still down 80 hours of manpower/week; an ad for a new officer is out; with assistance from part-timers, the department has maintained coverage.

Linda Avis Scott/Community Preservation Committee: refers to the handout titled “The Shutesbury Community Preservation Committee: Who are and what do we do” that lists the CPC funded projects, the structure of the Committee and how funds are raised and allocated; Determinations of Eligibility are due 11.30.18.

Makepeace-O'Neil, on behalf of the Select Board, offers appreciation for those present and the work done on behalf of the Town.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board members will sign vendor warrants totaling \$157,833.83.
2. Select Board members will sign payroll warrants totaling \$100,986.27.
3. Select Board members will sign Broadband warrants totaling \$1,880.56.

At 8:10pm, Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to adjourn the All Boards and Select Board meeting; motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting

1. Assessors Value Changes FY18-FY19
2. "Interim Revaluation Explanation" by Kenneth Holmberg/Administrative Assessor
3. Tax Classification Hearing Notice
4. "Classification Tax Allocation Fiscal Year 2019"/Mass DOR Division of Local Services
5. M.N. Spear Memorial Library "All Boards Report, November 2018" by Mary Anne Antonellis/Director
6. November 13, 2018 "All Boards Meeting Notes" by Susie Mosher/Town Clerk
7. "The Community Preservation Committee: Who we are and what we do"

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary