

Shutesbury Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes August 26, 2014

Members present: Chairwoman Elaine Puleo and members April Stein and Mike Vinsky.

Members Absent: None.

Remote participation: None.

Staff present: Town Administrator Rebecca Torres, Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge.

Press present: None.

Chairman Puleo opened the meeting at 6:30 P.M. at the Shutesbury Town Hall.

Appointments

At 6:30 PM Chairman Puleo opened a public hearing in the presence of M.J. Adams of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority:

- M.J. Adams summarized Shutesbury's partnership with 4 other towns including Sunderland in a Regional Community Development Block Grant.
- For Sunderland to alter previously planned use of its portion of the block grant, public hearings must be conducted in all 4 towns. The proposed change will not take from Shutesbury's allocation of funds and there might be some residual funds in Sunderland that could be spread to other towns.
- M.J. Adams stated that Shutesbury has "solid need." M.J. Adams plans that the 6 owner-occupied housing assistance projects in Shutesbury will all be completed by the end of December.
- With no objection raised to Sunderland's modifications, Selectmen unanimously voted to close the public hearing at 6:40PM.

Police Chief Harding:

1. Tomorrow is the first day of school
 - The school bus company has been notified of road closures due to tree trimming.
 - An email concerning road closures went out on the town announce list.
 - National Grid says it will be a 4 to 6 week project.
2. The new cruiser is in. Over the next 2 weeks, some police department equipment will be removed and some left in the transition of the old police department vehicle to the fire department.
3. Paperwork and follow-up references are in process concerning the part time officer applicant.
 - The probationary period includes field training.
 - Hiring would be under the Union contract, without a set term of employment.
 - Part time employees get put on the schedule as needed.
 - There is a regular need of 2 to 3 shifts/ week plus extra shifts when other officers are on vacation.
4. A meeting will be arranged with the Chief Harding, Dog Officer Long, Chairman Puleo and Town Administrator Torres.
5. There have been no recent break and enters and there is no new information regarding the June series of break-ins.

Selectmen met with Finance Committee members: Chairman Wilson, and members: Gary Hirschfield, Weezie Houle, Allen Hanson, Susie Mosher, Eric Stocker, Town Accountant Gail Weiss, Treasurer Gabriele Voelker to discuss the Select Board's role in the budget process:

- Finance Committee Chairman Rus Wilson summarized the Finance Committee process:
 - Starting at this time of year the Finance Committee gets an idea of the current financial picture: how last year played out, income and projected revenues.

- In late October the Finance Committee requests department budget projections for the coming fiscal year and schedules department meetings.
- It's a "give and take" with the different departments.
- There's usually very little flexibility in the budget: a 2.5% increase is strained; keeping it below 2.5% is hard.
- Revenues include property taxes, state aid, motor vehicle excise taxes, and grants.
- Treasurer Gabriele "Gabe" Voelker tied together many comments answering the question of how the town decides need and what should and should not be funded:
 - Requests originate at respective committee levels. For examples Gabe describes:
 - The Personnel Board reviews and prioritizes personnel requests.
 - The Capital Planning Committee reviews and prioritizes capital requests above \$5,000.
 - Committee recommendations go to the Finance Committee and the Finance Committee uses those committee priorities to fund a balance of priorities and services with limited funds.
 - There are stages in the process: from budget requests, to Finance Committee, other committees and Select Board prioritizations, then there is revenue forecasting, and looking at the whole picture.
- It's a collaborative process that takes months.
- The Finance Committee and the Select Board have representatives that attend the meetings of other boards, minutes are shared between boards and the Town Administrator is a coordinator sharing information between all parties.
- Big projects like the broadband effort may require a feasibility study and public forums.
- Citizens can petition individual committees for more or less funding of certain projects and have the final vote at Town meeting to increase, reduce or delete proposed funding.
- April: The intent is a very balanced process meant to encourage input. It's very complicated, but each committee/board has their responsibilities.
- Departments summarize their work and future needs to each other at the All Boards meeting in October.
- The Town Administrator coordinates information between boards and receives and shares Department of Revenue and other regional and state information.
- The town newsletter sends information out to voters 3 or more times each year.
- The April newsletter contains the culmination of the year's work done in the form of the town meeting warrant, the budget, and capital plan recommendations.
- Discussion includes the cumulative nature of the knowledge that volunteers gain through membership on committees that makes the democratic process work. Nobody has a monetary interest. People bring integrity to each committee.
- A committee has "institutional memory." Committee chairs take on a fostering role. It's a learning process, for a new person to join a committee. It takes time to develop an understanding of the whole process.
- Part of learning comes from attending the meetings and trainings of the various professional organizations, and networking with similar officials from other towns.
- Good communication and attention to detail are key to effective management.
- At 7:59 PM the Finance team left.

At 8 PM Selectmen met with approximately 18 residents of the January Hills Road neighborhood regarding high speed Internet access. Louise Dunphy of 18 January Hills Road read her prepared comments before the meeting was opened to a general discussion. The discussion ended at:

- Taxpayers of the January Hills Road neighborhoods desire a "speedy trail of fiber to homes."

- The Chestnut Hill Road neighborhood of Montague and the Bull Hill Road neighborhood in Sunderland are considering forming development districts and looking to Leverett for broadband.
- What are the chances of January Hills Road residents also becoming a neighborhood development?
- They have met with Representative Kulik's Aide Paul Dunphy.
- The group delivered 25 letters to the Select Board and 40 surveys.
- Craig Martin gave an update on Shutesbury's Broadband Committee efforts.
- Everyone wants the same thing as fast as possible: WiredWest and Leverett offer 2 different models of financing. It's not going to happen tomorrow.
- January Hills Road neighborhood residents will help in any way that they can but they don't know what to do.
- The region is waiting for possible September decisions to be made by MBI (Massachusetts Broadband Institute) regarding distribution of \$50 million for fiber to the homes.
- We are pushing our legislators.
- Property values are affected by the absence of broadband.
- Though some advocated for doing something independently with Leverett, Select Board Chairperson Puleo stated that they need to move the entire town forward.
- It's a safety issue, the children need it for studies, people need it to run their businesses.
- The decision to stay with WiredWest or to move forward independently as Leverett did would be a town Proposition 2½/override decision.
- Shutesbury is waiting to see how MBI distributes the \$50 million before taking any action. The Shutesbury Broadband Committee is carefully analyzing the 2 models: Leverett and WiredWest, and evaluating our town's options.
- Broadband is Shutesbury's number one priority.
- There are question marks about getting a \$3.1million bond passed in Shutesbury. Every single person in the town will be a part of making the decision.
- The next Broadband committee meeting is Saturday, September 6 at Town Hall.
- The Broadband Committee is a really strong committee and members are putting their best energy into it.
- Chairman Puleo and Town Administrator Torres are meeting with Representative Steve Kulik and 3 members of the Wired West Executive Committee tomorrow.
- Secretary Bracebridge will scan and email all letters and surveys to Select Board members, Town Administrator and Broadband Committee Co-chairs. They will be kept on file for inspection with the Select Board meeting minutes

January Hills Road neighborhood residents left the Select Board meeting at 9:20 PM.

Topics

1. **Discuss Select Board Role in the Budget Process:** See appointments above.
2. **Gas Leak/Fire Station update:** No action taken.
3. **Salt Legal Issue/Possible Executive Session:** No action taken.
4. **Knotweed update:** Becky has a quote of \$250 to treat the area on Pelham Hill Road south of Baker Road. She cannot reach one abutter. The knot weed is blooming; treatment needs to happen now.
5. **Discussion about Highway Department Notice of Intent (NOI):** Selectmen thought it not appropriate to review the draft blanket Notice of Intent created by the Conservation Commission to guide routine Highway Department projects in the absence of Highway Superintendent Timothy "Tim" Hunting. The original intent of the project was to save Tim time and paperwork. It is critical to have his input.

Select Board Action Items

1. The August 12 minutes had not yet been read and will therefore be approved at the next meeting. Leslie offered to forward minutes to selectmen early when possible.
2. **Selectmen unanimously voted to approve the July 15 minutes as written.**
 - a. It was noted that the ads for the dog Cassie still appeared on the Internet a number of weeks after the dog hearing. April wrote a note for one of them and shortly after, the ad was taken down.
 - b. Mike wishes for minutes from all committee meetings. Selectmen can encourage committees for more expansive notes in a supportive way.
3. **Sign Crocker contracts for new phone system and internet service for Town Hall:** After extensive review of the contracts, Selectmen unanimously voted to sign the 3 different Crocker contracts.
4. **Selectmen unanimously voted to sign the event form for the Celebrate Shutesbury.**
5. **Selectmen reviewed and unanimously voted to sign the Highway Pick-up Truck contract with Marcotte Ford of Holyoke, MA in the amount of \$31,995.00.**
6. **Selectmen signed payroll warrants totaling \$86,353.74.**
7. **Selectmen signed vendor warrants totaling \$72,612.41.**

Topics the Chairman Could Not Reasonably Have Anticipated

1. The monitoring wells are in. The well behind Town Hall was dug to 300 feet.
2. Selectmen reviewed the Select Board statement for the September newsletter.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting:

1. July 15 and August 12, 2014 draft Select Board meeting minutes.
2. July 21, 2014 Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, FY 2013 Bernardston Four-Town Quarterly report #4
3. August 19 2014 public announcement from Police Chief Harding regarding Lewis Tree trimming activity in Shutesbury.
4. Three quotes of August 15, 2014 from Crocker Communications for Network Cabling, Crocker Telecommunications - Hosted VoIP (MRC), and Crocker Telecommunications - Hosted VoIP (NRC) contracts.
5. Celebrate Shutesbury event notification form.
6. August 26, 2014 contract with Marcotte Ford of Holyoke for a Highway Department pickup truck.
7. August 8, 2014 invoice from the Department of Environmental Protection and explanatory attachment.

The Select Board **adjourned at 10:30 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge
Administrative Secretary