



2026 Special Town Meeting Warrant Guide

Town of Shutesbury, Massachusetts — October 17, 2026

Welcome to your simplified guide to the October 17, 2026, Special Town Meeting Warrant. This document provides clear explanations of each article to help you make informed decisions on local policy, finance, and town governance.

📍 **Location:** Shutesbury Elementary School Gym (23 West Pelham Rd.)

🕒 **Meeting Starts:** 9:00 a.m.

💡 **Pro-Tip for Attendees:** If you ever feel lost during the proceedings, you can stand and say, "Ms. Moderator, a point of information!" This allows you to ask for immediate clarification on what is being voted on or the meaning of a specific term.

📋 Warrant Articles Breakdown

🏛️ Article 1: Prior Year Bills

(Sponsor: Selectboard | FinCom: Recommends, 7-0 | Vote Required: 9/10ths Majority Vote)

Action: Transfer funds from Stabilization to pay overdue prior-year municipal invoices.

Summary: Covers two unpaid bills: \$5,000.00 to the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (FY25 annual membership fee) and \$238.40 to McCarthy, Burgess & Wolff for an Alert 360 alarm monitoring bill and late fees. Massachusetts law requires a 9/10ths supermajority to pay bills incurred in a previous fiscal year.

🏛️ Article 2: Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 64G, § 3D(a) – Community Impact Fee (1)

(Sponsor: Selectboard | FinCom: Recommends, 7-0 | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Adopt state provisions allowing a 3% community impact fee on professionally-managed short-term rental units.

Summary: Applies a 3% impact fee to short-term rentals (e.g., Airbnb/VRBO) that are professionally managed—defined as operators managing two or more units in town that are not located within a single-, two-, or three-family dwelling where the operator resides.

🏛️ Article 3: Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 64G, § 3D(b) – Community Impact Fee (2)

(Sponsor: Selectboard | FinCom: Recommends, 7-0 | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Adopt state provisions allowing a 3% community impact fee on short-term rentals in owner-occupied 2- or 3-family dwellings.

Summary: Extends the 3% community impact fee to short-term rental units located within two- or three-family properties where the owner/operator lives on-site as their primary residence.

🏛️ Article 4: Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 60, § 3C – Municipal Scholarship / Educational Fund

(Sponsor: Selectboard | FinCom: N/A | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Authorize a voluntary municipal scholarship or educational fund funded by tax bill donations.

Summary: Allows Shutesbury residents to voluntarily add a donation to their municipal property or motor vehicle excise tax payments to support local education and student scholarships.

🏛️ Article 5: Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 60, § 3D – Aid to Elderly and Disabled Taxation Fund

(Sponsor: Selectboard | FinCom: N/A | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Authorize a voluntary fund for elderly and disabled residents funded by tax bill donations.

Summary: Establishes a voluntary donation option on tax bills to assist qualified low-income elderly and disabled Shutesbury residents with their property tax obligations.

Article 6: Establishment of Special Education Reserve Fund (M.G.L. c. 40, § 13E)

(Sponsor: School Committee | FinCom: Recommends, 7-0 | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Accept state law to establish a Special Education Reserve Fund for unanticipated special education costs.

Summary: Creates a dedicated reserve fund to cover unbudgeted special education expenses, out-of-district tuition, or emergency transportation without needing additional Town Meeting approval. Disbursements require joint majority votes from both the School Committee and Selectboard. The fund balance cannot exceed 2% of the annual net school spending for Shutesbury Elementary School.

Article 7: Closing West Quabbin Woodlands Conservation Area CPA Grant

(Sponsor: Community Preservation Committee | FinCom: Recommends, 7-0 | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Return \$10,000 in unspent CPA grant funds to the Open Space/Recreation CPA account.

Summary: Formally closes the completed CPA grant for the Purchase/Development of Pelham Rd Lot R-15 and returns the leftover \$10,000 balance to the town's Open Space/Recreation CPA reserve for future projects.

Article 8: Accept Bequest of Property at 41 Cooleyville Rd.

(Sponsor: Select Board | FinCom: Recommends, 7-0 | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Authorize the Select Board to acquire/accept the parcel and buildings at 41 Cooleyville Road for municipal purposes.

Summary: Accepts a land and property bequest/gift from the David Rogers Ulen Revocable Trust (Parcel O-52, approx. 93 square rods with buildings and contents) to be held by the town for future municipal use.

Article 9: Amendment to Personnel Bylaw – Removal of Holidays Section

(Sponsor: Personnel Board | FinCom: N/A | Vote Required: Majority Vote)

Action: Remove specific holiday listings from the Personnel Bylaw and delegate holiday policies to the Personnel Handbook.

Summary: Deletes Section 7.3 from the town bylaw and replaces it with language stating that official holidays, eligibility, and pay rules are governed by the Town of Shutesbury Personnel Handbook. This allows future holiday administrative updates without needing town-wide bylaw amendments.

Reference Guide: Town Meeting Terms & Rules

- **Special Town Meeting (STM):** A town meeting called outside the annual spring meeting to address specific, time-sensitive town business or financial matters.
- **Stabilization Fund:** The town's primary reserve/savings account. Withdrawing money from Stabilization generally requires a 2/3rds majority vote, except for special statutory rules.
- **9/10ths Majority Vote:** A strict statutory threshold required to pass bills incurred in a previous fiscal year, ensuring fiscal accountability and prompt billing.
- **Community Impact Fee:** A local tax option under M.G.L. c. 64G (up to 3%) levied on short-term rental units to help mitigate local impacts on housing and infrastructure.
- **Special Education Reserve Fund:** A dedicated account under M.G.L. c. 40, § 13E capped at 2% of net school spending, used to cushion unpredictable mid-year special education costs.
- **Indefinite Postponement:** A parliamentary motion that effectively cancels action on an article for the meeting without taking a direct vote on its passage.

Your vote is your voice! Thank you for engaging in Shutesbury's local government. 