

Town of Shutesbury

Town Buildings Committee Meeting

June 10, 2026

Members Present: Frank McGinn, Phil Parker, Stephen Dallmus & Anna Cook

Absent: Jeff Quackenbush

Meeting called to order at 5:32 pm by Frank McGinn

1: Review minutes of 5/13

2: Review and update the Shutesbury's Building Assessment spreadsheet.

3: Any other unanticipated business.

Key Takeaways

- The Buildings Committee held a hybrid meeting (one member in person, others on Zoom) to review and update the municipal buildings maintenance spreadsheet.
- Gutters at Town Hall and the Fire Department have been completed and logged in the spreadsheet history.
- The committee voted to approve a Citizens Security wireless fire alarm system for Town Hall (~\$9,000 total; Buildings Committee responsible for approximately \$1,800–\$1,900 difference).
- The elementary school's buried oil tank situation is complex: the VitaRoot monitoring system needs \$6,000? to repair to fix, and a potential ground-source heat pump grant decision is expected by February.
- Stephen Dallmus recommended exploring an above-ground oil tank as a practical alternative to costly underground tank repairs.
- The Highway Department fire alarm system has been non-functional for approximately 8 years; additional quotes are needed before a vote.
- Knox boxes for the Fire Department still need to be ordered by Len; Frank will follow up.
- Anna's recommended HVAC contractor (multi-trade, brand-agnostic) was discussed as a preferred vendor for a future maintenance agreement.
- Next meeting is scheduled for July 15 via Zoom.

Discussed Topics

Meeting Setup and Technical Difficulties

The meeting began with technical issues as the conference room TV defaulted to a cartoon channel instead of the presentation input. Frank called Melissa, who walked him through switching the TV to HDMI input. The meeting formally started at 5:38 PM.

- Details
 - Frank: Arrived early, was shown how to use the conference room equipment by Brennan, but the TV came on with a cartoon; spent approximately 10 minutes troubleshooting.
 - Anna: Noted the hybrid setup (one in-person, three on Zoom) reminded her of a Sesame Street segment.
 - Speaker 5 (Frank): Also learned how to use the printer via phone and prepared printed copies of the spreadsheet.
- Conclusion
 - TV input was resolved by switching to HDMI with Melissa's remote assistance.

- Meeting proceeded in hybrid format.

Spreadsheet Review — Town Hall: Gutters and Downspouts

The committee reviewed and updated the maintenance spreadsheet for Town Hall gutters. Stephen clarified what had been completed and guided edits to the history section.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Confirmed gutters at Town Hall have been done; instructed that completed items be moved to history and incomplete items eliminated or transferred to comments.
 - Anna: Believed gutters were installed in May (possibly April); noted the Highway Department gutters are not done due to a roof issue.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Specified that a new gutter was installed on the east side of the north front entry; gutters were also added to two lower-level side porch roofs; noted the underground drain status remains unknown.
 - Frank: Updated the spreadsheet accordingly, adding date 5/2026.
- Conclusion
 - Town Hall gutter work recorded in history as of 5/2026.
 - Underground drain status changed to low priority / monitor.
 - Chimney brick work remains unchanged (nothing done).

Spreadsheet Review — Elementary School: Mini-Splits and Condenser Coil

The committee updated the elementary school section regarding the mini-split HVAC system.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Directed that the mini-split condenser coil cleaning (completed 6/2025) be moved to history; priority changed from high to monitor.
 - Frank: Confirmed the BTU and coil details were retained in the entry.
- Conclusion
 - Condenser coil cleaning logged in history as of 6/2025.
 - Mini-split priority status changed to monitor.

Elementary School: Buried Oil Tank and VitaRoot Monitoring System

A detailed discussion took place regarding the school's buried oil tank, its monitoring system (VitaRoot), water contamination findings, and the broader heating strategy.

- Details
 - Frank: Explained that the VitaRoot system is a monitoring/alarm system with test wells, sensors, and a buoyancy device in the vault; it has not been working for some time.
 - Frank: The insurance company found no oil in groundwater but requires the VitaRoot system to be brought up to code (~\$25,000+) and additional vault work done.
 - Frank: A pressure test confirmed no leaks in the tank, but 2 inches of water were found inside the tank; source is unknown; estimated ~\$6,000 to address before the next heating season.
 - Frank: A meeting was held at the school with Michael DiCiara, the Finance Committee, School Committee, and Anne regarding a potential upgrade to a ground-source heat pump system. A \$150,000 engineering study grant decision is expected by February; if approved, test borings would follow, and a

~\$1 million grant for heat pump installation could be available by 2028. The town is among only 35 certified municipalities eligible to bid.

- Frank: Raised concern that spending \$200,000+ to remove the tank may be wasteful if a heat pump grant is awarded in 2028.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Noted that ground-source heat pumps will not cover 100% of heating needs in very cold weather; a backup boiler (oil or propane) will still be required. Recommended exploring an above-ground oil tank near the boiler room as a practical, lower-risk alternative to repairing the underground system, especially since parking lot drilling for heat pump wells may conflict with the tank's current location.
 - Conclusion
 - Tank size, age, and average level to be added to the spreadsheet by Frank.
 - The committee will bring the above-ground tank option forward for further discussion.
 - The heat pump grant timeline (February decision, 2028 installation) is a key factor in any tank-related spending decisions.
-

Elementary School: Attic Fire-Rated Sheetrock

A brief discussion addressed damage to fire-rated sheetrock in the attic.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Clarified that the roof trusses themselves are fine; the issue is that a contractor punched a large hole through fire-rated sheetrock installed between attic sections as a fire stop.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Described the repair as straightforward.
 - Conclusion
 - Items remain on the priority list; repair is considered easy to execute.
-

Highway Department: Roof

The committee reviewed the status of the Highway Department's bent roof on the main building.

- Details
 - Anna: Asked whether roof repair falls under the Buildings Committee's purview.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Reported that he, Jeff, and Russ Wilson recently inspected the roof and the large sliding doors facing Leverett Road. Russ has a piece of equipment (similar to a lull or bucket lift) that could be used to apply pressure to the bent roof section and potentially screw-fasten it back into the framing. The framing itself has not been pushed up — only the roof surface is affected. The roof is not currently leaking internally.
 - Stephen Dallmus: This work is planned after he and Jeff complete prepping and restraining the Hearst house.
 - Conclusion
 - Roof repair is on the list; no changes made to the spreadsheet at this time.
 - Russ Wilson's equipment-assisted repair approach will be attempted.
-

Highway Department: Fire Alarm System

The committee discussed the long-standing absence of a functioning fire alarm system at the Highway Department.

- Details
 - Frank: Noted that a quote for replacing the Highway Department alarm system was previously sent to the highway department by mistake and never received by the committee. The fire alarm system has not been working for approximately 8 years.
 - Frank: Found a Citizens Security quote of \$2,073.41 for the Highway Department/DPW system.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Confirmed he could see the quote on his phone; emphasized that additional estimates are required per procurement requirements before a vote can be taken.
 - Frank: Agreed to work with Jeff to obtain at least two more quotes.
- Conclusion
 - Additional quotes to be obtained before a vote.
 - Frank will coordinate with Jeff to initiate the bidding process.

Town Hall: Wireless Fire Alarm System — Vote

The committee discussed and voted on approving the Citizens Security wireless fire alarm system for Town Hall.

- Details
 - Frank: Explained that the wireless system (quoted at approximately \$9,000) covers the entire Town Hall building, including previously uncovered older sections. The difference between the previously voted town meeting allocation and the actual quote is approximately \$1,800, to be covered by the Buildings Committee budget.
 - Frank: Fire Chief Lenny reviewed the proposal, consulted other towns, and approved the wireless system; he appreciates the app-based monitoring capability (can identify smoke detector issues and manage remotely).
 - Stephen Dallmus: Raised concern that a hard-wired system would be vulnerable to mice in the attic; supported the wireless approach.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Made a motion to accept the Citizens Security proposal for a wireless system covering all offices in Town Hall, with the Buildings Committee responsible for approximately \$1,800–\$1,900.
 - Phil: Seconded the motion.
 - Roll call vote: Anna Cook — Aye; stephen dallmus — Aye; Phil Parker — Aye.
- Conclusion
 - The motion passed unanimously.
 - Frank has already submitted paperwork; Jeff has contacted Citizens Security to schedule installation.

\

Fire Department: Gutters and Downspouts

The committee updated the Fire Department section of the spreadsheet to reflect completed gutter work.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Confirmed gutters and downspouts were installed on the front (north) and west side of the Fire Department building; rotted/deteriorated siding at the base of the north front wall was also replaced.
 - Anna: Confirmed the location as front and right side as viewed from the road (west side).

- stephen dallmus: Directed edits to move items to history with date 5/2026 and eliminate resolved sub-items; priority changed to monitor.
 - Conclusion
 - Gutter and siding work recorded in history as of 5/2026.
-

Fire Department: Knox Boxes

The committee discussed the status of Knox box procurement.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Asked whether Len (Fire Chief) had ordered the Knox boxes yet; noted that he and Jeff had recently followed up with Len and felt he may need further prompting.
 - Frank: Confirmed Len must place the order; Frank cannot order them directly. Funds are available through the Buildings Committee budget.
 - stephen dallmus: Suggested Frank remind Len the next day and follow up weekly until confirmed ordered.
 - Conclusion
 - Frank will contact Len the following day and follow up weekly until Knox boxes are ordered.
-

Fire Department: Garage Doors and Mini-Splits

Brief status checks on remaining Fire Department items.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Uncertain whether garage doors lacking safety-reverse features have been addressed; needs to inspect.
 - Frank: Note the fencing has not been done.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Confirmed the non-functioning mini-split at the Fire Department is still not working.
 - Frank: Suggested that all mini-splits needing replacement across buildings (including the assessor's office at Town Hall) be bundled into a single bid to save money.
 - Conclusion
 - Garage door safety-reverse status to be verified by Stephen.
 - Fencing remains outstanding.
 - Mini-split replacements to be consolidated into one bid across all buildings.
-

HVAC Maintenance Contract — Royal Steam / Anna's Recommended Contractor

The committee discussed replacing the current HVAC service provider (Jamrod) with a new maintenance contractor.

- Details
 - Frank: expressed desire to move away from Jamrod quickly, citing concerns about recurring filter replacements and water issues in the system at the school; noted Jamrod had done "unique things" at the fiber optic building.
 - Frank: Mentioned Royal Steam had been given a difficult job related to the oil spill and has not been in recent contact.
 - Frank: Intends to reach out to Anna's recommended contractor and aims to have a maintenance agreement in place before the next heating season or by end of summer.

- Anna: Confirmed her recommended company handles wet and dry systems, ground-source geothermal, air-source heat pumps, and plumbing; is not brand-specific (does not exclusively push Fujitsu or Mitsubishi); engineers systems in-house.
- Stephen Dallmus: Asked about the company's experience with ground-source heat pumps in older buildings.
- Anna: Noted her personal experience has been mostly new construction; her company installed a ground-source system in a North Amherst cohousing project around 1992 that is still running.
- Stephen Dallmus: Raised the point that ground-source systems require the building to run AC in summer to replenish ground heat for the following winter — a potential issue since the elementary school is largely closed in summer.
- Stephen Dallmus: Also noted that heat pumps deliver lower-temperature heat and may be less effective in older, drafty, poorly insulated buildings.
- Anna: Acknowledged these as valid considerations applicable to any heating system; offered to arrange an informal discussion with the contractor about geothermal questions.
- Conclusion
 - Frank will reach out to Anna's recommended contractor for a maintenance agreement proposal.
 - Anna will facilitate an informal discussion about geothermal suitability if needed.
 - The committee will work toward a contract before the next heating season.

Spears Building

A brief review of the Spears Building status was conducted.

- Details
 - Frank: Noted the chimney has not been done; asked about the front porch.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Reported that a CPC grant proposal was submitted but required a specific number (not a range) and a 10% match from another entity; the effort was dropped while he was in Europe.
 - Frank: Confirmed fixtures and electrical upgrades are on hold pending the Select Board's decision on the building's future use; the reuse committee must weigh in first.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Summarized that the Buildings Committee's recommendation to the Select Board (presented the prior evening) was to spend a modest amount to evaluate the site, including a tight tank, septic, and well assessment.
- Conclusion
 - Insulation, weather stripping, and fixture upgrades remain on hold pending Select Board and reuse committee direction.
 - CPC grant pursuit has been paused.

Old Town Hall: Crawl Space and Moisture

A brief check on the Old Town Hall crawl space moisture issue.

- Details
 - Frank: Asked whether foam insulation had been applied at the north side where water was previously entering.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Advised against foam if grading has been corrected properly, as water should no longer be entering.
- Conclusion

- Item left for future monitoring; no foam application recommended at this time.

West Schoolhouse

A brief review confirmed the West Schoolhouse status.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Noted that rotted corner boards were addressed in 2024 and are recorded in history.
 - Frank: Confirmed no other recent work has been done.
- Conclusion
 - No new updates required; existing history entries are accurate.

Hearst Building

The committee updated the Hearst Building entry to reflect exterior staining work.

- Details
 - Stephen Dallmus: Directed that the peeling paint/stain item (2.1) be moved to history with date 6/2026, noting exterior siding has been prepped and restained; all other sub-items to be removed.
 - Frank: Confirmed the Hearst house work is essentially complete.
- Conclusion
 - Exterior siding prepped and retained recorded in history as of 6/2026.

Fiber Optic Building

The committee reviewed the fiber optic building status.

- Details
 - Speaker 5 (Frank): Reported that one mini-split was destroyed by mice and has not been replaced; the tenant (Graham) did not want Jamrod to return due to prior issues.
 - Speaker 5 (Frank): Offered to arrange access for Stephen to inspect the building; noted Graham monitors electricity usage down to the hour and has temperature and computer monitoring systems.
 - Speaker 5 (Frank): Suggested waiting until a new maintenance agreement is in place before addressing the mini-split replacement.
- Conclusion
 - Mini-split replacement deferred until a new HVAC maintenance contract is established.
 - Frank will coordinate access for Stephen to inspect the building.

Elliott Park

A brief mention was made of Elliott Park.

- Details
 - Speaker 5 (Frank): Noted that Elliott Park received its funding allocation; future discussion items may arise.
- Conclusion
 - No immediate action required; to be revisited in future meetings.

Next Meeting Date

The committee discussed and agreed on the next meeting date.

- Details
 - Speaker 5 (Frank): Proposed either July 8 or July 15.
 - Stephen Dallmus: Both dates work.
 - Anna: Both dates work.
 - Phil: July 8 does not work; July 15 is fine.
- Conclusion
 - The next meeting is set for July 15 via Zoom.
 - Frank will add it to the calendar and inform Jeff.

Action Items

- Speaker 5 (Frank)
 - Add oil tank specifications (size, age, average level) to the elementary school section of the spreadsheet.
 - Add photos to the oil tank section of the spreadsheet.
 - Contact Len (Fire Chief) the following day to remind him to order Knox boxes; follow up weekly until confirmed ordered.
 - Work with Jeff to obtain at least two additional quotes for the Highway Department fire alarm system.
 - Reach out to Anna's recommended HVAC contractor to obtain a maintenance agreement proposal covering all town buildings (target: before next heating season / end of summer).
 - Coordinate access to the fiber optic building for Stephen to conduct an inspection.
 - Ask Jeff whether Citizens Security also monitors the new library.
 - Have Haley draft a written procedure/hierarchy for how maintenance and repair work is to be authorized and managed (to reduce burden on Matt at the school).
 - Consolidate all mini-split replacement needs across buildings into a single bid.
 - Schedule the next Buildings Committee meeting for July 15 via Zoom and notify Jeff.
 - Update the spreadsheet with all changes discussed during this meeting (gutter history entries, fire alarm status, etc.).
- Anna
 - Facilitate an informal discussion with her recommended HVAC contractor regarding geothermal/ground-source heat pump questions if needed.
- Stephen Dallmus
 - Verify whether the Fire Department garage doors lacking safety-reverse features have been addressed.
 - Complete prepping and restraining of the Hearst house (with Jeff); then proceed with the Highway Department roof repair using Russ Wilson's equipment.
- Jeff
 - Assist Frank in obtaining additional quotes for the Highway Department fire alarm system.
 - Coordinate with Citizens Security to schedule Town Hall wireless alarm system installation (paperwork already submitted by Frank).

Quick recap

The Buildings Committee meeting focused on reviewing and updating maintenance priorities across various town facilities including Town Hall, elementary school, highway department, fire department, and other buildings. The committee discussed completed work such as gutter replacements at Town Hall and fire department, electrical upgrades, and chimney repairs, while identifying outstanding issues including the need for a wireless fire alarm system at Town Hall (\$1,800-1,900), addressing water in the oil tank system at the elementary school, and considering heat pump installation as a potential future solution. The committee also discussed the need for above-ground oil storage tanks and reviewed maintenance contracts, with plans to seek additional estimates for highway department fire alarm systems before proceeding with installations.

Next steps

Speaker 5 (Conference-Room)

- Update the spreadsheet with the discussed changes for Town Hall, Elementary School, Highway Department, Fire Department, Old Town Hall, Spears Building, West Schoolhouse, Hearst Building, and Elliott Park.
- Get the size, age, and average level of the oil tank from the pressure tank and add it to the spreadsheet.
- Add pictures of the VitaRoot system to the spreadsheet.
- Talk to Jeff about getting additional estimates for the fire alarm system at the Highway Department.
- Remind Len to order the Knox boxes for the Fire Department and follow up until confirmation of order.
- Reach out to Anna's suggested heating company (for boilers, heat pumps, etc.) to discuss maintenance contracts and possibly GEO systems.
- Schedule the next Buildings Committee meeting for July 15th via Zoom.
- Inform Jeff about the decision to proceed with the wireless fire alarm system for Town Hall.
- Work with Haley to document the hierarchy/procedure for how maintenance requests and work are handled.
- Follow up with Royal Steam or another company for a proposal on heating system maintenance for all buildings.

Stephen Dallmus makes a motion to end the meeting

Anna Cook seconds

Roll call to vote to end the meeting Yeas: Frank McGinn, Phil Parker, Anna Cook & Stephen Dallmus

Meeting adjourned at 6:42pm