

**Shutesbury Planning Board
Minutes – May 7, 2025**

Approved and approved for public release: 8/18/26

In Person (jointly with Select Board)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Board Members Present: Michael DeChiara (acting Chair), Ashleigh Pyecroft, Jeff Weston, Keith Hastie, Steve Bressler, and Tom Siefert (Associate Member)

Board Members Absent: Deacon Bonnar, Nathan Murphy

Others Present: Rita Farrell, Eric Stocker, Melissa Makepeace-O’Neil, Donna MacNicol, Adam Costa

Call to Order: 5:03pm

Michael moved to enter into Executive Session for Reason No. 3, to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government’s litigating position. Litigation specific to Complaint received from Cowls regarding the Shutesbury Solar Bylaw. Not to return to Open Session. Ashleigh seconded.

DeChiara – aye

Hastie – aye

Weston – aye

Pyecroft – aye

Bressler - aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Adam reviewed the elements of the proposed settlement made by PB in April and the most recent response by PureSky/Cowls. Adam reported that PureSky/Cowls accepted all the elements of the proposed counter offer except for two: they could not commit to \$50,000 annual payments for the life of the project and they needed to confirm the available acreage before agreeing to a 2:1 set aside on the remaining land of Pratt East, Montague and Leverett sites.

The Board reviewed a handout regarding the mechanics of the process.

There was discussion that immediately following the April vote to make the counter offer, several Planning Board members were uneasy with that decision. Adam and Donna then facilitated a discussion with the Planning Board and Select Board to determine what the Town’s next steps would be. After much thoughtful discussion and exchange of ideas among all present, there was the understanding by the Planning Board of two things:

1. That in order to avoid inadvertent agreement being made if PureSky/Cowls belatedly agreed to all the terms, the PB would rescind the current offer.
2. That the Planning Board was still willing to explore ways to make a new offer that adequately protected the remaining three sites to the PB’s satisfaction.

Adam left the meeting at 6:50.

Michael moved and Ashleigh seconded that the Planning Board rescind the current offer to PureSky/Cowls and further, that the Planning Board supported exploration of additional settlement options.

DeChiara – aye

Hastie – aye

Weston – aye

Pyecroft – aye

Bressler - aye

Motion carried unanimously.

There was discussion about what the PB could live with in terms of the remaining three sites – Leverett, Montague and Pratt East. It was agreed that the PB would discuss this further at an Executive Session on Monday May 12.

Steve moved to adjourn the meeting. Keith seconded.

DeChiara – aye

Hastie – aye

Weston – aye

Pyecroft – aye

Bressler - aye

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23pm

Documents Used:

- Handout outlining proposed settlement process