

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
October 21, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

Selectboard members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair, Eric Stocker/ Vice-Chair (Absent), Rita Farrell/ Board Member.

Finance Committee members present: Ajay Khashu/Chair, George Arvanitis (Absent), Susie Mosher, Molly Moss, Laura Soito, April Stein (Absent), Jim Walton.

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux. Dave Grenier, Devon Pelletier, Leonard Czerwonka, Gail Fleischaker, Catherine Hilton, Ryan Mailloux, Gail Weiss, Leslie Bracebridge, Mary Anne Antonellis, Stephen Dallmus, Jay Whelihan, Nate Longcope, Anna Heard, Keith Hastie, Shannon White Cleveland, Frank McGinn, Anne Magill, Caitlin Anderson May.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 10:02 am

General Business:

1. Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee:
  - a. As part of a larger crowd, the Board (Makepeace-O'Neil and Farrell) heard discussion From Ajay Khashu on topics such as revenue sources, increased reliance on property tax revenue, significant budget challenges for FY27, and an overall revenue analysis.
  - b. The Board then broke into a smaller group to discuss any questions or express any comments they had on the FY27 Budget. Their group consisted of Dave Grenier, Leonard Czerwonka, Devon Pelletier, Hayley Bolton, Ajay Khashu, and Nate Longcope.
    - i. There was discussion about our school system and the amount of money we pay personnel and their benefit packages.
    - ii. Bolton shared that we need as a Town and the Finance Committee need to be clearer in how we present some of our budget terminology such as "cushioning the budget" and it realistically meaning we would be setting ourselves up for a deficit in the coming year. Bolton thinks some terms can cause confusion among residents, where they would not fully understand the scope of what the words mean in budget terms.
    - iii. The Board discussed efficiency and how we as a Town can be more efficient in our non-personnel budgets such as operating and purchasing.
    - iv. Pelletier shared his cruiser maintenance budget line and potentially down the road decreasing his fleet from 4 to 3 to save money on maintenance and insurance. He would like to turn in two cruisers for a new one in the future. He shared the idle time and engine time becomes a major issue for the cruisers.

- v. Longcope discussed the need for a new parking lot at the Shutesbury Elementary School. He shared they have had a new roof put on and a new paint job, all that is left is a new parking lot, which has been deferred maintenance for a while.
  - vi. Ajay Khashu shared that he believes the Finance Committee can improve on looking more long term when planning vs. short term as they have been. He stated they tend to focus on what is presently in front of them instead of really focusing on multi-year, future planning.
  - vii. Makepeace-O'Neil and Khashu shared the idea of hosting a joint Select Board/Finance Committee listening session with the public and then sending a survey to each household to gather feedback on what they see are essential services and how we can make our town run more efficiently.
- c. The Board reconvened back into a large group and heard shared comments from each other small group about how their discussions went and what they felt were the main topics of their discussions.
- i. A widespread belief was the need for more public input and involvement.
  - ii. There were thoughts shared of taking advantage of more grants, reducing paraprofessionals in the school system, being more promotional about our individual department's meetings, and seeking more ways to generate revenue such as introducing tolerable, commercial businesses.

2. Meeting adjourned at 11:28 am

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:28 am,  
Farrell seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Shutesbury FY27 Budget Discussion Informational Packet

Respectfully submitted,  
Brennan Mailloux  
Administrative Assistant  
Town Administrator/Select Board

