

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

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

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Fire Chief Leonard Czerwonka, Acting Police Chief Devon Pelletier, Leslie Bracebridge, Tom Siefert, Matteo Pangallo, Amanda Alix, Michael DeChiara, Jon Lawless, George Arvanitis, Howard Shpetner, April Stein, Diane Jacoby.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:02pm

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Matteo Pangallo gave an update on using CPA funds for partnering with other towns for a Regional Affordable Housing Coordinator, noting that the Community Preservation Commission can directly submit requests to use those funds to Town Meeting. It does not have to be done through the Select Board. Diane Jacoby made a comment that she was having troubles with the audio of the meeting on her end. Pangallo and Mailloux confirmed audio clarity on their ends.

General Business:

I. Approve the Meeting Minutes for 10.14.25 and 10.21.25:

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 10.14.25 as worded, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 10.21.25 as worded, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

II. Accept the resignation of Darwin Michener-Rutledge from the Recreation Committee:

a. Mailloux will write a thank you note to Michener-Rutledge from the town.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to accept the resignation of Darwin Michener-Rutledge from the Recreation Committee, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- III. Discussion on Halloween plans and department updates from Fire Chief Czerwonka and Acting Police Chief Pelletier:
- a. Czerwonka shared for Halloween the Fire Department plans to serve cider donuts and candy in front of the Fire Department, and they plan to be open to the public from dusk until around 9 pm. Pelletier shared there will be active police patrol in Town for safety purposes. One of the cruisers will be decorated and will be part of the Trunk or Treat, handing out goodie bags.
 - b. Pelletier shared the details regarding the 10/29/25 scheduled closure and how it will be closed from 8 am to 3 pm. This will be a one-day closure that starts at the dirt part of Cooleyville Road and will run to Town Farm Road, affecting traffic from Route 202.
- IV. Review and discussion of Fire Chief's request for permission to take the old Fire Chief's car and use it for training.
- a. Czerwonka requested permission to use the old, deteriorated, former Fire Chief car for a training session. They plan to cut it up with their jaws of life and practice their skills. This will be done at Clark's Auto Wrecking due to space constraints.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to give permission to Fire Chief Czerwonka to use the old Chief car for training with their jaws of life, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- V. Update on EV chargers- Eric Stocker
- a. Stocker shared that the ideal plan is to put two chargers at the new Library with Mary Ann Antonellis's permission as long as they are owned and not leased. This location would be chosen instead of the Town Hall, school, or Highway Department. Owning them allows more flexibility. These chargers would need to be ADA accessible and in a paved area. Stocker shared that this discussion and scenario as a whole is to be continued.
 - b. There was discussion about meeting with Highway Superintendent Dave Grenier and Mary Anne Antonellis on the upcoming Thursday to discuss moving the highway garage driveway for better sight lines. The conversation further touched on safety concerns around the highway garage and the potential need for crosswalk lighting.
- VI. Review and vote on Means-Tested Exemption Percentage- Assessors, Leslie Bracebridge.:
- a. It was discussed that Shutesbury offers many opportunities for low-income seniors, blind, and certain veterans upon application and qualification, for exemption from payment of real estate taxes and the Community Preservation surcharge.
 - b. Shutesbury's Means-Tested exemption qualifications include age, limited assets, 10-year minimum home ownership in Shutesbury, and qualification for the previous year's Massachusetts Income Tax Circuit Breaker Tax Credit (CBTC). The

amount of the state CBTC varies for each person/household each year based on factors such as income and local tax expenses. They need to have assets less than \$250,000.

- c. Local statute states that the Select Board must vote each year to set the percentage between 50 and 200% of the state CBTC, to offer to Shutesbury qualifiers of the Means-Tested Exemption.
- d. It was shared that previously on September 30th, Assessors discussed and voted to recommend 50% for FY26 which would increase Shutesbury's Means-Tested Exemption to a maximum of \$1365 per applicant. This recommendation is based on having consistency, and also with concern in mind, that in future years the number may go up.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to stick with 50% as the Town's chosen percentage, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VII. Review and sign letter to MEPA regarding the Eversource transmission line. Michael DeChiara.

- a. DeChiara shared that Shutesbury has the honor of having two transmission lines running through our town. One is for National Grid, and the other is Eversource. He shared that multiple towns are involved with signing this letter such as Amherst, Pelham, and Belchertown, and that there has been great coordination on the project amongst the towns.
- b. DeChiara shared that National Grid's second draft environmental impact report public comment deadline is through December 8th. He hopes with Bolton's coordination to host a community meeting for multiple towns with National Grid in attendance on Thursday, November 19th.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute the joint letter to MEPA and Jennifer Hughes, the Deputy Director, regarding the Eversource Transmission line, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VIII. Review and sign authorization form requesting access to MassEnergyInsight (MEI) data entry for Joan Hanson:

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to authorize Joan Hanson to have full access of data entry for MassEnergyInsight (MEI), Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

IX. 10/3/25 Open Meeting Law Determination on Open Meeting Law Complaint from 8/22/25:

- a. This open meeting law complaint was based on our 8/22/25 agenda posting for our Annual Appointments List. We did not list out all of the names to be appointed. The Attorney General concluded we were in violation, and the Town

has received a charge of \$500. Bolton shared this can be paid out of our Legal Fund.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to authorize Hayley Bolton to pay the Open Meeting Law violation \$500 out of our Legal Fund, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

X. Review and discuss Open Meeting Law Complaint dated 10/7/25:

- a. An Open Meeting Law complaint was made regarding our September 15th meeting's posting of an Executive Session that left out the name of the individual party to be discussed in the closed session. Bolton shared the reason for not naming the individual was that it was related to personnel, and employees do have a right to privacy. Bolton shared we will have to see what the Attorney General says.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute a letter to the Director of the Division of Open Government regarding the Open Meeting Complaint of September 15th, 2025, answering that complaint, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute a letter to Amanda Alix, who is the Complainant of the September 15th, 2025 Open Meeting Law Complaint, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

XI. Town Administrator Report:

- a. Bolton shared that the Town has submitted their Expression of Interest for the MVP Grant related to education, advocacy, and collaborative team partnerships. An interview with the state should come in the future as this is only the first big step. We would be able to do an engineering study, then advocacy and education, and then hopefully some repair work in and around the dam.
- b. Bolton shared an update on the Police Chief Search Committee. They have scheduled the first round of interviews and are hoping to give a recommendation by late November. Bolton and the Select Board plan to meet on December 9th for the second round of interviews. Bolton stated we have four candidates currently.
- c. The Board discussed moving their meeting from December 23rd to December 17th to avoid conflicts with the holiday season.
- d. Bolton shared the progress on the Beaver Dam situation at the Fiske Brook culvert, and that there has been a Board of Health, out-of-season Trapping Permit issued, as an emergency was declared. The hope is that once the beavers are dealt with, further dam maintenance will be conducted, and other solutions may be explored to prevent the beavers from continuously returning. This would be in coordination with Pine Brook Camp, hopefully sharing the cost. This process could also include a tour with an engineering company to address culvert problems and mention the ongoing beaver issues.

- e. There was discussion about the need to figure out the Lake Wyola Dam situation and accessing the dam for repairs. This discussion needs to include Donna MacNicol, Farrell stated.
- f. Bolton shared that the M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee Meetings are open to the public and that she encourages public attendance and engagement. She shared that you could give public comments at the meetings if you wish.
- g. Bolton shared she asked Ajay from the Finance Committee about a line-to-line transfer to cover her annual MMA conference in Boston. There is no current budget line for trainings.
- h. Bolton shared there is a new bill going through called the Municipal Empowerment Act designed to make it easier for small towns with limited staff. Things included are relaxing some of the procurement requirements and more flexibility around hybrid meetings and remote meetings. Bolton shared that she signed off on the letter and will send it to the Board for their signatures if they wish.
- i. Bolton recommended to the Board that they bestow additional holidays for Town Employees.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to give the town employees the day after Thanksgiving, November 28th, as an additional holiday day, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to give the town employees the day after Christmas, December 26th as an additional holiday day, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

XII. Meeting adjourned at 6:07pm

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 pm, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

- I. Mailloux to send a thank you letter to Darwin Michener-Rutledge.
- II. Select Board to change the date of 12.23.25 Select Board Meeting to 12.17.25.
- III. Bolton to send off the MEPA letter regarding Eversource transmission after coordinating signatures with other towns.
- IV. Bolton and DeChiara to reach out to National Grid to request a community meeting for November 19th regarding the second draft environmental impact report.
- V. Bolton to pay \$500 from our Legal Funds to pay an Open Meeting Law violation.

- VI. Bolton to follow up with Donna MacNicol about our water line to the church.
- VII. Select Board to conduct second round interviews for Police Chief Candidates on 12.9.25.
- VIII. Select Board to meet with M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee for a presentation on their questionnaire results and progress.
- IX. Select Board to have the Conservation Commission present on a land requisition request.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

- 1. Darwin Michener-Rutledge Resignation Letter
- 2. Means-Tested Exemption Percentage Informational Packet from the Assessors
- 3. Joint Town letter to MEPA regarding the Eversource transmission line
- 4. 10/3/25 Attorney General's Open Meeting Law Determination Letter on the Open Meeting Law Complaint from 8/22/25:
- 5. Open Meeting Law Complaint dated 10/7/25.

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

** A full version of the 10/28/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://youtu.be/7yilQYot1fc>

