

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

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

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Leslie Bracebridge, Beth Willson, Matteo Pangallo, Dave Grenier, Jay Whelihan, Tom Siefert, Judith Rimmel, Jennifer Wallace, Mark Wightman, Fred Steinberg, Lee Halasz (Kestrel Representative).

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:00pm

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment:

Tom Siefert made a comment to appeal to the Select Board to implement a beaver deceiver at the Fiske Brook culvert on Lakeview Road. He believes beaver trapping will not solve the water flow problem that could potentially lead to a potential emergency that would cause the road to wash out or the culvert to be damaged. Tom believes safety should be a number one priority over recreation.

Judith Rimmel shared a comment that the Pine Brook campers could use a trailer to store and move their canoes. She would like to see a beaver deceiver be used as well.

General Business:

- I. Review and approve the Meeting Minutes for 10.28.25 and 11.8.25:
 - a. The 10.28.25 Meeting Minutes required a name (MacNicol) to be corrected and the 11.8.25 Meeting Minutes needed to eliminate Eric Stocker as being present at the meeting (Clerical Error).

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 10.28.25 as amended, 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 11.8.25 as amended, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- II. Town Administrator Report:
 - a. Bolton discussed a newly drafted Storm Water Committee Charge and asked the Board for their thoughts on the membership composition.
 - i. The Board will give comments to Bolton, and they will vote on the Charge at the upcoming Select Board meeting.

- b. Bolton shared that she has received a request for Executive Session Minutes for two dates. One session has to do with contract minutes and the other for solar litigation minutes. Bolton stated she would have to coordinate with the Planning Board on that matter. The Select Board will need to vote on approving the Executive Meeting Minutes at a future meeting.
- c. Bolton gave an update on our budget process and stated that budget letters went out to all the departments necessary requesting their input by December 1st.
- d. Bolton discussed the Police Chief interview process and asked the Select Board if they want input from the committee on second round interview questions.
 - i. Farrell stated they would like to hear some input and review the interview questions.
 - ii. The Police Chief Search Committee will meet with the Select Board on 11/25/25 at their next scheduled meeting with their recommendations from the applicant pool for finalists. The second round of interviews would then take place at the subsequent meeting on 12/9/25.
- e. Lastly, Bolton gave an update on the beaver dam situation.
 - i. Bolton shared the beavers will be trapped and then the Leverett Highway and Shutesbury Highway Departments will work together to remove the beaver dam with an excavator. The campus volunteered their property to store the dammed materials. Bolton does not believe this will be a reoccurring issue if we continue to maintain it and clear out the debris.

III. 5:15 pm - Annual Tax Classification Hearing. Administrative Assessor Consultant: Jay Whelihan:

- a. The Select Board opened the tax classification hearing at 5:15pm.
- b. Jay Whelihan led the discussion with Leslie Bracebridge assisting. They reviewed a Tax Classification handout and discussed the importance of tax levy and how it makes a difference. The levy ceiling is 2.5 percent of the full value of the Town. The new FY26 levy limit is \$6,717, 526 which is calculated by adding 2.5 percent of the previous year's levy limit plus new growth revenue for the present fiscal year to last year's levy limit. The overall levy to be raised is \$6,134,092. Whelihan stated that the average tax bill is increasing for all parties based off of the data he is seeing. Whelihan also shared that the estimated tax rate for FY26 is \$16.19 per thousand valuation. At the end, he recommended that the Select Board keeps the single tax rate factor at 1.0.
- c. The Select Board closed the tax classification hearing at 5:50 pm.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to keep a single tax rate factor of 1, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion that the Select Board vote not to adopt a small commercial exemption for FY26, that the Select Board vote not to adopt an Open Space Discount for FY26, and that the Select Board vote not to adopt a residential exemption for FY26, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

IV. Highway Department Check-In (Dave Grenier):

- a. Highway Superintendent Dave Grenier shared that the Highway Department has started transitioning to winter mode and is now beginning to get their plows ready to go.
- b. Grenier shared that the grader is out of service as one of the pumps has sprung a significant leak. The department has been working to the best of their abilities on the dirt roads. He stated that they worked on the washout at Sandhill and resolved that issue. The ten-wheeler is good to go, and they plan to get a sticker put on it.
- c. He stated they obtained a tank to hold magnesium chloride for dust control next year but have yet to still obtain a sprayer. He is currently looking at used ones.
- d. Grenier plans on investigating and potentially pursuing an unpaved roads grant with the help of Town Administrator Hayley Bolton in applying for it. This could help with obtaining money for equipment acquisition.
- e. Any Chapter 90 money they have left over, they plan to use on West Pelham Rd to further scarify and repair it.
- f. Overall, his major goal is to acquire a new grader to help smooth out operations of the Highway Department as it is a major and necessary piece of equipment. It is pricey though he stated, around \$400,000 to \$700,000.

V. Discussion about well water access to the Shutesbury Community Church:

- a. Makepeace O'Neil stated she checked in with Town Counsel Donna MacNicol, and they found that there is something in relation to the Anti-Aid Amendment statute. MacNicol also tasked Makepeace-O'Neil and Leslie Bracebridge to research deeds and water rights due to potential historical changes in ownership and use. Makepeace-O'Neil also looked into PFAS contamination in the well and the filter stating that situation is fine. Makepeace-O'Neil noted the need for further research into the church's history and any other existing historical paperwork in relation to it, such as grants.
- b. This discussion will be revisited at an upcoming meeting.

VI. Unanticipated Business:

- a. Bolton advised of a Grant of Conservation Restriction for 101 Leverett Rd that needs to be signed by the Select Board in front of a Notary. It was already voted on previously but needed to be signed after state approval. Leslie Bracebridge was in attendance to notarize the document.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute the Grant of Conservation Restriction for 101 Leverett Rd in Shutesbury, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- b. Stocker gave an update on the EV chargers and stated he thinks the whole thing is just a bad idea right now as he could not find a suitable location for them, and he thinks a lot of residents who have EV chargers, will not go and park their car for two hours at the Town Hall or Library to charge them, but instead they would charge them right at their houses. The Board stated they would revisit this EV charger discussion again in the future.

VII. Discussion with Beth Willson

- a. A 9-acre parcel on Wendell Rd for potential purchase. (Kestrel will be in attendance):
 - i. The discussion concerned a 9-acre segment of an approximate 200-acre parcel spanning both sides of Wendell Rd. The east 200-acre segment abuts Brightwater Bog that is already owned by Kestrel. The west 9-acre segment abuts the Southbrook conservation area. There is a potential for the town to use CPA affordable housing funds to help purchase the 9-acre segment in exchange for the town receiving a building lot for affordable housing from the 9-acre segment.
 - ii. Farrell stated the Town has about \$400,000 in CPA funds.
- b. Update on FY26 MVP Grant for culvert assessments:
 - i. The Board and Willson agreed to gather more information about both properties and the CPA process, with plans to hold a community meeting in early December to discuss culvert inspections and prioritize problem areas.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 6:54pm

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 pm. Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minute Drafts for 10.28.25 and 11.8.25.
2. Maps of 9-acre parcels supplied by Beth Willson
3. Grant of Conservation Restriction for 101 Leverett Rd in Shutesbury.
4. Tax Classification Informational Packet provided by Jay Whelihan

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

** A full version of the 11/12/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://youtu.be/uEk6MkM3DVs>

