

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
September 3, 2019 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair, Elaine Puleo, and April Stein  
Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director, Brad Foster/Library Trustee, Nancy Matthews/Building Committee, Maurice Gregoire/Electrical Inspector, Pastor Mark Ellis/Pastor Shutesbury Community Church, Bill Czerwonka, Karen Czerwonka, Leslie Bracebridge, Ayres Hall/Shutesbury Community Church, Linda Rotondi, and Ken Rotondi, Fire Chief Walter Tibbetts, Mary Jo Maffei and Town Counsel Attorney Donna MacNicol.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 6:18pm.

32 Leverett Road/Shutesbury Community Church: Makepeace-O'Neil appreciates those who participated in the tour of the "parsonage"/32 Leverett Road and opens the discussion to comments from attendees. Torres explains that the Select Board is considering whether the property may be an asset to the Town now or in the future. Mark Ellis/Shutesbury Community Church Pastor: the three market analyses ranged from ~\$46,000 and \$174,900; the Church's goal is for the church building to be accessible; the estimate to do so is \$100,000. Ellis continues: the American Baptist Church has owned the parsonage since 1874; the Church Trustees voted to start asking price for the parsonage at \$119,900. Puleo notes that the assessed value of the property is \$63,900. Torres to Ken Rotondi's question: the Town does not have a plan for the property. Puleo: even though there is no current plan for the property, the Town is land poor and, if in the future, there is a vision for a town center, i.e. a safety complex, 32 Leverett Road is contiguous with the Fire Station parcel; this is an exploration with no decision on whether to keep or not to keep the building. Ayres Hall: the Town owns land on two sides of the parsonage making it more desirable. Linda Rotondi: if the site is purchased without a plan, does the Select Board have any thoughts about potential use; buying an uninhabitable house is not enticing; without a plan, other than acquiring the land, is questionable. Puleo, noting this is her personal opinion: the parcel is up for sale now and it may take a couple of years to develop a study/plan; the Town would be purchasing the parcel so the question is how do "we" all feel about doing so. Brad Foster: it is a great property; it does not feel like we would be buying the building, we would be buying the property. Stein: the opportunity to purchase came out of nowhere. Walter Tibbetts/Fire Chief: currently, the Town supplies the building with drinking water therefore we already have an investment in the property; the Fire Station property is limited by its narrowness; the parsonage lot abuts the Station lot and Town property surrounds 32 Leverett Road on two sides; owning the parcel would increase public access to Town owned property. Tibbetts notes that the Town did not act right away when Lot O32 was for sale and when the Town was ready to buy, the price had increased; considering this purchase is a good idea. It is noted that the total acreage of Town-owned land surrounding the parsonage is just under 4 acres (3.7). Leslie Bracebridge: the strip of land (Lot O37) behind the parsonage was donated to the Town for the purpose of recreation; there may be a record of the town meeting vote regarding its use. Torres: this is a situation where the Town would be thinking about the future; such a purchase would add to property already owned by the Town. Bracebridge to Mary Anne Antonellis' question: no single lot in Shutesbury has sold for \$120,000 though this is not a vacant piece of land.

K. Rotondi, noting that he is a member of the Board of Health, states concern about the ability to install a Title V compliant septic system on the lot and the status of the ground water. Tibbetts: the Town has been providing water to the house for a number of years; the well for the house could be retested. Antonellis: adding to existing town properties makes sense however the Town should not pay more than fair market value; this is a one-acre lot and, because the building would probably be razed, the Town would be paying the cost of demolition. Nancy Matthews/Building Committee: does the Town inherit the liability for water, septic, and the presence of wetlands? Torres: even if the Town does not purchase the property, the liability for providing drinking water to the house remains; the well water needs to be retested. Stein: how many houses are put on the market for twice their assessed value? Hall: the acquisition would increase the value of the abutting town lots; money could be saved by having the Fire Department burn down the house as a training exercise. Torres: there would be costs to preparing to burn the structure. L. Rotondi: the demolition of hazardous materials would be very expensive. Matthews: the cost of the property is relative to renovation because much of what needed to be pulled apart has already been done. Ellis: the structure is gutted so a lot of the most difficult work has already been done; the contractors who looked at the parsonage said it is a substantial building that could have a great future. Antonellis suggests the Town receive copies of the completed market analyses and that the Town ask other realtors to do a market analysis on the site. Matthews: everything is exposed and ready to go except for the well and septic; the barn could be knocked over or fixed; it is possible someone would buy the property for \$120-140,000. Torres requests that any further questions or comments be emailed to the Select Board; the decision to purchase would be by town meeting vote. Ellis is willing to have a group of town contractors look at the building. Bracebridge: this may be the Town's last chance to purchase an open piece of land. K. Rotondi: putting money into this parcel to enhance open land is not a good idea. Stein: this underscores that there is not a current plan for use of the lot. Makepeace-O'Neil thanks all for coming and participating in the conversation.

Agenda Review: No changes are made.

Public Comment: Mary Jo Maffei invites Select Board members to attend a 9.9.19 presentation at the Dunphy School in Williamsburg by Jennifer Benson and sponsored by Representative Natalie Blais; Benson will talk about the carbon pricing bill that includes green infrastructure funding for municipalities. Per Maffei: it would be reasonable to think that Shutesbury would be eligible for such grants.

At 7:02pm, Puleo moves the Select Board enter into executive session for reason #3, to discuss strategy with respect to litigation is an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government's litigating position/Watkins salt contamination lawsuit and to return to open session; Stein seconds the motion. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Puleo: aye, and Stein: aye; motion carries.

At 7:32pm, the open session resumes.

### **Discussion Topics:**

1. Anti-Discrimination Workshops: Per Torres, the date for the workshops was changed to 9.25.19. Select Board members will provide snacks.

2. Chapter 90 Cooleyville-Prescott Road Paving: Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve the 8.26.19 “Chapter 90 Project Request and Environmental Punch List” to cold plane/mill a section of Leverett/Cooleyville/Prescott Roads to a depth of 1.5” then pave 1.5” of bituminous concrete for \$165,000; the motion is passed unanimously.
3. Town Administrator Updates:
  - a. Tree work on Pratt Corner Road: Puleo heard from one resident about her concern regarding the lack of notifications related to the tree work and road closures. Torres: the short notice has to do with the work sites of the two tree companies and the fact that their locations in the field may change; there have been reports of accommodations being made, i.e. deliveries to businesses on the road; Police Chief Fernandes has been working to improve communication at all levels.
  - b. Celebrate Shutesbury plans: Makepeace-O’Neil calls attention to the potential need to arrange an alternative to the Library’s composting toilet during the event. Torres: folks will need to be directed to the Town Hall restrooms or arrange for a portable toilet to be rented for the day.
  - c. Per Torres, the letter from Ann Marie Kenerson is on the Library Trustees’ meeting agenda.
  - d. Torres provides an update on the PILOT for the addition of system resiliency equipment to the Wheelock solar site.
  - e. Makepeace-O’Neil is planning on attending the Franklin County Emergency Radio System meeting at GCC; Torres may attend.
  - f. Makepeace-O’Neil calls attention to the 4.29.19 email from Mark Rivers/Lake Wyola Advisory Committee Chair, “Lake Wyola’s Randall Road Boat Ramp” requesting time to meet with the Select Board. Torres suggests Rivers meet with the Town Administrator and a Select Board member prior to meeting with the full Select Board. Stein volunteers to meet with Torres and Rivers. Makepeace-O’Neil notes that Rivers also recommends creating a traffic plan for the State beach in advance of next year’s season. Select Board members agree for Makepeace-O’Neil to affirm with Rivers that this is a State issue. Torres notes the need to meet with the Shutesbury Police Department and DCR to do future planning. The Select Board may write a letter to DCR about the parking problems and the need for additional staffing.
  - g. Our Town Newsletter: Torres points out that the upcoming issue will have a whole page of news from the wider community. Puleo notes that Shutesbury is a secular community. Torres reads the policy into the record “We welcome news from Town of Shutesbury departments, board, and committees, and from individuals and groups about local projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions promoting the sale of goods or services for private profit cannot be accepted” and recommends a review of the policy specifically in regard to contributions from non-municipal entities. The topic will be considered during a future Select Board meeting; in the interim, Puleo will work on a draft policy. Makepeace-O’Neil, on behalf of the Select Board, appreciates the ongoing newsletter editing done by volunteer Janis Gray.
4. Committee Updates: Building Committee’s next meeting date has yet to be scheduled.

5. Prior/Future Actions: The draft letter to Bill Wells is pending; Makepeace-O'Neil will send the draft to Torres for review.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board members sign vendor warrants totaling \$126,348.50.
2. Select Board members sign payroll warrants totaling \$102,932.86.
3. Select Board members sign broadband warrants totaling \$43,896.80.
4. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve the 8.20.19 meeting minutes; as presented, the minutes are unanimously approved.

At 8:32pm, Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Property Record Card for 32 Leverett Road
2. 8.26.19 Chapter 90 Project Request and Chapter 90 Environmental Punch List
3. 4.29.19 email from Mark Rivers "Lake Wyola's Randall Road Boat Ramp"

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary