

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2021 Hybrid Format: Town Hall & Virtual

Select Board members present: Rita Farrell/Chair, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, and Eric Stocker
Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator
Staff present via remote: Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director; Linda Avis
Scott/Administrative Secretary
Library Trustees present: Kate Cell and Michele Regan-Ladd/Co-chairs, Bradley Foster, Savanna Ouellette, Melanie DeSilva, and Tim Logan
Finance Committee members present: Jim Walton/Chair, Susie Mosher, Bob Groves, George Arvanitis, Jim Hemingway and Ajay Khashu
Finance Committee members absent: Melody Chartier
Guests: Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Lauren Stara and Andrea Bunker/Library Building Specialists; members of the public present via Zoom

At 1:05pm, Torres welcomes all to the first hybrid meeting in Shutesbury Town Hall. Lauren Stara and Andrea Bunker introduce themselves as Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Library Building Specialists

Rita Farrell calls the Select Board to order at 1:07pm.

Jim Walton calls the Finance Committee to order 1:07pm.

Kate Cell/Co-chair calls the Library Trustees to order at 1:07pm.

All others present introduce themselves.

Torres announces the 8.17.21 event at the Shutesbury Athletic Club; Stara and Bunker will be present to answer questions from Shutesbury residents about the Small Library Pilot grant program.

Discussion Topic:

Lauren Stara: This preliminary interview is being held with each of the towns that submitted letters of intent; the purpose of the interview is to go over the basics of the grant timeline and answer questions from town officials; as mentioned, on 8.17.21, we will hold a community wide meeting for the citizens of Shutesbury. As a matter of background, Shutesbury worked hard on grant applications twice before. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) became aware that the application process created a higher bar for small towns; the pilot's goal is to lower the bar and enter into a collaborative process; the percentage of costs covered by the pilot are higher than the regular grant and will cover 75% of eligible costs, the largest amount allowed by statute; the grant does not cover paving and landscaping, furniture, fixtures and equipment not attached to the building, i.e. a refrigerator; it will cover heating systems, shelving, built in furniture and service desks; the town will pay the remaining 25% plus 100% of non-covered items. One of the main differences is that the town will be asked to approve construction before there is a design therefore our goal to assist in making the plan understandable. In addition to Shutesbury, letters of intent were submitted from Florida, Chester and Otis; three of the towns are very interested and one is unsure.

Stara continues: the first step is to write a library building program; having written a program in the past, Shutesbury is in a good position; we will assist applicants to write their programs which need to be complete by the end of September 2021. The public meeting will be an opportunity to answer questions and gather input for the building program, i.e., "what is it that Shutesbury

needs for a library”; this will lead to a determination of the “ball park” square footage of the building; site selection also has to occur by 9.30.21. Shutesbury’s annual town meeting already approved formal application for the pilot project. Applications, due by 12.3.21, need to include detail about the site, i.e., a survey, potential hazards, the presence of wetlands, utilities; and Town financial information, i.e., cash reserves, fund raising capacity, bond capacity; as well as anything included in the letter of intent that has changed. From December 2021 into January 2022, a committee of six MLBC staff, including Stara and Bunker, will review application materials; this review will be followed by a second interview with more financial questions for town officials; selection notification will occur late January to early February 2022. The selected town will have to ask their 2022 annual town meeting to appropriate 25% of eligible costs and 100% of ineligible costs; the appropriation will be based on estimated square footage and recent construction costs. It is noted that bid and actual costs will not be the same; the MBLC contribution will be 75% of the actual costs.

Andrea Bunker: the MLBC’s goal is to be as economic as possible with a functional building and efficient library operations that are sustainable and resilient; the goal is for the pilot library, a building that meets community needs, to be an example for other small towns. Stara: the MBLC will be documenting the process in order to create a guide book for future small town projects.

Stara and Bunker answer questions from town officials: solar panels are eligible if located on the roof; we have not set an upper amount for the 75%; the town will have to approve their portion; an evaluation manual for reviewers is in process; the town’s financial standing and building needs will be heavily considered; another need factor is income per capita per the Department of Revenue; all criteria for review and ranking will be considered. More funds for sustainability projects may be available through the Green Communities program. Funds are restricted to the construction of a library. The “Wisconsin Standards” are out of date and not being used by the MBLC; interested parties are referred to the “Library Space: A Planning Resource for Librarians”; the goal is for a true collaboration between the MBLC and the selected town.

Susie Mosher/Finance Committee thanks Stara, Bunker, and the MBLC for listening and responding to the needs of small town libraries and for the pilot program’s guidance and financial support; collaboration is essential and we appreciate what is being offered; Shutesbury is ready for collaboration and listening and communicating with the rest of the town to figure it out together.

Stara continues to review the timeline, after the grant is awarded, from July 2022 onward: 2-3 months to bid for a project manager who will help prepare the bid for an architect; 3-4 months for the design process followed by a community meeting; the estimate is that it will be 8-12 months before the town goes out to bid for a contractor; ground breaking is anticipated to occur in 2023; this is why we need to wait as long as possible to determine construction costs based on square footage.

Per Stara, the experienced cost estimator becomes a part of the process after the creation of schematic designs, about December 2022; the trickiest part of the process is asking for an appropriation prior to a design. Bunker: recent projects are coming in at estimate or below; materials are coming down from the pandemic highs.

Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director has been studying the pilot program and has conferred with Stara and Bunker and notes that Shutesbury is ready to proceed with the application process.

Stara refers all to the MBLC website for contact information and questions; land that is already owned by the town and dedicated to the project contributes to the town's 25% by the land's assessed value up to a defined maximum; the purchase price of project land contributes to the town's contribution. Bunker: funds can come from other grant sources.

Stara: prior to selecting a site, the town will do assessments of the land, i.e., environmental concerns. Bunker: a geotechnical report is to be provided with the application. Antonellis: we are investigating two town owned sites which Stara and Bunker will visit after this meeting; demolition of a garage and cleanup will be occurring on Lot O32 along with targeted soil testing guided by a site professional and a test of the well water; a Phase One environmental assessment and well water test will be done on the land behind town hall; we will be fully informed going into the application process. Ajay Khashu/Finance Committee: Shutesbury's track record for fundraising and town allocations speaks to our readiness and preparation for this opportunity.

At 1:58pm, Stocker moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

Cell adjourns the Library Trustees and Walton adjourns the Finance Committee.

Referenced Documents:

1. MBLC Program Notice Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program "Small Library Pilot Project"
2. "Library Space: A Planning Resource for Librarians"

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary