

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2023 Hybrid Meeting Format

Selectboard members present: Rita Farrell/Co-Chair, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Co-Chair and Eric Stocker

Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator, Geneva Bickford/Administrative Secretary

Volunteers & Other Staff present: Chief Burgess, Selectboard Meeting Room, Isaac Goldstein

Guests: Susie Mosher, Tom Siefert, Frank McGinn, Jill Marland, Diane, Marylou Conca, Rebecca Fil, Mike S., Martha Favre, George Arvanitis, Penelope Kim, Shannon's Dad, Jeffrey, Penny Jaques, Natalya K., Gail Fleischaker, Michael DeChiara, Mary Anne Antonellis, April Stein

Farrell calls the meeting to order at 5:37 pm.

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Jill Marland is upset with the lack of time being allowed for Arps to speak and not being able to have discussion with the public. Marland asks why the town is out of compliance with the DEP and if the SB was aware? Marland would also like an update on PFAS as it is spreading more widely in more wells and wants an accounting of the actual number of homes that have contaminated wells. Mary Lou Conca would like to understand more about hybrid meetings and asks if the public is able to attend in person. Makepeace-O'Neil thanks the Fire Department, the Police Department and the Highway Department for taking part in the procession and paying respect to a very dear town resident.

Review of Minutes: N/A

Discussion Topics:

1. Means Test Senior Exemption % of Benefit Decision by the Selectboard: David Burgess is recommending the SB set the senior exemption at 100% which will set the residential tax rate to \$17.84 and all other tax rates at \$17.81.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a Motion that we set the senior exemption at 100% benefit for fiscal year 2024; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

2. Classification Hearing with the Assessors: David Burgess recommends the SB NOT split the tax rate and vote for a factor of 1, vote no on open space, vote no on residential exemptions and vote no on commercial exemption.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil moves that the SB vote to establish a residential factor of 1 meaning a single tax rate for FY24; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil moves that the SB vote not to adopt an Open Space Discount for FY24; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil moves that the SB vote not to adopt a residential exemption for FY24; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O’Neil moves that the SB vote not to adopt a small commercial exemption for FY24; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O’Neil moves that the Shutesbury Selectboard vote in accordance with MGL Ch. 40, Section 56 as amended the percentage of local tax levy which will be born by each class of real and personal property relative to the setting the FY 2024 tax rates and set the residential factor at 1 with the corresponding CIP shift of 1.0 pending approval of the towns annual tax recap by Massachusetts Department of Revenue; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

3. Rooster Noise Complaint: No Discussion

4. Appoint Isaac Goldstein to Energy Climate Action Committee, ECAC. Brief discussion on ECAC MVP grant Ideas: Isaac Goldstein (“Goldstein”) was appointed to the Energy Climate Action Committee. The Municipal Vulnerability Program (“MVP”) has come out and the deadline to preview ideas with staff is December 15, 2023. The town will present the same idea to MVP they did in 2023 along with including a battery back-up. The Culvert at Brown’s Pond will be another suggestion to present to MVP. Michael DeChiara asks that ECAC be included in the budget meeting with FinCom to discuss a possible need for a budget line.

VOTE: Farrell makes a Motion to appoint Isaac Goldstein to the Energy and Climate Action Committee; Makepeace-O’Neil moves, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

5. Police Presentation of Solicitation Policy and Safety Grant review with the SB: Chief Burgess discusses solicitation in town. Burgess reviews the Solicitation Regulations (see attached). Burgess and Makepeace-O’Neil will review and rewrite part of the regulations and return to the SB for a vote. Chief Burgess discusses the speeding issue in Shutesbury. The Police Department was awarded the Traffic Safety Grant in the amount of \$12,478 from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, aka as the Click-it or Ticket-it grant. Chief Burgess will also sit on the informal traffic study committee.

VOTE: Farrell makes a Motion to accept the Safety Grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Makepeace-O’Neil moves, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

6. Selectboard Special Town Meeting Discussion: Special Town Meeting has been scheduled for January 16, 2023. Items to be discussed at STM is legal funds, gasoline (depending what transpires with the future testing on 50 Leverett Rd), the ConCom Bylaw and lastly, to have the town vote on Chapter 40, Section 22F, local fee options. TA will notify all town boards and committees of STM. Deadlines for the warrant articles will be provided at the next SB meeting.

7. Jeff Arps review of DEP Fire Station Violation Letter: Jeffrey Arps (“Arps”) of Tighe & Bond reviews the violation letter received from DEP and next steps to be taken. Arps will prepare a proposal for the town.

8. Fire Chief to discuss de-commissioning of equipment and fee increase request: Chief Czerwonka discusses the need for raising inspection fees from \$25 to \$50. Czerwonka also discusses old equipment that needs to be disposed of. The retired fire chief’s vehicle along with old fire hoses that are no longer in compliance.

VOTE: Farrell makes a Motion to allow the fire department to increase its fee for inspections to \$50.00; Makepeace-O’Neil moves, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O’Neil moves that the SB give Chief Czerwonka permission to dispose of the hose in a manner either of donation, selling or trashing, which ever he determines; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

9. Administrator Updates: Donna MacNicol (“MacNicol”) is asking that the town hold on charging fees that are subject to uncertainty at this moment. Loam has been spread at the culvert on all the slopes, the base has been rolled and laid out for the roadway and grass seed is being spread and bushes are being planted. Paving will hopefully be done on Monday. The town will be getting a credit of because they will not be using the thermos stripping.

Farrell Motions to Adjourn (7:46 pm) and go into executive session for Reason 3, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; in this case the Police Department; Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

1. Isaac Goldstein Appointment Letter

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Means Tested Exemption spreadsheet;
2. FY24 Municipal Road Safety Grant Program;
3. Town of Shutesbury Application for Solicitation; and
4. Town of Shutesbury Solicitation Regulations.

Respectfully submitted,
Geneva Bickford,
Administrative Secretary

** A full version of the 11/8/23 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury’s YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4ajoOcJsNzf5DBgMTZgcJA>