

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
November 26, 2024 Hybrid Meeting Format

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

Staff present: Gabriele Voelker/Town Administrator

Volunteers & Other Staff present: Chief Burgess, Dave Grenier, Ryan Kress, Joe King, Michael DeChiara, Nate Heard

Guests: Tom Siefert, Gabe Voelker, Gail Fleischaker, Frank McGinn, III, Matteo Pangallo, Scott Billups, Amanda Alix, Jan Rowan, Shannon's dad, Jon Lawless, Penelope Kim, Anna Heard

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

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: None

**Discussion Topics:**

1. Pole Hearing: This matter was confused with the Tree Hearing.
2. Tree Hearing: Ryan Kress and Joe King are present from National Grid. A tree assessment of public and private trees was done and National Grid has identified 16 trees for removal. Trees designated for removal are marked with a red ribbon and trees designated for pruning are marked with a blue ribbon. Roads affected are Lakeview Rd and Lockes Village Rd and have been identified in National Grid's "Town of Shutesbury NE Hazard Tree Mitigation Program Town Hazard Tree Removal List Circuit #705w1.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a Motion to give National Grid permission to remove the trees; Farrell moves, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

3. Town Administrator and Administrative Secretary Job Description Review: Farrell submitted a revised job description for the Town Administrator position. Some tasks were removed from the Town Administrator description and moved into the Administrative Secretary position. The revised Administrative Secretary job description will be discussed at a future SB meeting but is on hold for now. The SB will discuss the Town Administrator job description more at the December 3, 2024 meeting.
4. Town Hall Use Policy: No Discussion, will be discussed at the SB's December 10, 2024 meeting.
5. Town Administrator Hiring Committee Update: An ad was drafted but still needs some work done. Farrell asks for other SB members to help with the community description and would like to discuss this further at the December 10 meeting. The search committee roles and responsibilities has been finalized and committee members will be finalized soon.
6. Signing of the Material Recovery Facility ("MRF") Extension Contract: The contract terminates on June 30, 2024 and this extension needs to be signed no later than December 31, 2024.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a Motion to sign the contract extension with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the Contractor and a Dual Stream Designated Community for the processing of recyclables; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

7. Selectboard Support for the Energy & Climate Action Committee (“ECAC”) Grant for Decarbonization: Michael DeChiara (“DeChiara”) discusses the Decarbonization Planning Assistance Grant and asks the SB for their support. The SB supports the grant and will sign the Commitment Letter and the Certification of Application.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a Motion to execute the Certification Letter for the Decarbonization Planning Grant; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O’Neil: aye; the motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a Motion to execute the Decarbonization Letter confirming Shutesbury’s commitment to meet the All Climate Leader Community requirements within one year of receipt of the Decarbonization Roadmap; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O’Neil: aye; the motion carries.

8. Open Meeting Law (“OML”) Complaint re: Agenda Items from 10/22/24: The SB received an OML complaint from Amanda Alix (“Alix”) on November 20, 2024 regarding the SB meeting agenda for October 22, 2024. The summary alleges that two of the items on the SB agenda did not include adequate detail to reasonably advise the public of the anticipated discussion. The SB has reviewed the Open Meeting Law Regulations and feels these items on the agenda are not in violation. The SB’s response will be sent to Alix and the Attorney General’s Office as is required.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a Motion to execute the letter to Amanda Alix in response to the OML Complaint dated November 20, 2024; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O’Neil: aye; the motion carries.

9. Emergency Management Program Grant: These funds will allow Shutesbury, Leverett, New Salem and Wendell to work with a consultant on phase 2 of developing a regional approach to fire services and/or sharing resources to maximize fire response and sustainability to the four towns.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a Motion to sign the EMPG Grant extension for the regionalization study; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O’Neil: aye; the motion carries.

10. 2 Wyola Rd & CR Endowments: No Discussion tonight

11. Newsletter: Send Out Via Mail and/or Electronically: The SB discussed the possibility of sending the Newsletters out electronically versus hard copy. The SB agrees to look further into implementing this change and figuring out how to communicate with residents regarding their preference.

12. Town Administrator Updates: Jo Commerford will attend the SB’s December 17 meeting at 6 pm, if residents have any questions they should send them to the SB before as it will not be a “Town Hall” meeting and she will only be talking with the SB. Voelker is still working to get a handle on PFAS and will have a zoom meeting with the Licensed Site Professional (“LSP”), Jeffrey Arps (“Arps”) to get a better understanding of the required letters. The SB has reached out to the former Administrative Secretary, Geneva Bickford (“Bickford”) who has agreed to help with SB as she has some limited PFAS knowledge having worked with the former Town Administrator. The highway trucks have new windshields. Voelker and the SB discuss Special Town Meeting (“STM”) setup, breakdown, printing of the warrant and drafting of warrant motions. Voelker has spoken with the Town Moderator, Paul Lyons (“Lyons”) and he is available. Donna MacNicol will not attend but has reviewed the STM warrant. Gail Fleischaker points out a correction needed as the posting states it is hybrid. Correction will be made. Voelker and Makepeace-O’Neil update the SB members on Zoom and changing to a business account that allows 10 licenses and the cost will actually save the town money. Currently it

is costing about \$2,500 but changing to the business account will only cost \$2,200. A proposal has been sent to the SB through docusign and the SB agrees to allow Voelker to sign the agreement. This needs to happen ASAP as the current billing for the town's zoom is on the former TA's credit card and needs to be changed over. Zoom will invoice the town. The SB will continue to draft the OML complaint responses and will readdress when a permanent TA is hired.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a Motion to convert to a business zoom account with 10 licenses and to authorize the execution of the agreement by the Interim Town Administrator; Farrell moves; Stocker seconds. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

Makepeace-O'Neil Motions to Adjourn (6:26 pm); Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

1. OML response letter to be mailed;
2. Makepeace-O'Neil to follow-up with Personnel Board regarding

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. National Grid "Town of Shutesbury NE Hazard Tree Mitigation Program Town Hazard Tree Removal List Circuit #705wi;
2. Town Administrator Job Description;
3. Draft Job Posting for Town Administrator;
4. Draft Town of Shutesbury Guidelines for Town Administrator Candidate Search;
5. MRF Contract Amendment;
6. Commitment Letter and Certification of Application regarding the Decarbonization Roadmap Planning Assistance Grant;
7. EMPG Grant documents; and
8. SB response Letter to an Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Amanda Alix dated November 20, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Geneva Bickford,  
Administrative Secretary

\*\* A full version of the 11/26/24 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4ajoOcJsNzf5DBgMTZgcJA>