

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
March 11, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

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

Guests: Gabriele Voelker: Interim Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Gail Fleischaker, Tom Siefert, Elaine Puleo, Jennifer Wallace, Jeff Lacy, Bert Schwarz, Paul Lyons, Dave Green, Frank McGinn, Meryl Mandell, Grace Bannasch, Matteo Pangallo, Michael DeChiara

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:03 pm

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: None.

General Business:

I. Appointment: Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director, presenting forms for a vote for National Grid for the Library Solar Project and use of the credits:

- a. Mary Anne Antonellis shared we have already done the easement and the poles hearings. The solar panels and batteries will be connected to National Grid and there are incentives we can apply for including sharing with National Grid if we have excess from our solar panels during the peak times. She stated it is an expedited application. Makepeace-O'Neil asked how the credits would be used and Farrell explained that it will reflect on our electric bill. Mary Anne Antonellis stated this should be it regarding the batteries and incentives. She is currently working on applications. She also said the solar and battery installation will probably be the last steps. The roof needs to be done at the library before solar panels can go, as well as the cement pad needs to be put down.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to: For the agreement on the interconnection of battery and solar with National Grid, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

II. Appointments- ECAC appointment of Bert Schwarz as the fifth member:

- a. Michael Dechiara stated his support and the committee's support and recommendation for appointing Schwarz to join the committee.
- b. Makepeace-O'Neil asked. "Why were you interested in joining the Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC)?"
  - i. Schwarz responded that the environment has been a personal interest of his, as well as reducing negative impacts on the environment. He has an electric vehicle himself and likes to keep his emissions low. "Why not do it on a wider scale with the same goals in mind," he stated.

- ii. Farrell, "Have you attended some of the meetings before?"
  1. Schwarz stated he has been to some previous meetings before.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to: Appoint Bert Schwarz as the fifth member on the Energy and Climate Action Committee, Makepeace-O'Neil seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- III. Appointment of Michael Pill to the Shutesbury Zoning Board of Appeals:
  - a. Jeff Lacy offered his support for the appointment of Michael Pill as he believes he will be a great contribution to the Shutesbury Zoning Board of Appeals. He stated, "Michael is a zoning expert."

**VOTE:** Farrel makes a motion to: Appoint Michael Pill to the Shutesbury Zoning Board of Appeals, Makepeace-O'Neil seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- IV. Eric Stocker will update the board on the Quabbin's Town Meeting about the Quabbin watershed and present a support letter that calls for our area to get fairly reimbursed:
  - a. Stocker mentioned he took a lot of the bullet points for the letter directly from Jo Comerford's letter to help back it and make it clear.
  - b. Makepeace-O'Neil said she liked the idea of adding the acreage in the percentage calculation.
  - c. Stocker stated they want the letter sent "soon."

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to: Send the letter to legislature about their support, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- V. Discuss the Rural Development opportunities grants for towns under 7000 people:
  - a. Farrell shared that Shutesbury can apply for pre-development work.
  - b. Farrell stated it is a two-step process. An expression of interest and then a month-long period to submit an application.
  - c. Jennifer Wallace shared how she had sent a list of questions that her task force had on maintenance for Dave to hopefully answer.
  - d. Farrell stated even without an expression of interest; you can still apply for the money.

- e. Dave Green asked Farrell to send LWAC information about the issue. Makepeace-O'Neil will forward it to Dave.
- VI. Selectboard is asked to vote and sign the Warrant for Annual Town Election form:
- a. Bannasch advised the Board to hold off on this until the next meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>.
- VII. Review possible issue with Annual Town Meeting dates:
- a. Farrell stated she was updated on how the date scheduled may have conflict due to it being the school's vacation week and may lead to a smaller turn out with vacations. Her understanding is we have a bylaw set to date, but that we could change it. The finance committee advised moving it further to a later date despite always having conflicts that will arise. Farrell mentioned that Bannasch stated we can still have the election though, an election that will include the Town Moderator position. (There was some back-and-forth discussion on what the term for the Town Moderator and elected officials is.)
  - b. The board came up with some tentative dates that they could relay to the school and various departments and community. These included May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>. Paul Lyons said the 31<sup>st</sup> of May would work for him to moderate, but the middle of June would be more challenging. Farrell also stated the election would be very difficult to change the date and would not be ideal.
  - c. The board plans to reach out to all departments with the tentative dates to hear feedback before they make any changes to the Town Meeting date. They would like to make the decision at the next Select Board meeting on 03/25/2025.
  - d. Bannasch advised in the meantime she will change the meeting date on the website to "TBD."
- VIII. Review request from Gail Fleischaker the need to propose a Warrant Article to delete the Farm and Forest Commission Bylaw:
- a. Gail Fleischaker stated she understands this is an established bylaw and the only way it can be decommissioned is by either "deleting" or "negating," or rescinding the original founding bylaw at town meeting.
  - b. Bannasch stated this would not affect Shutesbury being determined as a farming community.
- IX. Review and confirm dates for Lake Wyola public forum on the boating safety:
- a. Makepeace-O'Neil confirmed it will be on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March at the school. She stated Matt from Boating asked if there will be online participation or at least online viewing. Makepeace-O'Neil advised she will test some things to see if it is doable. She believes the camera will not highlight a person speaking but will offer those online to see the room. Those online could also email in or use the

chat feature, if they wanted their voice to be heard. Farrell stated she was for that ask and sees it as a valuable tool that could be used.

- b. Makepeace-O'Neil stated this meeting will be for listening to comments and entertaining feedback. Dave Green asked if the committee would need to be present at the meeting, and Farrell advised that it would be beneficial to get a synopsis of where the committee is on it.
- c. Jennifer Wallace asked if there would be any email notification and Makepeace-O'Neil confirmed Town Announce would most likely be used. The community would be advised. She also asked if committee members could speak as a resident and Makepeace-O'Neil did confirm that as well. Tom Siefert asked if the committee should post it as their own meeting as well, and the board advised, "when in doubt, post."

X. Review Pineapple Express' request to deliver retail cannabis products:

- a. Voelker advised this is in relation to their ask of delivering cannabis products within Shutesbury. Voelker asked if there was any current policy. The board stated they would look further into the matter as well as Voelker, who stated she would and get back with more detail at the coming meeting.

XI. Vote to overspend Snow and Ice:

- a. Voelker stated Snow and Ice is overspent by \$16,400 and any snow and ice bills that came through today are not part of that \$16,400. Voelker stated that the expenditure list is on the website and can be viewed there.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to: Authorize the overspending of snow and Ice on the Highway Budget, Makepeace-O'Neil seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Farrell: aye; motion carries.

XII. Town Administrator Report:

- a. We have the need for a pole hearing on a later date with National Grid
- b. Voelker advised the annual town reports are due and should be submitted to Brennan Mailloux, the Town Administrative Assistant to the Select Board and Town Administrator. She pleads that they get in as soon as possible as time is of the essence.

XIII. Meeting adjourned at 6:21 pm

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6 :21 pm, and enter Executive Session for reason #2, To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or

contract negotiations with nonunion personnel: Police Chief contract and Town Administrator contract. The Select Board will **not** be returning to public session. Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Farrell aye; motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

1. Discuss changing Jeff Lacy's appointment from Associate to Regular Member for the sake of resuming as Chair.
2. Re-Discuss Pineapple Express and Cannabis Policy.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Letter of Support for Quabbin Watershed
2. National Grid Solar Project Forms

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

\*\* A full version of the 3/11/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xzi5HJBgBc>

