

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

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

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Bob Douglas, Michael DeChiara, Matteo Pangallo, Mary Lou Conca, Jon Lawless, Amanda Alix, Mark Rivers, Elaine Puleo, Tom Siefert, Frank McGinn, David Grenier, Gail Fleischaker, Dina Stander.

Bolton calls the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Mary Lou Conca asked about the Legal status of the Town and Chair Makepeace-O'Neil stated that the Board cannot answer at the time due to the ongoing issues being in Executive Sessions. They will share public information when they can do so.

General Business:

VOTE: Bolton makes a motion to nominate Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil as the Chair of the Select Board, Farrell seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to nominate Eric Stocker as Vice-Chair of the Select Board, Farrell seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

1. Approve Meeting Minutes for 6.3.25 and 6.17.25:

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes for 6.3.25, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes for 6.17.25, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

2. Discussion on an M.N. Spear Library Building Committee:

- a. Bolton shared a committee would be beneficial to sit down and truly look at what the Town needs and what long-term potential uses for the site could look like. Bolton shared it would be beneficial to have someone from the Finance Committee, Capital Planning, Building Committee, a Community At-Large

Member, etc. She stated the building will need infrastructure upgrades. Farrell stated the Town should look at what the interests are in potential uses for the building and then based on those what the code issues would be. From there you would then move forward and look at the costs Farrell stated. Farrell then stated she would work on drafting the charge for the committee and then discuss it at the upcoming meeting on 7/15/25. There they will approve the charge, the representation, and then go ahead and get a committee appointed by late July, early August.

- b. Farrell also added that we need to move quickly to keep it insured. We must keep it open, have minimal heat running, and check on it periodically to make sure it's maintained.

3. Request to consider adopting the Safe and Welcoming Policy approved as Warrant Article 44 at Annual Town Meeting. (Michael DeChiara):

- a. DeChiara stated he wrote it as a policy for Town Meeting, but Town Counsel stated the legislative body can't approve policy, but the Select Board can. He stated Town Counsel said the Board could approve it as a policy following the guidance of Town Meeting but not make changes to it. Makepeace-O'Neil stated she would like to discuss it further with Donna MacNicol and add political affiliation within the text.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to adopt the town policy: To Preserve and Protect a Safe and Welcoming Community, with the addition of political affiliation to the paragraph that starts with "It is the policy of the Town of Shutesbury to actively adopt policies.." Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

4. Request that Citizen's Petition "Article 45: Medicare for All" and a statement of the Town's unanimous vote in support thereof be communicated to State Representative Aaron Saunders and State Senator Jo Comerford:

- a. Bolton will draft the letter and have it ready for the Select Board to sign.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion that the Town Administrator draft a letter to Representative Saunders and Senator Comerford affirming the passage of a Medicare for All unanimous vote at our Annual Town Meeting, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

5. Discuss Open Meeting Law Complaint from 6/19/25:

- a. Amanda Alix filed an Open Meeting Law complaint against the Town of Shutesbury for not including the names of the individuals for the coming FY26 re-appointments in the actual agenda for the 6.17.25 Select Board Meeting. The Administrative Assistant had included it as an attached document to the meeting agenda, but not in the actual agenda. It was provided to the public. Bolton stated

she would respond with a letter of what we did, and it will be signed by all three Select Board members.

- b. DeChiara stated in the future we should potentially add a note in the actual agenda that states there is a supporting document attached with the individuals' names to be re-appointed.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to once reformatted, sign the letter that the Town Administrator drafted in response to the Open Meeting Law Complaint, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

6. Appointments of Tom Siefert to the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee as the Planning Board Representative, and Bob Douglas as the Conservation Commission Representative:

- a. Farrell stated she had heard concerns about Tom's one-year appointment, and it had made, in a way, an uncomfortable situation. She said we all should make respect a priority and that she would like to see everyone put disagreements and differences aside and move forward as one working whole body. She said it's okay if people disagree, but committees should have disagreements in ways that are done respectfully and in a way in which everyone feels heard, and common courtesy is practiced. She stated both the Planning Board and Conservation Committees have their own rights to put forth candidates. She stated Bolton has brought new ideas in with her transition to the Town Administrator role, and that they plan on bringing in a new Code of Conduct that all committees and boards should adopt as it covers topics like courtesy, respect, responsiveness, confidentiality, fair and equal treatment, and no personal benefit.
- b. Stocker, also a member of the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee, shared his concern that he worries Lake Wyola Advisory Committee members are going to leave because of this appointment. He stated the Planning Board has the right to appoint a member and the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee has a right to say they do not want a member appointed to their committee.
- c. Makepeace-O'Neil asked Siefert where some committee members feel that they may want to not want to stay on a committee with a presence of another committee member, how might he handle a situation like that? Siefert stated it is hard to answer that question not knowing truly what people are saying about him and feeling towards him. He would like to respond to anything addressed to him in the future.
- d. DeChiara shared that blackmailing is not a productive process by saying that if someone comes on everyone is going to leave. He said that is not the approach, and he has seen that happen before in the past when doing contract negotiations for the Fire Chief.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to appoint Tom Siefert to the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee as the Planning Board Representative for one year, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to appoint Bob Douglas to the Lake Wyola Advisory Committee as the Conservation Commission Representative, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, Farrell: aye; motion carries.

7. Concept of Agenda Item:

- a. Elaine Puleo shared that this is a 50% completion record and that she hoped the Board would sign it, but that they may not submit it as there is further discussion to be had. She stated it's hard to go through the evaluation questions and give an average score for everything, and then the total score come out to be below average when the process is only half done, and you hope for them to continue work. Puleo stated the only issue is time and it's not on our side with weather for example and the previous winter.
- b. Farrell asked Puleo about additional costs to the project due to the delay, and Puleo stated it would be an additional cost for the OPM and the architect.
- c. The sign off date is September 8th.
- d. The OPM stated there shouldn't really be any additional costs. The construction costs are tied. National Grid still hasn't come through with permanent power.
- e. The Board reviewed and signed the Standard Contractor Evaluation form which is an evaluation of the construction firm Construction Dynamics after 50% completion of the library building project.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion for Makepeace-O'Neil to execute the Standard Contractor Evaluation form and leave it up to the Library Building Committee to make the decision about whether it gets transmitted to DCAM (Division of Capital Asset Management), Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

8. Town Administrator Report:

- a. Bolton introduced David Grenier who shared that the berm Infront of the Highway Department is a safety hazard for individuals entering and exiting, and he would like to propose doing something differently. He said the growth of trees on the berm have grown 12ft tall in some areas and are also quite wide. He would like the berm to be removed and add a fence along where the backside of the berm is located. This is right in front of where the fuel tank fence is, quite a bit off the road. He would like to move the plants from the berm and relocate them to a flat surface not on the berm. He is open to suggestions. Farrell stated they should discuss this further with Dave and the group of individuals instrumental in dealing with the berm to see what kind of alternatives or plans could be made.
 - i. Grenier shared he knows of individuals along with himself who would be willing to move trees and bushes from the berm if that is requested. His

plan would be for the fence to be added, and then a flower bed in front of it that would look appealing all while allowing for safety in front of the Highway Department. He added the fence would be closed off with a gate at the end of the Highway Department's working days. Frank McGinn raised the question of sand access in the winter, and Grenier stated he is open to ideas about allowing access to it, without commercial companies taking it for their own personal use.

- b. Bolton shared there will be a Four Towns Meeting on July 14th and that she believes it would be beneficial to have a Select Board Member there.
- c. Bolton shared she will have a letter for the Select Board to draft regarding Ellen McKay and her 50 years of service to the town. She gave a public shout out.
- d. Bolton shared that she had discussions with Town Clerk Bannasch, and they believe an Open Meeting Law and Public Records Training would be beneficial for Shutesbury. This would be done through KP Law.
- e. Bolton shared a letter for the Board to sign stating that the Board will appoint Sergeant Pelletier as Officer in Charge until further notice.
- f. Bolton shared with the Board her new Code of Conduct Policy that she would like to be adopted. This Policy would be sent to all the committees and be used as part of the new appointment packet appointees receive from the Town Clerk.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the unanticipated item added to the agenda, Code of Conduct with the two amendments as written. Getting volunteers and a signature line. Also, giving Bolton permission to distribute to all town boards and committees. Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

9. Meeting adjourned at 6:22pm

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 pm, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

- 1. Send out Code of Conduct to all Committees.
- 2. Farrell to draft a charge for a potential M.N. Spear Library Building Committee.
- 3. The Select Board to draft and sign a letter to Ellen McKay for her 50 years of service to the town.
- 4. The Select Board to sign a letter stating SGT. Pelletier will be the Officer in Charge until further notice.
- 5. Grenier, Farrell, and members of the Garden Club to meet and discuss the berm situation in front of the Highway Department Facility.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minute Drafts for 6.3.25 and 6.17.25.
2. Open Meeting Law Complaint dated 6/19/25.
3. Appointment Letters for Tom Siefert and Bob Douglas
4. Standard Contractor Evaluation form
5. Copy of Article 44: Town Policy to Preserve and Protect a Safe and Welcoming Community.
6. Certified copy of Article 45: Medicare for All

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

** A full version of the 7/1/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gV0jWzfjLc>

