

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2026 In-Person Meeting Format

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

M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee members present: Susie Mosher, Paul Lyons, Rita Farrell (Also mentioned above), Stephen Dallmus, Henry Geddes, Mary Jo Johnson

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Gail Fleischaker, Tom Siefert, Beth Willson, Carolyn Platt, Chris Footit, Leslie Bracebridge, Michael Tommie McDuffie, Deborah O'Brien, Matteo Pangallo, Police Chief Devon Pelletier, Jenursa Mikalunas, Mary Lou Conca, Michael DeChiara, Mary Anne Antonellis, Jim Walton, Penelope Kim, Mark Ellis, Rich Strangman, Frank McGinn, Clark Sylvester, Tom Kalt.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:01pm

Agenda Review: As posted. Sand Hill Road discussion was removed and will be added to a future agenda.

Public Comment: No public comments.

General Business:

1. Approve the Meeting Minutes of 3.3.26, 3.11.26 (4:10), and 3.11.26 (4:40):

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 3.03.26 as worded, 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 3.11.26 4:10 as worded, 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 3.11.26 4:40 as worded, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

2. Review and sign a Letter of support for a McAvoy Dry Hydrant Grant Application:
 - a. Bolton shared the Fire Chief sent her the letter request. The letter states that the Select Board strongly supports the installation of a dry hydrant at McAvoy Pond in Wendell as a critical public safety improvement that would benefit both Wendell and Shutesbury. With structural issues at the Lake Wyola Dam lowering water levels below the intake of the existing dry hydrant, McAvoy Pond has become the only reliable nearby water source for firefighting. Currently, firefighters must set up a drafting system in warm months and cannot access the pond during winter when it freezes, making fire suppression more difficult. Installing a dry hydrant would provide dependable, year-round access to water

for structural and wildfire response, strengthen the region's rural water supply network, and improve preparedness for drought conditions and increasing wildfire risks. Because the pond is accessible to multiple departments, the project would also enhance regional mutual aid response. Due to municipal budget limitations, grant funding is necessary to complete the project without placing additional strain on local taxpayers.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to support and sign the Letter of support for a McAvoy Dry Hydrant Grant Application, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

3. Appointment of Michael Tommie McDuffie to the Conservation Commission:
 - a. Beth Willson read out words of support for the appointment. She stated he is interested in the outdoors and trails. Willson looks forward to having a fifth member on board.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the appointment of Michael Tommie McDuffie to the Conservation Commission, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

4. Appointment of Matteo Pangallo as Election Administrator:
 - a. Matteo will be responsible for the administration of the May 9, 2026 local election. This does not include responsibilities related to Town Meeting, vital records, or general Town Clerk business. The appointment will be effective immediately and conclude on May 11, 2026. This will be part-time with a range of around 5 hours per week, fluctuating based on the election cycle's specific needs. Pangallo will help in overseeing the voting process and preparing ballots. He will work in coordination with Town Counsel as well.
 - b. Mail-In voting should still be a go. Pangallo said only one paper application has come in so far for it.
 - c. Pangallo stated to get into VRIS he needs his title to also include "Interim Town Clerk" in it.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the appointment of Matteo Pangallo as the Interim Town Clerk and Election Administrator, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

5. Town Administrator Report:
 - a. Bolton provided the following updates:
 - i. Lake Wyola Dam
 1. Bolton shared that the Town will not have to perform an environmental review for the emergency repairs, which will save us time and money. She stated we contracted with T Ford

Company Inc. to do the repair work. The estimated repair cost is \$83,445 which is approximately 14% higher than the initial estimate of cost. Prior to any construction taking place, the Town will need authorization from the Conservation Commission. We have not yet sought this approval because the trash rack will not be available until early April. Once we have a more solid timeline on acquisition of the trash rack, GZA will initiate the permitting and construction can begin. The goal is to complete the project in 14 days after the start of construction.

ii. Shutesbury Elementary School Oil Tank

1. Bolton discussed the oil tank remediation at Shutesbury Elementary and updated the Board that we are currently in the active cleanup phase following an Emergency Management Team meeting with MassDEP, Western MA Environmental, and our engineering consultants. Bolton has been in direct contact with Shutesbury's insurance provider, MIIA, and their designated Licensed Site Professional (LSP) is scheduled to arrive on-site today to conduct a formal inspection and oversee the technical recovery. We are currently operating under a \$10,000 deductible for this claim. Additionally, the Town is coordinating closely with MassDEP to ensure that all remediation activities remain compliant with local environmental protections and that the site is fully stabilized. Bolton stated our primary goal remains to be the swift, safe completion of this project with full regulatory oversight.
2. Mary Lou Conca raised questions about the danger to the children and air quality, in which Bolton confirmed that the spill was well contained and there is no imminent danger to the school employees or students. All the necessary contacts were made, and a rapid clean-up response was conducted.
3. A State of Emergency may be declared at a later meeting to help with the funding process of the repairs and cleanup.

iii. Stormwater Erosion Committee

1. Bolton stated we have only received two applications so far for the committee. She asked the Select Board how they would like to proceed. Farrell suggested making the committee smaller, perhaps down to five individuals. The plan is to do more direct community outreach. Bolton will send Farrell the Charge for the committee.

2. Bolton shared that another MVP Grant application is to be submitted.

iv. Next Door Town Page

1. Bolton explained how she would like to set up a Town Business Account to use Next Door as a platform for communication with residents. She stated “The Friday Five” will be launching this week. This will be weekly bullet points sent out on what is happening in and around Town Hall.
 - a. Mosher commented that the Attorney General’s Office advised against this before. Bracebridge encouraged the Select Board to contact their office for their opinions on the matter.
 - b. Fleischaker cautioned against any official business coming from a different source other than the Town Website. Stocker agreed with this and raised the same thought.
 - c. DeChiara stated that official business should come from Town Announce or the Town Website, and platforms like Next Door or Facebook should only be used to direct the public to those sources.
 - d. Siefert agreed with everything everyone said but said that the entirety of Shutesbury residents should be considered when employing means of communication to residents on official town business.
 - e. Bolton shared in the new Personnel Policy there is information included on Social Media use.

6. M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee to present their work and findings:

- a. Mosher started off the presentation by giving a brief introduction of the committee’s work so far, as well as their charge. She stated the members involved with the committee, their work in sending out a survey to boards, committees, and departments requesting ideas for reuse, and then spoke on their Options Matrix chart that the committee came up with.
- b. Lyons explained the three options outlined in the Options Matrix chart in detail.
 - i. Spear becomes a meeting space only.
 1. No need for water or septic. Utility cost would be moderately lower, and an architect would likely not be needed. There is a potential need for a new furnace, new technology, and partition walls. This would likely be the least expensive option.
 - ii. Spear becomes a Police Station

1. A water source such as a well would need to be installed. This could be a new one installed or potentially the building could be tied into the Town Hall well. Septic would be needed. It is possible a connection could be made to the Church septic system. Interior renovations would be substantial with potential building codes needing to be met. An architect would likely be needed, and utility costs would be higher. This project would cost more than the previous option but would address multiple needs and give the Police Department a better space to operate out of. Future certifications will likely need to be met for our Police Department. The cost would most likely be around \$100 thousand.
- iii. Reorganization of the Town Hall
 1. No water or septic additions would be required. The Meeting Space downstairs would likely become the Police Department with the kitchen getting downsized to accommodate the creation of a Police Department evidence or storage closet. This would address multiple needs, but the approximate cost would be up to \$100 thousand.
- c. Lyons stated the committee agrees that the M.N. Spear Building should have a bathroom. He also reaffirmed that the committee is only providing options, not making recommendations.

7. M.N. Spear Library Reuse related Public Comments:

- a. Strangman raised a question about the overall load capacity that the M.N. Spear building can withstand. Dallmus commented that he believes it is structurally sound and that recent renovations have been made to the structure. He does not believe there is a need to increase the structure. He also asked about tying into the Church's well. Dallmus confirmed a new one will likely need to be installed as the Church's well has history of going dry. It likely would not be able to support being tied into.
- b. Fleischaker asked about combining options one and two. Moving the Police Department to the M.N. Spear Building and also reconfiguring Town Hall.
- c. Siefert asked if there is a deadline for making a decision on this. The committee stated there is not a deadline. They stated this is an interim report, and the next step will likely entail spending some money. Perhaps professional guidance such as consulting with engineers. Siefert suggested adding the option of doing nothing to the M.N. Spear Library Building. Mosher replied that there needs to be use of the building for insurance purposes.
- d. Mosher stated moving forward the committee needs input from the Select Board and that there will be no recommendations at the upcoming Town Meeting. Lyons added that the committee was supposed to be done in February, and that they are eager to zero in on an option and move forward. He stated that currently, they are at a bit of a standstill. Farrell stated the next M.N. Spear Meeting will be next week on Thursday, March 26 at 10:30 am.

- e. Geddes added that funding may be able to be secured for historical renovations.
 - f. Overall, the Select Board supported the committee exploring further into the well and septic costs/requirements.
8. Meeting Adjourned at 6:23 pm

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 pm, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minute Drafts for 3.3.26, 3.11.26 (4:10), and 3.11.26 (4:40)
2. Letter of support for a McAvoy Dry Hydrant Grant Application
3. Appointment Letter for Matteo Pangallo (Election Administrator)
4. Appointment Letter for Michael Tommie McDuffie (Conservation Commission)
5. M.N. Spear Library Reuse Options Chart
6. Town Hall Reconfigurations Floor Map
7. M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee Introduction to March Document
8. Public Construction Chart

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

** A full version of the 3/17/26 SB meeting will be available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://youtu.be/xouOPA7x458>

