

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
May 12, 2026 In-Person Meeting Format

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

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Police Chief Devon Pelletier, Gail Fleischaker, Tom Siefert, Gil Escobar, Bea Kwyatt, Diane & Gregg Adams, Mary David, Leslie Bracebridge.

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

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Amanda Alix asked about the Police Department appointments. She asked if the budget just passed at the Annual Town Meeting includes the two new hires into the salary lines. Makepeace-O'Neil stated yes, they do.

General Business:

1. Approve Meeting Minutes for 4.28.26:
  - a. No amendments.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 4.28.26 as worded, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

2. Approve the Police Chief Search Committee Minutes for 9.22.25, 9.22.25 Executive Session, 10.7.25, 10.7.25 Executive Session, 10.27.25, 10.27.25 Executive Session, 11.17.25, 11.17.25 Executive Session, 12.11.25, and 12.11.25 Executive Session.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve all of the Police Chief Search Committee Minutes as worded, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

3. Vote to extend Matteo Pangallo's appointment as Interim Town Clerk/Election Administrator to end on May 15th instead of May 11th.
  - a. This extension will offer Matteo Pangallo more time to wrap up the Town Election tasks.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to approve the extension of Matteo Pangallo's appointment as Interim Town Clerk/Election Administrator to end on May 15<sup>th</sup> instead of May 11<sup>th</sup>, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

4. Vote on (2) Appointments for the Shutesbury Police Department- Ernst Jean Louis to the position of Part-Time Police Officer and Gilberto Escobar Ruiz to the position of Full-Time Police Officer.
  - a. Chief Pelletier shared this is a great opportunity to add two wonderful candidates to the Police Department. Gilberto Escobar has six years of experience. One year with Springfield Police Department, and several years with Western New England University. He has a community-based mindset and is bilingual. Pelletier stated that Ernst Jean Louis has over 10 years of experience. He is trilingual and works for the Hamden County Sheriff's Department. He's also part of Holyoke Police's Community Task Force.
  - b. Chief Pelletier interviewed them at first, and then they had to undergo panel interviews with Highway Superintendent Grenier, Fire Chief Czerwonka, Town Treasurer R. Mailloux, Select Board Member Makepeace-O'Neil, and Town Administrator Bolton.
  - c. Farrell asked Escobar if he sees any challenges with going from an urban environment to a rural environment. He stated no, he was born in the countryside in Puerto Rico, he is an outdoor person, loves to go camping and hiking. He loves to work with people, and he sees working in a rural environment as an opportunity to work and interact closely with members of the Shutesbury community.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to approve the appointment of Ernst Jean-Louis to the position of Part-Time Police Officer, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to approve the appointment of Gilberto Escobar Ruiz to the position of Full-Time Police Officer, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

5. Web Committee- Review old Town policies for appropriateness and/or need for revision:
  - a. Fleischaker stated that the Town currently has about 26 policies and that from 2015 backwards, there are some questions regarding the need for some of those older policies.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Wi-Fi Public Use Policy that was approved January 6, 2015, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the 2011 Policy to Purchase Only Fuel-Efficient Vehicles that was approved April 12, 2011, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Animals in Municipal Buildings Policy that was approved October 1, 2004, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Kennel Policy that was approved June 4, 2002, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to remove from the Fragrance-Free Guidelines the Meeting Minutes of August 28, 2001, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- a. Accommodations will be explored. Potentially a policy will be drafted.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Designer Selection/Request for Proposal Policy that was approved February 27, 2001, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Selectboard Policy on Seat Belts that was approved February 13, 2001, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Selectboard Policy about Appointment of Non-Registered Voters that was approved August 1, 2000, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to rescind the Policy Relating to Sexual Harassment: Town of Shutesbury Massachusetts that was approved April 15, 1997 and amended June of 2000, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

6. Sign Scanlon and Associates Audit Engagement Letter:
  - a. They started working on Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. This is part of the town's financial obligations to do a yearly audit.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to execute the signature of the Scanlon and Associates Audit Engagement Letter, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

7. Discussion about the Shutesbury Post Office Notice of Closure effective June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026:
  - a. Bolton stated that she spoke with the Regional Manager for Jim McGovern and on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, will speak with a Representative of the Postal Workers Union. Bolton stated she has received a lot of Impact Statements from Shutesbury Residents and believes they truly do help. A lot of them state the added mileage for travel to Leverett will affect them as residents, as well as

receiving their medication or legal notices would be even more challenging. Bolton stated she will compile these Impact Statements and share them with the necessary individuals to be used for advocacy purposes. Bolton stated she is hoping to get a postponement for the initial closure date. She has heard that these closure notices have been used before as a scare tactic. The notice of closure states that it is due to the landlords not renewing their lease. Ultimately, the Town has no power over that according to Farrell.

- i. Mailloux to send an email to Town Officials and Veteran Services encouraging them to also advocate for the Post Office and shares their concerns about its closure.
- ii. The Select Board will send out a letter of advocacy to the U.S. Postal Service and Legislators.

**VOTE:** Farrell makes a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to draft a letter to the U.S. Postal Service, with copies to legislators, expressing their disgust with the planned closure of the Shutesbury Post Office, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

8. Unanticipated Business (Open Meeting Law Complaint):

- a. As unanticipated business, the Select Board reviewed an Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Amanda Alix on March 12, 2026. Alix's complaint states that an alleged violation occurred on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, when the Select Board had a regularly scheduled meeting, and failed to disclose the results of their April 13, 2026 Executive Session review of Executive Session Minutes for a September 12, 2025 meeting. In response, the Select Board prepared letters to the complainant and to the Office of the Attorney General, that states they acknowledge the complaint, acknowledge a delay in the release of the Minutes, but deny that any Open Meeting Law was violated. The letter states the Minutes have been released to the complainant and posted on the Town Websites.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to sign the letter for Amanda Alix and the Open Meeting Law Complaint, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to sign the letter for the Attorney General's Office regarding the Open Meeting Law Complaint, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

9. Town Administrator Report:

- a. Bolton started her Town Administrator Report by discussing the ongoing Lake Wyola Dam Repairs and how the controlled refilling is underway. The water level has not yet reached the winter draw down level.
- b. Bolton discussed the Shutesbury Elementary School oil tank remediation. As of May 6<sup>th</sup>, Bolton stated more oil has been found in a crack by the curb, and

excavation by the insurance company revealed the contamination was deeper than anticipated. There will be additional testing conducted on the contaminated soil to make a final recommendation on how to dispose of it.

- i. More water has accumulated in the oil tank.
- ii. Tighe and Bond is planning to perform subsurface drilling at the Shutesbury Elementary School to assess conditions around the vault. This work should take place on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- c. Bolton discussed the Town Clerk position and stated she had drafted a Job Description for Select Board Approval. The Select Board reviewed the Job Description. Bolton and the Select Board discussed whether the hiring process should be done by an established committee or be led by the Town Administrator. It was determined that Bolton would take the lead on the hiring process and use panel interviews along the way to help with the hiring. Makepeace-O'Neil suggested asking Leverett Town Clerk, Lisa Stratford to sit in on the panel.

**VOTE:** Stocker makes a motion to accept the Job Description for the Town Clerk position as amended, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

10. Rita Farrell End of Term Discussion:

- a. Rita proposed to the Select Board that she does one more meeting to finish up her work and close out her term. She stated in discussion with Jim Walton, he agreed to wait longer, and not start his term until the beginning of June with the Select Board. Farrell would like to wrap up her M.N. Spear Committee work as the Select Board Delegate before she is done.
- b. Farrell suggested having a uniform start date in the future for Elected Officials.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to delegate Rita Farrell as the Select Board Representative on the M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee until the committee is finished with their work, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

11. Meeting Adjourned at 6:17 pm

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 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 Minutes for 4/28/26
2. Police Chief Search Committee Minutes (Regular and Executive Sessions)
3. (2) Police Department Appointment Letters
4. Scanlon and Associates Audit Engagement Letter
5. Open Meeting Law Complaint from May 12, 2026
6. Packet of Town Policies

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

\*\* A full version of the 5/12/26 SB meeting will be available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://youtu.be/gySBY1TvJVC>

