

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2026 In-Person Meeting Format

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

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Gail Fleischaker, Matteo Pangallo, Michael Miller, Leslie Bracebridge, Penny Kim, Grace Bannasch, Calvin Elison, Damon Herring.

Bolton calls the meeting to order at 3:01pm

The meeting began with deciding on the new membership roles of the Select Board. It was decided as follows: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil: Chair, Eric Stocker: Vice-Chair, James Walton: Board Member.

VOTE: Stocker makes a motion to nominate Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil as Chair, Walton seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: abstain; motion carries.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to nominate Eric Stocker as Vice-Chair, Walton seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: abstain, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: None.

General Business:

1. Open session interviews for the position of Town Clerk:
 - a. The Town Clerk position was stated to be part-time, 25 hours per week operating under the general direction of the Town Administrator.
 - b. The following interview questions were asked:
 - i. Please introduce yourself and tell us what draws you to the position.
 - ii. As Town Clerk, you will work closely with the Select Board, Town Administrator, and committees. How do you view the ideal working relationship between the Town Clerk's office and the Select Board, and how will you ensure we are kept proactively informed about critical compliance or election matters?
 - iii. In your first-round interview, you outlined a 30-to-60-day assessment plan. Assuming you have now completed that assessment and found significant disorganization in our records management or digital archiving, how would you approach proposing and implementing a structural overhaul on a part-time, 25-hour-per-week budget?
 - iv. Shutesbury is a highly engaged community where residents value transparency and accessibility. In a small town, a Town Clerk frequently interacts with neighbors and acquaintances in an official capacity. How do you balance being approachable and customer-service-oriented while

firmly upholding strict state statutory deadlines and regulations, even when it's unpopular?

- v. As previously noted, some systems need structural rebuilding, but our town can't press pause on the calendar. You will be stepping into this role right before a major election cycle, and we'll have to hit the ground running with little room for error. How do you balance the demands of running an election while simultaneously diagnosing and fixing the systemic administrative gaps in the office?
- vi. What does long-term success look like to you in this role, and how does this part-time position in Shutesbury align with your broader professional goals?

c. The first Town Clerk interview was with Calvin Elison.

- i. Calvin Elison introduced himself; grew up in Amherst with strong ties to Shutesbury through his grandparents; earned a bachelor's and master's in international relations from American University in Washington, DC; worked in academic administration and interned in the US Senate; returned to the Pioneer Valley in December of the prior year seeking mission-driven, community-level public service work.
- ii. Makepeace-O'Neil asked how Elison views the ideal working relationship between the Town Clerk's Office and the Select Board, and how he would ensure proactive communication on compliance and election matters. Elison described the relationship as highly collaborative; emphasized being a resource and note-taker; stated his first daily priority is ensuring all relevant parties have the information they need.
- iii. Walton asked how Elison would approach a structural overhaul of disorganized records management within a 25-hour-per-week part-time role. Elison explained he would assess the functional impact of disorganization, consult with stakeholders including Town Administrator Bolton and board members, and prioritize changes based on who needs information and when; acknowledged a full overhaul would take time given the part-time nature of the role.
- iv. Makepeace-O'Neil asked how Elison would balance approachability and customer service with strict adherence to state statutory guidelines. Elison, in response, emphasized transparency, empathy, and honest communication; stated he would explain regulatory constraints clearly while working collaboratively toward solutions.
- v. Stocker asked how Elison would balance running an election while simultaneously addressing systemic administrative gaps. Elison stated election operations are the top priority; would identify which disorganization issues directly affect election day and address those first; expressed enthusiasm for organizational rebuilding post-election.
- vi. Walton asked what long-term success looks like and how the part-time role aligns with Calvin's broader professional goals. Elison defined success as building clear, replicable institutional knowledge; expressed

genuine alignment between the role and his goal of impactful, community-level public service.

- vii. Stocker asked whether Alison felt sufficiently knowledgeable about election law to manage the upcoming election cycle. Alison acknowledged a knowledge catch-up would be needed but expressed confidence in his ability to learn quickly; described himself as a "trial by fire" learner.
- viii. It was then asked how Alison handles stress. Alison cited preparation, list-making, maintaining situational awareness, and knowing when to ask for help as his primary stress management strategies.
- ix. Alison asked the board for one piece of advice for starting in the role during an election cycle. Stocker advised not to make light of the election process and to be fully confident in that area. Walton advised to be ready for anything. Makepeace-O'Neil advised to stay calm and breathe.

d. The second Town Clerk interview was with Damon Herring.

- i. Herring: Introduced himself; has lived in Shutesbury for nearly 12 years; background is primarily in business as a territory manager in the construction, kitchen, and bath industry; previously contributed to the town's broadband internet initiative; transitioning away from extensive travel to be more present in the community and closer to home.
- ii. Stocker asked how Herring views the ideal working relationship between the Town Clerk's Office and the Select Board. Herring emphasized constant communication, proactive information sharing, and keeping all parties informed throughout any process; drew parallels to managing large client portfolios in his sales career.
- iii. Walton asked how Herring would approach a structural overhaul of disorganized records within a 25-hour-per-week part-time role. Herring acknowledged the 25-hour limit may not be realistic initially; stated he would meet individually with interim staff to understand ongoing projects, prioritize urgent issues (especially election-related), and address disorganization systematically; used the example of missing dog license paperwork to illustrate a pragmatic, people-first approach.
- iv. Makepeace-O'Neil asked how Herring would balance approachability with strict adherence to state statutory deadlines and regulations. Herring emphasized de-escalation, treating residents as he would want to be treated, and finding the quickest and best path to compliance without raising his voice or becoming confrontational.
- v. Stocker asked how Herring would balance running an election while addressing administrative gaps. Herring described a prioritization approach focusing immediately on election-related issues, consulting other town clerks for advice, planning for contingencies such as staff illness, and addressing lower-priority items afterward.
- vi. Walton asked what long-term success looks like and how the part-time role aligns with his broader professional goals. Herring defined success as residents and administration feeling that things are running smoothly and

that he is responsive; expressed a desire to be more engaged in the community after years of extensive travel.

- vii. Stocker asked whether Herring felt sufficiently knowledgeable about election law. Herring acknowledged limited current knowledge of election law but drew on a personal story of rapidly mastering an entirely new industry (construction materials) to demonstrate his ability to learn quickly under pressure; committed to making election preparation his top priority.
- viii. Makepeace-O'Neil: Asked how Herring handles stress. Herring stated he rarely gets visibly stressed; relies on conversations with his wife as a sounding board; cited a personal philosophy that all problems eventually pass and push you forward.
- ix. Herring noted a scheduling consideration as his wife has medical appointments in Boston between July 10–15. He confirmed he could provide references to Hayley by the following day.

- e. The Select Board discussed the next steps in the process. After interviews, it was stated reference checks will be asked of, background checks will be conducted, and then a submission of an offer letter to the chosen candidate will be sent out. The goal is to make an appointment at the 7/7/26 Select Board meeting.

2. Approve Meeting Minutes for 6/22/26:

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 6/22/26 as posted, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Walton: abstain, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

3. Resignations:

- a. April Stein from Personnel Board
- b. Jill Bancroft from the Shutesbury Police Department

VOTE: Stocker makes a motion to accept the resignation of April Stein from the Personnel Board and Jill Bancroft from the Shutesbury Police Department, Walton seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

4. Appointments:

- a. Clif Read as the Select Board's Designee for the Board of Parks Commissioner on the Community Preservation Committee.
- b. April Stein to the Board of Assessors.

VOTE: Stocker makes a motion to approve the appointment of Clif Read as the Select Board's Designee for the Board of Parks Commissioner on the Community Preservation Committee, Walton seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Walton makes a motion to approve the appointment of April Stein to the Board of Assessors, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

5. Review Special Event Application for the Historical Commission to set up an informational table on the Town Common on July 5th:
 - a. The Historical Commission submitted a Special Events Application to hold a pop-up 1776 History Information table display on the west side of the Town Common under the trees if in warmer weather, or closer to the war memorials if it is cooler out.
 - b. Date and Time of Event: Sunday July 5th, 2026 beginning at 10:30 am and ending at 1:00 pm.
 - c. No anticipated need for sanitary services, or law enforcement detail services. Cookies and lemonade will be served.
 - d. The application was signed in advance by the Board of Health, Fire Chief, and Police Chief.

VOTE: Stocker makes a motion to give permission to the Historical Commission to hold a pop-up 1776 History Information table display on the west side of the Town Common on July 5, 2026, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

6. Vote to close Town Offices on Monday July 6th in observance of July 4th holiday.
 - a. This closure would be in place of closing Friday July 3rd.
 - b. Bolton stated at an upcoming Annual Town Meeting she would like to have a vote to remove the language of holidays in the Personnel Bylaw and stick with just the Personnel Handbook's Policy.

VOTE: Stocker makes a motion to approve the closure of town offices on Monday July 6th in observance of the July 4th holiday, Walton seconds. Roll call vote Walton: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 4:19 pm

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

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minutes for 6/22/26
2. Resignation Letter for Jill Bancroft
3. Appointment Letters for Clif Read and April Stein
4. Historical Commission Special Event Application

Respectfully submitted,
Brennan Mailloux
Administrative Assistant

Town Administrator/Select Board

** A full version of the 7/1/26 SB meeting will be available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: https://youtu.be/ZKHxP0f_fcU

