

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2026 In-Person Meeting Format
10:00 AM Meeting

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, David Grenier: Highway Superintendent, Leonard Czerwonka: Fire Chief, Mary Lou Conca

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 10:02 am

Agenda Review: As posted.

General Business:

1. 10:00 AM- Highway Superintendent Performance Evaluation:
 - a. Makepeace O'Neil provided an overview of the performance evaluation process. She stated that each employee was asked to complete a self-evaluation and was evaluated by each Select Board member before convening in open session to discuss the feedback. Walton noted that due to his short tenure on the Select Board that he could not provide substantive comments on employee performance.
 - b. Makepeace O'Neil summarized the highlights of the Highway Superintendent's self-evaluation including:
 - i. I have learned over the years how to be in a leadership role and to show respect for those that work under my direction. This year I have had to deal with some new issues with communication since when I send workers out to accomplish a task the work was not done exactly as expected even though not in itself wrong. So, I have learned to adapt my thinking to accept something new.
 - ii. I have a commonsense way of thinking that is not a learned quality but one that lends self to this type of work. An example of this is the ability to adjust under difficult circumstances such as the winter operations that change quickly. This is also helpful when coming up with solutions on how to handle tasks in an efficient way and with the right equipment.
 - iii. As far as future goals, this has to be updating the equipment and having the right priority in this process and setting up a plan to schedule future needs so that finance can match the town budget.
 - iv. My goal for FY27 is to be more organized in approach to completing the yearly maintenance that is involved with mowing, gravel roads, machinery maintenance and providing safe travel for our Road Town in the summer and winter months.

- c. Makepeace O'Neil then launched into the Select Board review which looked at core performance areas. Highlights of the review from Makepeace O'Neil include:
 - i. Dave has shown a good understanding the Highway department budget. He has been creative in saving money when able. At annual town meeting his explanations of equipment on the warrant resulted in new equipment being voted for.
 - ii. Dave has made a good effort to replace equipment with budget in mind. Unfortunately, our Highway department has aging equipment. Dave has done good work in repairing what is able to be and asking for replacements. He has a good grasp on being fiscally responsible and keeping workplace safety in mind.
 - iii. On several occasions while dropping by the department I have arrived in the middle of Dave coaching Ben or Mike on repair to equipment or road repair. He is a good coach for the employees. He has recruited several people as seasonal snow help. Good job.
 - iv. Dave does a good job communicating with the public and answer questions. As a working Super it is a hard balance to find with the amount of phone calls and emails received, and work in the field.
- d. Stocker then gave an overview of his performance review which included:
 - i. I think in general, Dave has managed this department well. There have been a few cases where more timely responses to citizen complaints would have been helpful. Right or wrong complaints from citizens are excepted and part of the job. Ignoring them is tempting, but in the long run, only leads to a more volatile situation.
 - ii. Dave's knowledge about the condition of the Highway Dept. equipment is good. The Highway Garage is kept neat and orderly. The equipment maintenance is excellent. The addition of some newer equipment will be helpful to the HD. It will be well maintained under Dave's supervision.
 - iii. This last winter was severe and very taxing on the HD. I thought the roads were well maintained.
 - iv. Dave is a good equipment operator and has been a valuable teacher and mentor to younger employees. He has operated all if the HD equipment regularly with skill.
- e. All Select Board members acknowledged that working with the public can be challenging and that people may have different ideas and expectations of what work needs to be done, and some may not understand the limitations of our aging equipment, but that communication with the public is important and a necessary component of the job.
- f. The Select Board also identified goals for the year, which included:
 - i. **Goal 1:** External communication to residents, including follow-up phone calls as needed.
 - ii. **Goal 2:** Continue mentoring of Highway Department Staff
 - iii. **Goal 3:** Continue collaborations with other department

- iv. **Goal 4:** Update the Town's capital plan to be fully inclusive of Highway Department needs.
 - g. Select Board members thanked the Highway Superintendent for his work. The next step was for the Town Administrator to incorporate the goals into the evaluation document and coordinate having all Select Board members sign the evaluation and the employee to sign off as well. One copy would be kept in the employee's personnel file.
2. 11:00 AM- Fire Chief Performance Evaluation:
- a. Makepeace O'Neil provided an overview of the performance evaluation process. She stated that each employee was asked to complete a self-evaluation and was evaluated by each Select Board member before convening in open session to discuss the feedback.
 - b. Makepeace O'Neil summarized the highlight of the Fire Chief's self-evaluation including:
 - i. Fire in Leverett. Though it was a total loss Shutesbury Fire had several firefighters working hand lines, E-1 supplied water to the attack engine and E-2 drafted by the bridge to supply water for the whole scene without any issues.
 - ii. Going for a new fire truck. I talked to as many people for advice as I could, including firefighters and chiefs from around the area. I reached out to the Town of Florida and test drove the same engine we picked out. The truck passed at Town Meeting.
 - iii. I make every opportunity I have with firefighters a learning experience. New firefighters are included as soon as possible.
 - iv. Working with my hands and figuring mechanical issues out is my strength. I have made it a point to train the firefighters how to operate the engines so even relatively newer firefighters can run them at scenes.
 - v. Having another firefighter at the station to help with grants, emergency plans, and inspections would be helpful.
 - vi. It would be nice to set the department up so it can function without me. It is not good practice for an organization to solely rely on one individual to function. Due to it being a call department, members are generally not available to be at the station to learn the office side of things.
 - c. Makepeace O'Neil then launched into the Select Board review which looked at core performance areas. Highlights of the review from Makepeace O'Neil include:
 - i. Budgeting has its challenges. Lenny has kept the department running and received money for a Fire

Truck at Annual Town Meeting. With the tough budget years that may be ahead for the Town, we encourage Lenny to use historical past expenses to draft each year's budget.

- ii. Lenny has replaced equipment as needed in the department. He has decommissioned unused equipment. He worked with the Capital Planning and the Finance Committee for a new Fire Truck. Firefighting equipment has expiration dates, useful life, and changing regulations. We encourage Lenny to project out a replacement schedule and look for grants or other resources to help secure funding.
 - iii. Lenny has kept the fire department's levels of employees up. In the past he has handled a sensitive personnel issue correctly. Lenny encourages fire fighters in weekly training as a team. He fosters a team-oriented work environment.
 - iv. Lenny has weekly training for the department with varied types of fire related – medical related topics. This gives him the ability to create team environment and is very important. We had set a goal of Lenny completing some personal development goals. We would like more movement in this area for Lenny to complete.
 - v. On scene is where Lenny excels. He responds to most calls during the day, many at night, as a working Chief. Lenny's long experience with firefighting is a benefit.
 - vi. Lenny meets our expectations overall and does a good job with the department, we encourage him to keep this up. There have been no complaints to the Select Board. Lenny does a good job on scene of a call.
- d. Stocker reviewed the highlights of his evaluation, including:
- i. There were some budgets that were overspent this Fiscal Year. While call budgets are less predictable, training budgets are to some extent optional. More attention could be paid to these budget lines.
 - ii. Lenny meets with all personnel weekly. I know Lenny has also dismissed people that he thinks are not compatible with Fire Department requirements.
 - iii. Lenny has been good at setting up monthly meetings with the Emergency Management Team to work on issues that could develop.
- e. Walton highlighted parts of his evaluation, including:
- i. Lenny's role in forming a new, well-thought-out 5-year capital plan in the coming months will be important towards supporting the town's efforts to maintain fiscal discipline during the challenging times.
 - ii. Excellent work recruiting the necessary personnel.
 - iii. With the town facing increased limitations on state and federal funding, grant procurement focus will increase.

- iv. I know from observations from my Finance Committee role, that Lenny is very proficient in all the required areas and is calm and effective in challenging situations.
- f. The Select Board then discussed goals for the upcoming year which included:
 - i. **Goal 1:** Continue pursuing professional development through additional trainings and certifications.
 - ii. **Goal 2:** More emergency alert communication regarding weather alerts before a storm.
 - iii. **Goal 3:** Prepare an FY28 budget that is reflective of true operating costs (example: training wages).
 - iv. **Goal 4:** Identify grant opportunities to replace equipment and explore collaborations with other fire departments.
- g. Select Board members thanked the Fire Chief for his work. The next step was for the Town Administrator to incorporate the goals into the evaluation document and coordinate having all Select Board members sign the evaluation and the employee to sign off as well. One copy would be kept in the employee's personnel file.

3. Meeting Adjourned at 12:30 pm

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil 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. Evaluation Forms for Highway Superintendent and Fire Chief
- 2. Self-Evaluation Forms for Highway Superintendent and Fire Chief

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