

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS



OUR TOWN

Oh Joy —Town Meeting! Paul Lyons, *Town Moderator*

It might be hard to believe, but some Shutesbury residents wait in joyful anticipation for the spring Annual Town Meeting. And yes, I know that for others, slogging thru hundreds of budget line items is one of the worst ways to spend a sunny Saturday at the end of a long cold winter. For those

The 2021 Annual Town Meeting has been moved from April 24 to outdoors on June 12 due to the need for social distancing

who hold that latter perspective, I urge you to reconsider.

Annual Town Meeting is a uniquely New England (well, and parts of

New York) tradition that harkens back to the early Colonial times.

In Massachusetts, Governor William Bradford presided over what is believed to be the first such meeting in 1622 — almost 400 years ago! Early meetings (often called to divvy up town lands) were held weekly, but later moved to a monthly, and eventually to just an annual, frequency. The first official town meeting in Roadtown (Shutesbury’s original name) was held after the

New to Town?

Join Town government’s email list, Town Announce, on the right side of the home page at www.shutesbury.org. Sign up for CodeRED, too — see page 4 of this newsletter for details!

settlement received its charter in 1761.

Despite their importance and recognition as one of the purest forms of participatory democracy, early Town Meetings had a reputation for being “suspicious, contradictory and cantankerous.” “Raucous” is another adjective often used to describe those early meetings.

Town Meeting, cont. on page 3

Select Board News

Melissa Makepeace-O’Neil, *Chair*, Rita Farrell, April Stein

It was with great sadness that we accepted the resignation of Police Chief **Dan Fernandes**. He was hired into this position 2 1/2 years ago. In that time he instituted the use of body cameras, continued to hire new police officers and bring a sound foundation of community policing to Shutesbury. We wish him well on his continued endeavors. There will be more to come regarding where we go from here.

December 31, 2020 was

Penny Jaques’s last day on the Conservation Commission. Her steady, fair, intelligent work on the committee for many years will be missed.

COVID-19 continues to impact our community. The Board of Health has done an amazing job in helping keep the people in our town safe. The Cares Act has paid for new air exchange units in the downstairs of the Town Hall as well as in the Library. However Town Hall remains closed to the public and meetings continue to be held through Zoom, giving people the opportunity to attend safely from their homes. The Library has had some in person availability, but mostly has done curbside pickups. The Elementary School has worked closely with the community, teachers and the union in order to safely serve our children.

The PTO, Library, School

Select Board, cont. on page 4

The Latest from Our Elementary School

Dear Shutesbury Community, The Shutesbury Elementary School community was happy to usher in a new year. As a tight-knit school community, we are missing being together in person to learn, play and

School, cont. on page 8

A Letter from the Town Clerk

Grace Bannasch, *Town Clerk*
(she/her/hers)

townclerk@shutesbury.org

Susie Mosher, *Assistant Town Clerk* assistantclerk@shutesbury.org

[shutesbury.org](http://www.shutesbury.org)

413-259-1204

Website www.shutesbury.org

Town Hall is closed for now.

We are available by phone or by email.

Salutations Shutesburians!

The **Annual Street List** will soon appear in your mailbox, if it hasn't already. Upon its arrival you may find yourself asking, *what is this or why should I care?* Well, the Annual Street List is a once-a-year town census which generates a significant amount of the data I use to keep the Town Clerk's records (including the many, many lists) up-to-date and accurate. And you ought to care because this is how we know to put your name on the Trash Bag List. Also, if you fill out and return your Annual Street List, you will not be added to the Inactive Voter List.

And *now* you may be wondering what being on the **Inactive Voter List** involves. Don't worry, it's not painful and inactive voters are not in trouble. It simply means that I am slightly less than completely and totally 100% confident that you definitely-absolutely continue to reside at the address where you are registered to vote—because you didn't return your Annual Street List, which is part of how I keep track of such matters.

Being inactivated does not prevent you from voting, but it does mean you will need to show ID to prove residency on your next trip to the polls. Fill

out and return your yellow 2021 Annual Street List form to save yourself the extra step come Election Day. And yes—you can use the drop box! You can always use the drop box.

Speaking of Election Day...

Have you considered running for office? I highly recommend it. This is my first time ever being an elected official and I absolutely love it. Every day brings something new, interesting and challenging.

Currently there are 11 seats on the Shutesbury 2021 Local Election ballot. This number may change if there are any further resignations or vacancies between writing this letter and Election Day. Please see the list of current availabilities below. If you're interested but unsure, I suggest attending some virtual meetings (links at www.shutesbury.org/calendars), and reading minutes to familiarize yourself with the committees and boards.

Contact my office to arrange an appointment to pick up your nomination papers. You need 20 signatures on your nomination papers from 20 registered Shutesbury voters to get your name on the ballot. Due to the ongoing pandemic, you will not be able to get all your signatures in one place at one time like in the good ol' days, but don't let that stop you. Ask your neighbors, your friends,

List of Available Elected Positions in 2021

Board of Health:	2 seats
Cemetery Commission:	1 seat
Library Trustees:	2 seats
Municipal Light Plant/Broadband:	2 seats
Planning Board:	1 seat
School Committee:	2 seats
Select Board:	1 seat

your family, your community to help you out. That's what elections are all about.

Last Day to Submit Nomination Papers: April 27

Last Day to Object or Withdraw: April 29

Last Day to Register to Vote in the Local Election: May 14

Last Day to Register to Vote at Town Meeting: May 28

Are You Looking for a Volunteer Opportunity?

The following committees have vacancies. If you are interested in serving on a committee, attend one of their virtual meetings to learn more about their work, read their webpage, contact its chair!

- **Council on Aging**
- **Conservation Commission**
- **Energy Committee**
- **Water Resources Committee**
- **Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate)**

Our Town Newsletter Policy

Adopted by the
Shutesbury Select Board
December 23, 2019

Our Town, published three times a year in January or February, April, and August or September, is supported by tax dollars. We welcome news from Town of Shutesbury departments, boards, and committees, and from individuals and groups about local community projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions must be strictly secular and nonpartisan and are subject to review, revision, and/or non-acceptance by the editorial board of the newsletter. Submissions promoting the sale of goods and services for private profit cannot be accepted. Appeals to any review decisions can be brought to the Select Board for further discussion.

Janis S. Gray, *Editor*
Linda Avis Scott, *Town Hall Liaison*



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Town Meeting,
cont. from page 1

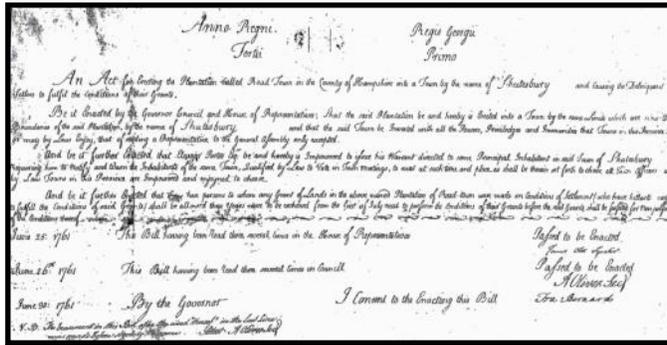
As a result, the Massachusetts General Court passed a law in the early 1700s requiring the election of a Moderator to “manage and regulate the business of the meeting.” And historically, that business ran the gamut, from matters of taxation and land distribution, to the number of pine trees that each family was allowed to “cut from the swamp.”

And it was discussions at Town Meetings that fueled the spark that ultimately led to the American Revolution!

Initially, voting at “open” Town Meetings was restricted to white, land-owning, church-going males. Today, that right is extended to any and all registered voters in town.

Thomas Jefferson was a big fan of Town Meetings and he saw them as “government controlled by grassroots citizenry.” His vision for the whole country included the establishment of “little republics” — direct democracies, like New England towns, where every citizen could be involved in the management of public affairs.

When you attend Town Meeting, you’re helping to pre-



The act that incorporated Shutesbury in 1761.

serve and perpetuate what Henry David Thoreau wrote of in 1854: “When, in some obscure country town, farmers come together to a special town-meeting, to express their opinion on some subject which is vexing the land, that, I think, is the true Congress, and the most respectable one that is ever assembled in the United States.”

But the effectiveness, legitimacy and continued survival of Town Meetings depend on the willingness of its members to show up, to respect each other’s opinions, and feel safe enough to freely express their own. It’s that process that’s most important - more so than the outcomes of the actual votes. And with that said, I look forward to seeing you at Shutesbury’s Annual Town Meeting!

A(nother) Word from the Board of Health

We know, you’ve been hearing a lot from us lately! – or have you? If you are not receiving weekly bulletins from the Board of Health, please – *please!* – go to the home page of the Town website, shutesbury.org, and click on “Sign up to receive Town Announcement e-mails” (on the right side of the page, down from the photo of Town Hall). Signing up will not result in a lot of

extra emails in your inbox, typically one or two a week. This is a crucial source of information for you. In our weekly message we let you know how many COVID cases are currently in isolation in Shutesbury, and how many close contacts are in quarantine, as well as other timely information as needed. As the vaccine rollout continues, we’ll try to keep you informed about how, when, and where you can be vaccinated.

All this information is also available at shutesbury.org/pandemic-information, as well as links to many other sources, including the Department of Public Health’s vaccination information page.

As of February 1, seniors 75 and over are eligible to be vaccinated. Those 65 and over may be eligible by the time you read this. If you do not have Internet access or need help with registering or transportation, call the LifePath Help Voicemail Line: 413-829-9285.

Brush Burning: What Everyone Should Know

The legal brush burning period runs from January 15 through May 1. Apply for permits to at www.fcburnpermits.com. If you lack Internet access, call Shelburne Control at 413-625-8200 to get a permit.

Permits, good for one day only, are available 7:30am - 1pm on days that burning will be allowed. Hours for burning are 10am - 4pm. Fires must be located at least 75 feet from any building and attended at all times by a person 18 years or older. Only brush may be burned – the burning of grass, leaves, stumps, building materials, trash, etc., is prohibited.



The site of Shutesbury Town Meetings in the 19th century

Select Board, cont. from page 1

and Volunteers came together to create a safe Halloween celebration for our children despite the pandemic.

We continue to follow the guidance from the State. The pandemic also impacted the National Elections in November, and put an incredible amount of work on our Town Clerk, **Grace Bannish**, and Assistant Town Clerk, **Susie Mosher** (our former Town Clerk). Responding to requests for mail in ballots, managing and accounting for them, making a safe place for in person voting and a safe place to count the ballots took many hours. We had the largest turnout ever in town for this election.

The Black Lives Matter banner continues to hang on town hall per the Select Board. There have been many discussions with, and within, the town on how we, as a community, deal with systemic racism. The conversations are not over, and clearly there is much left to do. The Library has sponsored a reading of *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo, which has been a place to look more closely at racism in our country.

The town is now benefiting from an additional 2000 acres of woodland that will be held in Conservation Restriction forever. **Cinda Jones**, of WD Cows, made this possible by selling their development rights. This means the land can be logged, but not developed, and there is access to the public to enjoy the area for recreation. In addition, it remains important habitat and helps preserve the woodlands of our town.

There are also around 130 acres owned by WD Cows that have been reserved for possible

solar farms in Shutesbury. No plans are currently before the Planning Board, but five AN-RADS (Abbreviated Notice for Resource Area Delineation) are before the Conservation Commission.

The five potential sites are 1) Off of Leverett Road; 2) Wheelock Parcel; 3) Montague/Carver Road; 4) Near January Hills; 5) Near Poverty Mountain. To date the town has had informational meetings with AMP Energy and their representative Evan Turner.

There is the potential for significant tax savings to the town's people if these projects are built. A summary from the informational meeting is on the Town Website.

There are **two large, expensive and badly needed projects** ahead for the town.

One is the replacement of the culvert under Locks Pond Road at the dam.

The other is replacing the roof at the elementary school.

The Select Board has also been working with the School Committee and Finance Committee on **the assessment method that will be used to determine how much each of the four towns in the Middle and High School Region will be responsible to pay for the 2022 budget.**

We are determined to continue to establish the assessment method as 100% Statutory with a five year rolling average of student numbers. We are also aware that we have to negotiate with our neighbors through this process.

Our meetings are open to the public, and access through Zoom can be found on the Town

Website. If you do not have Internet, Zoom can be accessed through the phone.

While on the Town Website, take a moment (if you haven't already) to sign up to Town Announce. Town Announce is a way we have of communicating with the public directly.

Have You Signed Up for CodeRED?

Along with emergency and critical messages, the CodeRED notification system releases important but non-emergency information such as road closures and changes to the trash collection schedule.

CodeRED delivers several benefits for residents and enables staff to more efficiently manage and distribute notifications before, during and after these events.

- Registration for this notification service is customized, allowing residents to choose which alerts they'd like to receive, as well as their preferred channel.
- Residents can select several different methods including landline, cell phone, email, text message, TTY, a CodeRED mobile app, or a combination of any.

Create a "managed account" to update contact information at any time, join any notification groups that are made available, and download the CodeRED Mobile App for your phone. Sign up at <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/bfcb3e0416b>.

For more information on the CodeRED notification system, please contact Fire Chief/Emergency Management Director **Walter Tibbetts** at 413-259-1211, firecpt@shutesbury.org.

Town Website is Being Updated!

The Web Communications Committee is updating the Town website with the intent of making it easier to find what you're looking for. Our goal is to have everything directly available to you on one or more of the tabs/menus when you get to www.shutesbury.org.

You'll find tabs/menus displayed differently, depending on how you access the website:

- **on a laptop or desktop PC**, the tabs/menus will appear across the top of the screen
- **on an iPad or tablet**, click on the three-line "hamburger" icon at top left and the tabs/menus will be listed vertically to the left (click on the "X" to return to the page) *or* scroll to the very bottom and click on |Site Index| for a bulleted list of tabs/menus and their content
- **on a phone**, same as iPad: click on the three-line "hamburger" icon at top left and the tabs/menus will be listed vertically to the left (click on the "X" to return to the page) *or* scroll to the very bottom and click on |Site Index| for a bulleted list of tabs/menus and their content. *(On a phone, you'll see only a small portion of a committee/board page and will have to scroll down to see the righthand section (list of contacts and members, list of minutes.)*

Please write to web@shutesbury.org if you have difficulty finding (or can't find!) what you're looking for. And please let us know if you're comfortable with editing configuration in Drupal: We could use your help!



*By the Broadband Committee/
Municipal Light Plant Board*

As the effects of COVID 19 continue to affect our community, our municipal broadband network helps keep people connected to work, school, entertainment, healthcare, and loved ones. We are happy to be able to provide this community resource.

We continue to monitor townwide usage levels, and even at peak times Shutesbury's network still has the capacity for about three times the amount of bandwidth being used (this means the data capacity flowing to our network from the outside internet). The ability to provide up to gigabit speed to each home means all members of your household can be online simultaneously and the network won't slow down.

If you do notice a slow-down of speeds it's likely due to your in-home network. Please see the Broadband FAQ page for an article about how to diagnose and fix most home network speed issues. <https://www.shutesbury.org/faq>

At the end of 2020 we sent out a brief survey to all account holders to check on how well the network is serving the community. About one third of subscribers responded and of those, 91% reported being either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with our municipal internet and phone services. In addition, 86% reported that it was a good or great value for their money. The survey also revealed that

the tech support provided by Crocker Communications has room for improvement, so we're working with this vendor to make some changes. This includes a new ticketing and tracking system and improved response times for when you need a call-back by a technician. A new subcontractor has been hired to make new installations happen with less wait time. And finally, we've "overstocked" many maintenance and repair materials which had been backordered due to COVID supply chain issues, so repairs and new installations won't be delayed in the coming year. We hope these changes will continue to improve service to all Shutesbury residents.

Hopefully the coming year will have us back at work and school in-person at some point, but in the meantime our municipal broadband network will continue to keep us connected.

Of Note

Dear Community,

While writing my letter for the Fall issue of *Our Town*, I wondered where we would be when the Winter issue rolled around. Here we are, continuing to wear masks, practice physical distancing, remembering to wash our hands. Town Hall remains closed to the public and the folding and collating for this issue will have been outsourced.

Each time I write to you, words about **Janis Gray**/ Newsletter Editor are part of my letter. I would be remiss if I failed to recognize Janis's ongoing dedication to editing our newsletter. Editing the *Our Town* is a volunteer job that requires skill and experience and can be demanding at times.

Of Note, cont. on page 6

As Town Hall liaison for the newsletter, I am appreciative of the opportunity to work with Janis. I wish for each of you to take a moment to send a virtual thanks for her commitment to bringing us news of our Town.

As I bring my letter to a close, I am thinking about the recent resignation of long-time Conservation Commission member **Penny Jaques**. In my former role as Clerk for the Commission, I worked with Penny for 14 years. She was a deeply dedicated volunteer who worked with many residents, oversaw many simple and complex wetland permit applications and initiated special projects such as the sign kiosk at the boat ramp and the Top of the Lake canoe/kayak launch. Penny is now serving Shutesbury as member of the Open Space Committee updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Warmly,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary

What are Your Thoughts on Our Open Spaces?

Gail Fleischaker and Penny Jaques, *Open Space Committee*

Shutesbury is updating its 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), which guides our town in decisions about open space and recreation over the next seven years.

Look for the OSRP survey next month! The survey will ask important questions such as

- What factors led you to move to Shutesbury?
- What do you do for recrea-

tion and where?

- Is there a special place in Town where protection would be important to you?

Your participation is critical. Your responses will shape the goals contained in the final Plan. An approved Plan makes our community eligible for Department of Conservation Services grants funding for conservation and recreation projects.

The OSRP assesses the current status of the community's recreation and conservation land and identifies the Town's future goals and objectives. Shutesbury's OSRP is being developed with assistance from the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments.

In the meantime, **do you have a favorite open space or recreation site in Town** that you'd like more folks to know about? The Open Space Committee has added a new page on the Town website — [Places of Interest](#) on the "About Shutesbury" menu/tab. Send a description (and photo, if you have one) of your place of interest to open.space@shutesbury.org to be added to the new web page. That might be a favorite landscape, observation point for wildlife, or a recreational or historical site.

Our first entry is Julian's Bower with photos and *The Daily Hampshire Gazette* article posted at [Places of Interest](#).

From the Administrative Assessor

Kevin Rudden, *Administrative Assessor*

This issue's topics are "in care of" on tax bills and a possible new senior property tax exemption.

When newcomers to Shutes-

bury get their first property tax bill, they often ask why the former owners' names come first, addressed in care of them as the new owners.

Here's why: Under Massachusetts law, property taxes are assessed as of January 1 of each calendar year. This date fixes the tax liability for the entire fiscal year (July 1 through June 30 of the following calendar year). And, this liability is not affected by changes in property ownership or valuation during the fiscal year.

The property owner(s) as of January 1 is/are the "taxpayer(s) of record." The "taxpayer of record" does not change during the course of the fiscal year, even if the property is sold during that time. The tax payment is the taxpayer of record's legal obligation, even if the new owner — through the purchase — agrees to assume responsibility for paying some of the taxes.

The "in care of" gets removed from the Assessors' records once the fiscal year ends.

Here is an example of how this works: Owner A sold her house to Owner B on July 8, 2020. Because Owner A was the owner of record on January 1, 2020, Owner A will remain the taxpayer of record from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Let's assume the July 1-8 property taxes were apportioned to Owner A and the balance of the fiscal year's taxes to Owner B during the real estate sale closing. Technically, Owner A is legally liable for the property taxes, but Owner B has agreed to be responsible for paying those bills from July 9 onward. For the rest of the fiscal year, however, the real estate tax bills will remain addressed to Owner A in care of Owner B.

Assessor, cont. on page 7

As property values and property taxes rise, every community across the Commonwealth of **Massachusetts faces the same dilemma: How do you help senior citizens living on fixed or reduced incomes from being taxed out of their homes?** Shutesbury's voters have voiced this concern at the past few town meetings.

Over the past several years, about 18 to 20 cities and towns have been successful in petitioning the state legislature to allow their municipality to create their own "means tested real estate property tax exemption" (MTREPTE) to reduce property taxes for their respective seniors.

And, the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers has filed a bill seeking to create a statewide MTREPTE. If enacted by the state legislature and signed into law by the governor, this new law would allow any municipality to vote at its Annual Town Meeting to accept it and offer a MTREPTE under the terms of that bill.

What exactly does an "MTREPTE" do? In the version Shutesbury is considering, any senior citizen who currently gets the "circuit breaker" credit on their state income tax would be eligible to receive a property tax exemption equal to between 50% to 200% of that income tax credit. Each year, the Select Board would vote to set the exact percentage. The cost of paying for the exemptions would be spread across all of Shutesbury's residents. And, Shutesbury's voters would decide every three years whether the town should keep offering MTREPTEs.

If the Select Board agrees to place this idea on the warrant

for Shutesbury's Annual Town Meeting, the Assessors' Office will hold a few online "Zoom" webconference meetings to explain the proposal in greater detail and answer people's questions.

Note from the Town Collector

Ellen McKay, *Town Collector*

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,

With the winter upon us, the third quarter of our real estate bills are due on February 1 and the calendar 2021 motor vehicle excise bills for many vehicles registered on January 1 may have been mailed. Additionally, excise bills on vehicles registered late in 2020 are billed during 2021. The year for which the bill is issued is found in the upper right hand corner of the bill.

For everyone with an Amherst or New Salem mailing address, please check your registration to make certain the "Place of Garaging" is listed as Shutesbury. This is the information the Registry of Motor Vehicles uses in determining what municipality issues the excise tax bill. If you find incorrect information on that line, please contact the Registry and your insurance company to correct the information.

If you receive a bill on a car you have traded or on which you have changed registrations, do NOT ignore the bill. The Board of Assessors should be contacted to obtain an application for abatement. The forms are also available through the Assessors' section of the Town's website and should be printed out in landscape format for easy completion. The mailing address for the Assessors is PO Box 264, Shutesbury.

Our on-line bill paying feature allows you to pay your tax bills either directly from your checking or savings account with a fee of \$.25 or with a credit card for a fee based on the amount of your transaction. To use this service, click on the Town's website and then on the announcement on the Home page. For Real Estate and Personal Property taxes, you should enter 2021 for the year and just the bill number WITHOUT the RE or PP to enter the program. For motor vehicle payments, enter the year and bill number which is found on the top, right side of your bill. If you do not have this information, you are able to find your bill information by clicking on the notation "Need help locating your bill" after you indicate what type of bill you wish to pay. You then enter your last name and all bills in that name should be shown. Select the correct one and click on it and the amount due will appear.

Please note that the on-line feature cannot be used to pay any bill on warrant.

We have just been notified that effective March 2 you can pay as many bills (one to whatever) in your cart as you wish for a \$.50 fee.

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD when mailing your tax payments to avoid interest due to late payment. The date your payment is received in this office or by the lockbox is the date of payment for receipt purposes under Mass. General Law. If you send a check generated through a bill payment function from your banking institution, please note that it may take over a week for the Town to receive the payment. If you have the bill generated on the payment due date it will definitely be late. Please

SES Preschool Enrollment for Fall 2021

Typically we begin the enrollment process for Fall 2021 in March. **Due to COVID, that will be delayed.**

If you are interested in receiving information for Fall 2021 enrollment, please contact griec-cig@shutesburyschool.org.

Preschool and Kindergarten Enrollment/ Screening for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds in Our Community

In Shutesbury, developmental screening is available through the school as a first step in a process intended to find children in need of special services and to plan for meeting those needs. The screening focuses on a child's growth in a number of areas, such as large and small muscle control, speech/ language development and concept development. This activity takes about 20 minutes and consists of a number of games that children typically enjoy playing. The screening gives an indication of whether or not a child's skills are developing within the typical range.

If you or anyone you know has children under the age of five, or you have questions or concerns about your child's development, please contact us for more information about the program. Contact **Grace Griecci**, Pre-k teacher, at 414-253-1212 ext.140 or email her at griec-cig@shutesburyschool.org

This screening is available to all families in town, including those with a child not already enrolled in the school's preschool program.



Outdoor time for Preschoolers at Shutesbury Elementary!

School, cont. from page 1

grow. Our masterful teachers have worked hard and devoted countless hours to establishing strong, engaging and meaningful virtual classrooms. Students are able to work in small groups, present to one another and "be together" every day.

Teachers are finding magical ways to teach content and find time to build social skills. Preschool, Kindergarten, First and Second grades have been learning in a hybrid fashion since December 7. Students attend school from 8:30-11:30am in person with their teachers. Then, they go home for lunch and recess. From 1:00-3:10pm, they return to their virtual classroom for the afternoon.

Beginning on February 1, Fifth and Sixth grade students will be welcomed back to school in a hybrid fashion. They will follow the same schedule of in-person mornings and remote afternoons.

We hope to welcome back Third and Fourth grade students in this schedule after February break.

Shutesbury Elementary School has an extremely thorough Hybrid Handbook that outlines our very detailed health and safety measures. This handbook is available to view on our website for any towns person who is interested.

For this school year families are able to choose whether to send their students back to school in a hybrid manner, or to keep them learning remotely at home.

As you can imagine, having students at home and in person is a challenging task to accommodate with a small staff. I would like to thank our amazing educators for their flexibility, talent and professionalism as many are teaching remote and hybrid students at the same time. They are finding ways for all students to "see" each other and interact meaningfully.

Every month, we gather together (virtually) for a full-school assembly. Mr. Cortina (our music teacher) leads us in some fun songs and dances. I will often read a story, an activity and a dance party session. Although it is not that same as

our traditional in-person, bi-weekly assemblies, it is a wonderful way to all gather together.

We are hopeful that the spring will afford us more opportunities to gather together outside for learning and playing. In the meantime, we remain grateful for the wonderful Shutesbury community that continually supports us in providing our students and families with an exceptional education and elementary experience. Special thanks go to the Shutesbury Board of Health for being an incredible support to us as we navigate the health and safety needs of our students.

Sincerely,
Jackie Mendonsa
Principal

PTO Shares Thanks for 2020 and Hopes for 2021 Hello Shutesbury Community!

As the past year has shown us, great change is possible and also inevitable.

We of the Shutesbury Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization applaud the efforts of school staff and leadership taking on the changes and challenges of these past months in a massive effort to make school as engaging and educational as possible while maintaining a safe environment for learning. It is no small feat, and we want to recognize the many hours of creativity and thought all of the educators put forward to keep SES a wonderful place of in-person and remote learning.

The PTO would not be possible without the support of the larger Shutesbury community and we want to take this moment to say thank you. We strive to bring appealing opportunities for you to participate and help our school and you have

shown us your generosity and kindness. Our small fundraisers during the pandemic have been hugely successful because of you. Thank you!

Our mission is to support the educational experience of students at SES while developing a closer connection between school and home by encouraging parent/guardian involvement. 2020 certainly showed us that connection is essential to learning! We look forward to helping fund arts programming, author visits, field trips, Field Day and more in the future!

One achievement of note this past year has been years in the making: **We have become a registered 501c(3) non-profit organization!** The tireless diligence of one PTO member in particular is to be praised as she carried our group through this process single-handedly. Thank you! As a non-profit, we are now eligible to apply for new sources of funding and programs for our students and teachers.

** We are beginning a PTO newsletter! Please email shutesburyPTO@gmail.com if you would like to opt-in to our mailing list or if you have questions, concerns or interest in joining the SES PTO. Parents/guardians and teachers all make up our school community and are welcome to join! As of now, we meet via Zoom the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm. **

We miss seeing your faces in person and out from behind masks, and look forward to gathering again. **We value your commitment to the school and our PTO!**

With heart-felt thanks and warm wishes for health and harmony,
*Shutesbury Elementary School
Parent Teacher Organization*

From the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee

Just a few notes and reminders to help us recycle and dispose of trash through the winter and the continuing pandemic. May we all get our vaccinations soon!

Purchasing Trash Bags

If you need additional trash bags you can purchase them Monday afternoons from 3:30 to 5pm at Town Hall. The bags will be distributed from the Senior Lounge downstairs. Please call in advance to let those working at Town Hall know you're coming. Town Administrator: 413-259-1214; Town Clerk: 413-259-1204; Administrative Secretary: 413-259-6550.

Disposing of Mercury-Bearing Waste Although Town Hall is closed, you can get rid of old fluorescent lamps at the following locations: Home Depot (**compact bulbs only**) and Lowes (**compact bulbs and long bulbs up to 4 ft.**)

Hazardous Waste Amherst will be hosting a hazardous waste disposal day in late August or September this year. We will send out the details as they become available. If you need to get rid of hazardous waste before then, the NEDT Household Hazardous Products Collection Center is open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays from 9:am to 4pm at 190 East Main Street in Westfield. The website is www.NEDT.org, and the phone is 866-769-1621

Bulky Waste Disposal If you have large items that you need to get rid of, you can purchase a sticker at Shutesbury Town Hall—Mondays between 3:30 and 5pm — for \$20.00, which gives you access to the Leverett Transfer Station (LTS) until July 1. LTS hours are Wednesday 2-

Recycling and Solid Waste,
cont. on page 10

Recycling and Solid Waste,
cont. from page 9

5pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am-1pm. For more information about Shutesbury residents using the LTS: [ShutesburyResidentsCanUseTheLTS_2020.pdf](#). And here's the LTS price list: [Transfer station Price guide - Google Docs \(shutesbury.org\)](#).

Disposal of Electronics

Staples in Hadley recycles most electronics, **but not TVs**, at no cost. Here's a list of what you can and can't drop off at Staples: [recycling at Staples.pdf \(shutesbury.org\)](#) Call ahead to see how many items you can bring.

Stay safe, everyone.

Collector, cont. from page 7

address these checks to the Collector's Shutesbury mailing address which is PO Box 175, Shutesbury, MA 01072. Do NOT use the Woburn address because the lockbox cannot process the payment because there is no bill enclosed which results in the check being forwarded to Shutesbury and additional time elapsing before you payment is recorded.

If you receive a demand notice, you should pay it immediately as you only have 14 days from the demand date to pay before the bill goes on warrant which results in a substantial increase in the fees.

If you have purchased your property after January 1, 2020, Massachusetts General Law requires that the previous owner's name remain on the real estate tax bill. Hence, your name will appear with an "in care of." There is nothing we can do to put the bill solely in your name.

The question has come up concerning the information found on the bills. All information is required either by Massachusetts General Law or by the Department of Revenue of the Commonwealth. The Town and this office have no discretion on the statements printed thereon.

Before venturing out to pay a bill in person, please call this office at 413-259-1615 to check the answering machine to determine if I am here. If conditions are poor, I may not attempt to come to work.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

Ellen

Are You Over 55 and In Need of Foot Care?

The Council on Aging (COA) home visit foot care program is staffed by FootCare by Nurses based in Greenfield. These are the same nurses that staffed our in-person clinic prior to the pandemic.

Over the last 10 months, the COA has been using our Executive Office of Elder Affairs grant to partially subsidize the cost of home visits for current foot clinic participants.

We are now able to open up participation to new clients! We suggest clients donate toward the cost of their home visits and grant funds will be used to cover the balance.

If you are interested in learning more, please email coa@shutesbury.org or leave a message at 413-259-3796. Please also see the COA's webpage at shutesbury.org for information about other local resources.

Working Together to Create Community — Village Neighbors!

Village Neighbors (VN) is a volunteer-run organization offering free services to residents over 60 in Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell. Some include assistance with household tasks, yard work, rides and delivery services, post hospital help, respite for caregivers, and technical support for internet and electronic devices. We have recently been awarded a grant to pay for small home repairs materials, and volunteers have assisted over 25 members to make free repairs.

Membership in VN is Free, volunteers of all ages are welcome, and many of our members also volunteer. Find out more: 413-345-6894 or membership@villageneighbors.org or volunteers@villageneighbors.org.

The VN newsletter is published bi-monthly. If you would like to contribute or receive VN News, please contact generalinfo@villageneighbors.org or dina@dinapolizzi.com.

ATTN Google Mail Users: If you are a VN member or volunteer and are not receiving the electronic newsletter, Google has been automatically diverting it to your Promotions folder. To receive it directly to your inbox drag the newsletter from your Promotions folder to your inbox (it will always direct it there in the future) or hover over the sender's name in the top-left corner of the email, and then click "Add to Contacts." Emails from a subscriber's contacts always go to the Primary inbox. If you need assistance, you can contact **Dina Polizzi** (VN newsletter editor) directly at dina@dinapolizzi.com

The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

10 Cooleyville Road

413-259-1213;

www.mnspear.org

Mary Anne Antonellis, *Director*

Thank you!

For a number of years now, the Friends of the Library have launched their year-end fund drive on Giving Tuesday. Our Library's Friends are active, creative and dedicated to making sure the Library has the funding it needs to offer fun and enriching opportunities while also saving for a future new library.

During the pandemic, the Friends have had to cancel many of their usual fundraising activities. We are all really looking forward to gathering for dinners at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, Tag Sales on the Common, and Bake Sales on Election Days sometime soon.

On Giving Tuesday, the Friends asked townspeople and library users who were able to, to contribute to their year-end fund drive. Mindful of the added stress of navigating life during the pandemic, and the challenges we all face, they announced the campaign quietly, using mostly online communication tools.

The response was enthusiastic and generous. Inspired by the early response to the appeal, a library supporter was inspired to offer a challenge. If the Friends received an additional \$2,000 in donations before December 31, this supporter would contribute an extra \$1,000. Response to the challenge was rapid and generous!

Your kindness and generosity towards the Library and towards each other is inspiring. The Library couldn't provide all the



special things, the Storywalks and Take-Home Kits and fitness programs, without this support. This year, Giving Tuesday year-end contributions to the Friends exceeded \$14,500. For comparison, last year during the same campaign, contributions totaled \$9,000. I find it quite moving, that during these unprecedented conditions, so many of you made the Library and the people it serves, and at the same time, the new library we dream of, a priority.

Browsing our collection online

We know many of you miss being able to browse the Library's shelves. We are hopeful that COVID cases will decline as the vaccine becomes more widely available. These past 10 months have been challenging. We have had to adjust library services repeatedly, and we really appreciate your patience and support as we do our best to make our collection accessible.

We know browsing the collection online isn't the same as browsing in-person, and we have a couple of tools to help make it easier.

To browse the entire catalog, visit our website, mnspear.org, and click the **Search Catalog** tab. From here, you can use the dropdown arrows to modify your search. Click **Search** to access our local collection and **All Libraries** to expand your search to all CWMARS libraries.

On the left side of the screen, click **More Search Options** for more options to narrow your search.

One area of our collection that is always popular is newly added items. On the left side of the screen, in the black bar, just under the CWMARS logo, click **See New Titles at your Library**. Scroll down to find **Shutesbury-M.N. Spear Memorial Library** in the alphabetical list which brings you directly to a list of [Titles added in the last 14](#)

Library, cont. on page 12

days in our online catalog. From here, click on each title to read a summary of each item.

Wowbrary

Wowbrary is a weekly email newsletter highlighting the newest items added to our collection. To sign up for the alert, visit mnspear.org and click on the **Newest Arrivals** tab. Alerts are sent out each Saturday. See something you like, click the title then click **Place Hold** on the right side of the screen.

You will be prompted to **log in to your account**. Enter your library card number and password and click **Log in**.

If you don't know your library card number or password, email library.director@shutesbury.org or call the Library, 259-1213, Tuesday through Saturday.

To make online browsing *even more* accessible, we have slowly been creating *Padlets*, online bulletin boards highlighting areas of our collection. To view the Padlets, visit mnspear.org and click on the **Padlets** tab.

Public service during the pandemic

It was about a year ago when the first case of COVID-19 was identified in the United States. Concern grew rapidly as more cases were identified and an outbreak was identified in Massachusetts. In mid-March, we made the decision to cancel Library programs and to close the Library to in-person visits. Making those decisions wasn't easy, and finding ways to make the Library's collections and services accessible, in a safe manner for staff and library users, has been challenging. *Being able to provide meaningful li-*

brary service to our community during this time has also been rewarding.

The *not knowing* has been particularly challenging. Not knowing how the virus is spread, if it lingers on materials, not knowing how long the pandemic would last, when a surge would happen, if inter-library loan would resume? How do we plan for ongoing library services in the face of so much uncertainty?

My goal from the very beginning has been maximum access while also making sure nobody gets sick.

The Library is tiny, and lacks running water for hand washing, so for the most part, just one staff person at a time works in the building. We did improve ventilation, put up some Plexiglas, and did some decluttering in an attempt to make the Library *safer* for staff and library users during in-person visits but then cases surged and it didn't feel responsible to continue in-person visits.

Recent case counts suggest a plateau but there are also reports of new, more contagious variants of the virus. So for now, we are going stick to curbside pickup, telephone and email service.

Managing the workflow, with our small staff of just two people, one full-time and one part-time, social distancing and sanitation requirements, necessitate reduced public service hours. *Currently*, curbside pickup, telephone and email service are available Tuesday to Saturday. The hours and more info are on our website, click the **Curbside Pickup** tab on mnspear.org. There are a few ways to order materials.

You can search the catalog, either our local catalog, or the broader CWMARS catalog, and

place holds. When they are ready, you will receive a **hold pickup notice** via email. You can choose a curbside pickup appointment slot from those listed on the website, and send an email – library.director@shutesbury.org with your preferred time. We will send a confirmation email. Please try to give us an hour notice.

We have also set up an online scheduling tool for booking curbside pickup appointments. This tool should only be used when you get a hold pickup notice. There is a link on mnspear.org.

If you aren't sure what you want, email or call and we will help choose items for you. We love pulling together collections of books and other items for you.

Quarantine

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been questions about how the virus is transmitted. In the beginning we were instructed to wash our hands and wipe down frequently touched surfaces. Some people began quarantining their mail and wiping down their groceries. Later, we learned that the virus is transmitted by droplets and possibly aerosols emitted from our mouths and noses and lingering in the air. We began social distancing and wearing masks.

Clear, reliable, science based guidance on whether or not it is possible to "catch" the virus from library materials has been lacking. Studies have been done and scientists have found that the virus can survive on different materials for different amounts of time. So far, studies don't suggest that object to person transmission is a major concern. Guidance from the Governor's

office suggests a 24-hour quarantine of library items. Other guidance suggests a 72-hour quarantine. Since the virus is detectable on some surfaces for up to seven days, some libraries are choosing to quarantine items for a week. We have decided to quarantine items for a minimum of 72 hours most of the time. Due to our small staff and workflow, sometimes it may take up to a week before your returns are checked in. We do not charge overdue fines and fines assessed on inter-library loan items will be waived.

If research yields more definitive information, our quarantine protocols might change.

How to get Library News

Visit our website, mnspear.org for info about programs. LIKE us on Facebook for interesting news and reminders about library happenings.

The Library uses the Town's email announcement list to announce new programs and opportunities. To sign up, visit Shutesbury.org and click [Sign up](#) to receive e-mail Town Announcements.

Fitness Classes for Adults

Last year, The M.N. Spear Memorial Library and the Wendell Free Library were awarded a federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant for \$15,000 from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). "We are proud to deliver grant funding to libraries for projects that fill unique needs of libraries across Massachusetts," said Rob Favini, Head of Library Advisory and Development at the MBLC. "Libraries continue to be a vital resource to the communities they serve. Programs

funded through LSTA grants illustrate the diverse range of topics and audiences served by Massachusetts libraries."

The MBLC developed this direct grant program using federal funding to help libraries meet local community needs including programs that help New Americans learn English and become citizens, STEM and STEAM projects, programs that serve teen needs, and projects that preserve valuable historical documents. The MBLC also offers grants to increase access to library services for people with disabilities. In addition to the direct library grant program, the MBLC uses LSTA funds to support statewide programs and services including summer reading programs, research databases, the statewide eBook program, the Commonwealth Catalog and mass.gov/libraries which has information and resources for residents. LSTA is administered on the federal level by the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) and in the Commonwealth by the MBLC. More information at www.mass.gov/mblc.

About IMLS

[The Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) is the [primary source of federal support](#) for the nation's approximately 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The LSTA grant, "Toward a Community Culture of Fitness" is designed to engage Shutesbury's older adults (ages 50 and over) in ongoing fitness opportunities. The funding is providing weekly Strength Training classes on Tuesdays at 9am. Additional funding from the Friends of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library and the Shutesbury Council on Aging provide a second Strength Training class on Saturdays at 9am. After more than a year of ongoing classes, many participants in these classes have improved skills and increased strength. With hopes of expanding Strength Training to more townspeople, the Library Director applied for another grant from the New Salem Academy, which is providing a weekly Strength Foundations for Beginners class on Thursdays at 4:30pm.

With additional support from the Shutesbury Cultural Council, the Council on Aging, and the Friends of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library, the Library is able to offer two weekly yoga classes. A Qigong class was offered in the fall and a second series will begin February 23.

The fitness classes are ongoing, online via Zoom, and open to every Shutesbury resident. Check with your doctor to make sure strength training or yoga is right for you. For more info, email library.director@shutebsury.org.

Help Support the Friends of the Library

Bring in Your Returnables!



Bring your returnable bottles and cans to the MN Spear Memorial Library



TOWN OF SHUTESBURY
P.O. BOX 276
SHUTESBURY MA 01072

Return Service Requested

Prsrt Std
US Postage
PAID
Permit 183
Greenfield MA

HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

Go to www.shutesbury.org to find email addresses, or call the appropriate number below.

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss 413-259-1108	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Jackie Mendonsa, Princ. 413-259-1212	RECREATION COMMITTEE B.Z. Reily 413-687-3605
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Linda Avis Scott 413-259-6550	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR Walter Tibbetts 413-259-1211	RECYCLING COORDINATOR Gary Bernhard 413-259-1235
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR Rebecca Torres 413-259-1214	FINANCE COMMITTEE James Walton, Chair 413.259.5397	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Stephen Sullivan 413-259-1626
ANIMAL INSPECTOR Nancy Long 413-259-1279	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief 413-259-1211 or at home 413-259-1286	SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE Dan Hayes 413-230-4686
ASSESSORS Kevin Rudden 413-259-3790	HEALTH AGENT Claudia Lucas 413-549-3710	UNION #28 SCHOOL SUPT. Jennifer Culkeen 413-423-3337
BOARD OF HEALTH Catherine Hilton, Clerk 413-259-2122	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting 413-259-1215	SELECT BOARD Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil, Chair 413-256-0312 Rita Farrell 413-259-1297 April Stein 413-259-1074
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Bob Groves 413-259-1200	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 413-259-1214	SHUTESBURY BROADBAND COMMITTEE Gayle Huntress Broadband Mailbox 413-345-2855
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins 413-774-3167 x. 113	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis 413-259-1213	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay 413-259-1615
CEMETERY COMMISSION Walter Tibbetts 413-259-1286	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Kate Cell, Co-chair 413-259-9129 Michele Regan-Ladd, Co-chair 413-259-1149	TOWN CLERK Grace Bannasch 413-259-1204 Susie Mosher, Assistant
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMM. Rita Farrell, Co-chair 413-259-1623 Allen Hanson, Co-chair	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Leave inquires at 413-259-1214	TOWN MODERATOR Paul Lyons 413-259-1556
COUNCIL ON AGING For Info., Med-Ride Program, Foot Clinic, leave message 413-259-3796	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray 413-259-1584	TREASURER Ryan W. Mailloux 413-259-1801
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 413-259-3792	PERSONNEL BOARD Leave inquiries at 413-259-1214	TREE WARDEN Don Wakoluk 413-256-6736
CULTURAL COUNCIL Rory Valentine 413-256-0563	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar 413-406-2767	WEB COMMITTEE Gail Fleischaker 413-253-0565
DEPT. OF VETERANS' SERVICES Timothy Niejadlik 413-772-1571	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau 413-367-0017	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare 413-549-5330
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long 413-259-1279	POLICE DEPARTMENT Daniel Fernandes, Chief 413-259-1279 Dispatch 413-625-8200	
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire 413-253-7505		

POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD 911