

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS



OUR TOWN

Greetings and happy 2018 from the Select Board

The most significant change we need to report is the resignation in December of our newest member, **Tim Logan**, due to health reasons. Tim was a thoughtful addition to the Select Board and he will be missed; we wish him well.

Following Tim's resignation, the Select Board decided to carry on as a two-person board rather than hold a special election. A special election would have cost the town about \$2,000 and given state required timelines would have put the earliest election in late March. An open two-year position will be on the ballot during annual town elections in May.

There are several issues that the Select Board has been focused on that are particularly important to share. The first is the continuing issue of the regional school budget assessment. Since Shutesbury is part of the secondary school region along with Amherst, Pelham, and Leverett, we are assessed an annual "bill" for the cost of educating our children grades 7-12. Several years ago, Shutesbury town representatives requested that the method for determining how the assessment is calculated be reviewed; it was felt that the current method was no longer appropriate because it did not incorporate the concept of a town's "ability to pay." This fall after more than three years of discussions, a consultant selected by the 4-town committee, and the regional school administration, made a recommendation. Shutesbury, Amherst and Pelham supported this recommendation but Leverett did not. The regional school's upcoming budget is still being developed so nothing is final.

However, since the annual assessment is a significant part of all the towns' budgets, this will have an impact for FY19. There are currently only two options, both are financially beneficial for Shutesbury although we have concerns that one option may result in deeper cuts to the regional school system (\$1.3M are already expected). However this is

See Select Board, page 3

Sharpening the Vision

Meryl Ann Mandell, Chair, *Master Plan Working Group*

The Master Plan Working Group (MPWG) has completed our work to develop a Town Vision. With more than 400 participants in the public process, we thank all the Shutesbury residents that carved out time in busy schedules to attend a workshop, complete a written or on-line survey, or send an email sharing concerns and ideas. After all the data was collected, collated, categorized and analyzed, the MPWG huddled with our consultant, Harriman, to define the Vision and report on what we learned about Shutesbury.

See MPWG, page 4

'Make-ready' work is under way for broadband

Shutesbury Broadband Committee

Our town's broadband project progressed dramatically in 2017. We're pleased to report that you will see evidence of this progress in the ensuing months on Shutesbury roads. Line workers will be out in bucket trucks preparing utility poles by moving existing wires and other equipment and replacing deficient poles to get them ready to accept the fiber-

optic cables that will run our network. Verizon has already begun its "make-ready" work; we expect/hope National Grid and Eversource to begin their work soon.

Please be extra cautious when driving since the trucks will take up a lot of space and our roads are already narrower than normal due to snow banks. Use caution when passing to ensure that everyone stays safe.

While this make-ready work is happening, we are working with Westfield Gas & Electric on our design and engineering plan and construction bidding so that actual network construction can begin as soon as the utility company work is complete. Assuming no undue delays in the make-ready phase, we are on target to complete the project by early 2019.

Many people have asked which areas of town will be built first, but we are unable to answer this question until the design and engineering plan is complete. However, we will be working with the engineers on a build sequence that will allow us to "light up" areas as they are complete so residents don't have to wait for

See Broadband, page 4

Town taxation: from taxing chickens, to taxing your car

Rebecca Torres, *Town Administrator*

In the 1800s, the Town of Shutesbury taxed chickens, cows and houses and land. The Town, your local arm of the government, continues to tax townspeople on the basis of the value of the property you own: houses, land and cars. More cars

See Taxation, page 7

Messages from the Town Clerk

Susie Mosher

townclerk@shutesbury.org

413-259-1204

on the web @ www.shutesbury.org

Office Hours: Mon. 3:30 – 6pm

Tues. - Fri. 8:30 – 10:30am

Thurs. evenings 6:00 – 8:00pm

And other times by appointment

Census:

Happy New Year! 2018 is here along with the gray 2018 Census forms that were mailed to every Shutesbury household this month. The annual street list/census form is mandated by the state to update the voter rolls. Nationwide voter rolls are being more carefully scrutinized. The town uses the information to determine trash bag distribution, verify mailing addresses, etc.

Please:

- list all residents, voters and non-voters, in your household including children,
- fill in missing information and correct any mistakes on the form.
- sign the census form and mail it in.

If someone has moved away, please send me an address so I can contact them. A voter cannot be removed from the list until I received a signed request by that individual to remove her or him from the Shutesbury voter rolls. ***If your household didn't get a census form, please notify the Town Clerk.***

Elections:

2018 brings us some important local, state and federal elections. In town government there will be 16 seats on the town election ballot on Saturday, May 5. All seats are for a three-year term unless noted. The seats are:

- two for Board of Health
- one for Cemetery Commission
- two for Board of Library Trustees
- two for Planning Board (a two-year seat and a three-year seat)
- two for School Committee
- two for Select Board (a two-year seat and a three-year seat)
- five for the Municipal Light Plant Board (Broadband) (a

one-year seat, two two-year seats, and two three-year seats. Thereafter all terms are for three years. This may be revised at Town Meeting; see Broadband article.)

Much of the town's government is done by people who volunteer for elected or appointed positions. This saves thousands of tax dollars, and committee work provides a civic and social connection to our town. Consider joining the force! Now is the time to attend a committee meeting or visit committee web pages to learn about their workings. Scheduled meetings and agendas are on the town's website calendar and posted on the bulletin board in Town Hall.

It is simple to run for office in Shutesbury. Nomination papers can be picked up at the Town Clerk's office ***beginning February 1***. The signatures of 20 Shutesbury registered voters are needed, then return the papers by ***Monday, March 19***.

Massachusetts has state primaries, ballot questions and elections this year; the dates are yet to be determined. If you'd like to be paid as an election worker, please contact the Town clerk. We need more workers. Teenagers and new citizens would be GREAT!

To vote at Town Meeting, in town elections or in state or federal elections, you must be a registered voter. The voter registration period for our town election ends Friday, April 13. You can register to vote on-line, in person, or by mail. Mail-in forms available outside the Town Clerk's office.

Citizen Petitions:

A Citizen's Petition is a proposal by a citizen or a group of citizens, signed by 10 or more registered voters, that is brought to the Select Board to place on a Town Meeting warrant. For example, a petition could ask Town Meeting to vote for adoption, amendment or repeal of a town's bylaw. Another type of petition may offer a resolution/advisory urging action at local, state or federal levels. Last year six Citizen Petitions placed articles on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. The process to file a Citizen Petition is multi-stepped and has deadlines. The Town Clerk and Town Moderator have prepared an information sheet to guide citizens through the steps. If you are consid-

ering such a petition, the time to start this research and process is **now**. Contact the Town Clerk for more information.

To New Shutesbury Residents:

If you are new to Shutesbury, ***WELCOME!*** For some, a move to Shutesbury can be a real adjustment to rural life. Stop by Town Hall (top of the hill), and I'll give you a short tour, provide you with information and trash bags and answer your questions. If you have Internet service (and believe me, we are working on that!), check out the town website at www.shutesbury.org. If you don't have Internet service where you live, feel free to stop by Town Hall or the Town Library to get a free WiFi signal.

Without volunteers, no newsletter!

Linda Avis Scott, *Administrative Secretary*

This issue, like every other, would not arrive in your mailbox without the dedication of our volunteer newsletter editor, **Janis Gray**, and the folks who spend hours collating, folding, and sealing each one.

A grateful thanks for the folders of the Autumn 2017 issue of the newsletter: **Mary Anne Antonellis, Andy Fairfield, Sally Fairfield, Susan Gomberg, Catherine Hilton, Tim McNerney, Susan Millinger, Susie Mosher, and Janice Stone.**

If you would like to join in the fun of assembling our newsletter, please let me know by calling 259-6550 or emailing adminsecretary@shutesbury.org and I will add you to my list. When a new issue goes to print, I will call or email you with the date/time the folding will begin. Any amount of time is welcome.

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 projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions promoting the sale of goods or services for private profit cannot be accepted.

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

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Conservation Commission seeks two new members

Do you love the unique natural beauty of Shutesbury? Would you like to help the town protect and nurture it?

The Shutesbury Conservation Commission (ConCom) currently has two vacancies and is actively seeking interested community members to fill them. The ConCom is a group of volunteers responsible for protecting the town's natural resources.

Through one to two monthly Thursday evening meetings and site visits all over town, the ConCom administers the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act and the town's Wetlands Bylaw, and manages town conservation land.

If interested, call the Commission office: 259-3792 or email: con-com@shutesbury.org

Community Clean Up – CANCELLED?

There is currently a vacancy for leading the spring Community Clean Up, co-sponsored by the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee.

This one-morning-a-year event is a good way to meet people and help our town. Interested people please contact **Susie Mosher** at sndmoes@verizon.net or call 259-1204.

It's brush burning season- January 15 to May 1

For Burning Permits (good for ONE DAY only): Go to

www.fcburnpermits.com or call 413-625-8200 between 8:30am and 1:00pm on the day you want to burn.

Please note these excerpts from the Massachusetts General Laws, 527 CMR, 10:22: Open Air Fires:

(1) No person shall set, maintain or increase a fire on the open air at any time except by permission, covering a period not exceeding two days from the date thereof, granted by the head of the fire department or forest warden.

(2) The disposal by burning of brush, cane, driftwood, and forestry debris, excluding hay, leaves and stumps, from January 15 to May 1 shall be conducted:

(a) at a location greater than 75 feet from any dwelling

(b) between 10:00am and 4:00pm

(c) on land proximate to the place of generation

(d) while in constant attendance and until completely extinguished

(6) Any permit granted under 527 CMR 10:22 may be revoked at any time. Whoever violates any provisions of 527 CMR 10.22 shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$100 or by imprisonment for not more than one month, or both. (Reference M.G.L., c. 48, s. 13)

A full copy of 527 CMR 10.22 can be obtained from the Fire Dept.

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resolved, Town Meeting will be asked to approve an approach that will be different from in years past.

Now for some good news for those residents who remember the gas leak at the fire station in 2008 and 2009. After the work was done to correct the situation, Shutesbury owed the federal government \$198,000 for "cost recovery." This November 2017, the Town received notice from Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection that the state was successful in convincing the federal government that cost recovery would be a burden to our Town; as a result we no longer owe anything. This is great news.

Another development worth mentioning is that our police chief of 13 years, **Thomas Harding**, will be retiring on June 30, 2018. Tom has served Shutesbury well; he fully appreciates the character and needs of our small town. In preparation for his retirement, the Select Board will be discussing a search for a new police chief starting this winter.

Finally, in the Select Board's continuing effort to improve cross committee communications and coordination, the Select Board hosted the annual All Boards meeting in early November. Attendance was strong, with representatives from many of the 27 town committees and 10 departments sharing information with each other.

As always the Select Board would like to acknowledge all the hard work that volunteers and staff do to make our Town run. Despite our modest size, there are many issues, large and small, that require meetings, planning, expertise and dedication. We invite all resi-

dents but especially those who have never volunteered to try it out. There are various opportunities to get involved; the most important qualification is your interest in becoming part of this rewarding enterprise called local town government. In a world where many Americans are increasingly feeling isolated from their communities, this is a great opportunity to get connected and involved. Visit the Help Wanted Page on the town website or contact the Town Administrator at 413-259-1214.

We would be remiss if we did not to take a moment to thank the members of one set of volunteers that make the Select Board's work lighter. Usually unless there is controversy, few people attend Select Board meetings. Members of the group "Positive Presence" take turns to observe, contribute and appreciate our meetings. They also feed us healthy and sugary snacks to get us through the hours of meetings. We sincerely appreciate their thoughtfulness and actions.

As a reminder, every Select Board meeting starts with public comment so if you want us to know something, stop by for that. All our agendas are listed on the town calendar and topics are listed by time.

If you can't make a meeting, send us an email at selectboard@shutesbury.org. While legally we cannot respond in substance to your email (we are not allowed to deliberate outside of meetings), we will get the information.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to improve our town.

Sincerely,

Your Select Board
Michael DeChiara, Chair; Melissa Makepeace-O'Neill; Vice Chair



Midwinter on the Common

MPWG, cont. from page 1

The resulting Community Vision Report, May 2017, is available on the Shutesbury MPWG Website (http://www.shutesbury.org/master_plan_working_group), along with all the backup information gathered and used to compile the report. Residents identified four themes in the Vision:

- Community – preserving the town's unique culture with civil discourse through activities and gatherings;
- Finances – staying fiscally sustainable and affordable, with residents satisfied with the level of municipal services provided relative to their property taxes;
- Infrastructure – improved lifestyles with advanced Internet and cell service, social gathering spaces such as a new library/community/senior center, and well maintained, well-utilized existing buildings and roads;
- Land Use and Housing – diversity in housing with localized economic development and protected open space that is more accessible.

The Select Board voted to endorse the Vision, but then asked the MPWG to reconvene in summer to give the board direction on Vision Statement #2, which included strategies to implement the vision. A re-constituted MPWG (**Meryl Mandell**, Chair, **Mike Vinskey**, **Allen Hanson**, **Jeff Lacy**, **Tim Logan**, **Mary Anne Antonellis**, and **Michele Cunningham**) reconvened in August to work on the Selectboard request. Every member came forward with their ideas to implement aspects of the Vision. After extensive discussion, three topics emerged that the group chose to bring forward to the Select Board for future action: developing a concept plan for use of Lot O-32; crafting a statement of fiscal issues in town; and developing low cost/high benefit actions to improve the quality of life in town.

The MPWG felt that working on a plan for Lot O-32 would encompass all four areas highlighted in the Vision. We developed a Lot O-32 Committee mission and charge, and passed this charge on to the Select Board for action. The MPWG recommended that the Committee not be

responsible for coming up with a roadmap or a particular plan set in stone, but rather a vision for the lot consistent with what was gleaned from the data. Since our recommendation to establish the Lot O-32 Committee, the Town Administrator submitted a grant application to the State to fund hiring the Conway School to develop a concept plan for the site. Happily, the State funded the grant, the Select Board is working on forming a Lot O-32 committee, and the town will move towards engaging townspeople and developing the plan. Stay tuned. It is extremely gratifying to see action on this MPWG recommendation from the Vision.

After long and lively discussions on fiscal sustainability/responsibility, the MPWG issued a statement that recognized that the various entities in town responsible for town finances had already been working on "understanding, developing and implementing best practices for sound fiscal planning with the assistance of a grant-funded consultant from FRC-OG." Rather than reinvent the wheel, the MPWG chose to support the Select Board and others in continuing their close watch over the town's budget. The MPWG also strongly encouraged the various financial entities in town to work hard on improving both internal communications on financial matters, and also reaching out to Townspeople to explain financial matters more clearly and thoroughly.

The final tangible recommendation from the MPWG was the establishment of a group, possibly called the Achievable Actions Committee, that would encourage residents and town staff to submit ideas and suggestions that were small, achievable, inexpensive and doable. Example ideas that bubbled up were community vegetable gardens, developing a trail or historic site map for Shutesbury, and more. The Committee would not be the idea originators, but rather the facilitators for applicants that would implement the suggestions. We recommended that funding be allocated at town meeting to kick-start these low budget projects. Stay tuned and start thinking about some ideas of your own.

The MPWG has completed its work, and thanks all those that assisted along the way. We worked long and hard to try and understand the desires and hopes that residents have for the future of Shutesbury. The Community Vision Document provides a documented synthesis of how we want our town to gracefully move into the future. Let's all work together to make it happen.

Broadband, cont. from page 1

the completion of the entire project to get service.

We've received some great questions about how recent FCC (Federal Communications Commission) net neutrality changes will affect our network. Unlike most of the country, which is at the mercy of Internet providers such as Comcast, Charter or Verizon, Shutesbury will contract with an independent Internet Service Provider (ISP). Our ISP contract will include privacy and neutrality protections for Shutesbury residents. The managers of our town network will also continually work to make it as affordable as possible for all residents. Towns and cities like Shutesbury which are building their own municipal networks will be able to provide these protections on our portion of the network because WE will own the network.

Keep your eyes out for broadband mailings this spring. We'll be contacting every household with home installation information this summer. In the meantime, the best resource for project updates and status is our website: <http://www.shutesbury.org/broadband>

P.S. Part of the Annual Town Meeting in May will include an election of the five-member Board of Directors for our Municipal Light Plant (MLP). If you're interested in running for this volunteer (unpaid) position, a job description is available on our website. Nomination papers must be in by March 19. Note that the state is still unclear about which governance structure is required for a broadband-only MLP board, so the board may be changed – or even eliminated in May.

What won't change is that we'll continue to have a dedicated and talented group working to manage our broadband project regardless of structure or title.

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 2018 motor vehicle excise bills for many vehicles registered on January 1 may have been mailed. Additionally, excise bills on vehicles registered late in 2016 are billed during 2017. The year for which the bill is issued is found in the upper right hand corner of the bill.

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 on the Assessors' section of the Town's website. 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 2018 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.

You are now 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 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 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, 2017, 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 will be here.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

— Ellen

News from our school

Jackie Mendonsa, *Principal*,
Shutesbury Elementary School

Dear Shutesbury Community,

Shutesbury Elementary School has had a wonderful four months in the 2017-2018 school year!

Students and staff continue to enjoy our younger student playground and fabulous track.

Our Office Administrator, **Jessica Carlson-Belanger**, and School Nurse, **Katherine Harrington**, are organizing and facilitating our "Moose on the Move" afterschool walking/running club (the Moose is the SES mascot!). This club is affiliated with the 100 Mile Club (100mileclub.com).

Students and staff track the amount of miles they run and walk each visit to the track. We map how far we have walked in total on a map in the front hall of the school. Our goal is to make it to Florida by June. We have already made it to Savannah Georgia! (See map on this page.)

Four of our classrooms received new tile flooring during the summer. The bright tile replaced the old carpets in the rooms. The students and teachers have commented on how bright and fresh the floors look. Teachers have commented on a difference in odor and cleanliness in the rooms. Many thanks go to the Town for supporting this Capital Planning project.

In December, the school was treated to our traditional Artist-in-Residence experience. This year, SES welcomed



back Shutesbury resident **Marilyn Sylla** and her son **Jericho** (an SES alum!). They taught the students and staff African drumming and dance. The residency culminated in a wonderful school evening performance before our winter break.

The school budget and the SES PTO sponsored this meaningful event. It is so important for students to experience the arts. We are so grateful to be in a community that supports that philosophy.

We have welcomed several new families and teachers to the school over the fall and early winter. New staff members include **Susan Kahn** in grade 5 as the long term substitute, and **Annemarie Foley** in Title 1. We are thrilled to have them on board!

Students continue to be immersed in engaging units of study in their classrooms. Grades K-6 are working with the Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing curriculum.

The younger grades have also been learning about working with the Kathy Richardson Math curriculum and introducing it into their math learning. Students have also been on field trips

to local apple orchards, the UMass Fine Arts Center, Morse Hill, and to the movie theater!

Older students are participating in the Massachusetts Children's Book Award (MCBA) challenges. These challenges include reading the books and creating and participating in activities related to the top-rated books on the master list. Students who read five or more books on the list are invited to a giant MCBA party with incredible games, activities and food in March.

The school librarians in Shutesbury, Leverett and Swift River schools create this special party. Students from all three schools are able to gather together to celebrate at this highly anticipated event.

SES is looking forward to more fun learning and growing in 2018. We're hoping it won't be too cold in the winter months and that we don't have any more snow days!

We welcome the community to use our track during non-school hours and also welcome any volunteers to help in our library or be guest/buddy readers with our students.

If you have questions or interest in volunteering at SES, please contact me at mendonsaj@shutesburyschool.org and I can help you with the process.

Happy 2018!

Shutesbury Early Childhood Program

The Shutesbury Elementary School Community (SES) believes that opportunities for early childhood education are essential components of a good education system.

Early experiences in an environment rich in hands-on materials and activities provide children various opportunities to grow emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively.

We believe that a trans-disciplinary team approach, in which all adults working with children are responsible for a child's learning, is the most effective way of teaching and we also believe that parents are the most important teachers of their children and that their involvement in their child's education is essential.

Our Early Childhood Program is accredited by the National Association

for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which is a mark of a high quality program for young children.

Your child must be 3 years old on or before September 1, 2018 for preschool enrollment, or 5 years old on or before September 1, 2018 for kindergarten enrollment.

Please contact the school for Fall/2018 enrollment information. Call **Jessica Carlson-Belanger** at the Main Office of SES, 413-259-1212 x100 carlson-belangerj@shutesburyschool.org or **Grace Griecci** 413-259-1212 x 140 grieccg@shutesburyschool.org

Developmental screening for 3, 4 and 5 year olds

Developmental screening is available through Shutesbury Elementary 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 40 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 have any questions or concerns about your child's development, would like more information, or wish to set up an appointment, please call **Grace Griecci**, Shutesbury Elementary School's Preschool Teacher at 259-1212 x140 or email grieccg@shutesburyschool.org

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

Union #28 Community Network for Children

The Community Network for Children program supports families by acting as a hub to provide information, support, literacy opportunities and family engagement programs within the communities of Erving, Leverett, Wendell, New Salem and Shutesbury.

Come take part in our programs and play, read, and meet up with old and new friends. It takes a village to

raise a child!

Shutesbury – free weekly Tales & Tunes

Come and enjoy stories, song and craft activities with your child(ren) and other families and caregivers from your community at the M.N. Spear Memorial Library. Tales & Tunes will continue on Mondays, from 9:30 -11:00am, and is facilitated by **Katie Tolles**. This program is intended for children 0-5 years of age and is sponsored by the M.N. Spear Memorial Library and Union #28 Community Network for Children.

For more information please contact Gillian Budine, (978) 544-5157 or email budine@erving.com.

Shutesbury – Free weekly Playgroup

Come and enjoy time with your child (ren) and other families and caregivers from your community at the Shutesbury Elementary School gym on Fridays, from 8:45 -10:15am.

This Playgroup is facilitated by Joie Ciepiela and is intended for children 0-5 years of age and is sponsored by the Shutesbury Elementary School and Union #28 Community Network for Children. Program not held during school closures.

See CNC Website for program and event schedules, <https://sites.google.com/site/communitynetworkforchildren/home>.

For more information please contact Gillian Budine, 978-544-5157 or email budine@erving.com.

Talk, Read & Play – at home!

Talk, Read & Play is a free home-visiting program for families with children two years old and younger who live in New Salem, Wendell, Shutesbury, Leverett and Erving. Help build the foundation for your child's learning. Participants will receive free books, toys and learning materials. When children talk, read and play, they build skills that prepare them for a lifetime of success.

To participate in this free program, or if you have questions, call 978-544-5157. Find flyer and more details at the Community Network for Children's website at: <https://sites.google.com/site/communitynetworkforchildren>



Taxation, continued from page 1
than chickens are taxed today. The most common tax is excise tax on vehicles.

If you rent, you do not pay real estate taxes directly, but you are assessed for vehicle excise tax. More than 2300 automobiles are now taxed in Shutesbury and only a few chickens and cows.

The excise tax collected in Shutesbury last year for vehicles was \$190,000. The state has a formula for evaluating the value of the vehicles. A commitment is sent out multiple times a year based on new cars purchased and older cars still in use.

Real estate valuation goes through a rigorous process. The Town Assessors track properties assessing the change in the marketplace as well the change in condition, and maintenance of properties, comparing your property to other properties in the neighborhood, and the sales that take place. The assessing department manages a reassessment that was required every three years, and by state law is now required every five years, as well as annual updates. This revaluation process is monitored and certified by Mass. Dept. of Revenue officials. The goal is to assess all properties in town within 10% of their market value.

The total value of all property in town is \$212,575,170. That figure is put in a spread sheet, the tax recap, to calculate the total property tax levied by the Town. The tax rate is a function of total valuation, and the budget. If values go up the tax rate goes down. If values go down the tax rate goes up. The tax rate is determined and applied to each non-exempt property.

The average house in 2018, valued at \$242,833, is multiplied by the \$23.06/thousand tax rate, equaling the average annual Shutesbury tax bill of \$5,600. The Tax Collector divides that by four and sends out quarterly bills.

In 2017, Shutesbury ranked 118th of 351 towns for Average Single Family Tax bill in the Commonwealth.

Each and every property owner in town receives bills. Homeowners are our tax base. Residential property makes up 90% of the town's property. This money is collected each year, equaling \$4,901,983 for 2018. The total town budget is \$6,247,051 and is funded by a mix of town taxes, state aid, and local receipts. The town budget reflects the majority of spending done to provide services in town. Other revenues that support services come from capital accounts, revolving funds and grant accounts that provide for capital items, and projects beyond operational services.

The majority of spending by the Town is for education, 60% of the \$6,247,051 town budget: \$3,769,900. The balance provides for maintenance of our roads, public safety (police and fire services), library services, environmental and health services, and administration.

The next largest piece of the town budget is revenue from the state, c. 70 aid. Total local aid this year is \$775,856 direct to the town, and approximately \$700,000 directly to the regional schools.

Each year we wait to learn how the state will fund cities and towns. The Governor makes the first determination, followed by the House and then the Senate estimate. In July they conference together and agree on the final amount for the state budget, including how much money they will give to cities and towns in local aid.

The biggest pieces are c. 70, school aid, and c. 90, for roadways. The first estimate is made in January.

The Governor detailed his spending priorities the end of January 2018. This year we are looking at a 3.5% increase in unrestricted local aid (UGGA), an additional \$5929. Our state education funding is an additional \$20/student and there is no proposed change by the Governor in highway c. 90 aid.

There are cuts in state and federal grants that are larger than these projected increases. The net balance of increases and cuts to local aid and grants is a negative number. The Town will have to increase local funding if it is to provide level services, meet the mandated requirements of federal and state laws and the needs of our students.

The town governance structure in Shutesbury is open town meeting. All residents in town that register to vote have a vote at town meeting. Annual Town Meeting is held the first Saturday in May. A three person Select Board serves as the executive body. They are paid a stipend of \$2377/year and have weekly duties and responsibilities.

The three Select Board members are elected with each three-year term coming up on a rotating basis. Currently there are two members on the

Board. There is a vacancy. The Select Board is supported by the town administrator.

The Select Board is a policy making body. The Finance Committee is responsible for working with all Town departments and

bringing a budget forward to Annual Town Meeting.

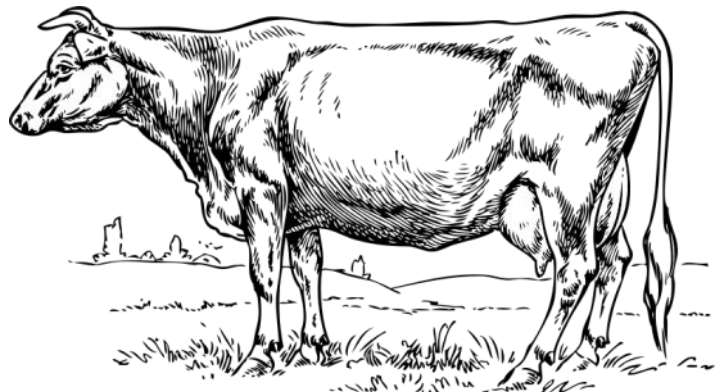
There are 35 boards and committees (made up of 163 people) with a mix of statutory responsibility and committee charges to do the work of the Town.

There are nine full-time and 34 part-time town employees, and 42 school employees.

There are about 1400 registered voters in town. More than 10%, 163 volunteers, are appointed by the Select Board or elected to serve Shutesbury and make this town work.

Come to town hall, call or email to ask how you can get involved. Be a part of it.

The Town will have to increase local funding if it is to provide level services, meet the mandated requirements of federal and state laws and the needs of our students.



Thank you from the MN Spear Library Board of Trustees

The Trustees of the MN Spear Library begin this new year in a spirit of profound gratitude. Last year, three fundraisers, Spring Spruce-Ups, Valley Gives and Giving Tuesday, raised \$23,000. When you add this to our existing funds raised and appropriated, we now have \$310,722 saved up for our new library!

To put this figure into context, this is *fully one-third* of the Town's share of the cost of the previously proposed new library. Town Meeting has shown great foresight in making annual appropriations to save up for the new building, and volunteers and donors have invested great energy in raising private funds.

Our new library will be a true public/private partnership. Because it will be a town building providing services to everyone, it's right that Town Meeting has set aside funds. And because some people are more passionate about our need for a new library than others, it's right for those of us who most want a new library to put the most effort into funding it.

So we're grateful to the Friends of the Library and the many volunteers who have raised such a significant amount of money for the new building.

We also appreciate constructive criticism of the previous proposal and approach. The various concerns and criticisms about the last proposal will help us create a stronger vision and proposal next time. We have special gratitude for those who opposed and who have continued to stay engaged with the process, through coming to Trustees meetings, responding to surveys, and communicating with us about how to build broad support in our town.

Through Town Meeting appropriations, a variety of creative and effective fundraising efforts, and by participating in surveys and focus groups, our whole town is already contributing to a new library for Shutesbury. And for that, and the spirit of goodwill we've seen taking root and flourishing, the Library Trustees say thank you.



The M. N. Spear Memorial Library



10 Cooleyville Road
413-259-1213; www.mnspear.org
Mary Anne Antonellis, *Director*

Open Every Day

The M.N. Spear Memorial Library is open every day. Our hours:

Monday and Wednesday: 11:00am - 1:00pm and 3:00 - 6:00pm
Tuesday and Thursday: 3:00 - 7:30pm
Friday: 3:00 - 6:00 pm
Saturday: 10:00am - 1:00pm
Sunday: 3:00 - 6:00pm

Monthly Ukulele Strum-Along with Julie

Join our group of ukulele enthusiasts for a monthly evening of music making! Other instruments welcome too. Usually the last Monday of the month, 7:00pm, at the Library. (Dates followed by asterisks are the exceptions.)

January 29	May 21*	September 24
February 26	June 25	October 29
March 26	July 23*	November 26
April 30	August 27	December 17*

Tale and Tunes

Story Time with Katie

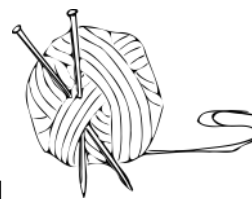
Mondays, 9:30 – 11:00am, at the Library

Join us for stories, songs, simple crafts, and good company. Best for babies from birth and children up to age 5 and their caregivers.

Library Knitting

Wednesday, January 31, Wednesday, February 28 and Tuesday, March 27, 7:00pm, at the Library

Bring your knitting to the library and knit in the company of neighbors and friends. Local knitting enthusiast



Nancy Logan will be on hand to answer questions and offer guidance for your on-going knitting projects.

Healthy Cooking for Kids – Breakfast!

Wednesday, February 21, 10:30am, at Town Hall

Children ages 6 -13 are invited to participate in a hands-on cooking (and eating) workshop.

Healthy Breakfast featuring healthy French toast, eggs in a basket,

and chocolate strawberry smoothies. Space is limited - Registration required, please call 259-1213 to register your child.

Chocolate Tasting: From Bean to Bar to Palate

Sunday, March 4, 4:00pm, at Town Hall

Come for a virtual tour of cacao production, from choosing and harvesting beans, to drying and fermentation techniques, to creating the "recipe" that leads to the chocolate bars that we eat.

Then, learn how to truly appreciate and assess chocolate with all of your senses with a tasting of different varieties and sources from around the globe. Learn why two 70% chocolates taste different from one another, how to read a label to assess chocolate quality, why one chocolate that is good for eating might not be for baking, and what makes a chocolate "best" in its class.

Ages 14 & up, please. For the best experience eat only lightly before attending. Class runs 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Registration required, please call the Library to register, 259-1213.

About the instructor: Dédé Wilson has written 17 cookbooks, was an editor at *Bon Appetit* magazine for 15 years, and eats chocolate every single day.

Corned Beef Dinner

March 16, 6:00pm, Shutesbury Athletic Club

A benefit for the Friends of the Library

Corned beef, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, and dessert.

Suggested donation: \$10 for adults, \$5 for children and seniors.

Spear Library Academy

Friday, March 23 10:0am – 2:00pm

A series of fun and educational programs!

Live animals! Ukulele! Balloon Twisting! And more!

Visit our website for more info.

All to the Tune of a Hickory Stick: A Look at Education in the One Room Schoolhouse

Wednesday, March 28, 7:00pm, at Town Hall

A presentation by local "Living History" professional Dennis Picard.

This program is co-sponsored by the Shutesbury 250th Anniversary Committee and the Spear Library.

Library Gentle Yoga

Wednesdays, 9:00am, at Town Hall. Bring a yoga mat.

Library Yoga will resume in the middle of March. We are pleased that the newly formed Shutesbury Recreation Committee was able to continue the weekly yoga class through December, January and February.

Our spring yoga series is supported in part by a grant from the Shutesbury Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass. Cultural Council, a state agency.

Save the Date! Pop-Up Playground and Ice Cream Social

Saturday, June 16, 5:00 – 8:00pm, Shutesbury Athletic Club

Play starts at 5:00pm, Ice Cream served at 7:00pm.

And More!

Plans are in the works for a series of line dancing classes, some arts and crafts classes, more strength training classes, and a fun-filled summer reading program.

Stay tuned to our website, <https://sites.google.com/site/mnspearmemoriallibrary/>

LIKE us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ShutesburyLibrary/>

Nextdoor Shutesbury

Join "Nextdoor Shutesbury," the non-municipal website and email communication system for Shutesbury residents.

This is our virtual town bulletin board, where people exchange time-

New Parent & Family Meet & Greet #2!

Hosted by

**The M.N. Spear Memorial Library &
The Union 28 Community Network for Children**

**Sunday, February 18th
11 am - @ Town Hall**



**Refreshments
will be served.**

Please RSVP by calling the Library, 259-1213 or Gillian at CNC, (978) 544-5157



**M. N. Spear
Memorial Library**

"The Union #28 Community Network for Children Program is funded by the CFCE Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care."

ly info in categories that include Crime & Safety, Recommendations, Lost & Found, For sale & Free, Events Calendar, and General.

Members can also create public or private special interest groups, or join those already created by others.

Some of the more recent groups include:

- Photos of Shutesbury
- Shutesbury Families (geared toward those with younger kids for playgroups, or mom/child walks, etc.)
- One public general info group
- Five private member groups serving the Neighborhood Safety Net teams established under the guidance of the Board of Health.

Just Google "shutesburyma nextdoor" and choose "sign up" to start receiving and sharing info with more than 805 Shutesbury residents, and optionally, to reach out to an additional 770 neighbors in adjoining neighborhoods in Amherst, Pelham, Leverett and Wendell.

If you have problems signing up, email **Paul Vlach**, a Nextdoor "Lead," at vlach@admin.umass.edu for help.



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

Return Service Requested

PRSR
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #305
AMHERST MA 01002

Resident
Shutesbury MA 01072

HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

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

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss 259-1108	ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire 253-7505	POLICE DEPARTMENT Chief Thomas E. Harding 259-1279 Dispatch 413-625-8200
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Linda Avis Scott 259-6550	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Jackie Mendonsa, Principal 259-1212	RECREATION COMMITTEE B.Z. Reily 413-687-3605
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR Rebecca Torres 259-1214	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR Walter Tibbetts 259-1211	RECYCLING COORDINATOR Gary Bernhard 259-1235
ANIMAL INSPECTORS Nancy Long 259-1279	FINANCE COMMITTEE George Arvanitis, Co-Chair 259-1348 Eric Stocker, Co-Chair 259-1250	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Stephen Sullivan 259-1626
ASSESSORS Kenneth Holmberg 259-3790	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief 259-1211 or at home 259-1286	SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE Fred Steinberg 259-9996
BOARD OF HEALTH Catherine Hilton, Clerk 259-2122	HEALTH AGENT Claudia Lucas 549-3710	UNION #28 SCHOOL SUPT. Jennifer Haggerty 413-423-3337
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Bob Groves 259-1200	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting 259-1215	SELECT BOARD Michael DeChiara, Chair 259-1059 Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil 256-0312
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins 413-774-3167 x. 113	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 259-1214	SHUTESBURY BROADBAND COMMITTEE Gayle Huntress 259-1905 Asha Strazzero-Wild 413-478-8368
CEMETERY COMMISSION Marilyn Tibbetts 259-1976	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis, Dir. 259-1213	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay 259-1615
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMM. Rita Farrell, Co-chair Allen Hanson, Co-chair 259-1623	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Kate Cell, Co-chair 259-9129	TOWN CLERK Susie Mosher 259-1204
COUNCIL ON AGING Med-Ride Program 259-3796 David Dann, Chair 259-1554	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Leave inquiries at 259-1214	TOWN MODERATOR Penelope Kim 259-1326
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 259-3792	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray 259-1584	TREASURER Gabriele Voelker 259-1801
CULTURAL COUNCIL Julie Stepanek, contact 387-5670	PERSONNEL BOARD April Stein 259-1074	TREE WARDEN Leave inquiries at 259-1215
DEPT. OF VETERANS' SERVICES Timothy Nijadlik 772-1571	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar 259-1276	WEB COMMITTEE Jamie Malcolm-Brown 413-362-9996
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long 259-1279	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau 367-0017	ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare 549-5330
POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD 911		