

**Shutesbury Board of Selectmen
Tuesday February 26, 2013 Meeting Minutes**

Members present: Chairwoman Elaine Puleo and members Al Springer and April Stein.

Also Present: Town Administrator Rebecca Torres, Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge recording, and Shutesbury resident Michael Vinsky for the full meeting.

Chairman Puleo opened the meeting at 6:30 P.M. at the Shutesbury Town Hall.

Appointments

6:30 PM Police Chief Harding:

- Things are going well at the (full time police officer) Academy for Officer Soto; no graduation date has been set yet.
- Officer Herzig has resigned. Chief Harding is working to fill the empty shifts:
 - Mount Holyoke College security police officer Jesse Ritter (first interviewed by the Board of Selectmen on November 20, 2012) is still interested in working part time in Shutesbury.
 - Chief Harding has also received another application.
 - Officer Thomas is still working for us though he still covers in Leverett for Sgt. Batchelder.
 - Selectmen declined needing a second interview with Jesse Ritter.
 - Chief Harding will schedule an interview with the new applicant and the Select Board.
 - Both the new applicant and Mr. Ritter would require training time.
- Franklin County will run a 1 week “police academy” for youth this summer:
 - It will be similar to Scout Explorers, for people aged 15 to 18 years old.
 - Teaching assistance from area police chiefs is requested.
 - The maximum class size is 15.
 - The class is tentatively scheduled for a week in July, 2013.
- Another winter storm is on the way.

6:45 PM Democratic Committee Registrar Appointment: Selectmen received a letter of recommendation for Democrats who would be interested in serving on the Board of Registrars when the Democratic seat comes up for renewal on April 1, in keeping with Massachusetts General Law 51:15:

Susan Millinger, 135 Wendell Road

Georgianna Parkin, 52 Montague Road

Linda Seidman, 511 Pratt Corner Road

- Some Selectmen don't know all of the people and feel it is important to meet all 3 candidates.
- Town Clerk Bracebridge offered that she knows all 3 people and welcomes working with any one of them.
- Penny: Gave brief descriptions of all 3 people.
- Becky will invite all three candidates to one of the March Select Board meetings before the Board makes their selection for the April 1 appointment.

7:00 PM Highway Superintendent Tim Hunting and resident Jeff Lacy: (Also present for this discussion only: Planning Board member Jim Aaron, resident Steve Puffer, Water Resources Committee Chairman Hugh Harwell.)

- Elaine: Almost every year the Select Board gets a letter from Jeff Lacy on the topic of winter road cleanup and use of sand. Elaine invited Tim to explain the overall concept of decision making on snow removal, and use of sand and salt.
- Highway Superintendent Tim Hunting:
 - Almost any snow event requires some sanding. Snow on tar can be very slippery, sometimes not. Snow on gravel is sometimes very slippery, sometimes not.
 - Rain on gravel roads is the “worst case scenario.”
 - A Highway Department truck rolled over on Montague Road just the other night. That's our biggest fear when the Department goes out to sand the rained on gravel roads. It was unfortunate. It could have happened to any one of us.
 - Last Tuesday night Shelburne control notified Tim that the dirt roads were slippery.
 - Tim headed off to sand Wendell Road where 2 people were stuck.

- John started down Montague Road. John’s truck “broke loose” at the crest of the Montague Road hill and after sliding 200 feet, it went on its side and over the embankment.
 - Chains could have helped in that situation.
 - Use of chains is a judgment call. It takes ½ hour to put on chains.
 - Two vehicles were stuck blocking Wendell Road and waiting.
 - In retrospect, taking the extra ½ hour is better than wrecking a truck.
 - Under other conditions Tim would definitely use chains.
 - That day was warm and people were waiting.
 - If John had had chains the truck may have stopped.
- How Tim treats a regular large amount of snow storm:
 - Pre-treat roads or traffic will pack the snow down.
 - If the snow gets packed down, it takes 3 times the material to work from the top down rather than from the pre-treated bottom up. Tim did a test strip of this principle on Pelham Hill Rd.
 - The crew starts out treating all the tar roads first.
 - Then they go back and hook up the plows and wait for the snow to accumulate:
 - The number of inches accumulation, depends on the type of snow.
 - Wet snow is really slippery and is done sooner. Dry snow can wait.
 - They only sand twice for a typical 2 to 8 hour storm; they might have to sand the main hills more often.
 - When the storm is all over, and the roads are plowed, they sand one last time.
 - If it snows for 24 hours, they have to sand more often.
 - You can plow as little as you want, but if the snow becomes stuck on the road, you have to sand more often.
 - A storm that starts out as snow and then rains, the rule of thumb is to leave the snow to absorb the rain, but that can “come back to bite you”:
 - A few years back it was raining on 4 inches of snow.
 - The snow got saturated and packed down with traffic.
 - The plow rode up on the tar roads.
 - The dirt roads are not an issue. We’re not trying to get back to the road surface. We just sand with enough salt so it doesn’t freeze. We want the dirt roads firm enough that plows don’t dig into them.
 - Magic Salt: This year Tim is using a different product (Klear Lane) that is similar to the Magic Salt that he started with 3 or 4 years ago:
 - Tim started using Magic Salt on Leverett, Cooleyville and Prescott Roads because it is so expensive to pump the sand out of the catch basins.
 - Magic Salt is enhanced with Mag. Chloride and a brewery byproduct that melts ice.
 - Tim mixes Magic Salt with the sand and it works very well, even in much colder temperatures. Plain salt is less effective after 20 degrees. Magic Salt is still working at zero, so a smaller amount of sand is used.
 - Tim first tried Magic Salt straight with no sand. Since the traffic helps to get it working by “mushing” it around, it wasn’t as effective as it is now that he cuts it 50/50 with sand. He’s now putting ½ as much material on the road and it’s working better.
 - This year’s new product is available in Westfield and is \$10 or \$15 cheaper.
 - Tim had to order the Magic Salt from New York a week in advance of the need (a storm.)
 - The new product is here in 1 or 2 days, and works just as well as Magic Salt.
 - A 2010 cost analysis found Magic Salt was more expensive to use on all the major roads: Wendell, Lakeview and “the Pelham Roads” than the standard treatment. Tim uses it occasionally on the other roads.
 - In response to a question concerning its effect on the environment, Becky noted that the Magic Salt has 26% molasses in it; and that molasses is not environmentally damaging.
 - Tim is hoping to use magic Salt on Wendell and the Pelham Roads next year.

- Additional storage space is needed for increased use of the Magic Salt type product.
 - Al: If people don't use snow tires, they make it the Highway Department's problem. They call Dispatch and get Tim out. In the old days people would find their own way home.
 - Elaine: There's a balance between too much and too little care. Some people feel that Shutesbury's roads are not plowed often enough. Pelham's portion of Schoolhouse dirt road is often plowed earlier than the Shutesbury end. An explanation was given that Pelham plows their Schoolhouse Road at the same time that they plow their main Buffam Road whereas Shutesbury's end of Schoolhouse gets plowed after Shutesbury's tarred roads, at the same time that the Baker dirt road gets plowed.
 - Tim described the routes of the various trucks and drivers with tarred roads being done before the dirt roads in each area of Shutesbury.
 - April summarized Tim's plan as developed over time, by talking with other road bosses, trying new products, not random actions and also stated that she appreciates Jeff's interest.
 - Water Resources Committee Chairman Hugh Harwell inquired as to how often the catch basins are emptied and where the recovered product goes: Tim responded that the catch basins are cleaned each year and the product is dumped in the yard and re-used for road maintenance material.
 - Hugh: If a catch basin overflows where does the overflow go? Tim:
 - Down the road.
 - Outfalls are built into the retention basins.
 - The system is all tied together.
 - There are a couple of retention basins on Prescott.
 - The material doesn't overflow, just the water. The materials settle out in the basin.
 - Hugh: Cleaning out the basins maintains outflow capacities. We don't want sediment in the outflow. That is why basin cleaning is needed.
- Jeff Lacy: States that he didn't write a letter this year. He just asked Becky about a particular storm on January 6 and another storm a week or 2 later. The inquiry did not pertain to plowable snow. It was more around sanding the dustings of snows and sanding during big storms when the sand would be plowed away a couple of hours later. Jeff's 2 pet peeves are: 1. the cost of winter road maintenance and 2. staggering harmful environmental side effects:
 - On January 6 there was ¼ inch of dry snow in the evening. Tim and Steve came in and sanded all the roads. \$900 in materials plus overtime. If that's being done for Jeff, it's not necessary. He doesn't benefit from it.
 - Another storm a few weeks later, same thing.
 - A 3rd similar storm was not sanded and that one was all gone the next morning.
 - Question: If one storm doesn't require any treatment and the others get treated and the result is the same, why don't we cut back? Just do the problem areas and call it a day.
- Elaine: The sense is what is going to happen not only at that time but in the next 24 hours:
 - In the 3rd storm Tim could see ahead.
 - There have been times especially on dirt roads, if they don't plow, we keep that snow for the season, and it turns into ruts.
 - This weekend we didn't get the big storm predicted. But on Route 2 they got the snow.
 - Road maintenance is dependent on the forecast. We do what we think will be appropriate.
 - If it's right before a school day, Tim might do one thing as busses don't travel well.
 - It's a delicate balance.
 - Elaine agrees with protecting environment. It's definitely a trade-off.
- April: Advises to listen to how carefully Tim investigates his work. There's thought and judgment in doing one of the most thankless jobs. It's impossible to please everyone. April doesn't think that Tim is trying to "wrack-up" overtime, as Jeff suggests.
- Tim: Jeff says the traffic will blow the snow away:
 - If that were true we wouldn't sand. The problem is the traffic packs it on the road and it turns to ice. It's harder to remove ice and takes more material to treat from the top down.

- If I don't sand, Shelburne Control will call with a complaint or accident on the S-curves, or the Locks Pond Road hill and I'll end up coming in anyway, when I could have just gone out and given it a shot before any problems occurred.
- Tim agrees that if there is not much snow it won't turn to ice, but how does Tim know what will happen?
- With dirt roads you can get away with more snow than on the tarred roads, and it doesn't turn to ice as easily.
- It's all case by case, storm by storm.
- Tim used to let the snow accumulate more and wait and see, but that's not a good strategy. The longer you let snow pile up, the harder it is to get off later. We're using less material with the up-front approach than in the past when it was left to accumulate.
- Tim is all for the magic salt.
- Tim doesn't use extra sand. The Highway Department hauls the sand up from Warner Brothers to save the town money.
- Leslie: Described a recent light snow day's ride to work contemplating just sanding the difficult parts of Wendell Road and found that it was hard to say where sand wouldn't have been welcome including on the straight flat stretch where a cat jumped out in the road in front of her causing her to brake for the cat. She was glad for sand everywhere along the way. She pointed out that not all drivers have the nice winter worthy tires and all wheel drive vehicles that some of us are fortunate enough to have. We may just as easily have an 18-year-old inexperienced driver or someone with a less winter-worthy car coming at us, as those of us who have driven winter roads for many years in cars meant for winter roads.
- April: Also appreciates Jeff's dialogue and questioning that helps the whole town. We want to be conscious of our environment.
- Jeff requests a winter treatment policy for roads:
 - Get input from the Conservation Commission.
 - Are we really trying to create summer conditions in winter?
 - How far do we have to go with liability?
- Elaine: It may not be written but Tim's policy was spoken tonight.
- Elaine explains role responsibilities: I don't drive a truck. I depend on Tim to maintain my road, I depend on the Fire Chief to put out fires, and I depend on the Police Chief to protect the town. I also want time for the Conservation Commission to discuss policy. We hired Tim to run the Highway Department. He is ultimately responsible if there were an accident; he, and Elaine. Elaine doesn't want to save \$1,000 and have 12 accidents.

Hugh: Jeff attended a recent Water Resources Committee meeting looking for evidence of a ground water problem which may be coming from road salt. There's also the question of how it affects surface waters. Hugh has asked Tim if in his years of working here, if Tim has observed the catch basins so overloaded that it's running out into ponds or streams, no. Some contaminants will go down into the soil. The basins are built to trap the sediment and let the water filter back into groundwater. That's the best management practice. We have \$4,000 in the budget for cleaning catch basins and Tim digs the other basins out throughout the year. Hugh needs evidence that there is some ecological harm happening. Students are doing tests. If we find something, we will bring that information to the Select Board's attention.

Becky: We are conforming to state standards.

"Brine": Brine is a liquid form of salt. Not yet clear how it compares to other treatments. It's an emulsion sprayed on prior to a storm and enables active melting. A lower amount of material and manpower is needed; it needs equipment for spreading, and storage tanks. How does it affect trucks? Calcium chloride is only used with very specially lined trucks because it is very corrosive to metals. Calcium chloride has to go on at the right time in the right amounts, and it is terribly corrosive.

Sand isn't corrosive by itself but it collects water and causes rust.

Jeff: 1. References Massachusetts Department of Transportation Winter 2013 Bulletin: Liquid Magnesium Chloride offers savings, saves wetlands, saves on corrosion.

2. Shutesbury used to have a Roads Committee. There are lots of issues that a roads committee could take up: new highway equipment, culverts on Wendell road, whether to pave or chip seal. Jeff recommends the Selectboard reinventorize the Roads Committee.

Becky: The Roads Committee disbanded after the last Montague road paving question. That's when the Selectboard adopted a practice of taking the question of paving a road to town meeting.

April: Doesn't think we need another committee. We already have other committees looking at other environmental issues, and we hired a professional to maintain our roads.

Becky: The Conservation Commission is working on a blanket order of conditions for the Highway Department. Tim has gone to Conservation Commission meetings to discuss it with them. Becky has looked at state (Department of Transportation) standards for snow removal and read their policies. It's hard to write a policy that addresses each storm condition. Tim has explained a number of times his practices which have evolved with new technologies structures and equipment. We have technical expertise on the Water Resource Committee. The Water Resources Committee can study environmental impacts.

Jim Aaron: Doesn't want to "micromanage" what Tim does. Jim suggests a compromise: At the end of the winter, conduct a review of the performance of the Highway Department. People will comment on the elements of the winter and how the Department dealt with the weather relative to treating the roads in order to eliminate problems the following year.

Elaine: There are already Select board reviews, but not with input from community.

Becky: Tim's department is more consistently under review than any other department in the town. Tim receives constant feedback. Becky is concerned with the format described.

Elaine: Unfortunately Tim gets the negatives.

Becky: There are opposite comments: one or 2 people say they plow too soon, but most say not soon enough.

Elaine: We get the input and then go over budgets and practices with Tim.

April: Wants to be protective of Tim's time. If we add another layer it would add more work rather than lessen the burden.

Jeff: Jim is just talking about making discussions known. Elaine: Meetings are posted with agendas.

Jim: Maybe no one would show up. Jim recommends these reviews as a matter of course, saying "public input is the oxygen of government."

Elaine wants to wait until the Water Resources Committee reviews the data for clues.

April: Jim is right that public comment nourishes government.

Becky: Wants any meeting created to be constructive.

Jim: People might come to congratulate Tim and ask questions.

Becky: If you're going to do that kind of thing, it needs to be done with every department and it should be more educationally constructed.

Hugh: Many committees are volunteers. We do it because of our interest in the subject matter and public service.

All meetings are open for people to attend. The basic issue is how to fine tune it enough so others will come out.

Steve Puffer: Wonders why Leverett Road has 2 potholes in it. Steve holds nothing against Tim, just wonders how that could happen with how carefully the Leverett, Cooleyville Prescott Roads were rebuilt. Steve adds that years ago they would have oiled and stoned the roads. Steve describes "honing" the tar and stone road 1/2 at a time. If the roads were tarred and stoned, there would be no need to crack seal the roads. It would be a lot cheaper than blacktop. Tar and stone also causes a roughness to prevent sliding.

Hugh: Potholes are due to either one of 2 conditions: either the space excavated was not deep enough and therefore the base material sunk, or the ground water has moved some material away under the road. Maybe drainage should have been installed under the road. There was either a flaw with the original design and or with supervision of building the road. So then, we have to do spot repairs.

Mike Vinsky: Favors the educational aspect of meetings. A lot of committees are manned by volunteers who do a lot of work. The majority of the people in town can't know what they are doing. At the same time people could offer comments. There's a lot of stuff going on that people don't know about. You only hear the negative stuff. All the positive stuff could be heard.

April: It could be similar to town meeting. We could call it a committee fair.

Mike: Town meeting has friction; this would not be in that environment.

Becky: The year before the library, the town's annual town meeting was called "the most congenial on record" by the newspaper. The key is how to draw more people in.

Jeff: We have the All Boards meeting; that's fine for boards. They don't get a huge public attendance. Jeff is more interested in what the 3 major town departments are doing. Wants more of an annual review of what they have done.

Leslie: Suggests the annual town report tells what departments have done in the past year.

Elaine: Finance Committee meetings review department activities relative to budget issues. Next Tuesday the Finance Committee will meet with the School committee. The Finance Committee reviews the police, fire and highway departments when they are trying to put the annual budget together.

Jeff: Is there any way to make that more easily known? Answer: All meetings and agendas are posted on the website.

Leslie: People's lives are full so they only end up coming to meetings when there is a problem.

Elaine: Publicize the budget development process at town meeting. Many volunteer committees have Selectboard representation. Elaine likes the idea of a volunteer board day.

Hugh: Supports volunteer board discussion groups, scheduled in advance. It would not be a decision making forum, just a general discussion.

Becky: People come with problems.

Elaine: Buttons could be worn to indicate who is a volunteer. There are a lot of committees. A lot of committees come and go because no one volunteers. Elaine wants to see a volunteer committee day.

Jim: Wonders if Tim would have an objection to coming to a meeting at the end of the plowing season. Jim thinks that Tim would be glad to come to an education session, not a complaint session.

Hugh: Observed Tim's excellent work on Baker Road.

Topics

1. Regional School District Planning Board update- numbers:

- All the new financial numbers, the questions and answers, and the agendas are on the website.
- The PowerPoint presentation will go up after the presentation.
- A postcard announcement mailing was sent out. There is no idea what the turn-out will be like.
- David Dann will take minutes. Leslie will also take notes for the Board of Selectmen, as it will be important to keep track of the questions.

2. Budget Update:

- Meeting with the Finance Committee and School Committee is set for here at 7 PM on March 5.

3. Floodplain Bylaw update on notice:

- The Floodplain Bylaw was approved by the Attorney General's office.
- The final step is the town clerk's required notice to the community which Leslie will have posted at the town bulletin Boards and will put notice of in the next town-wide mailing.

Select Board Action Items

1. Maintenance contract for generators:

- Town Administrator Torres has reviewed the preventative maintenance and emergency service contract for Shutesbury's 3 generators at the School, Town Hall and Fire Department proposed by ASNE Authorized Services of New England with Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director Tibbetts. EMD Tibbetts has worked with ASNE in the past and prefers to continue working with them.

Selectmen unanimously voted to sign the preventative maintenance and emergency call contract with ASNE in the amount of \$661.50 for the School, \$450 for the Town Hall and \$450 for the Fire Station.

2. Appoint a Registrar:

- Selectmen will postpone their appointment of a Registrar until the individuals nominated by the Democratic Town Committee have come to interviews with the Board of Selectmen.

3. New ALTRU Simply Sustainable Letter of Intent (to host meter for solar generation Facility) Proposal:

- The language in item #4 clarifies the starting point.
- The other tightened language from the original: The original listed 2 different projects at 2 different sites, one site up to 12 megawatts. The new contract is for 3 the megawatts site only.

Selectmen unanimously voted to sign a letter of intent to host a meter for a solar generation facility with Altru Simply Sustainable forming an expression of mutual interest to negotiate actively and in good faith the terms

of a mutually agreeable formal agreement (the “Definitive Agreement”) based on the terms outlined in the **Letter of Intent**.

4. **Selectmen unanimously voted to approve the minutes of February 12 as written.**
5. Selectmen signed payroll warrants totaling \$_____.
6. Selectmen signed vendor warrants totaling \$_____.

Topics the Chairman Could Not Reasonably Have Anticipated

1. If the Shutesbury Elementary School is closed, not delayed tomorrow due to weather conditions, the **Regional School District Planning Committee’s Forum** will be postponed to March 6. If the school is open or only the opening delayed, the Forum will continue on as planned.
 - a. Police Officers will be present for traffic control.
 - b. The new Daily Hampshire Gazette Reporter will be present.
2. **Selectmen unanimously voted to approve use of the Town Hall meeting room for 5 up-coming library events.**
3. **Selectmen unanimously voted to sign the annual 2012 Liquor License Report to the ABCC.**

The Select Board **adjourned at 8:27 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge
Administrative Secretary