

Shutesbury Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes January 14, 2014

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

Members Absent: None.

Remote participation: None.

Staff present: Town Administrator Rebecca Torres, Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge.

Press present: None.

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

Appointments

Police Chief Harding:

1. Ice and Mud:
 - A section of Sand Hill Road was closed over the weekend due to ice.
 - There were a few accidents in the last few days, nothing serious.
2. Elaine reported an electric pole which was sheared off and still standing beside the base of the pole on Baker Road on Christmas. There were no tire tracks to indicate that a vehicle had hit it. No one knows how such a thing happened.
3. Things are going well with Officer Sawicki:
 - He's enjoying his work and becoming exposed to different types of events.
 - He will be taking courses in keeping with the Select Board's appointment requirements.
4. Has an estimate of \$2,200 for many years' worth of confiscated firearms offered by Interstate Firearms.
 - The amount was disappointingly low as Chief Harding had hoped to change them out for upgrades on some of the firearms equipment in current department use.
 - Mass General Law requires the funds to go into the general fund anyway.
 - The Town Accountant recommends setting up a revolving fund for the Police Department.
 - Another option would be to just speak with the Finance Committee about bringing in \$2,000 and needing \$5,000 in return to upgrade department firearms.
 - Other towns' police departments keep an account at the exchange facility.
 - The equipment to be changed out was originally town-funded.
 - The confiscated equipment needs to get cleaned out.
 - Chief Harding listed categories of other items that need to be destroyed including records.
5. The Dog Hearing is scheduled for Thursday, January 30, 2014.
 - Becky and Al report experiences of being in the neighborhood without the dog barking.
 - Selectmen think that it would be worthwhile to have town counsel present at the hearing. Becky will consult with Town Counsel, who may alternatively advise to take it all under advisement and call her later.
 - Mr. Meck received Chief Harding's letter and in a meeting with Chief Harding Ron stated that he would like to see the town fine the dog owner, but no one is hearing dogs barking, so how can the owner be fined?
 - There are older reports of barking, but remedies have been implemented since then.
 - After the hearing, there is nothing more to be done.
 - There are other dogs in the neighborhood that could also be barking.
6. Auxiliary Officer Peters has been hired for pay in New Salem and Sunderland and so, he is at the end of our training for him. He will be exposed to a larger variety of experiences in Sunderland.
7. Officer Thomas may retire in the spring, so word has gone out that Shutesbury is looking for qualified part time officers.

8. Sergeant Masiuk is the Officer in Charge when Chief Harding goes on vacation.

Topics

1. **Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB) update:**

- The RSDPB got preliminary approval from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to go forward with the unanimously voted choice to amend the regional school agreement to allow for an expanded Pre-K through 12 region.
- Tonight the Regional School Committee is meeting and will decide on accepting the plan to amend the regional school agreement, and whether to appoint a committee for the task.
- Elaine is trying to write a letter for the *Our Town* newsletter concisely explaining the process.
- Things are very “complicated and cumbersome.”

2. **All Boards Meeting Planning:**

- A letter went out to all town boards to prepare for the All Boards meeting.
- Becky is already getting positive responses back.
- Becky prepared a small announcement that she is hoping will go on the front page of the *Our Town* newsletter, which Elaine read out loud to the others and approved.
- Is the Select Board going to give a presentation?
- Seating will all be on the same level.
- There will be a podium for the department speaker to use, and members of committees in the audience will be asked to stand and be introduced.
- Selectmen will sit to the side.
- It’s helpful for members of boards to hear what other boards do for a full understanding of how the town runs.
- Refreshments: Cookies will be served.
- The major thing is to get the public there, to encourage more volunteer participation.
- An announcement will also be put in the *Roadtown Newsliner*.
- Elaine will make posters for the library, post office and the front door of town hall.

3. Update on Dog Hearing: See appointment with Chief Harding above.

Select Board Action Items

1. Sign Fire Department PAF’s

a. Selectmen unanimously voted to sign Benjamin “Mino” Caulton’s resignation PAF, effective Jan. 21.

b. Selectmen unanimously voted to sign the retirement PAF for George Davies.

2. Selectmen unanimously voted to approve, sign and send the 2013 annual liquor license report.

3. Selectmen unanimously voted to approve the minutes of January 7, 2014 as written.

4. Elaine signed letters to the Democratic and Republican party Chairmen regarding annual recommendations for election officers and for a Republican Registrar for the term that expires 3/31/14.

5. Hampshire Power Fixed Price Electricity Contract:

a. Becky saw a draft of the latest contract only 15 minutes before this meeting.

b. The new contract will not start until spring and will run through December 2015.

c. Hampshire Power is waiting until spring to get a lower rate than they can get right now.

d. For right now we are getting power through National Grid.

e. The new contract is written to protect Hampshire Power interests. The contract requires an accurate estimate of electricity usage. We do not want to be penalized for using more or less electricity than estimated, so need to approach this contract with caution.

6. Selectmen signed vendor warrants totaling \$464,882.03.

7. Selectmen signed payroll warrants totaling \$91,318.67.

Topics the Chairman Could Not Reasonably Have Anticipated

1. Selectmen will shift their whole meeting of Tuesday January 28 to Thursday January 30th in order to accommodate the scheduled dog hearing.
2. Elaine:
 - Would like to “Skype” in for Select Board meetings that she will miss due to vacation.
 - School contract negotiations will start next Tuesday.
3. No one has heard a word about the status of proposed solar panels on Pratt Corner Rd.
4. No one has talked further with Becky from AT&T regarding a tower on town property.
 - Locks Pond Road resident Jim Hemenway shared with Becky that he tried for years to put a tower on his property by the Lake. His understanding is there are no live projects in his area.
5. Becky has a report from Jim Okun regarding the gas contamination clean-up at the fire station. She will finish reading through it, review it with Jim and then send it out to the Selectmen.
6. Town resident Graeme Sephton, who is a cable plant engineer at UMass and responsible for installing and maintaining all fiber and copper communications cable on that campus will be holding a gathering of people interested in learning more about Leverett’s high speed Internet progress, on Tuesday January 21 at the Shutesbury Athletic Club regarding high speed Internet choices for Shutesbury. Becky has been invited to give a Wired West update at the meeting.
 - Al will attend the meeting.
 - Wired West people in Northampton were aware of it and concerned about towns splitting off from Wired West, and adopting the Leverett model.
 - Representative Steve Kulik will be chairing a workshop on the Friday of the Massachusetts Municipal Association annual January meeting: The head of Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and Monica Webb who is the Chairman of the Executive Board of Wired West will be at that workshop. Linda Dunlavy, FRCOG Executive Director is on the “Kitchen Cabinet,” which is working on the last mile.
 - Warwick’s Representative to Wired West, and Wired West Executive Committee member Reva Reck volunteered to come to Graeme’s meeting and answer questions.
 - Is there a strong contingent in Shutesbury that want to go it alone?
 - Al: In addition to increased taxes, they will still have to pay monthly fees. Wired West will allow people to take the service if they want it. We just have to wait a little longer.
 - Becky: Leverett wants their project subsidized by MBI’s \$40 million last mile money, which has to go for regional projects but MBI also wants to put funds toward Leverett’s project.
 - i. Wired West offers a regional model with much greater savings for everyone involved.
 - ii. If Leverett gets money how many towns will go Leverett’s route?
 - iii. There about 6 other towns state-wide, not members of Wired West, talking about going on their own.
 - iv. We’re trying to “keep the wagons together.”
 - v. It’s a really tricky time because nothing is set as to how the money will be portioned out.
 - vi. The money (\$40 million) should be voted on by the Mass. Senate by the end of the month.
 - vii. You don’t want people to lose Internet.
 - viii. The state will want towns to contribute.
 - ix. There are round numbers about how much it would cost us.
 - x. With a Wired West package it could be a fraction of the \$3.6 million which is what Leverett is paying.
 - xi. Now when people move out, DSL will not stay with the house. That changes everything.
 - xii. Becky: They’ll upgrade again. If they don’t upgrade we go after them again.
 - xiii. April: Wired West will go through; the process is just longer.

- xiv. Elaine: For people at the Lake and the January Hills Road area with expensive homes, it's very hard to sell a home and to live there without high speed Internet.
 - xv. Comcast is in Amherst by town franchise
 - xvi. Could Comcast do January Hills Roads and the Lake area get service from Leverett?
 - xvii. Leverett's Rob Brooks says they don't want to cherry pick parts of Shutesbury making a town-wide upgrade even more difficult.
 - xviii. A base of 5,000 households is needed for the Solarize Mass program to come in. Becky tried adding up all of Leverett, Shutesbury and Wendell but didn't get enough households even with the three towns.
 - xix. Becky is still working on a charge for the new Broadband Committee and will finish it up after the community meeting on Tuesday at the Athletic Club.
7. The Regional School Capital Planning group meeting was cancelled last Saturday morning due to icy road conditions, but those who showed up met anyway.
- Rob Detweiller's plan would ramp Shutesbury up to \$65,000/year to contribute to the regional schools capital fund. The Regional School Committee would decide how to spend the money.
 - Rob wants to stabilize the account at \$870,000 per year for all 4 towns.
 - The plan was so complicated that Shutesbury's representatives said it won't work unless we keep our funds rolled into our own capital fund, like Pelham does.
 - Shutesbury wanted to see a 10-year capital plan. They came up with a 10-year plan which Elaine felt was a "no-starter" because of science labs and bleachers in the middle school, which is a huge amount of money when people are talking about closing the middle school.
 - Shutesbury's representatives said to come to the 4-town meeting with a regional capital plan.
 - Shutesbury's representatives said that all that should be done is to maintain the shell of the building so that it can be re-usable. Nothing for up-grading the middle school until the question of moving the 7-8 grades to the high school is answered.
 - i. The one thing they do have to maintain is the pool.
 - ii. It cannot be drained; it has to be filled with concrete, Styrofoam, anything.
 - iii. If the pool is full you have to maintain what it is full of.
 - What is a timeline of closing the middle school? Who knows what is going to happen with regionalization?
 - i. If we regionalize, then Amherst could use some of outlying towns' elementary schools.
 - ii. Lots of outside conceptions are colliding with planning. Regionalization is a huge question.
 - Regionalization would help with money from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for renovations to Amherst's elementary schools.
 - Amherst could renovate Wildwood by putting Wildwood into the middle school and the Middle school into the high school.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting:

1. January 7, 2014 Select Board meeting minutes.
2. Letters to be sent to the Chairmen of the Republican and Democratic Town Committees in keeping with MGL 51:15 regarding expiration of terms on the Board of Registrars and MGL 54:12 regarding selection of election officers.
3. Shutesbury's 2013 annual report to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission.

The Select Board **adjourned at (9:00?) P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge
Administrative Secretary

140114 Select Board