

Shutesbury Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes August 12, 2014

Members present: Chairwoman Elaine Puleo and members April Stein and Mike Vinskey.

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. Chief Harding provided members of the Board with copies of an act clarifying the term of appointment of non-civil service police officers, which will go into effect on November 9, 2014. Selectmen accepted the information without taking any action.
2. For the benefit of new Selectman Mike Vinskey, Elaine and April reviewed their previous experiences with interviewing police officer candidates. In the presence of residents Melissa Makepeace and Meryl Mandell, Selectmen interviewed candidate Peter Granitsas of 3A Wildwood Lane, Goshen for the position of part time police officer. (By 7 PM residents Deacon Bonnar, Jim Aaron and Anna Aaron also arrived and sat in on the end of the interview.)
 - Peter's answers to questions included the following information:
 - i. Moved here from the eastern part of state, loves rural, small town atmosphere. Rides horses.
 - Loves western Mass atmosphere for law enforcement – There's not a call in every corner. Can look at people without suspicion.
 - Described his approaches with handling hypothetical domestic incidents and under-age drinking and illegal drug parties.
 - Reviewed his work history including some recent short-term positions in local departments.
 - Understands that this is a part time position.
 - Is continuing in his field with training and certificates.
 - Put himself through the full time police academy; so doesn't owe any town anything.
 - Would like to move up through the ranks of a small town and also develop his credentials to become a trainer in policing specialties.
 - Did the Federal Reserve Bank academy, but it's "a different world" that he did not enjoy. Did a lot of related seminars before and after the training and has good contacts, but he's not pursuing that kind of work.
 - His parents took in refuge families after almost every conflict when he was growing up, so he has been exposed to multiple languages: Vietnamese, Khmer, Russian. Knows conversational Spanish having grown up in the inner city.
 - He has timed his commute to be 40 minutes from Goshen to Shutesbury; has an ultimate residential goal of the Sunderland Leverett area due to friends with horse stables in that area.
 - Peter's question for the Board: In what way do you want the police department to be "out there?"

April: Right now we have a fabulous Department. The tenor about how to relate is really working.

Elaine: We want residents to trust police. They are there to enforce the rules and to provide community service. An incident should not be a demeaning situation. It's a fine line to negotiate. We want our officers to be people that residents wave to when they drive by.

- Peter is interested in the paired reading program in the elementary school, stating that one can learn as much from a 12-year-old as from an adult. Peter describes his experiences with the Winthrop Explorer program.
- When asked to, Peter described a recent most difficult situation and how he confronted it. He concluded that through that experience, he gained confidence that he can work alone and think on his feet to keep everyone safe.
- To a question about working with the fire department: “I think they’re great... We can’t do a job without them and they can’t do a job without us.” Likes complexes with just a wall, not streets between the departments.

At the conclusion of the interview, Chief Harding offered to communicate with all parties for input.

3. National Grid has hired Lewis Tree to trim trees in Shutesbury. Because they are a regional company, they need a place to park their 5 trucks. Chief Harding authorized Lewis Tree to park the trucks on Lot O-32. The trucks will leave the lot at 7 AM and be back at 3:30 PM for a period of 4 to 6 weeks. Becky reminded everyone of the importance of addressing sanitary facilities.
 - Sand Hill Road will be closed below the houses for 1 or 2 days. Detours will be well marked and Chief Harding will send out a town email blast.
 - Baker and Leonard Roads will not be closed, but the trimming will cause delays.
4. As a result of complaints about a professional wake-boarder who provided student training and demonstrations on Lake Wyola, an Environmental Police Officer has been out on the Lake, and has addressed some violations: the wakeboard boat for hull numbers, and also random violations on other boats on the Lake.
5. After Chief Harding had left, Elaine requested resumption of individual Selectmen meeting with the Chief on Friday mornings. Becky will coordinate the arrangements.

7:00 PM: The Group for Civil Communication: Represented by Meryl Mandell and Selectman

Mike Vinskey, Selectmen received a short historical write-up of a group of Shutesbury residents who call themselves “The Group for Civil Communication.” Also in attendance for that portion of the meeting was Planning Board Chairman Deacon Bonnar, Planning Board member Jim Aaron and resident Anna Aaron:

1. In addition to Meryl and Mike, the group membership includes Jeff Lacy, Paul Lyons, Graeme Sephton, and Sharon and Robert Raymond. Meryl spoke for the group’s goals:
 - a) Wants to see how to lessen bad feelings and develop positive discourse when town residents don’t agree. We don’t have all the answers.
 - b) The Group doesn’t want the rules and regulations of being an appointed town board. Members understand that the group doesn’t have the same clout as a recognized town board. They compare themselves more to a book club, which invites people to their meetings.
 - c) The group is trying to gain an understanding of process: helping people to feel included.
 - d) The Group had a productive meeting with Town Moderator Penelope Kim.
 - e) Trying to build bridges between people who feel disaffected following the library question; want a Shutesbury “we.” We don’t know where we’re going with it.
 - f) We want to see the library issue come up again.
 - g) Group member Jeff Lacy is also on the Planning Board. It’s time for the Planning Board to up-date the 10 year old Master Plan, the big picture for a town.
 - h) Mike: We’re starting to talk with the Planning Board and the Library Trustees and we want to up-date the Select Board with where we have been and where we are going:
 - a. Meet once per month at the Shutesbury Athletic Club (SAC).
 - b. They are not a committee, so they don’t post minutes.
 - c. They do want to get other people involved.
 - d. The Group got a notice in the spring issue of *Our Town*.

- e. Elaine: Meeting at the SAC does exclude some people.
- i) Meryl: If the Library Trustees want to get conversations started about a new library, the Master Plan could start looking at the bigger picture, and the library question would fall out of that.
- j) Group member Jeff Lacy brought a professional planner who he works with, and who facilitates envisioning with towns that have dissent over issues, to a Group meeting. It would cost \$10,000 for her to work with Shutesbury. Where should those funds come from?
- k) Becky: The Master Plan is Planning Board driven. What is the relationship between your group and the Master Plan process?
 - a. Meryl: Our group is just an incubator. Jeff brought up the Master Plan and has taken the lead from the angle of the Planning Board. Meryl refers to the presence of other Planning Board members, who came to listen to this discussion at this Select Board meeting.
 - b. Mike: Feels it was the other way around. The Group wanted to do something about the library divide and the Group thought the Master Plan to be a good vehicle into the library discussion. If the Planning Board decides they want to redo the master plan without us, that's fine. We're a club. We were only looking at the Master Plan as an avenue to generate discussion about the library.
- l) Meryl continues: We're just trying to connect with other people. We need diversified participation.
- m) Elaine recollects a similar non-municipal very diverse Committee for Social Responsibility.
- n) Meryl: When you get face to face with people and get to know them: they're nothing like what is said about them. Notes that the 250th celebrations brought out a huge cross-section of people. People really care about the town: so if we can tone down the rhetoric and come up with something most of us want we can work together. Meryl wants a re-opening of a new library discussion: The visioning of the Master Plan focuses on the priorities of the people of the town.
- o) Deacon: The Planning Board has talked through this proposal with no result. Mediated discussions would provide opportunity for an informed exchange of ideas.
- p) Do we need to spend \$10,000 on a planner for 1700 residents?
- q) Meryl: It's really a facilitator, hired through the low bid process, to address challenges. We never resolved how to fund it. A special town meeting to use free cash would give a broader picture of agreement. The Group has organized groups that could get people out to vote.
- r) Mike: The \$10,000 to go above and beyond the Master Plan budget to address a civic divide is contentious in the Group.
- s) Meryl: The \$10,000 shouldn't be talked about because visioning is a big part of Master Planning.
- t) Deacon: The library issue is much more important than the timing of the Master Plan.
- u) Meryl: What's a good time and when? Some say, let's just start talking about the library. Others say do the Master Plan visioning and the library will fall out of it. You'll also hear about broadband and other big issues. We don't have answers; we're trying to make connections.
- v) Mike: The Master Plan guides us in everything we do in the town. The one we have now is old and out of date. Mike sees a new Master Plan as more important than the library issue.
- w) Mike: How much of the current Master Plan was accomplished? Deacon: We got the zoning.
- x) Meryl: Another goal was a new library: The Master Plan was very perfunctory.
- y) Elaine: This isn't the first time we've talked about the library.
- z) Deacon: There was a widespread opinion that a library was appropriate. Times and economy have changed.
- aa) Leslie recollects the Master Plan survey results: Yes we want a new library; no we don't want to spend money.
- bb) Elaine: If someone handed us the entire funding, there would still be some who will say "No."
- cc) Meryl: It wasn't all about money. I didn't realize that. A lot was financially based. A number of people want to hold onto the vision of a town from the 1800's that never changes; stop

- development. Small is beautiful retain rural character whatever that means. But the town has grown. That's the question. Where do we want to go from here?
- dd) Elaine: You'll get civil discourse; you won't resolve the question. Half would like to remain a small town and remain very rural.
- ee) Meryl: 10% and 10% feel very strong and everyone else is in the middle. The same is true for gravel roads and paved roads.
- ff) April: it has to be a majority.
- gg) Mike: It gets answered through the Master Plan.
- a. Elaine: The Master Plan is vague: It has to last for 10 years. You wouldn't want the Master Plan to pin the hands of the town meeting in 5 years, so it has to be extremely vague.
 - b. Becky: The Master Plan is a suggested collection of where people are at a given time. The Master Plan was never embraced by town meeting.
 - c. Deacon: It has no authority.
 - d. April: People do not want to volunteer; the library (debate) made volunteering distasteful.
 - e. Becky: The purpose of the Master Plan is to be a tool that you update to track the things you want.
- hh) Meryl: The Group focuses on a few issues in town that are of great importance: the library, broadband, regionalization. We are identifying these as critical issues. We were hoping then some other groups will fall out of it. We were talking about re-starting LFNAC (Library Feasibility Needs Assessment Committee.)
- ii) April: One job a consultant could do, would be to help us look at process.
- jj) Deacon: Feels that a consultant from out of town would be helpful.
- kk) April: The consultant needs to be a totally neutral party. How would we do that?
- ll) Becky: The Planning Board will discuss this issue again? Deacon agreed.
- mm) Deacon: The Planning Board felt the library was of more importance than the timeliness of the Master Plan. The Planning Board as a whole is still talking.
- nn) Mike: Our group needs to look at some other vehicles. Maybe we need to brainstorm. If the Planning Board doesn't agree, that's fine.
- oo) Meryl: Has reached out to the acting Chair of the Library Trustees. They're in a flux right now. Maybe the Select Board could call a few different groups together. How do we do this?
- pp) April: What is this we're trying to accomplish? Diffuse the rage? Is it to go back to a library discussion that brought all the unhappiness? Maybe it would best not to say "new library."
- qq) Becky: A lot of people have moved on. I think the healing is occurring. People are moving forward. Before any big issues come up we need acknowledgement that a lot of people have a very good feeling about this community; don't go back there.
- rr) Elaine: As with any big issue, a lot had to do with the circumstances at that time:
- a. It was the first major issue with Internet connection. People were learning how to organize in a way that never happened in this town before. It's a little example of what is happening across the entire country no matter what the issue. It's learning to say that I don't agree and not only one party wins. Most of the time we can each get something.
 - b. Put the library somewhere else. Stop talking about it. Let's figure out a way that you and I can talk. Praises the senior lounge as work done together.
 - c. I worry about talking about the library, about visioning a conflict to resolve it. Most people have moved on.
- ss) Mike: Recollects an issue at the November 2013 All Boards meeting and disagrees that people have moved on.
- tt) Elaine: A majority of people have moved on.

- uu) Meryl: The library is still on people's minds; the issue is not resolved. Not everyone thinks about it every day and is concerned. People want to do it comfortably. I would personally like to talk about it because I want a new library.
- vv) April: We stopped talking to each other.
- ww) Mike: Our group will continue to explore; to rebuild civil communication, community spirit.
- xx) Elaine: Sees no harm in the Group's continuing efforts.
- yy) Meryl: We want to help participate.
- zz) Mike: Perhaps it's not as large a problem as we think it is.
- aaa) Deacon: The one thing library folks say is they're planning on applying for another grant. This discussion should take place first.

Topics

1. Fire Station Clean-up: Town Administrator Torres:

Should we go ahead with just the report? Having heard no Select Board vote for extra work, Becky is planning that once the report is in and the test results are in, a meeting will be scheduled with the Department of Environmental Protection.

2. Salt Legal Issue/Possible Executive Session:

Becky wrote a letter with Town Counsel's coaching to keep conversations going.

3. A motion was made and seconded to approve application of a knot weed eradicator to the bloom of knotweed on Pelham Hill Road south of Baker Road. Town Administrator Torres recommends:

1. The town move ahead using one of the Kenerson Corporation's consultants to spray a test section of Pelham Hill Road where there are no houses, and where the knotweed has spread the worst, if the town can get the Conservation Commission's approval, and announce the test section as a kick-off for town discussion of future work. We have a quote from last fall.
2. There are 2 little experiments at town hall.
3. Asks if the Board would consider using Select Board money to do the test section.
4. Meryl Mandell describes knotweed as "really invasive." In surrounding communities it's very extensive. Shutesbury only has a little. We can handle it right now.
5. Becky references a list of places that Meryl and Liz Lacy compiled for the Board last year.
6. If the test case, done away from people, gives a foothold into controlling the problem on Pelham Hill Road than we can cite it in our conversation with the public. This is a process of education.
7. Meryl: The Kenerson Corporation does a very controlled application.
8. Elaine wonders what Montague used so effectively. Becky will make a call and find out.
9. Meryl: Mowing just causes it to grow more vigorously. This is a very aggressive plant not easily eradicated.
10. Becky: Eradication requires 2 to 3 years of applications.
11. Elaine: Wants to know what it does to the vegetation around it. Sees a specific application in our town as a demonstration for the public.
12. Mike: Questions how the selection of a chemical will be made. Becky will send Mike the package of information from the Kenerson Corporation.

Selectmen unanimously voted to approve the application of a knotweed eradicator to the bloom of knotweed, when it flowers, on the west side of Pelham Hill Road south of Baker Road.

A second motion was made, seconded and unanimously voted to fund the knotweed eradication through the Select Board expense account if there is no other funding available, not to exceed \$1,000.

4. Bid Process: Not discussed.

Select Board Action Items

1. **Selectmen agreed to postpone the approval of the July 15 meeting minutes to August 26. Selectmen unanimously voted to approve the August 5, 2014 meeting minutes as written:**
 - No permits are required by the Building Inspector for the test wells.
 - The well location on Lot O-68 was moved as requested by the Conservation Commission.
 - The Highway Department has had unusual staffing for some time due to medical issues. It is hard to get skilled temporary help.
2. Selectmen signed payroll warrants totaling \$75,009.14
 - Selectmen signed vendor warrants totaling \$115,983.45.
3. **Selectmen unanimously voted to appoint a list of Election Officers as provided by the Town Clerk in keeping with M.G.L. 54 §12.**

Topics the Chairman Could Not Reasonably Have Anticipated

1. Discussion of Select Board email:

- Select Board members will forward emails containing subjects that they would like to discuss to the Town Administrator for inclusion on a meeting agenda.
 - Selectmen can manipulate their own email files but they should not change the master Select Board email files in any way.
 - Selectmen agreed to have Mike's be the official disclaimer to the contact page of the website.
2. Regional Assessment Method Committee:
- Meeting dates discussed. The time has been moved to 6 PM so Dan Hayes can attend the meetings.
 - Sean Mangano's meeting summaries are serving as a summary of what the Committee has done in the absence of minutes.
 - Review of possible ways the assessment calculation method could work included:
 - i. Develop a method of assessment calculation and then each of the 4 towns would approve the method at a special town meeting.
 1. If a change is recommended, the regional agreement will have to be amended. This must be done at a special town meeting that should occur in the fall, January at the latest, for any planning of budgets to move forward.
 2. If no amendment is recommended, it stays the way it was: 5-year rolling average to be voted at annual town meeting or else it reverts back to the statutory method.
 - ii. Mike: So if people want to revert back to statutory, it will cause the catastrophic laying off of staff that was spoken of last spring? Is there any transition planning taking place?
 1. Becky: The goal is to be as predictable as possible. Even if we change the calculation method, the alternative may have an impact that we did not anticipate, and it could be a different party raising an objection. So the potential for catastrophe is on-going.
 2. We're trying to find the most equitable way to avoid the potential of catastrophe.
 - iii. Mike: If whatever the working group comes up with is not approved, we're back to where we were last year. Maybe there needs to be 2 budgets: One based on the statutory method and one on the regional calculation method.
 - iv. Elaine: Hopefully a special town meeting this fall will determine a new alternate method. The budget will not have been created.
 - v. Becky: When they build a budget, there's always the default budget. If you cut \$1.5 million it's going to cause chaos.
 - vi. Mike: You don't want to wait until the last minute to deal with that chaos. We'll see what happens at the fall town meeting.
 - vii. Elaine: The new method versus statutory could throw the budget into chaos.
 - viii. Becky: We always deal with potential chaos.

- ix. Mike: If at the spring town meeting we vote for statutory, then they will have to rebuild the budget.
- x. Becky: It's the responsibility of the town to budget responsibly.
- xi. Is there the possibility to vote the alternative or not in January? It still causes chaos: It won't change the reaction of the other times.
- xii. Elaine: They already send out the pink slips. Pink slips went out for many years.
- xiii. Mike: That's one of the reasons for the Regional Assessment Working Group.
- xiv. Becky: In other years of economic drops, when the information was pretty clear in January, pink slips went out. When can the vote for the method be done? Can it be done much earlier? Yes. That's not to say that the communities would support it in May.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the Meeting:

1. Draft minutes of July 15 and August 5 Select Board meetings.
2. An Act Clarifying the Term of Appointment of Non-Civil Service Police Officers by Attorney John M. (Jack) Collins, General Counsel.
3. Resume of Peter Granitsas.
4. August 2014 summary of the Group for Civil Communication
5. Request from Town Clerk for appointment of election officers for Aug. 15, 2014 through Aug. 14, 2015, including information on minimum wage and the list of proposed election officials.
6. Proposed disclaimer wordings for the Website contacts page by Mike Vinskey and Elaine Puleo.

The Select Board **adjourned at 9:18 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge
Administrative Secretary