

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2016 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Mike Vinskey/Chair and Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil
Select Board member absent: Michael DeChiara
Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Susie Mosher/resident, Bob Douglas/66 Lake Drive, Gabriele Voelker/Treasurer, Finance Committee members George Arvanitis, Weezie Houle, Eric Stocker, Bob Groves and Jim Hemingway; Chris Lynch/Matrix

Vinskey calls the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Agenda Review: Vinskey appreciates Torres preparing the meeting packets by 7.8.16; suggests considering digitally formatted packets at a future meeting.

Public Comment Period: Mosher explains her "Positive Presence" idea for increasing community understanding of and participation in town government; she has asked a group of individuals to attend Select Board meetings in support of staff and volunteers; this is also an endeavor to increase participation, particularly of women, in town government. Mosher expresses her gratitude for the work of the Select Board; the goal is to be an incubator and a positive presence – recognizing the work of the volunteers; her newsletter articles have been emphasizing the participatory nature of town government. Vinskey: is there anything the Select Board needs to do? Mosher: the goal is to connect; one of the keys to a strong community is awareness of how a town functions. Vinskey clarifies that this is Mosher's personal effort not the Town Clerk's.

Discussion Topics:

1. Sale of Town Land Lot B10/Bob Douglas: Douglas: as owners, we are under a Board of Health order to improve the potable water for 66 Lake Drive; we are unable to site a new well on 66 Lake Drive due to the site's terrain and the location of the septic system; we want to pursue use of land/Lot B-10, across from 66 Lake, locating the well on this lot will attain the 50' setback allowed by the Board of Health – they are disposed to allow the installation of a well on Lot B10. Vinskey: the Board of Health approval of a 50' setback is a major component of the proposal. Douglas: the Board of Health well application requires an engineer to locate nearby septic systems, potential sources of contamination; the well site will most likely be in the center of the lot. Gabe Voelker/Treasurer: this lot was acquired through probate therefore must be sold by silent auction; notice of the auction is publicly posted for 14 days; the minimum bid is usually the assessed value; the tax title attorney must notify the prior owner – the acquisition was in 1937 – and ensure the title is clear. Voelker: the \$500 tax title fee is required to be covered through the bidding process; the Select Board decides whether to hold an open or sealed bid auction; the bid is opened in a Select Board meeting when the Board decides whether to accept the bid; if accepted, the tax title and buyer's

attorney do the transfer of ownership. Vinskey: why would a bid not be accepted? Voelker: the Select Board decides the minimum bid, usually the assessed value. Torres: the assessed value is \$3,200. Voelker: if a minimum bid is posted, it must be accepted as a low bid; when a bid is accepted, a deposit is required and once a bid is accepted, the process goes fairly quickly. Vinskey: are there any reasons why the Select Board should not sell the property? Voelker: there is no point in going through the process if the Board of Health will not issue a well permit. Douglas: even without the well, we will still want to pursue purchase of the property. Torres: it was noted at a prior Select Board meeting that another party had interest in this parcel. Vinskey to Douglas: if the Board of Health does not approve a well on Lot B10, what is your back-up plan? Douglas: additional filtration on the current well; we prefer a deep water well. Makepeace-O'Neil confirms with Douglas that the Board of Health is aware of the location of nearby septic systems. Douglas: the well application requires an engineer's confirmation of septic system locations. Vinskey asks for a motion to place the tax title property listed as Lot B10 on Town of Shutesbury record card up for a sealed bid auction with a minimum bid of \$3,200. Makepeace-O'Neil moves the motion; Vinskey seconds the motion that passes unanimously. Voelker will proceed with the tax title attorney.

2. Year End Transfer Review/Finance Committee: Torres provides updated "Schedule of Proposed Budget Transfers – Fiscal 2016" documents and explains that two additional bills changing the year-end transfers arrived on 7.12.16. Stocker: it may make sense to do all of these as FinCom transfers. Arvanitis: it makes sense to transfer the funds from FinCom reserves; the balance in the FinCom reserve account is \$42,707.10. Vinskey asks if there are limits on the use of FinCom reserves. Torres: the limits do not apply if transfers are from FinCom reserves and a joint meeting/decision is not necessary. Vinskey: how do we know these accounts are overspent? Torres: the overages are indicated on the expense reports. Arvanitis: transfers will show up in the "budget revision" column of the expense report; overdrawn accounts will end up with a zero balance. Arvanitis reviews the FinCom reserve line item: there were some emergency transfers during the year. Vinskey: it makes sense to transfer from FinCom reserves rather than take the funds from an overfunded account. Arvanitis: the Police Department wage overage is due to Officer Sawicki's attendance at the police academy. Torres: after the budget was approved, the union contract awarded two items, holiday pay and finger printing/cell phone costs, for \$2,400 in new costs; an additional \$7,000 was needed to cover academy costs. Groves asks for clarity on officer training and fulltime pay while in training. Torres explains the process and that if an officer leaves prematurely, there is a repayment plan for the cost of training. Mosher clarifies that this is an area standard. Torres: it is difficult to bring in trained officers that are a good fit for our community; the goal is to have a committed officer that wants to serve the town for a number of years. Arvanitis: trained officers can do well elsewhere. Torres: it is a tough management challenge to hire trained officers and to provide required training. Vinskey: how is there an incentive to stay within budgetary parameters when Chief Harding provides a

number that is subsequently covered when it is overspent? Arvanitis suggests the Select Board talk with the Chief about this matter. Torres: once the Select Board approved the academy, the expenses could, at that time, have been moved as a FinCom transfer; because a lump sum was not transferred in, Harding may not have kept his budget as tight as he did. Arvanitis: for any overspent department, it is important to emphasize the need to stay within a budget. Groves: is there any disciplinary mechanism for overspending? Torres: it is not a disciplinary issue it is a matter of communication. Torres: throughout the year, departmental spending is looked at. Arvanitis: there are no surprises here; the FinCom is aware of the overages though is concerned about the potentially large costs of the salt issue litigation. Vinskey agrees that these costs will be significant. Houle: going forward, the FinCom needs to be more aware of budgets needing adjustment. Vinskey uses the school flooring project as an example of an overspent account: the \$800 overage was taken out of the trash hauling account or some other account – what causes something to be on the year-end list or taken care of during the year? Torres: the \$800 overage was for disposal of the old carpet; the vendor needed payment, therefore the trash hauling account was used. Vinskey notes the need to keep track of overages and costs that are more than expected. Houle: the FinCom allows flexibility for minor amounts that are very small compared to our whole budget. Vinskey: the \$25,000 for the floor was voted at town meeting and ended up costing more. Groves: the cost of disposal should have been included in the original estimate. Vinskey: to be transparent, additional costs need to be out in the open. Vinskey referring to “Buildings/Internet Comm.”: do we need to re-evaluate if there is a more cost effective internet/phone system? Torres: part of the cost is for closing down unused internet lines particularly in the Town Hall as well as the Fire and Highway Department buildings; this line will be over by \$2,000 next year - has not wanted to increase the account. Stocker: would we save funds by moving these buildings to Crocker? Torres: there would be an additional expense to do so; Crocker is partially hooked up at the Fire Department for the Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECS) reports. Hemingway recommends a microwave connection for these buildings. Vinskey asks Torres if a consultant is needed to assist in streamlining. Torres would like to bring the project to completion; the school still has Verizon lines. Vinskey confirms that, this year, overspent accounts will be covered by FinCom reserves. Houle: yes, to do so is FinCom vote. Stocker: could a wage payback be included if an officer leaves after academy training? Torres: no, wage labor law prohibits doing so. Torres: there is a contract with Officer Sawicki for the return on investment for the expenses; one is not allowed to work as a full-time officer without academy training; we currently do not have anyone eligible for the town Quinn Bill – there are restrictions on what programs are eligible. Groves states that he understands paying an officer his salary in addition to training costs to attend an academy is required under law, but it is very expensive for a town like Shutesbury; while we currently have no one eligible for the Quinn Bill, this is another program that could be very costly for the town. Vinskey to Arvanitis: is there any reason for the Personnel Board to review whether there is a more cost effective way to fund the academy? Arvanitis: academy training rarely happens. Arvanitis: FinCom will

have the final numbers sometime in September. Vinskey states concern that too many line items are overfunded. Arvanitis: this matter will be part of the fall FinCom/Select Board conversation.

3. Regional Assessment: Arvanitis: everyone on the committee agreed to work cooperatively and “in good faith” and that along with the five-year rolling average, the ability to pay should be a component; we are working on finding a method everyone agrees on and what percentage, i.e. enrollment 40% and ability to pay 60%. Arvanitis believes the property tax assessment method is a good choice because it does not account for income and cannot be manipulated – it generates a town’s ability to pay; cash can be manipulated; right now, we are focusing on the best method to determine ability to pay; everyone agrees that income is not the best method; the statutory method is difficult to calculate and difficult to understand. Arvanitis: the committee may not finalize our goal before the four-town meeting or before the budgetary season thus, for this year, we are looking at using 15%. Torres notes the need to study how the benefits of the formulas are changing and what formula will work best for the long-term. Arvanitis: any method that veers too far from the statutory method will put a town’s budget at risk; coming up with our own method will provide a reliable ability to predict and not have to take into account the State’s methods. Vinskey provides Arvanitis with a list of ideas he brainstormed about the ability to pay. Mosher: is regionalization still on the table? Torres: that decision has been postponed until next year. The next meeting of the Regional Assessment Committee is 7.25.16.
4. Review PILOT Consultant Proposal/Select Consultant: The Select Board reviews the revised Scope of Services from Harald Scheid/Regional Resource Group. Makepeace-O’Neil moves the Select Board approve the “Scope of Services for PILOT Consultant” from Harald Scheid; Vinskey seconds the motion that is passed unanimously. Torres will draft a contract to be signed by Vinskey.
5. Town Administrator Updates:
 1. The Farmers’ Market has been very slow. As the originators of the market, the Select Board is asked for input/ideas and whether more energy should be put into marketing; currently there are four vendors - Greg Fitzpatrick will return next week and will have a greater variety of produce. Vinskey notes the presence of a new farm stand on Leverett Road. Torres is generally the one opening town hall on market mornings; the market is often a place for communication/sharing. Vinskey suggests considering the matter over the next two weeks.
 2. Vinskey notes that Police Chief Harding’s report indicates that he is no longer in the running for the Sunderland position; asks Torres to confirm with Sherry Patch/Sunderland Town Administrator that the window of opportunity for a shared chief is closed.

3. The schedule of Small Town Administrators of MA meetings for the next year have been planned - issues of concern are regional policing, land-use and keeping open space available.
4. Per Hunting/Highway Superintendent, Locks Pond Road paving will occur later in August; some crack filling will be done on one of the roads; the cistern at Old Town Beach is now filled with concrete; some testing has been done on the drainage problem at the intersection of Wendell and Locks Pond roads; some complaints about washboarding in various areas have been received.
5. Fire Department hose testing conducted at the School is successfully complete.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board Minutes: Vinskey asks for a motion to approve the 7.5.16 meeting minutes; Makepeace-O'Neil moves the motion that is seconded by Vinskey; the minutes, as amended, are unanimously approved.
2. Annual Personnel Action Forms (PAFs): The Board reviewed the annual PAFs and compared them to the master list; Torres will correct the master list and ensure any additional PAFs are prepared. Vinskey asks for a motion to approve the annual PAFs; Makepeace-O'Neil moves the motion that is seconded by Vinskey and unanimously approved. Vinskey/Select Board Chair will sign the annual PAFs.
3. Appointment Letter Template: Select Board members review and Vinskey signs the updated appointment/re-appointment letter template.
4. WiredWest (WW) Appointment Certificate: Torres: this document will make the official changes to be submitted to WW. Vinskey reads the designations into the record: Asha Strazzero-Wild/Municipal Light Plant Manager, Craig Martin/Delegate to WW, and Ayres Hall/Alternate Delegate to WW. Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board approve the "Certificate of Votes to Join WiredWest and Make Appointments"; Vinskey seconds the motion that is unanimously approved. Vinskey/Chair signs the document.
5. Vendor Warrants totaling \$331,209.78 are signed.
6. Payroll Warrants totaling \$92,778.33 are signed.

Unanticipated Item:

1. Appoint Library Substitute JoAnn Bernhard to Library Staff for FY17: Makepeace-O'Neil moves the Select Board appoint JoAnn Bernhard as a Library Substitute FY17; Vinskey seconds the motion that is passed unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Town Property Record Cards for 66 Lake Drive and Lot B-10
2. Schedules of Proposed Budget Transfers - Fiscal 2016 and Fiscal 2015
3. 7.6.16 emails regarding Assessment Committee meetings
4. Town of Shutesbury Scope of Services for PILOT Consultant
5. Annual Employee List and Annual PAFs
6. 7.12.16 Certificate of Votes to Join WiredWest and Make Appointments
7. Appointment Letter Template

7.26.16 meeting agenda:

1. Planning conversation – supporting/promoting Native American heritage
2. 5.31.16, 6.14.16 and 7.12.16 meeting minutes
3. Use of Nextdoor Shutesbury
4. Digital packets and agenda finalization dates
5. Executive Session

Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Vinskey seconds the motion, approved by all, to adjourn the meeting at 9:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary