

Shutesbury Select Board/All Chairs and Department Heads Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2016 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Mike Vinskey/Chair, Michael DeChiara, and Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil

Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Tim Hunting/Highway Superintendent, Kate Cell and Molly Moss/Library Trustee Co-Chairs, Tim Cook/Water Resources Committee, George Arvanitis/FinCom Co-Chair, Susie Mosher/Town Clerk, Eric Stocker/FinCom Co-Chair and Broadband Committee, Gayle Huntress/Broadband Committee Chair, Gail Fleischaker/Conservation Commission and Recycling and Solid Waste Committee and Penny Jaques/Conservation Commission, Barbara Goodhind/Historical Commission Chair, Meryl Mandell/Recycling and Solid Waste Committee Chair & Master Plan Working Group Chair, Gary Bernhard/Recycling Coordinator-Recycling and Solid Waste Committee, Catherine Hilton/Board of Health, Lake Wyola Advisory Committee and Old Town Beach Improvement Committee, April Stein/Personnel Board, Jeff Lacy/Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, Bob Groves/Buildings Committee Chair, Ken Holmberg/Administrative Assessor, Gail Weiss/Accountant, Al Hanson/Community Preservation Committee and Master Plan Working Group, Gabe Voelker/Treasurer, Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director, and Fred Steinberg/School Committee Chair and Web Committee.

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

Agenda Review: Paul Vlach/Web Committee Chair is unable to attend this evening. Dates for the Four-Town Meeting are considered.

Public Comment Period: None offered.

Vinskey offers a sample of his proposed every two-week update for the Select Board webpage titled "October 28, 2016 Select Board updates". Strategies for where/how to display the updates are considered. Vinskey suggests the update, which will include a link to the next meeting's agenda, be sent out the Friday before a meeting. DeChiara will manage the posting. Content of Vinskey's proposed update is reviewed and amended.

7:00pm: All Board & Committee Chairs and Department Heads Meeting

1. Introductions: Vinskey welcomes all present and explains the rationale for the "All Chairs" meeting – that those attending will bring information back to their boards/committees. All present introduce themselves and their respective committees, boards, and/or departments.
2. Open Meeting Concepts by Town Clerk Susie Mosher: After offering her department's thanks for volunteer contributions, Mosher reviews Conflict of Interest/Ethics training requirements; an email with a link to the training site will be sent. Open Meeting Law: deliberations and decisions must be made in a public

arena, agendas must be posted 48 hours in advance, public access is via the online Town calendar and public bulletin board, and an acknowledgement of the posting is sent. A guide for Open Meeting Law is available online. Mosher reads the definition of “deliberation” into the record (found on page 4 of the 10.24.16 “Requested procedures for electronic communications”) and emphasizes that decisions must be made in the context of a posted public meeting and that opinions offered in an email are a violation of Open Meeting Law; working groups must post their meetings. Basic requirements for meeting minutes are reviewed; templates for meeting minutes are available. Mosher is willing to post minutes to committee webpages; hard copies must be received by the Town Clerk’s office; draft minutes meet Open Meeting Law request requirements. Public Records requests: the new law takes effect January 1, 2017 and guidelines for compliance are due by July 2017. As the Public Records Access Officer, Mosher must receive record requests that she will clarify with the requester; the bulk of requests are for minutes therefore posting minutes to committee webpages may diminish these requests; emails concerning town business are subject to public record requests. Mosher emphasizes the need to keep private and town business email content separate. The Web Committee and Town Counsel will be providing input on the development of guidelines. The timeline for a public record request begins with the date it arrives in an email inbox; requests must be met within ten days. To meet a public records request, the onus is on committees to be prepared to offer minutes in draft form. Mandell: does each committee member need to have a town email address? DeChiara: currently, the town has fifty Gmail addresses; a public records request may require sorting through a committee member’s personal and town government emails; in the future, there may be changes in how town committee email is managed. Mosher: public record requests for minutes from adjudicatory meetings are handled the same as other minutes. Torres notes the need for committees to rethink how they are using email; emphasizes the need to refrain from offering opinion. Mosher: a member of the public with a question can be encouraged to attend a meeting. DeChiara: committees need to have a protocol for handling email inquiries. Mosher: the goals are how to protect yourself and, at the same time, respond to the public; this is a topic for an ongoing dialog.

3. Financial Concerns for FY18 by FinCom Co-Chair Arvanitis: This is an exciting time for the FinCom - budget meetings will be starting, the Assessors will be putting together the recap, and Free Cash will be certified. Weiss: Free Cash will be certified in 3-4 weeks. Arvanitis: in conversation with the Select Board, the FinCom is looking at a scenario for not increasing the tax levy. The FinCom will be working closely with the Select Board – looking at the departments and the lines that have been over/underspent; emphasizes the need for the Select Board’s presence at the Four Town Meeting. The town cannot afford to add any additional debt; Broadband or building a library may be appropriate for a debt exclusion override. The FinCom may be making a recommendation to close the gap for funding OPEB (other post-employment benefits). DeChiara clarifies that the Select Board does not have consensus regarding FY18 tax levy recommendations.

4. Website Focal Point of Town Information by DeChiara: Last year's goal was to increase communication, transparency, and community engagement. The Web Committee is looking at redesigning the website and some changes have been made; suggestions for changes can be sent to DeChiara and/or the Web Committee. Emphasizes the need for current, accurate information on webpages and encourages committees to maintain content that is relative to their work. The Web Committee is available for support on the techniques for updating sites. A solution for the location of minutes on webpages is in process. The leading edge is the creation of better access; the website is our portal. Current policy prohibits links to non-governmental pages; this policy will be revised to allow the provision of more helpful, educational information. Fleischaker: is it possible to add a counter to evaluate the frequency of page search/access?
5. Website Content & Communication Methods by Makepeace-O'Neil: Suggests a "FAQ" page and the use of other web platforms to draw attention to the town website. DeChiara cites the example of the Police Department webpage, which is static, however now has a link to the Department's active Facebook page. Makepeace-O'Neil: when using Town Announce or Nextdoor, link back to your committee's website. Groves notes Facebook's use of advertising. Makepeace-O'Neil: the advertising is directed to the user rather than the page. Vinskey: the Board wants to provide the opportunity for the sharing of information via different platforms with the proviso that postings are always linked back to the town website. DeChiara: time will be spent on the development of relevant policy; a working group will be formed during the next couple of months. Holmberg: use of different platforms can be distracting, unnecessary, and affect the ability to get the actual job done; asks if there has been any feedback that the Assessors are not getting their job done. DeChiara notes the need to let residents know what is happening with town government. Mosher: the citizenry have a responsibility for finding out what is going on. Vinskey to Holmberg: if your webpage is working, that is fine; this is an opportunity for boards/committees to assess if their websites are meeting the needs of the community. Fleischaker states that she is a strong believer that the website is the hub and emphasizes the need to encourage its use as a source of information. DeChiara: the idea is to go where "people are" and bring them back to the website. Vinskey: if committees/boards wish to have their own Nextdoor account, Paul Vlach will set up a committee account. Groves: it seems wise to put a link on NextDoor to the town website – the town website needs to be a viable alternative to NextDoor. Hilton: this seems to be emphasizing outreach and maybe not all boards/committees need to do outreach. Torres: the functions of boards/committees vary greatly – some are into outreach as a natural function, i.e. the FinCom versus regulatory committees such as the Conservation Commission. Cell: there is a distinction between providing information and knocking on a door and handing out information; this is a matter of function and how outreach is handled. Jaques notes the time consuming nature of maintaining a Facebook page. DeChiara: this is more a matter of allowing rather than requiring the use of different platforms for outreach; we are taking the constrictors away. Makepeace-O'Neil: the Council on Aging developed a newsletter, sent by mail, to meet the needs of their population. Vinskey: this is all

- about communicating and allowing the use of avenues that work. Vinskey: Town Announce and NextDoor get information to a lot of people in town; Town Announce is a viable avenue for getting notices out to residents.
6. The Role of the Web Committee by Steinberg: Some individuals can post directly to Town Announce; others must send their announcement to the Web Committee for distribution; there are about 450 residents on Town Announce with approximately the same number on NextDoor with a lot of overlap between these two groups. DeChiara: information sent needs to be factual and link back to the town website. Barbara Goodhind emphasizes the importance of the town newsletter as a resource and suggests that perhaps it could be sent out more often. Vinskey: the only way for information to get to the most people is by mail. Arvanitis suggests the use of the official town kiosks. Torres: the kiosks are used for official postings. Vinskey encourages the use of various tools to get information out. Torres: once the town receives Broadband services, meetings may be televised.
 7. Need for Committee Email Addresses by Vinskey: Verifies that all committees/board present have a shutesbury.org email address and recognizes that currently, committee email will be shared via private email addresses. Antonellis emphasizes the importance of only one committee member being responsible for responding to emails. Vinskey reaffirms the need for each committee to have one person responsible for acknowledging an email, taking the inquiry back to the committee, and following up on the inquiry or inviting the resident to attend a meeting. Cook is encouraged to contact the Web Committee to obtain an email address for the Water Resources Committee.
 8. New Committee Issues: none offered
 9. Term Limits for Committee/Board Members by DeChiara: Every year, the Select Board needs to reappoint/appoint committee/board members, therefore, the Board is interested in the thoughts of those present on the subject of term limits and how to encourage more involvement. Groves: is there any committee/board with an excess of members? Mandell: it is really a matter of personal outreach; the idea of term limits does not make sense – it is hard to get volunteers. Bernhard: those with a long-term commitment to town service are not preventing others from becoming involved; there is a need to engage people. Hilton: imposing term limits could create a problem with not having enough people to serve. Stein calls attention to the younger committee members present. Huntress: running a tech business necessitated her need to join the Broadband Committee; she comes from a background of service which influenced her willingness to join a committee; if we do not achieve Broadband, our town will wither and die; her schedule offers flexibility to attend meetings; many folks her age are raising children and do not have time to serve. Cell: term-limits is a broad brush approach; the real need is to find a way to bring people in – suggests a town “welcome wagon” with a packet of information. Stein: there may be a way to offer support to young parents serving on committees, i.e. preparing dinner for them. DeChiara: a huge number of individuals volunteer in town. Mosher: term limits, in a volunteer government, would wipeout institutional knowledge; suggests finding small projects that people might volunteer for; recently, the Friends of the Library created a welcome

brochure. Fleischaker: it takes a number of years to learn the work of a committee such as the Conservation Commission. The Select Board recognizes that based on the input received, limiting terms is likely not a good idea. Hilton: folks with time available are the ones to tap for service. DeChiara: the website has a volunteer service “help-wanted” page.

Vinskey appreciates all present and encourages communicating to let residents know what is going on with their town government.

Meeting is adjourned at 9:01pm.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. 10.24.16 Select Board Memo “ Requested procedures for electronic communication”
2. 10.23.16 email from Paul Vlach “Information for those attending the Selectboard ‘All Chairs’ meeting on October 25, 2016”
3. “October 28. 2016 Select Board updates” by Mike Vinskey

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary