

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS



OUR TOWN

Complex matters coming to Town Meeting

April Stein, Chair, Mike Vinsky and Michael DeChiara, *Shutesbury Select Board*

Two important school issues are looming on the horizon and will require voter input as early as Town Meeting this May.

One is adjusting the method used to determine regional assessment. The other is regionalization.

When it comes to determining assessments for regional school district expenses, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) allows regions to use a formula created by DESE (Statutory method) or a formula agreed to by the towns in the region (Alternative method). For the past eight years the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District has used the Alternative method.

Three years ago at Town Meeting, a resident made the observation that Shutesbury has been assessed about \$200,000 more under the Alternative method than we would have under the Statutory method and requested the town look into this.

This was brought to the Regional School Committee, which formed a working group of members from the four towns to evaluate the Alternative method and determine whether this was the best way to assess expenses. The group concluded the Alternative method was best. However, Shutesbury felt their concerns hadn't been addressed and felt the process leading to the group's conclusion was flawed.

Shutesbury's Finance Committee recommended the Select Board form a Shutesbury Regional Assessment

Summer Study Committee (SRASSC) in an effort to reevaluate the assessment method.

The committee spent the summer of 2015 analyzing data regarding wealth, income levels, enrollment, demographics, tax rates, and other aspects of a town's ability to pay their assessment.

The committee produced a report that confirmed that Shutesbury's ability to pay (property values, income, economic status) was less than the other towns' abilities to pay. The report also showed the Statutory method takes into consideration ability to pay and because of this, the Statutory method is a better formula to use.

While the Shutesbury Summer Study Committee determined that the Statutory method is the most equitable, transitioning to its use in one year has large effects on each town's finances. With a total assessment of 19 million dollars to be spread among the four towns, going directly to the Statutory method would mean the assessment for Pelham and Shutesbury would be reduced by about \$200,000, while the assessment for Amherst would increase by

See Select Board, page 7

MMA news for "272"

Becky Torres, *Shutesbury Town Administrator*

There are 351 Cities and Towns in Massachusetts. Shutesbury's State Assigned Number is 272.

The Mass Municipal Association (MMA) holds an Annual Conference and Trade Show in Boston at the end of January every year. The MMA supports cities and towns across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

It lobbies for cities and towns at the state legislature on matters important to us. It informs the towns about political initiatives that occur and explain how they impact municipalities. It holds forums on emerging issues like the Opioid Epidemic and the Share Economy. Twenty workshops were presented, ranging from Labor Law Updates to Economic Development for Small Towns.

It is at the conference where you can meet and talk to decision makers from all over the state. How do you deal with social media? budget presentations? tasers? historic preservation? health issues and trash collection? cable franchise services, and last mile Internet?

See MMA, page 3

Broadband: Moving toward common ground

Gayle Huntress and Asha Strazzero-Wild, Co-chairs, Frank Citino, Craig Martin, Graeme Sephton, Eric Stocker, Ayres Hall and Steve Schmidt, *Shutesbury Broadband Committee*

It's been an interesting and busy few months for everyone involved with the broadband project in Shutesbury.

On December 30, 2015, Shutesbury submitted its letter of intent and associated documentation in order to let the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) know we are ready to move forward with the utility pole make-ready work as soon as possible. You can see a copy of this letter stating our desire to move ahead "expeditiously" on our website.

Thanks to everyone who attended the December 10, 2015 informational meeting. It was an excellent example of civil public discourse and we hope

See Broadband, page 3

Messages from the Town Clerk

Susie Mosher

townclerk@shutesbury.org

413-259-1204

on the web @ www.shutesbury.org

Office Hours: Mon. 3:30 – 6pm

Tues. - Fri. 8:30 – 10:30am

Tues. evenings 6 – 8pm

And other times by appointment

Democracy thrives when you participate, vote, and get counted

Susie Mosher, *Town Clerk*

Participate:

Democracy is rooted in small towns. It grows because this local newsletter, the town website, (www.shutesbury.org) and neighbor-to-neighbor contacts keep people informed. The town draws its strength through participation of its residents volunteering to take care of business: discussing needs and recommending solutions. The committee system of small town government cultivates the diverse interests, skills and points of view into productive discussion. There are many appointed and elected opportunities for you to join this highly democratic system of local government.

Town elections will be held for eleven seats on May 7. The seats are on: Board of Health, School Committee, Cemetery Commission, Moderator, Select Board, Constable, Library Trustees (2), and Planning Board (3). Contact the Town Clerk for information. Pick up nomination

papers, get them signed and returned by Saturday, March 19. (See related articles on pages 3 and 10 about *appointed seats* and *other* volunteer opportunities.)

Vote: Local, State and Federal elections

Voter registration forms are available at the Town Hall or the Town Clerk will mail you one. You can also get the form on line (or at the library if you don't have Internet). Party affiliations or address changes all must be done 20 days before the state or federal elections, or 10 days before the town elections. Don't delay – register today!

Absentee ballots are available for those who are unable to come to the polls due to health concerns, religious restrictions or because they will be out of town on Election Day. Contact the Town Clerk for information about getting an Absentee Ballot Application and ballot.

Election Worker Pool. This will be a busy year for elections; a good year to broaden our town's election worker pool. If you have never participated in this activity, let the Town Clerk know of your interest. It pays the hourly minimum wage and there are different time slots available throughout the day from 7:45am – 8pm as well as evening hours to count the ballots. Try it – you might like it.

2016 Elections Schedule:

March 1: Tuesday. Presidential Primaries (Don't we know it!) – Town Hall

May 7: Saturday. Town Elections at Annual Town Meeting; polls open 8am – 2pm at Shutesbury Elementary School

September 8: Thursday. State Primaries – Town Hall

November 8: Tuesday. State/ Federal Elections & multiple ballot questions – Town Hall

Get Counted:

Annual Census. Did you get this year's blue Annual Census/Street List form?

This is part of an important process required by the state. The information is used as proof of residency to protect voter rights and veteran status, and it helps our schools with enrollment information and projections.

Registered voters are maintained as "active" if their form is mailed back to the Town Clerk.

Census data is used to update the annual street list available to our police chief and our fire chief/emergency management director as they carry out their public safety responsibilities.

Census information about children under the age of 17 is not made available to the public.

Please help us make the Annual Town Census as complete and accurate as possible. If you didn't receive the form or have any questions, please call the Town Clerk's office at 413-259-1204.

Democracy thrives when you Participate, Vote, and Get Counted.

Notice to the Voters of Shutesbury Winter 2016

Two general by-laws approved at the May 3, 2014 Annual Town Meeting have been approved by the Office of the Attorney General.

Article 18 amended the Town's "Watercraft and Persons Using Lake Wyola" by-laws to read:
2. Speed Limit on Lake Wyola is not to exceed (30mph) day time and 5 mph Sunset to Sunrise.
5. No water skiing between Sunset to Sunrise.

This by-law change was also approved by Colonel James McGinn of the Massachusetts Environmental Police.

Article 19 adds to the Town's general by-law a new, unnumbered by-law "Littering and Dumping." Section 4 provides that the by-law may be enforced through non-criminal disposition and further provides in relevant part as follows:
B. If materials are not removed within the two week period after notification, a fine of \$25.00 in addition to all costs of disposal, including waste removal and disposal costs, Shutesbury departmental, administrative and hired staff time to handle the disposal, and any other relevant costs incurred, shall be charged to the violator.

Copies of these two by-laws are posted at the Locks Pond bulletin board, the Town Hall, the Library, the Shutesbury Post Office, the Shutesbury Elementary School, and the Cross Road bulletin board.

Take pride in Shutesbury — and be involved!

Becky Torres, *Shutesbury Town Administrator*

Shutesbury's new tax rate is \$22.08 per thousand, and the average tax bill in Shutesbury is \$5,415 per year on an average house valued at \$245,250.

We are all mindful of the cost to provide minimal services in a small town with no commercial tax base. Town Administration is driven by almost 200 volunteers and 10 professionally paid staff. We search for efficiencies through shared programs, regional alliances and mutual aid.

We take pride in our schools, in our public service departments, police and fire. Our new white fire truck was delivered last month and stands ready to respond. We take pride in our highway department which up-keeps 20 miles of dirt road and 23 miles of paved road. We take pride in our busy small library, and the fact that the Council on Aging sponsors a

med-ride program.

We need you to be involved to make this town run. We need you to attend public meetings, share your thoughts on issues, volunteer your time. Stop by Town Hall and start learning more about your community.

About our official town website and email list

The official Town website — www.Shutesbury.org — has a wealth of information from various departments, boards and committees.

You'll find the town calendar (official posting place for upcoming meetings and agendas) as well as trash schedules and recycling information, minutes of Select Board meetings, as well as minutes of other boards or committees that choose to post them.

There is a link on the main page to sign up for the Town Announcements email list, to which town officials send out messages and reminders about their activities.

From the Fire Department page,

you can follow the link to sign up for Emergency Notifications by phone and email when a critical event is expected or has arrived.

The Web Committee is planning a new version of the website, and would welcome your thoughts on content you want to see as we move forward. Just drop a note to web@shutesbury.org to share them with us.

For the Web Committee, Paul Vlach, Chair

Our Town, published three times a year in January or February, April, and August or September, is supported by tax dollars. We welcome news from Town of Shutesbury departments, boards, and committees, and from individuals and groups about local projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions promoting the sale of goods or services for private profit cannot be accepted.

Janis S. Gray, *Editor*
Linda Avis Scott, *Town Hall Liaison*

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30% POST CONSUMER WASTE



MMA, cont. from page 1

This year 500 town officials, selectmen, administrators, mayors, city councilors gathered.

We heard the governor speak. He listed the local financial assistance that he is recommending be distributed to cities and towns. Shutesbury aid will increase by \$2,360 for the elementary school and our unrestricted lottery aid will increase by \$6,722.

Cherry sheet revenue, state funding that comes to the towns, will remain mostly flat. So the state is holding steady for this year.

He underscored his efforts to address his greatest concern, the Opioid Epidemic, which is leaving no community untouched.

I heard the Springfield Chief of Police, John Barbieri, say every day in his city there are two heroin overdose deaths. The Governor is promising more beds for treatment, new programs and more support.

The news from Senator Elizabeth Warren was that the federal government is remaining open for business this year, not shutting down. And the second piece of good news is that there are few cuts and a few minimal gains in grant funding for things like "Meals on Wheels" in the federal budget this year.

Broadband, cont. from page 1

that all attendees left feeling heard and more informed about the issues at hand. We held the meeting to address public concern about the December 1 statement released by the MBI that criticized the WiredWest business plan. MBI is a governmental organization responsible for contributing 1/3 of the build costs and managing the build process across the state.

In an effort to resolve the issues, the WiredWest Cooperative continues to meet with the MBI. There have been multiple meetings since mid-December and both parties are working hard to negotiate issues around ownership and the operating structure so the project can move forward.

A positive result of the release of the December 1 statement has been an increase in press coverage and more public involvement.

As a result of the attention and a desire to find common ground, communication between WiredWest and the MBI has improved and both sides have a renewed commitment to work together towards the goal of bringing

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broadband to our underserved areas.

In addition, our legislators increased their involvement and WiredWest has met with them to make sure they are informed and support the project.

We have done extensive research for close to two years and our investigation still shows that the WiredWest solution offers more benefits than the other solutions available to us. We will continue our thorough review of all information as it is released. We're planning a second full review of the revised operating agreement and financial model in February to make sure that the WiredWest solution continues to meet our needs as a town.

The Shutesbury Broadband Committee is in ongoing contact with the Wendell and New Salem Broadband Committees. We have plans for special tri-town sessions in 2016 to further foster communication and information sharing in the coming year between our neighbor towns.

In an effort to keep you informed we'll post updates on our website the second week of every month and on an as-needed basis when newsworthy events happen. www.shutesbury.org/broadband

News from the School Committee

Sean Woodard-McNiff, Chair, Kathryn Fiander, Daniel Hayes, Fred Steinberg, Stephen Sullivan

New Hires for Union #28

The 2015 school year started with some new leadership at Union #28. We'd like to welcome **Jennifer Haggerty** as our new Superintendent. Jennifer comes to the Union with 28 years of experience in public schools — 20 years teaching kindergarten, and the last seven years as an elementary principal in Orange.

Aaron Osborne is the new Director of Finance and Operations; he has 15 years of experience, previously holding the Director of Finance position with the Southbridge public schools, and has also taught middle and high school math for six years.

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Budget

The 2016-17 elementary school budget is projected for a 1% increase. This includes some grants we've received in prior years, but which may or may not be funded this year. If none of these grants come through, the worst case is a 2.28% increase.

The town's Union #28 cost allocation is expected to be a 10% decrease.

Advocacy

School Committee members are advocating to address concerns from the public regarding high-stakes, standardized testing and the impact of charter schools on small and rural districts. We are working with our state representatives and organizations that we are members of, including MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) and CES (Collaborative for Educational Services).

The School Committee meets the 3rd Thursday of every month, 7pm at the elementary school. Meetings begin with an opportunity for public comments and questions; everyone is welcome — but not required! — to stay for the entire meeting. Note: due to school vacation, the February meeting is the 4th Thursday, February 25.

Shutesbury Elementary School updates

Jackie Mendonsa, *Principal*

The 2015-2016 school year has been

Shutesbury Elementary School Preschool Open House

Wednesday February 24

12:00-1:00pm

This is an opportunity for families to visit the preschool, meet the teacher and hear an overview of the Early Childhood Program. Children are welcome, but are not required to attend.

Decisions for the 2016-2017 academic year will be made by April 7, 2016.

Attending the Open House does not guarantee acceptance to the program.

Children must be 3 by September 1, 2016 to be eligible for the preschool.

Questions may be directed to Grace Griecci Pre-K Teacher
grieccg@shutesburyschool.org
259-1212 ext. 140

one filled with great teaching, learning, fun and experiences! Teachers in grades K-6 are implementing a new English Language Arts curriculum, Lucy Calkins Reading and Writing Units of Study. Students are immersed in rigorous and engaging literacy learning. Classrooms are also using the Words Their Way program for spelling and word study. These programs are robust and hands-on, with lots of room for differentiated instruction and imagination.

In December, the school presented a whole-school performance in collaboration with our artists-in-residence from The Center Dance school in Amherst, Ashley and Caddy Carlisle. Students infused science content, storytelling and dance and created a beautiful production. Classrooms are continuing to offer great field trips that let our students see and explore theater, movie making, nature, and their community. Third graders are taking part in Amherst Cinema's See-Hear-Feel program, and the fifth grade is participating in a year-long learning experience with the Hitchcock Center and our new 5th grade teacher, Vanessa Bergmann, around Phenology.

As we move into the spring, keep May 13 on your schedule for the annual Spaghetti Dinner! There's always a lot of amazing and interesting things happening at SES. Please visit our

website www.shutesburyschool.org for a weekly newsletter and more information! The current enrollment is 131 students, including 19 preschoolers.

Regional School District updates

The FY17 Regional School budget has been released and Shutesbury's assessment is \$1,727,118, an increase of \$71,682 or 4.3% over FY16.

The Regional School Committee has voted to change the current trimester academic schedule at the Amherst-Pelham Regional High School to a four-semester schedule beginning with the upcoming 2016-2017 school year. There are also initial discussions with the superintendent and her staff about combining the Regional Middle School (grades 7-8) with the Regional High School (grades 9-12).

The superintendent has given two main reasons to consider consolidation, declining enrollment throughout the region and yearly cost savings of approximately \$800,000 per year. The earliest that this would take place is the 2018-2019 school year.

If you have any questions or comments about anything related to the regional school committee please feel free to contact me, **Stephen Sullivan**, at sullivan@shutesbury.org, sullivan@arps.org, or any other Shutesbury School Committee member:

Hello from your PTO!

The Shutesbury Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has been busy. We've coordinated a variety of community and fundraising events this school year including the bounce house at Celebrate Shutesbury, and the "Boo-Hoo/ Yahoo" first day of school breakfast for parents. In November, we joined with the MN Spear Memorial library to put on the annual community harvest dinner, which this year included a great puppet show with Shutesbury's own **Anna Sobel**.

We are currently in the midst of selling our excellent Shutesbury Elementary School T-Shirts. The t-shirts with student depictions of the SES Moose have been wildly popular in the elementary school community. Any community members interested in purchasing a shirt can contact **Angela Regan** at

angela.l.regan@gmail.com.

Other upcoming events include sponsoring a community dinner at the Athletic Club in February, and a community skate event with the Leverett PTO at the Mullin's Center in March.

Planning is under way for the PTO's signature fundraising event — the annual Silent Auction. PTO volunteers will soon be soliciting donors

for items, coordinating volunteers and organizing raffle baskets. Donations from our community are always welcomed and appreciated. Stay tuned to find out how you can help with this Shutesbury Elementary Tradition.

As always, the PTO is thankful to our community for helping us support the Shutesbury Elementary School.

Front



Back



Developmental screening for 3, 4 and 5 year olds

Developmental screening is available through Shutesbury Elementary School as a first step in a process intended to find children in need of special services and to plan for meeting those needs.

The screening focuses on a child's growth in a number of areas, such as large and small muscle control, speech/language development and concept development. This activity takes about 40 minutes and consists of a number of games that children typically enjoy playing. The

screening gives an indication of whether or not a child's skills are developing within the typical range.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's development, would like more information, or wish to set up an appointment, please call **Grace Griecci**, Shutesbury Elementary School's Preschool Teacher at 259-1212 x140 or email her at grieccg@shutesburyschool.org

This screening is available to all families in town, including those with a child not already enrolled in the school's preschool.

Shutesbury Early Childhood Program

The Shutesbury Elementary School Community (SES) believes that opportunities for early childhood education are essential components of a good education system.

Early experiences in an environment rich in hands-on materials and activities provide children various opportunities to grow emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively.

We believe that a trans-disciplinary team approach, in which all adults working with children are responsible for a child's learning, is the most effective way of teaching and we also believe that parents are the most important teachers of their children and that their involvement in their child's education is essential.

Our Early Childhood Program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which is a mark of a high quality program for young children.

Your child must be 3 years old on or before September 1, 2016 for preschool enrollment, or 5 years old on or before September 1, 2016 for kindergarten enrollment.

Please contact the school for Fall/2016 enrollment information. Call **Jessica Carlson-Belanger** at the Main Office of SES, 413-259-1212 x100 carlson-belangerj@shutesburyschool.org or **Grace Griecci** 413-259-1212 x140 grieccg@shutesburyschool.org

Union #28 Community Network for Children

The *Community Network for Children (CNC)* serves families by acting as a hub to provide information, support and family programs within the communities of Erving, Leverett, New Salem, Wendell and Shutesbury.

Come take part in our programs and play, read and meet up with new and old friends.

Funding is provided through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant. The CNC supports all families with children from birth through age 8 in our school union.

If you are interested in being on our mailing list to receive the newsletters, please call or email **Gillian Budine**, Coordinator, 978-544-5157 or Budine@erving.com.

Free Gift and Resource Tote Bag!

The Union #28 Community Network for Children (CNC) would like to extend a welcome to your new baby with a free Welcome Baby Gift Bag. Your bag will contain books, health and safety items and valuable information about local services for you and your new baby.

Please call or email Gillian Budine, CNC Coordinator, 978-544-5157 or Budine@erving.com!

Community Clean-up Dday ... the sequel

More than 50 people came out last year to pick up trash alongside Shutesbury's roads in the first Community Clean-up held in recent memory. While many walkers and joggers pick up when they go out, this was a two-hour concerted effort that made a difference on almost every road in Shutesbury. And we had fun, with lots of recommendations to do it again.

So...SAVE THE DATE for Saturday, April 30 from 10am – noon, for a sequel co-sponsored by the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee.

You will be able to get out, walk along your road and find neighbors pitching in and picking up. We hope to have some volunteers up at Town Hall with a couple of pots of soup and some bread to share with citizens who help out. A couple of pickup trucks made a big difference in getting large items to the dumpster. Young muscles and an upbeat, can-do civic attitude will help make this 2nd annual event a success. This is an event with something for everyone to do.

We'd like to hold a few neighborhood meetings to get information and suggestions. Last year we did not have a contact in the **January Hills area**, so we'd like to get organized there with volunteers to clean up. Anyone who would like to participate from around the reservoir or the west end of Pratt Corner, we'd appreciate hearing from you. Contact **Susie Mosher** at 413-259-1550, sndmoes@verizon.net

The Student Council did a very good job cleaning up the schoolyard in time for the Annual Town Meeting. Anyone who would like to help organize that effort will be welcomed.

Circle the date (APRIL 30) on your calendar, help plan your neighborhood effort, watch for the scarecrow figures on a corner near you, and talk it up with your neighbors so we can build on last year's success.

Thank you....

Linda Avis Scott, *Administrative Secretary*

I am writing with appreciation for our dedicated volunteer newsletter editor, **Janis Gray**, who brings her talent and skill to each issue of *Our Town*. She carefully reads, patiently edits our errors, and ensures we are communicating clearly. In addition, Janis makes all the arrangements for the printing of

the newsletter.

Behind the scenes of each issue, there are the volunteers who assemble the flyers, fold, and seal each newsletter. This is a time-consuming task and those who take time to help out are surely valued.

The folders for our September issue were: **Mary Anne Antonellis, Sally Fairfield, Catherine Hilton, Ellen Kalt, Penny Kim, Susan Millinger, and Becky Torres.**

News from Shutesbury's Council on Aging (COA)

Ongoing activities

MED-RIDE: Medical/Dental transportation is provided by volunteer drivers for appointments in Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. Seniors in need of transportation should call 413-259-3796. Requests require a minimum of two weeks advance notice to make arrangements.

The COA also needs more volunteer drivers; if interested please call the same number.

FOOT CLINIC: New last fall, 30-minute appointments with a registered nurse foot care specialist the fourth Monday of each month from 9am-noon. Call **David Dann**, 413-259-1554, with questions or to schedule your appointment. Up-coming dates are February 22 and March 28.

POT LUCK LUNCHEONS: Come join your neighbors and friends for an enjoyable lunch once a month. Our next potluck is Tuesday, March 8 at noon. Call **Marilyn Tibbetts** at 413-259-1976 to let her know what you are bringing.

COFFEE CHAT: Every Monday from 10am-noon in the senior lounge at Town Hall. **Mike** and **Patty Vinskey** host this drop-in event.

Special notices from the COA

- The COA has a **vacancy on our board**. Anyone interested please contact us at 413-259-3796 and leave a detailed message. We meet monthly throughout the entire year on Wednesdays from 5:30-7pm.
- The **"Aging in Place Task Force"** will be starting soon; contact **Sally Fairfield** 413-253-4808 if you are interested. We will be exploring

how we can help seniors remain in their homes.

- Mark your calendar for our **Spring Open House** on April 16 from 10am-noon.
- For more information and in-depth news read our quarterly newsletter mailed to all residents at least 55 years old.
- Very shortly, you will be able to get up-to-date COA news from our website.

Note from the Town Collector

Ellen McKay, *Town Collector*

Dear Shutesbury taxpayers,

With the winter upon us, the third quarter of our real estate bills have become due and the calendar 2016 motor vehicle excise bills for many vehicles registered on January 1 have been mailed. Additionally, excise bills on vehicles registered late in 2015 are billed during 2016. The year for which the bill is issued is found in the upper right hand corner of the bill.

If you receive a bill on a car you have traded or on which you have changed registrations, do NOT ignore the bill. The Board of Assessors should be contacted to obtain an application for abatement. The forms are also available on the Assessors' section of the Town's website. The mailing address for the Assessors is PO Box 264, Shutesbury.

Our on-line bill paying feature allows you to pay your tax bills either directly from your checking or savings account with a fee of \$0.25 or with a credit card for a fee based on the amount of your transaction. To use this service, click on the Town's website and then on the announcement on the Home page. For Real Estate and Personal Property taxes, you should enter 2016 for the year and just the bill number WITHOUT the RE or PP to enter the program. For motor vehicle payments, enter the year and bill number which is found on the top, right side of your bill. You are now able to find your bill information by clicking on the notation "Need help locating your bill" after you indicate what type of bill you wish to pay. You then enter your last name and mailing address and click on the bill information.

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD when mailing your tax payments to avoid interest
Collector, cont. on page 7

Select Board, cont. from page 1
\$640,000 and Leverett's assessment would increase by \$144,000.

Shutesbury's leadership met with the leadership of the other three towns in early December 2015 to explain our position and offer a means of transitioning to the Statutory method that would be less extreme. This meeting was emotionally charged and did not generate any meaningful discussion.

An idea to meet again was presented but not acted upon until several days later, when the Amherst Regional superintendent invited representatives from the four towns to another meeting. With only three towns represented at this meeting, the concept was discussed and another plan to transition to the Statutory method was considered.

The superintendent held a second meeting with all four towns present. This meeting concluded with an agreement that starts to move toward an ability-to-pay method. This method is being discussed by the Regional School Committee and a decision to have the new method on the warrant for town meeting should be made sometime in February 2016.

This agreement is a very small step toward what Shutesbury needs. However, there is still much more negotiating required before Shutesbury will be satisfied with the assessment method. Unfortunately, time has run out for any further negotiating to be conducted for this year's (FY17) budget cycle. We are expecting to start talking with the other towns about FY18 early this summer.

What this means for residents of Shutesbury is the Annual Town Meeting warrant article regarding regional assessment may be different this year.

If the Regional School Committee recommends using the method the four towns recently negotiated, the warrant article will be a vote to either use this new Alternative method (Shutesbury assessment amount \$1,700,000) or the Statutory method (Shutesbury assessment amount \$1,455,000).

If the Regional School Committee does not recommend this new Alternative method, then the warrant article will be a vote between the old Alternative method (Shutesbury assessment amount \$1,727,000) and the Statutory method (Shutesbury assessment amount \$1,455,000).

This is an extremely important issue that you will be resolving at Town

Meeting. There will be more information provided in the next couple of months.

Regarding regionalization: The effort to modify the Amherst-Pelham Regional agreement to create a PreK through 12 region is moving into its fourth year of work. Currently, the draft of the new regional agreement is on the desk of the Regional School Committee. It will soon decide whether to approve the draft and send it to the towns for a vote.

The town vote will consist of two questions. The first will ask town voters whether they approve of amending the regional agreement. The second will ask town voters whether they want to join the new PreK-12 region. Each question has many subtle ramifications depending on a *yes* or *no* vote.

Early in the current process, Shutesbury realized that the proposed plan for regionalization was not beneficial for our town and elementary school. The first question is required since all four towns need to agree on this question in order to make a change to the agreement. If any town doesn't vote to amend the agreement, that will end the approval process of a PreK-12 region.

It has been suggested that Shutesbury should be a good neighbor and let the other towns regionalize but unfortunately, there are significant changes that would be triggered if Shutesbury voted yes and approved amending the regional agreement. These changes would be fundamental to our relationship to, and role in, the regional school district.

An amended agreement would give Shutesbury only two years to decide to join the region.

After two years, Shutesbury would have to apply for membership. The Superintendent would conduct an impact study to determine the effect of allowing Shutesbury to be a member. The Regional School Committee and the Shutesbury School Committee would then negotiate to mitigate any impact Shutesbury would have on the region. After this, the majority of the Regional School Committee would have to approve Shutesbury's membership. More than likely there would be no incentive for the region to allow Shutesbury to join.

Allowing the agreement to be amended, but then not joining the region, would mean Shutesbury would lose its current representation on the

Regional School Committee. Currently the Regional School Committee consists of 9 members: 5 from Amherst, 2 from Pelham, 1 from Leverett, and 1 from Shutesbury.

Under an amended agreement there will be 9 to 13 members: 7 from Amherst, 2 from the towns that are full K-12 members of the region, and 1 from any town that is only a grades 7-12 member. It would be very difficult for Shutesbury to have a voice in this configuration. As it stands, the best option for Shutesbury is to vote no on amending the agreement, and no on joining the PreK-12 region.

Another school issue is **the proposal to consolidate the Middle School into the High School**. There are still surveys being conducted and studies being completed so nothing definitive is yet at a decision stage, but indications are that financially this would be a smart move for the Region to make.

There are some concerns about this idea, and just like the other school issues, more information will be provided in the near future, so please stay informed.

Collector, cont. from page 6
due to late payment. The date your payment is received in this office or by the lockbox is the date of payment for receipt purposes under Mass. General Law.

If you receive a demand notice, you should pay it immediately as you only have 14 days from the demand date to pay before the bill goes on warrant which results in a substantial increase in the fees.

If you have purchased your property after January 1, 2015, Massachusetts General Law requires that the previous owner's name remain on the real estate tax bill. Hence, your name will appear with an "in care of". There is nothing we can do to put the bill solely in your name.

The question has come up concerning the information found on the bills. All information is required either by Massachusetts General Law or by the Department of Revenue of the Commonwealth. The Town and this office have no discretion on the statements printed thereon.

Before venturing out to pay a bill in person, please call this office at 259-1615 to check the answering machine to determine if I will be here.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

Check out Nextdoor Shutesbury (NDS)

Join "Nextdoor Shutesbury," the non-municipal website and email communication system for Shutesbury residents. This is our virtual town bulletin board, where people exchange info, share recommendations, post lost pets or safety warnings, and give away or sell their used belongings.

Just Google "shutesburyma nextdoor" and you'll find the main sign-in or join page. If you have problems signing up, email **Paul Vlach**, a Nextdoor "Lead" (moderator) at vlach@admin.umass.edu for help. You will join more than 500 Shutesbury members; you may also opt to include more than 636 neighbors in Amherst and Pelham.

Celebrate Shutesbury to continue in 2016!

Last year that fantastic group, the Shutesbury Education Foundation, disbanded, leaving the planning and implementation of Celebrate Shutesbury (our town-wide fall fair) to the citizens, boards and committees of the town.

Many individuals and groups stepped up and pulled together a delightful day of activities, information and music on the Town Common. Because of the high level of interest, we hope to do the same thing this year! Historically, Celebrate Shutesbury has been held the third Saturday of September. This falls on **September 17 this year**.

If you, as an individual or as part of a formal or informal group in town, would like to participate, help to plan, or have new ideas for Celebrate Shutesbury, LET'S MEET!

An informal, brainstorming and organizational meeting will happen on: **Monday, February 29 at 6:30pm at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, 282 Wendell Road.**

All groups, individuals and ideas are welcome! If you or your group has participated in Celebrate Shutesbury in the past, we'd love to have you at this meeting. Please send a representative!

If you can't make it to the meeting but would like to participate, please email **Jessica Carlson-Belanger** at carlsonbelanger@verizon.net or call Jessica at 413-253-9120. Looking forward to celebrating Shutesbury with you again this Fall!

The M.N. Spear Memorial Library



10 Cooleyville Road
413-259-1213; www.mnspear.org
Mary Anne Antonellis, *Director*

Open Seven Days

Public Service Hours

Monday 11am-1pm and 3-6pm
Tuesday 3-7:30pm
Wednesday 11am -1pm and 3-6pm
Thursday 3-7:30pm
Friday 3-6pm
Saturday 10am-1pm
Sunday 3-6pm

Commonwealth Catalog

The M.N. Spear Memorial Library is a member of C/W MARS, a consortium of 140+ libraries with nearly nine million items. If you cannot find what you are looking for in C/W MARS, you can search the collections of many other Massachusetts libraries through the Commonwealth Catalog.

The Commonwealth Catalog gives you access to millions of items from libraries that hold unique collections, such as Boston Public Library and UMass Amherst and other academic, special and public libraries. These items will be delivered to the M.N. Spear Library through the same statewide delivery

system used to deliver C/W MARS items.

You should always search C/W MARS first, through the **Card Catalog** tab on mnspear.org. The Commonwealth Catalog will not accept holds on items available through C/W MARS.

To access the Commonwealth Catalog, follow these easy steps or ask for help at the library.

From the M.N. Spear Memorial Library website, mnspear.org, click on the Commonwealth Catalog Tab. This tab takes you to the home page of the Commonwealth Catalog.

Commonwealth Catalog

On the upper right side of the screen, click **Login**. A Login screen will appear. You need to complete three items on this page. First, select a library. Scroll down to find Shutesbury and choose the M.N. Spear Memorial Library. Next, enter your 14 -digit barcode number. Finally enter your pin. If you do not remember your pin, enter the four digits of your phone number or your last name. Finally, click Submit.

Once you have logged in, you may begin searching for items in the

Commonwealth Catalog. You can begin by entering a title in the box labeled *Enter your search here*, then click the magnifying glass symbol. The check symbol to the right of the search box allows you to modify your search by title, author, subject and more. The tabs under the search box lead to information of the Commonwealth Catalog. Comprehensive instructions for using the catalog can be found by clicking the **Patron FAQ** tab.



Items borrowed through the Commonwealth Catalog can be checked out for 28 days. Renewals are not allowed. Items must be returned at the library where they were picked up.

Digital books and media

Shutesbury residents with valid C/W MARS library cards have access to a several free downloadable eBook, audiobook and video resources. Digital items can be read or listened to on a variety of devices: smart phones, iPads, eReaders, and computers. Click on the **Digital Books and Media** tab on our website to find links to three resources.

Overdrive is the free service provided through our C/W MARS membership. It provides access to thousands of books, videos and a small magazine collection. You will need to sign in using your 14-digit library barcode number.

The help button directs you to instructional videos, links to free software and apps needed to use the collection and more.



Once you have installed the proper software or app for your device you are ready to start browsing the collection and reading.

Axis 360 is a growing collection of eBooks and audiobooks available statewide. To use this collection you will need to enter your barcode and the pin you use for your C/W MARS account. If you don't know your pin, call us and we will help.

Biblioboard also requires your barcode and pin. It is a resource for historical documents, media, and other curated content, arranged by topic. A great resource for homework or for browsing!

New science fiction and fantasy book club

The new Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club met for the first time on Monday, February 1 at 7:30pm. Attendees participated in a lively discussion about science fiction and fantasy sub-genres and their favorite books and authors.

The group chose to read *The Water Knife* by Paolo Bacigalupi. This is a summary of the novel from our library catalog.

"The American Southwest has been decimated by drought. Nevada and Arizona skirmish over dwindling shares of the Colorado River, while California watches, deciding if it should just take the whole river all for itself. Into the fray steps Las Vegas water knife Angel Velasquez. Detective, assassin, and spy, Angel 'cuts' water for the Southern Nevada Water Authority, ensuring that lush, luxurious arcology developments can bloom in the desert and that anyone who challenges her is left in the gutted-suburban dust. When water is more valuable than gold, alliances shift like sand, and the only truth in the desert is that someone will have to bleed if anyone hopes to drink."

Everyone is welcome to participate in this new book group. The next meeting is Monday, March 7, 7:30pm, at the Library. We will be discussing *The Water Knife* and choosing the next book to read at this meeting. Copies of the book are available at the library.

Discussing mortality: a community conversation

M.N. Spear Memorial Library patrons are invited to join Cooley Dickenson Hospital and the Forbes Library in a regional "community-wide read" of *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* by Atul Gawande, MD.

The acclaimed bestseller has started a national conversation about the deep flaws in our society's current treatment of aging and dying people. Using his book as a springboard, we hope to begin a conversation about our goals for end-of-life care and how to bring about better outcomes for ourselves and our loved ones. Copies of the book are available to borrow at the library.

Community members are invited to participate in a **book discussion** on

Wednesday, April 6, 7pm, at the Shutesbury Athletic Club.

On **March 23**, at 7pm at Town Hall, we will be screening a **documentary** called *How to Die in Oregon*.

In 1994, Oregon became the first state to legalize physician-assisted suicide. In *How to Die in Oregon*, filmmaker Peter Richardson gently enters the lives of the terminally ill as they consider whether – and when – to end their lives by lethal overdose.

Gentle yoga

Wednesdays at 9am, April and May, at Town Hall

Please bring a yoga mat.

Thanks to the Shutesbury Cultural Council, the Library is able to offer an eight-week Yoga series.

Yoga classes will be taught by **Carina Antonino DiMare**, a certified yoga teacher and a graduate of Yoga Center Amherst's 200-hour Embodiyoga teacher training. Carina is also a licensed massage therapist with a private practice in Amherst.

Carina says, "My approach to yoga is calmative, present and compassionate! I was raised in Shutesbury and have a deep love for the community. I can't wait to share space and practice with you."

Save the date!

Thank you to everyone who has made a recent donation to our New Shutesbury Library Fund. The Friends are looking forward to participating in *Valley Gives Day* which has been moved to *Tuesday, May 3!*

We are also planning our annual Spring Spruce-Ups for the New Library Fund. We will post updates on our website, our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ShutesburyLibrary/, the Ecricret and Nextdoor Shutesbury.

Thank you for supporting the Friends of the Library!

More than 60 Friends memberships for 2016 have arrived at the library already! The Friends mailed membership brochures to every house in Shutesbury at the end of November. If you have misplaced your envelope, we have extra membership brochures available at the library. Donations can also be made online by clicking the **donate** link in the right side bar on our website.

Volunteer opportunities right here in Shutesbury!

In addition to our municipal departments and staff, our Town government works because a group of women and men volunteer their time. These Shutesbury citizens dedicate themselves to the specific tasks and responsibilities of the boards and committees on which they serve.

Volunteering in one's own community is an opportunity to develop new skills, learn, meet folks, challenge yourself, and contribute to the wellbeing of our Shutesbury.

If you are interested in serving our Town, the following committees are currently seeking new members:

- Americans with Disabilities (ADA)
- Finance Committee*
- Conservation Commission

- Personnel Board*
- Council on Aging
- Cultural Council
- Town Buildings Committee

*The Town Moderator has the responsibility of appointing all seven members of the Finance Committee and three members of the Personnel Board. Currently, there are three openings on the Finance Committee and two vacancies on the Personnel Board.

Penny Kim, our Town Moderator, says "Great opportunity to get involved – no competition and easy application process." If you are interested in the work of the Finance Committee or Personnel Board, just contact Penny at 259-1326. She will be happy to talk with you!

For all other committees, contact our Town Administrator, Becky Torres, at 259-1214, who will gladly

talk with you about volunteering.

If you are interested in serving, I recommend attending committee meetings to get a sense about the work of the committee and the responsibilities of its members. For meeting schedules, visit the "Calendar" on the Town webpage at shutesbury.org or check the postings on the bulletin board outside the Town Clerk's office.

My own experience is that the members of committees will readily guide and support new members. The only requirements are a willingness to learn and a commitment to regularly attend meetings.

I love the opportunity to serve my Town.

— Linda Avis Scott, *Administrative Secretary*, and volunteer on the *Community Preservation Committee*, *Council on Aging*, and the *250th Anniversary Steering Committee*

March 1 deadline to report personal property for FY2017 Businesses and 2nd Homes

The Shutesbury Board of Assessors recently sent notices to all businesses and owners of second homes that a personal property "Form of List" should be completed and returned to the assessors by March 1 2016. Property owned on January 1 is taxable for **the fiscal year 2017 (which starts July 1 2016)**.

Business Form of List (State Tax Form 2)

Incorporated and non-incorporated businesses must report all equipment and machinery. In addition, non-incorporated businesses must report inventory such as office furniture, filing cabinets, chairs, adding machines, computers, printers, motorized tools, etc. Farm animals, unregistered motor vehicles and unregistered construction equipment must also be reported. If you depreciate the furnishings on your federal tax return, you or your accountant may already have an itemized list and you could attach that to the Form of List rather than filling out the tables on the form.

Household Form of List (State Tax Form 2HF)

Owners of 2nd homes, duplexes, etc. must report all furnishings and appliances including refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, washers and driers, TV's, lawnmowers, dishes, eating & cooking utensils, furniture, etc. If you purchased your property furnished, and you were provided with a value for the contents of the home at the time of purchase you may submit that information (copy of purchase and sale agreement, appraisal, etc.) by attaching it to the form of list. If your property is insured, the insurance company should be able to provide you with a list of the contents and their insured value OR a lump sum value for all of the contents. You may attach a letter from your insurance company or a copy of your insurance coverage page to the Form of List rather than filling out the tables on the form.

Exemptions

Exemptions exist for veterans with service related disabilities and their wives, widows, and for elderly residents of Shutesbury. The criteria for elderly are listed below. Gross income is subject to a Social Security exemption allowance (i.e. we do not include this amount) of \$4,523 for the retired worker if single and an additional \$2,262 for his or her spouse. Total household income must be verifiable by tax returns and/or earnings statements. Assets include all bank accounts, IRA's, stocks, investments, personal property, and real estate excluding primary residence.

Exemption	Amount	Minimum Age	Maximum income	Maximum Assets
17-D (S&M)	\$175.00	70	No maximum	\$40,000
41-C (S)	\$1000	65	\$20,000	\$40,000
41-C (M)	\$1000	65	\$30,000	\$55,000

CPA exemption information

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a surcharge which is added to the property tax to support local conservation and/or development projects. Depending on the owners' household income, they may be eligible for an exemption from the tax.

The following tables show the allowable net household income to qualify for the CPA exemption. These tables are based on an area wide median income of \$74,300 from HUD*.

net household income limits under age 60

Household size	Age <60
1	\$ 41,608.00
2	\$ 47,552.00
3	\$ 53,496.00
4	\$ 59,440.00
5	\$ 64,195.20
6	\$ 68,950.40
7	\$ 73,705.60
8	\$ 78,460.80

net household income limits over age 60

Household size	Age 60 and over
1	\$ 52,010.00
2	\$ 59,440.00
3	\$ 66,870.00
4	\$ 74,300.00
5	\$ 80,244.00
6	\$ 86,188.00
7	\$ 92,132.00
8	\$ 98,076.00

Applications for the CPA exemption must be accompanied with copies of the federal income tax return for 2014 and received by assessors no later than March 30.

All exemption and abatement forms are available through links on our website www.shutesbury.org/assessor.

*www.huduser.org



Motor vehicle excise tax

This is about the time of year for excise taxes for calendar 2016 to be mailed to owners of vehicles.

In order to receive an abatement the owner **must** document **two** things.

1. Return of the license plate
2. Transfer ownership of the vehicle

If you have sold or traded a vehicle recently and received a tax bill for that vehicle you can apply for an abatement for a portion of the year. We will issue a pro-rated abatement upon receipt of all materials required by law.

- Bill of sale (if sold) - or trade in documentation (if traded), or handwritten bill of sale.
- Plate return receipt or copy of new car registration showing plate transfer.

Application forms are available online for download at www.shutesbury.org/assessor.

You may leave the form and documents in the Assessor's mailbox in the Town Hall or mail it to Assessors at P.O. Box 264, Shutesbury MA 01072. We will process your abatement promptly upon receipt of the above materials.

Office telephone (413) 259-3790

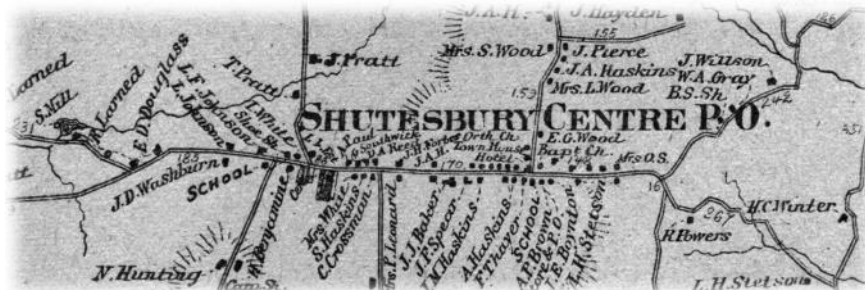
Email assessor@shutesbury.org

Hours: M & T 10-3; W 1-3; Th 12-4

Kenneth Holmberg Admin. Assessor
Leslie Bracebridge Assessors Clerk

BOARD OF ASSESSORS:

Stephen Schmidt Assessor (Chairman)
Susan Reyes Assessor
Diane Jacoby Assessor (Jan. 2016)





TOWN OF SHUTESBURY
P.O. BOX 276
SHUTESBURY MA 01072

Return Service Requested

PRSR
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #305
AMHERST MA 01002



Resident
Shutesbury MA 01072

Pancake Breakfast
February 27!
See flyer inside.

HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

Go to www.shutesbury.org to find email addresses, or call the appropriate number below.

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss 259-1108	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Jackie Mendonsa, Principal 259-1212	POLICE DEPARTMENT Chief Thomas E. Harding 259-1279
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Linda Avis Scott 259-6550	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR Walter Tibbetts 259-1211	Dispatch 413-625-8200
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR Rebecca Torres 259-1214	FINANCE COMMITTEE George Arvanitis, Co-Chair 259-1348	RECYCLING COORDINATOR Gary Bernhard 259-1235
ANIMAL INSPECTORS Denise Chiminiello 259-1020	Eric Stocker, Co-Chair 259-1250	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Stephen Sullivan 259-1626
Nancy Long 259-1279	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief 259-1211	SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE Sean Woodard-McNiff 978-660-7983
ASSESSORS Kenneth Holmberg 259-3790	or at home 259-1286	UNION #28 SCHOOL SUPT. Jennifer Haggerty 413-423-3337
BOARD OF HEALTH Catherine Hilton, Clerk 259-2122	HEALTH AGENT David Zarozinski 549-3710	SELECT BOARD J. April Stein, Chair 259-1074
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Dale Houle 259-1696	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting 259-1215	Michael DeChiara 259-1059
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins 413-774-3167 x. 113	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Leslie Bracebridge 259-1973	Michael Vinskey 253-4260
CEMETERY COMMISSION Marilyn Tibbetts 259-1976	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis, Dir. 259-1213	SHUTESBURY BROADBAND COMMITTEE Gayle Huntress 259-1905
COUNCIL ON AGING Med-Ride Program 259-3796	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Kate Cell, Co-Chair 259-9129	Asha Strazzero-Wild 413-478-8368
Marilyn Tibbetts, Chair 259-1976	Molly Moss, Co-Chair 253-6717	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay 259-1615
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 259-3792	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Janice Stone 259-1557	TOWN CLERK Susie Mosher 259-1204
CULTURAL COUNCIL Julie Stepanek, contact 387-5670	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray 259-1584	TOWN MODERATOR Penelope Kim 259-1326
DEPT. OF VETERANS' SERVICES Timothy Niejadlik 772-1571	PERSONNEL BOARD J. April Stein 259-1074	TREASURER Gabriele Voelker 259-1801
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long 259-1279	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar 259-1276	TREE WARDEN Thomas Houston 259-1508
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire 253-7505	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau 367-0017	WEB COMMITTEE Fred Steinberg 259-9996
		ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare 549-5330
	POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD 911	