

SHUTESBURY

MASSACHUSETTS



OUR TOWN

A vital message from the Board of Health

Catherine Hilton, *Chair*

Some numbers: Between spring 2020 and January 19, 2022, there were 113 known cases of COVID-19 in Shutesbury residents. More than half of these cases – 69 of them – were reported in the month prior to January 19. Seventeen of these cases were self-reported, the results of positive home testing.

If you or a household member get a positive result on a home test, know what to do:

1. Inform your health care provider of this result.
2. Inform the Board of Health at publichealth@shutesbury.org so that we can provide you with information and guidance.

3. Begin isolating right away, including from members of your own household if they have not tested positive. The vast preponderance of cases are transmitted within households or at family gatherings. **You must wear a mask around others, even in your own home.** The guidance on isolation and quarantine has evolved: if you test positive you must stay home, in isolation, for five days, not 10 days as previously. After five days, if you have no further symptoms and feel well, you can resume your life – **but you must continue to wear a high-quality mask**, ideally N-95, KN-95, or KF-94, whenever you are around other people for five more days.

Guidance about masks has also evolved. The most important

Board of Health, cont. on pg. 2

New program may help lower that broadband bill

Gail Huntress, *Chair*,

Broadband — ShutesburyNET

The federal relief program to reduce monthly internet bills ended in December, but it has been replaced by a new long-term program called the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

This program, available to ShutesburyNET subscribers who meet certain income requirements, can reduce your monthly bill by almost \$40 if combined with the long-standing Lifeline program.

Only one single application is needed to determine financial eligibility for both programs.

To apply online or download a paper application, please see this website for more information:

shutesbury.org/broadband/lifeline

If you were previously enrolled in the original Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP), you will automatically be moved over to the new Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) this year. Again, for more details on this see the website above.

Last Chance to get your Wired West Refund!

There are 155 people in Shutesbury who still have not requested to have their \$49 WiredWest deposit returned. Because the money is held in an escrow account, *you must make the request individually, and in writing*, to get your deposit back.

Age-Friendly Communities Project seeks your input!

LifePath, our Area Agency on Aging, has launched a survey of Franklin County and the North Quabbin in collaboration with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, senior centers and Councils on Aging (COAs), including Shutesbury's COA.

The survey, **for residents over 50 years old as well as caregivers of older adults**, is the main component of the age-friendly needs assessment process, which seeks to better understand the challenges facing seniors in our region. Responses will remain confidential. They will be used to help create an Age-Friendly Action

Plan and to apply for grants to improve conditions for older people in Shutesbury and beyond.

LifePath is accepting both online and print submissions. The survey is open until Friday, March 11. To fill it out online, please visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/age-friendly-survey>. (A link is also at shutesbury.org/council_on_aging.)

To request a printed copy, and for any other inquiries, please contact Nour Elkhataby Strauch, Age-Friendly Program Manager, at nelkhatabystrauch@lifepathma.org or 413-829-9274, or Meg Ryan, RN, Regional Public Health Nurse, at FRCOG (mryan@frcog.org, 413-774-3167 x158).

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W-W Refund, cont. on pg. 5

A Letter from the Town Clerk

Grace Bannasch (she/her/hers),
Town Clerk

To contact the Town Clerk:

Phone: 413-259-1204

Email: townclerk@shutesbury.org

Website: shutesbury.org/townclerk

Office Hours: M-F, 10-1 and 3-5

Salutations Shutesburians!

Annual Street List: By now, you all should have received your 2022 Annual Street List. This is a yearly municipal census that is sent to every household in town. Please review the information on the pink sheet, make any corrections that might need to be made, and return this form to the Town Clerk office via mail or drop box. And remember to sign on the bottom!

2022 Local Election: Even though a date has not been finalized yet for our 2022 Local Election, it's never too early to think about running for office! Nomination papers are available upon request from the Town Clerk. You need signatures from 20 registered Shutesbury voters to get your name on the ballot.

Offices up for election this year include:

- Board of Health
- Constable
- Library Trustees
- Moderator
- Municipal Light Plant/
Broadband
- Planning Board
- School Committee
- Selectboard

Town Hall Services: Town Hall is currently closed to the public due to the COVID pandemic. But all Town Clerk office services remain available.

For transactions that must occur in person, including marriage intentions and notarizations, call or email the Town Clerk to make an appointment. We will meet in the

Senior Lounge, which is set up for social distancing.

Trash Bags: Trash bags are available for purchase at Town Hall and at the Leverett Co-op.

Dog Tags: Have a pupper or doggo? Check to make sure their license is up to date! The easiest way to do this is by checking the color of their Shutesbury dog tag. If the tag is not blue, you can get a new dog tag application at Town Hall or on the Town Clerk webpage.

Staying Connected: While visiting shutesbury.org, remember to sign up for the **Town Announce mailing list!** This is the best way to receive important information and updates from town officials. And if you think you are already signed up but have not been receiving emails recently, check your spam folder. And if you have not already done so, please sign up for **CodeRED** to receive emergency alerts from town government.

Board of Health, cont. from pg. 1

thing about a mask is that it must be properly adjusted and fit you. Air should go through the mask, not around it. That said, **cloth masks have been found to be far less effective than N-95 masks** in preventing the spread of the omicron variant.

Please note that many masks that claim to be N-95 masks do not, in fact, filter at least 95% of airborne particles, because of either poor quality control or fraudulent claims. To make sure the masks you contemplate buying are approved, go to shutesbury.org/pandemic-information and click on [CDC-approved masks](http://shutesbury.org/cdc-approved-masks).

Rapid test kits are now covered by insurance at pharmacies; in addition, free test kits can be ordered from www.covidtests.gov/. If you do not have internet access and wish to order tests, contact the Board of

Health for help.

Keep informed! If you are not receiving regular e-mail updates from the Board of Health, you're missing out. It's easy to get on the list for town announcements: go to the town website, shutesbury.org. At the bottom of the home page, on the right, click on *Sign up to receive email Town Announcements*. It won't be a flood of unwanted emails; most weeks there are one or two. If you think you signed up but aren't receiving any messages, please check your spam folder.

There is also information available on the pandemic page of the town website, shutesbury.org/pandemic-information.

Don't have internet access but want the info? Call us at 413-259-2122.

Our Town Newsletter Policy

Adopted by the
Shutesbury Select Board
December 23, 2019

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 community projects, activities, or special events of benefit to our community. Submissions must be strictly secular and nonpartisan and are subject to review, revision, and/or non-acceptance by the editorial board of the newsletter. Submissions promoting the sale of goods and services for private profit cannot be accepted. Appeals to any review decisions can be brought to the Select Board for further discussion.

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

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Select Board seeks volunteers 'energized' for climate action

Hello Residents,

Given the identified threats to the community from climate change and the need to address how energy policies and programs could help to mitigate the effects of that change through municipal and community efforts, the Select Board recently reconfigured the Shutesbury Energy Committee to create the Energy and Climate Action Committee.

To this end, the Select Board is reaching out to the community for letters of interest to be part of this new committee. Please submit your letter of interest to the Select Board, at selectboard@shutesbury.org, or to Town Hall, Energy and Climate Action Committee, Select Board, 1 Cooleyville Rd., Shutesbury, MA 01072.

Below is a full description of the background, purpose, composition and charge.

Revised Energy Committee Charge Draft, 11/9/21

Background:

The Shutesbury Energy Committee has been in existence for more than 44 years and was established to take advantage of Green Communities funding opportunities i.e., solar panels, energy audits, and conservation measures. In **April of 2018 the Shutesbury Select Board voted to revise the charge of the Shutesbury Energy committee** to "The purpose of the committee is to study and recommend to the Select Board, in coordination with other committees: energy policies, approaches and projects on efficiency, conservation and generation for the benefit of the town and residents."

Since 2018 there have been a number of steps taken by the Town to address issues related to the effects of climate change.

This includes the adoption of the Municipal Vulnerability Plan, which includes a comprehensive, baseline climate change and natural hazard vulnerability assessment and a list of priority actions for the Town. In addition, the Town updated its Hazard Mitigation Plan which identifies actions to be taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards such as flooding, storms, high winds, hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, etc.

Purpose:

The Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC) shall make recommendations to the Select Board on ways for the Town to meet its climate mitigation and resilience goals as detailed in the Town's 2020 Municipal Vulnerability Plan (MVP) and the 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP).

Composition:

Seven (7) voting members appointed by the Shutesbury Select Board, some of whom shall have experience with one or more of the following areas: net zero energy building; energy efficient retrofits; climate change mitigation/advocacy/research; clean energy practice/policy/infrastructure; community choice energy; green infrastructure for climate adaptation; sustainable transportation; sustainable farming and forestry; waste reduction; and environmental or climate justice, and other relevant areas.

Charge:

The ECAC shall:

1. Study and make recommendations energy policies, approaches and projects on efficiency, conservation and generation for the benefit of the town and residents
2. Review and prioritize recommendations from Shutesbury's Municipal Vulnerability and Hazard Mitigation plans.
3. Recommend for adoption to the Select Board target dates,

benchmarks and/or climate mitigation goals to achieve

4. Coordinate with other town committees' and boards' efforts to develop a plan to reduce Shutesbury's energy footprint and to build climate resilience.

5. Recommend to the Select Board programs and policies to implement energy goals and climate resilience planning in such areas as, but not limited to:

- a) Energy;
- b) Built environment;
- c) Transportation;
- d) Land use;
- e) Water;
- f) Solid waste;
- g) Infrastructure; and
- h) Open space, agriculture and forestry

6. Report progress to Select Board on a quarterly basis

From the Administrative Assessor

Kevin Rudden, *Administrative Assessor*

Tax exemption applications:

Applications for tax exemptions for veterans and senior citizens who meet certain criteria continue to be available from the Assessor's Office through the end of March. You can find out more about them by scrolling toward the bottom of the "Assessors" page found under "Departments" on the town's website.

Among the exemptions available to the **military veterans** who have served our country are those known as Clause 22 (\$400), 22A (\$750), 22B (\$1,250), 22C (\$1,500) 22D (complete exemption), 22E (\$1,000) and 22F (complete exemption). The term "clause" and its associated number/letter refers to the section of Chapter 59, Section 5 of the Massachusetts General Laws authorizing these exemptions.

Among the exemptions available to **senior citizens** are those known as Clause 41 (\$500), 41B (\$500), 41C (\$500) and 41 C 1/2 (5% of the average assessed

Assessor, cont. on pg. 4

valuation of residential property in town).

Circuit Breaker State Income Tax Credit: When filling out their state income tax return forms for calendar year 2021 this year, **Shutesbury's seniors should check to see if they are eligible** to receive what is called the "Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit" by filling out Schedule CB.

Not only can eligibility save you money on your state income taxes, but qualifying means you will be eligible for the town's **Means-Tested Real Estate Property Tax Exemption "METER,"** which Shutesbury can offer once the state legislature passes the home-rule petition authorized at our 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

Updating Exemptions: Most of the tax exemptions enacted by the state legislature are decades old. Only a few have been updated. The Assessor's Office is reviewing all of them and will put forward acceptance of any updates on this year's Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Auto Excise Taxes: It's that time again. The Registry of Motor Vehicles just sent its first (and usually largest) batch of motor vehicle excise tax data so that cities and towns across the state can send out annual auto excise tax bills to you.

Two things to remember: First, all data on the bill is generated by the Registry. If there is an error, you need to contact the Registry, not the Town.

Second, this includes the value of your car. The Registry uses the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) as its value, not what you paid for it.

The value is calculated on a declining scale as follows: 90% of MSRP in year one; 60% in year two; 40% in year three; 25% in year four; and, 10% in year five and older.

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 are due on February 1 and the calendar 2022 motor vehicle excise bills for many vehicles registered on January 1 have been mailed. Additionally, excise bills on vehicles registered late in 2021 are billed during 2022. The year for which the bill is issued is found in the upper right hand corner of the bill.

For everyone with an Amherst or New Salem mailing address, please check your registration to make certain the "Place of Garaging" is listed as Shutesbury. This is the information the Registry of Motor Vehicles uses in determining what municipality issues the excise tax bill. If you find incorrect information on that line, please contact the Registry and your insurance company to correct the information.

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 through the Assessors' section of the Town's website and should be printed out in landscape format for easy completion. 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 \$.50 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 2022 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. If you do not have this information, you are 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 all bills in that name should be shown. Select the correct one and click on it and the amount due will appear.

Please note that the on-line feature cannot be used to pay any bill on warrant.

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD when mailing your tax payments to avoid interest 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 send a check generated through a bill payment function from your banking institution, please note that it may take over a week for the Town to receive the payment. If you have the bill generated on the payment due date it will definitely be late. Please address these checks to the Collector's Shutesbury mailing address which is PO Box 175, Shutesbury, MA 01072. Do NOT use the Woburn address because the lockbox cannot process the payment because there is no bill enclosed, which results in the check being forwarded to Shutesbury and additional time elapsing before you payment is recorded.

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, 2021, 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

Ruminations of a Shutesbury 'Newbie'

Paul Lyons, *Town Moderator*

This year marks four decades since my wife and I moved to Shutesbury and built our first home here. That feels like a long time ago, but I know better than to consider myself anything other than a relative newbie in town!

But although I have not yet earned the right to talk about "the way things used to be," I have still witnessed a lot of change, and I've learned a fair amount about our town during that time.

First and foremost, I've seen that there are a lot of really good people living in Shutesbury – many of whom give of themselves in various ways as volunteers to keep our town running.

Just imagine if we had to pay people each year to develop our budget proposals, administer wetland protection regulations, research and develop our zoning bylaws, oversee public health regulations, plan and oversee construction of our broadband network, evaluate the condition and needs of our town buildings, edit our newsletter, run our recycling program, apply for grants, and all the other vital town functions that volunteers perform!

Not all of us are called, or we may not be able, to volunteer on town

committees, but we can all still have a say in the most important decisions affecting our town. That's because the work that those committees and boards (and town employees) do all year long usually culminates in warrant articles that are discussed and voted on at our Town Meetings. That's the way it's been for hundreds of years, and that's the way it's likely to be for the foreseeable future.

So, why is it that of the 1400+ registered voters living in Shutesbury, less than 200 tend to show up for most Annual Town Meetings to make those important decisions?

As Town Moderator, I ponder and ruminate on that question more than I probably should. But that's because I know that there are many strong opinions in town that are never heard at Town Meetings, yet could add a great deal to the discussions.

It's probably becoming obvious that I tend to let some discussions continue at Town Meetings longer than some (many?) of you would like. And that's because on some issues, I know that there are opinions and perspectives that have not yet been expressed, but might be helpful for all of us to hear before we cast our votes. So, for the sake of "fully informed decision making," I allow those discussions to continue a bit longer.

But sometimes, those other perspectives are never heard – perhaps because the people holding them aren't even present. And that's what I'd like to understand better – i.e., Why do some people with strong opinions on town matters choose not to show up at the one place where they have the best opportunity to express their opinions, and perhaps influence the outcome of votes?

No doubt, there are a number of possible reasons why this may be the case, but if there happens to be some commonality among those individual reasons that I/we might be able to do something about (e.g., to make Town Meeting more welcoming and comfortable for people), then THAT'S what I want to know.

So . . . although I generally don't like to solicit emails to the Moderator's account, in this case, I would like to hear from any Shutesbury voting resident who does NOT generally attend Town Meeting and would be willing to tell me (completely confidentially) why you don't. Or, if anyone has thoughts or ideas (within reason of course) on how Town Meetings could be made more welcoming, I would appreciate hearing from you also. Please send your thoughts to: Moderator@Shutesbury.org.

Thanks. And as always, I hope to see you at Town Meeting!

Collector, cont. from pg. 4

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 413-259-1615 to check the answering machine to determine if I am here. If conditions are poor, I may not attempt to come to work.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year.

Ellen

W-W Refund, cont. from pg. 1

For legal reasons, it can't be done as a group request or sent to you automatically. If you want to support the advocacy work that Wired-West continues to do for broad-

band throughout the state, you can request that your deposit be donated into their general funds instead of being refunded to you.

If you don't either request a refund or donate your deposit in writing to Wired West, the funds will be forfeited to the State's general funds in April of 2022.

For more information about how to request a refund or contribute your deposit please see wiredwest.net/campaign/refunds/

Out and about with the Recreation Committee

The Community Garden is coming! It just has a longer gestational period than we expected.

The original intent was to create the garden behind Town Hall.

While the location had the advantage of convenience and

visibility to those going to Town Hall, it also had disadvantages, among them the need for a water tank (not the most attractive structures) and increased parking congestion and traffic behind Town Hall.

Meanwhile, two sites were under consideration for the proposed library: behind Town Hall and Lot 0-32 (on Leverett Road), and in November 2021, Lot 0-32 was selected. While locating the gardens at this site will delay the garden's start, integrating the community gardens into the landscape around the library creates exciting opportunities for collaboration. We had always envisioned the garden as a place for educational programming and building community, and this proximity makes both possible.

Recreation, cont. on pg. 6

Updates from the Council on Aging

The Council on Aging (COA) serves town residents aged 55 and older.

Big news! In early January, our COA was notified that Shutesbury's application to enroll in AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities was officially accepted. We are now part of a network of local and regional communities participating in LifePath's initiative with AARP to "strengthen the features and services that help to make communities livable for residents of all ages."

We are pleased to be participating in this program, and ask you to complete the "Age-Friendly Communities Survey" described on page 1 of this newsletter. Although it is a regional survey, we will be able to review Shutesbury's own data, which will help us understand the needs of our older residents. All submissions are anonymous.

New LifePath/Community Action Older Adult Home Modification Program

This program is designed to help eligible homeowners, 62 years of age and older, to remain in their homes through no-cost modifications that reduce the risk of falling, improve general safety, and increase accessibility. Modification examples include installation of grab bars, railings, lever handled door knobs and faucets, and safety bathroom/tub equipment.

For more information and details about eligibility, call Home Repair Program at 800-370-0940 or 413-774-2319 or email homerepairs@communityaction.us

Are you over 55 and in need of foot care?

The Council on Aging (COA) home visit foot care program is staffed by FootCare by Nurses, based in Greenfield. These are the same nurses that staffed our in-person Town Hall clinic prior to the pandemic. During the pandemic, the COA has used our Executive Office of Elder Affairs grant to partially subsidize the cost of home visits for current foot clinic participants.

New clients are welcome! We suggest participants donate toward the cost of their home visits. Grant funds will be used to cover the balance. If you are interested in learning more, please email coa@shutesbury.org or leave a message at 413-259-3796.

Please see the COA's webpage at shutesbury.org to download "How to Be Prepared for a Medical Emergency" and for information about other local resources, including:

LifePath This Area Agency on Aging provides many individual in-home and community services that support Franklin County citizens 55 and over. LifePath provides help with Medicare, Medicaid, and MassHealth plans through the SHINE program (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders). For any questions or help, call their Information and Referral number at 413-773-5555. Go their website, <https://lifepathma.org/> to sign up to receive *The Good Life*, LifePath's free weekly newsletter, in your email inbox each Monday.

Village Neighbors This non-profit member/volunteer-run organization helps adults 60 and older in Shutesbury, Leverett, New Salem and Wendell age in place by assisting with transportation, computers, small tasks at home, or friendly visits. Membership is free. To learn more, call 413-345-6894, write to Village Neighbors, P.O. Box 501, Shutesbury, MA 01072, or generalinfo@villageneighbors.org.

Virtual Learning and Fitness Opportunities

Visit the M. N. Spear Library website, mnspear.org, for information about virtual learning classes and fitness programs.

Check out area college websites for information about virtual learning in retirement programs:

Five College Learning in Retirement, 5clir.org, and Greenfield Community College, <https://go.gcc.mass.edu/seniors/senior-symposia/>

Also, LifePath often offers free virtual health-related programs.

If you are interested in learning about our COA's work, please attend one of our online meetings held on the second Wednesday of the month. See the Town meeting calendar at shutesbury.org for Zoom log-in information.

We have a vacancy!

Recreation, cont. from pg. 5

Because 2021 Town Meeting approved the use of CPA funds for a garden specifically located behind Town Hall, we will be returning to Town Meeting in June 2022 to request to locate the community garden on Lot 0-32.

We project that the community gardens will be ready in Spring 2024. So a long gestational period! Outdoes the rhinoceros at 15 to 18 months, and even elephants at up to 22 months. But it will be worth the wait.

We will plan programming around sustainable gardening, and beginning in Winter 2023, we will sponsor workshops on planning a garden, knowing when and how to plant seeds, and selecting seedlings so that prospective gardeners have the knowledge they need to dig right in come Spring 2024.

But that's not all! Beyond the garden project, the Recreation Committee has been busy developing a host of new activities for 2022.

We will be working with a Springfield business to purchase reduced-cost, gently used ice skates for children and teens and holding an ice-skating party.

And look forward to a spring Family Track and Field Day to be held at the elementary school track and to guided nature walks.

Everyone is welcome to attend our committee meetings on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 4 pm. There's so much happening!



Community Preservation projects for Town Meeting

The state Community Preservation Act allows Massachusetts communities to create a local **Community Preservation Fund** to help fund open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge on the tax levy against real property, and these local funds are matched in part by state funding.

CPC-funded projects are community-initiated. The application and funding process is straightforward and is described in the Community Preservation Plan available on the CPC website (shutesbury.org/community/preservation). It should be noted that the CPC does not independently appropriate funding for projects, but rather submits warrant articles for funding of allowable projects to Town Meeting for its approval.

This year, the CPC will be presenting four articles at Annual Town Meeting for funding. For you gardeners out there, one of the articles is to allow the Recreation Committee to move the Community Garden (funding approved at last Town Meeting) from its previously approved site behind Town Hall to Lot O-32 on Leverett Road. This article does not affect the original funding and is offered in light of the likelihood that a new library will be situated on Lot O-32.

A second article, sponsored by the Shutesbury Historical Commission, seeks to repair and restore the historic mile guidepost on the Town Common. This antique guidepost has significant historic value and requires restoration work to protect it from further degradation.

A third article, supported by the Recreation Committee, requests funding for the Kestrel Land Trust to slightly expand the existing public parking area at Ames Pond and to resurface it with pervious material. The project will also im-

prove trail access, remove invasive plant species, add a new viewing platform, and make the area wheelchair accessible.

The final article, supported by the Conservation Commission, seeks support for the Kestrel Trust to purchase 34 acres of forested land with 2,000 feet of frontage on Pelham Hill Road. The parcel, which runs from just south of Baker Road to the Pelham line, has high conservation value and is situated between two parcels of already-protected land. It includes the headwaters of Amethyst Brook and features a historic dam/mill structure. The property would be preserved as open space and developed for passive recreation.

Check before you dig!

From the Shutesbury Conservation Commission

What we do: The Conservation Commission (ConCom) administers the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act and the Town's General Wetlands Protection Bylaw. We also manage Town conservation land, educate the public, and work with other town boards and committees to support the environment and open spaces.

Why it matters: Wetlands maintain water quality and serve as critical habitats. They are vital for a healthy ecosystem. Countless critters, from amphibians to birds, depend on wetlands for food, shelter, and spawning. Massachusetts law and our local Bylaw pro-

tect wetlands, and infractions are subject to penalties.

Planning a project? Check before you dig! Near Lake Wyola, streams and rivers, and many smaller wetland areas in our community, proposed work must be reviewed by the ConCom before the work begins. Landscaping, construction, tree removals, paving, new structures or even up-grading existing structures all may require action to guarantee there will be no impact to nearby wetlands. The ConCom must sign off on all Building Permit Applications when digging is required.

The ConCom wants to help property owners proceed with their projects while simultaneously protecting the valuable wetland resources that benefit everyone. Don't wait till until your contractor is scheduled to contact us! It may take time to schedule a site visit by ConCom, and more time if wetlands are nearby.

There are a variety of smaller projects that may be allowed (or "exempt" from the state wetlands protection regulations) without a permit from the ConCom.

A list of these "minor activities" can be found on the ConCom's homepage on the town website. Our local wetlands Bylaw does not have the same exemptions as the state law. If you are not sure whether you have wetlands on your property or if your project requires a review, the ConCom can answer

ConCom, cont. on pg. 8

'Green burial' is an option in Shutesbury

The Cemetery Commission frequently fields questions about green burial, which is an option available to residents in a specified area at the West Cemetery.

You can find information about cemetery plots and Shutesbury's green burial guidelines at the Cemetery Commission page at shutesbury.org. Because of high demand, priority for green burial

plots is given to town residents and to people connected to the town in some way (e.g. a person has ancestry they can trace to town, or they grew up here and family moved away, or they are from away but family members reside here, etc.).

For answers to all of your general questions about green burial, search online for the Green Burial Council and its "On the Way to the Green Burial Cemetery: A Guide for Families."

News from the Shutesbury School Committee

Dan Hayes, *Chair*

The School Committee has been focused on providing support to administration to insure the safest environment for students, teachers and staff.

Collectively, we all have been following COVID-19 trends, the latest CDC and DESE (Department of Secondary and Elementary Education) guidelines and working with our local Board of Health, in order to stay abreast of critical data and information.

Our goal is to keep students in the classroom — learning, and to protect the teachers and staff so they can provide the best quality education for all students. This has been challenging, especially with

cases rising so dramatically; however, patience, kindness and respect are helping all of us manage each hurdle. We appreciate everybody's cooperation and understanding.

The School Committee is also working with the Town's Buildings Committee to address several issues related to building maintenance and repairs.

This includes the recent replacement of the sliding doors that lead into the courtyard and replacement of cracked and heaving sidewalks, as well as exploring remedies for the electrical controls to the heating system.

Additionally, we are prioritizing repairs to the school roof. The roof has been leaking water into the building for several years now; we are very concerned that this could damage the gymnasium floor, and

constant water leaking into the building could cause mold and other damage as well. This will be our top priority for the coming year.

The School Committee is also committed to expanding services and opportunities for students, while working with the Finance Committee and Select Board in crafting our budget.

We are continuing to work with Superintendent Jennifer Culkeen, Principal Jackie Mendonsa and our new Director of Finance, Caitlin Sheridan, investigating state and federal monies and grants for relief from the ramifications of COVID-19, including upgrades to the air filtration system, and we have used funds from the school choice account to supplement in areas that support student mental health.

School, cont. on pg. 9

ConCom, cont. from pg. 7

basic questions and refer you to other resources.

Who to contact: Our Land Use Clerk is here to help you through the process. She can help you determine what you need to do and how to go about it. Here are ways to engage:

1. Call our office, 413-259-3792,

and leave a message, or email concom@shutesbury.org.

2. Visit Town Hall during the Land Use Clerk's office hours which are posted on our homepage, shutesbury.org/concom. (Call ahead, 413-259-3792, before you come.) You can also pick up an informative brochure when you visit for more details.

3. Go to the Conservation

Commission's homepage, shutesbury.org/concom, for helpful information, links to permit documents, information about the Commission's activities, and more.

4. Attend one of our meetings (from March to October, on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7pm, and from November to February, on the 2nd Thursday).

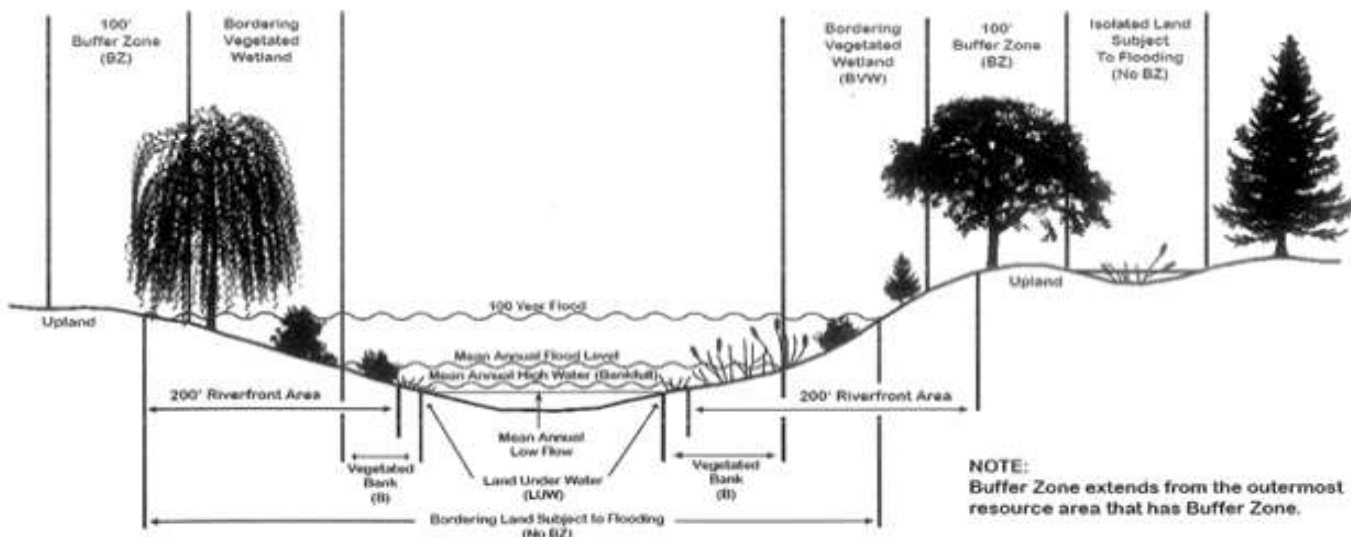


FIGURE 1: Inland Wetland Resource Areas and associated Buffer Zones. Modified from: Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (personal communication) and MA WPA regulations.

Lastly, School Committee members serve as representatives to Union #28, the Collaborative for Educational Services and Amherst Regional. As representatives, we actively support our town and our students: from curricula, capital planning as well as regional assessment and budgets. We remain engaged, open minded and make every attempt at being well informed.

We are grateful to all of the town departments and committees for their support and for the people in our community for their kindness.

Preschool and kindergarten enrollment/screening for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds in our community

In Shutesbury, developmental screening is available through the 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 30 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.

The Shutesbury Elementary School Preschool is currently enrolling children for the 2022-2023 school year. If you or anyone you know has children under the age of five, or you have questions or concerns about your child's development, please contact us for more information about the program. Contact **Grace Griecci**, Pre-k teacher, at 413-259-1212 ext.140 or email her at griecciq@shutesburyschool.org

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

Time to plan for Fall 2022's Early Childhood Program!

The Shutesbury Elementary School Community 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.

Your child must be 3 years old on or before Sept 1, 2022 for preschool enrollment, or 5 years old, on or before Sept 1, 2022 for kindergarten enrollment.

Please contact the school for Fall/2022 enrollment information.

Call **Laura Feltman**, Main Office SES, 413-259-1212

feltmanl@shutesburyschool.org

or **Grace Griecci**, 413-259-1212 x140

griecciq@shutesburyschool.org.

Union #28 Community Network for Children

The **Union #28 Community Network for Children Program** (CNC) offers family programming and basic needs support for families with young children in Erving, Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell. Some of the programs and activities are "Welcome Baby" gift bags: Tales & Tunes programs, Playgroups, and Babies and Books at our local libraries.

We also offer the Ready Rosie Program for 3-year-olds; Parent/Caregiver Group Chats and parent education workshops; Ages & Stages Questionnaires to help parents and caregivers learn more about your child's development;

as well as a Free CNC Children's Clothing Closet and more!

When possible, we meet in person and provide alternate programming online when we can't meet in-person. Registration is required for all programs. COVID-19 safety precautions such as wearing masks, social distancing and hand sanitizing will be in place for all in-person programs. Most appropriate for families with children 0-5 years of age.

To sign up for CNC weekly email updates and to learn more about the CNC program offerings contact CNC at (413)422-0170 call/text or email budine@erving.com.

NEW FAMILIES WELCOME!

The Union #28 Community Network for Children program is funded by the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant awarded to the Union #28 Schools by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, and donations from the Community.

Changes to the process of obtaining burning permits

Brush burning season started January 15 and runs until May 1. You may no longer call the town's dispatch service, Shelburne Control, for a permit. You must obtain your permit either online at www.fcburnpermits.com or by calling the Shutesbury Fire Station at 413-259-1211. **The use of the online service is preferred.**

While you can obtain a permit online between 8:30 am - 1 pm on any day that burning is being allowed, you may only call the Shutesbury Fire Station Monday - Thursday from 9 am - 1 pm.

Burning is permitted between the hours of 10 am - 4 pm. Fires need to be out at 4 pm. Burning of brush only. Fires must be attended by a person 18 years or older at all times, and be 75 feet from any building. Permits are only issued on the day of the intended burning and are good for one day only.

The M. N. Spear Memorial Library

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

Hours

Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 3 - 7:30
Wednesday: 11 - 1 & 3 - 6
Thursday: 3 - 7:30
Friday: 3 - 6
Saturday: 10 - 1
Sunday: 2 - 4 (Outdoor pickup only)

Small Library Pilot Project

We submitted our application for the Small Library Pilot Project in December. The next step is a meeting with a grant review team in early February. It will be the end of February or early March before we know if Shutesbury has been chosen to receive the grant.

Current Programs

The Library offers a variety of programs. While we are sad to not be able to safely gather in person, we are grateful that modern technology allows us to gather online for now. We are also grateful for funding from the Friends of the Library. Without their enthusiasm and dedication, we would not be able to offer so many wonderful opportunities.

Two Weekly Storytimes

Tales and Tunes with Katie

Mondays, 10 am, on Zoom through February.

Email budine@erving.com to register.

Tales and Tunes with Katie is offered in partnership with the Community Network for Children.



Storytime with Julie

Fridays, 10 am, on Zoom through March.

Grab your favorite stuffie and snuggle up for 30 minutes of stories and songs with Julie!

Email library_director@shutesbury.org to register.



Take-Home Activity Kits

We try to create a take-home activity kit for children about once a month.

The best way to stay informed about take-home kits is by signing up for Town of Shutesbury email announcements on shutesbury.org. About once a week, we send an email via this list with the latest opportunities.

Watch for emails from "Library Director" with "Library News" in the subject line.

Gardening Programs

The Library was awarded a grant from the New Salem Academy to present a series of gardening programs. We will begin with online programs and hope to be able to meet in person in the spring.

Email library_director@shutesbury.org to register for the gardening programs below.

The Magic of a Winter Garden

Tuesday, February 8, at 7pm, on Zoom

The garden can be a magical place – even in winter! This richly illustrated lecture provides inspiration and tips undesigning your garden for winter interest, choosing the best trees, shrubs and perennials, and grouping them to create arresting vignettes.

Presented by Joan Butler, who has been an enthusiastic gardener and plant collector for over 35 years, and who believes gardens should invite you to linger in the world outside your door.

The gardens on her half-acre suburban property have been included on several garden tours and feature exciting plant combinations, dramatic horticultural specimens, and collections of

native plants, hosta and epimedium.

Joan holds a Bachelor's degree in Geology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a Certificate in Landscape Management from UMass Extension Green School.

She is a Master Gardener, a retired horticulturist, and a past Chairman of the Massachusetts Landscape Design Council. She is a member of the Garden Consultants Council, the New England Hosta Society and is an accredited Flower Show Judge.

Joan has presented programs at flower shows in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and at numerous garden clubs, horticultural societies and libraries.

Seed Starting

Tuesday, February 22 at 7 pm, on Zoom

In this workshop, we will learn the basics of seed starting! Everyone will learn best practices to ensure success in preparing seeds for a home garden.

This workshop is presented by Eric Bromberg, a Master Gardener in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts. To this day, he remains the youngest person to receive certification in the history of the Rhode Island program, at just 25 years old in May 2003.

With a focus on vegetable production, Eric teaches classes on indoor seed starting, as well as hydroponics for Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens. He lives in Uxbridge with his wife and two young children, where he and his seven-year-old son maintain two gardens consisting of five raised beds each.

Fitness Classes

The Library is pleased to offer a series of ongoing, weekly fitness classes for adults in our community. These classes, always free to participants, are funded by the

Library's budget, the Friends of the Library, grants, and a partnership with the Shutesbury Council on Aging.

Email library.director@shutesbury.org to register.

- **Gentle Yoga with Jeannette** Wednesdays, 9 am on Zoom
- **Therapeutic Yoga with Dr. Kathy Sward** (Resumes mid-February) Thursdays, 9 am on Zoom
- **Zumba Gold with Aimee** Fridays, 10 am on Zoom
- **Strength Training with Jay** Saturdays, 8:30 am on Zoom

Book Clubs

The Library hosts two monthly book clubs. Books for both groups are available to borrow from the Library. Email library.director@shutesbury.org for more information or to join.

Shutesbury Roadtown Reads
Meets monthly from September through May and reads alternating fiction and non-fiction. Meetings are currently on Zoom.

Science Fiction Book Club
Meets on the first Wednesday of the month on Zoom. Books are chosen monthly.



Survey, cont. from page 1

The Age-Friendly Communities Network is a global initiative that was established by the World Health Organization and is administered in the US by AARP.

It has more than 1,200 members worldwide, including more than 600 American towns and cities. The network connects

stakeholders in these communities to promote a common vision of making them better places for people as they age by assessing and improving essential services like transportation, housing, and social participation, as well as additional services.

Below: "The 8 Domains of Livability," Age-Friendly Communities Network



Adapted from: Suzanne Garon, University of Sherbrooke



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SHUTESBURY MA 01072

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HOW TO CONTACT TOWN OFFICIALS

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

ACCOUNTANT Gail Weiss 413-259-1108	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR Walter Tibbetts 413-259-1211	RECREATION COMMITTEE Barbara Bigelow, Chair 413-801-9714
ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY Linda Avis Scott 413-259-6550	FINANCE COMMITTEE James Walton, Chair 413-259-5397	RECYCLING COORDINATOR Gary Bernhard 413-259-1235
TOWN ADMINISTRATOR Rebecca Torres 413-259-1214	FIRE DEPARTMENT Walter Tibbetts, Chief 413-259-1211 or at home 413-259-1286	REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE Stephen Sullivan 413-259-1626
ANIMAL INSPECTOR Nancy Long 413-259-1279	HEALTH AGENT Claudia Lucas 413-549-3710	SHUTESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE Dan Hayes 413-230-4686
ASSESSORS Kevin Rudden 413-259-3790	HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT Tim Hunting 413-259-1215	UNION #28 SCHOOL SUPT. Jennifer Culkeen 413-423-3337
BOARD OF HEALTH Catherine Hilton, Chair 413-259-2122	HISTORICAL COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 413-259-1214	SELECT BOARD Rita Farrell, Chair 413-259-1297 Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil 413-256-0312
BUILDINGS COMMITTEE Bob Groves 413-259-1200	M.N. SPEAR MEMORIAL LIBRARY Mary Anne Antonellis 413-259-1213	Eric Stocker 413-259-1250
BUILDING INSPECTOR Jim Hawkins 413-774-3167 x. 113	LIBRARY TRUSTEES Kate Cell, Co-chair 413-259-9129 Michele Regan-Ladd, Co-chair 413-259-1149	SHUTESBURY BROADBAND COMMITTEE Gayle Huntress Broadband Mailbox 413-345-2855
CEMETERY COMMISSION Walter Tibbetts 413-259-1286	OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Leave inquires at 413-259-1214	TAX COLLECTOR Ellen McKay 413-259-1615
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMM. Allen Hanson, Chair 413-259-1623	OUR TOWN NEWSLETTER Janis S. Gray 413-259-1584	TOWN CLERK Grace Bannasch 413-259-1204
COUNCIL ON AGING For Info., Med-Ride Program, Foot Clinic, leave message 413-259-3796	PERSONNEL BOARD Leave inquiries at 413-259-1214	TOWN MODERATOR Paul Lyons 413-259-1556
CONSERVATION COMMISSION Leave inquiries at 413-259-3792	PLANNING BOARD Deacon Bonnar 413-406-2767	TREASURER Ryan W. Mailloux 413-205-9944
CULTURAL COUNCIL Rory Valentine 413-256-0563	PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR John Letourneau 413-367-0017	TREE WARDEN Don Wakoluk 413-256-6736
DEPT. OF VETERANS' SERVICES Timothy Niejadlik 413-772-1571	POLICE DEPARTMENT Kristin Burgess, Acting Chief 413-259-1279 Dispatch 413-625-8200	WEB COMMITTEE Gail Fleischaker 413-253-0565
DOG OFFICER Nancy Long 413-259-1279		ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Charles J. DiMare 413-549-5330
ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR Maurice Gregoire 413-253-7505		
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Jackie Mendonsa, Princ. 413-259-1212	POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD 911	