

**Shutesbury Board of Selectmen
February 11, 2014
Meeting Minutes**

Members present: Chairwoman Elaine Puleo, and members Al Springer and April Stein.

Also present: Town Administrator Rebecca Torres and Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge.
Chairman Puleo opened the meeting at 8:05 AM at the Shutesbury Town Hall.

Appointments

8:00 AM: Police Officer in Charge Masiuk:

- The past week and a half National Grid has been upgrading ground wires on poles. It is anticipated they will be working in Shutesbury for another 2 weeks.
- No new dog complaints have come in.
- Staffing is fine.
- A winter storm is predicted for Thursday followed by excessive cold on Saturday.

School Committee Chairman Michael DeChiara: School Committee Resignation:

- Emily Bloch notified Michael that she is resigning from the School Committee effective February 12, 2014, creating an unexpected vacancy on the Committee.
- Emily also serves on the Union 28 Committee:
 - The next Union 28 Committee meeting isn't until April.
 - Superintendent Mahler has signed on for a second year as interim Superintendent.
 - The Superintendent search will begin in spring and finish in the fall.
 - It is likely that the hiring process will be done without hiring an outside consultant.
 - The Union 28 Committee will interview parents in the member communities for what is needed in a Superintendent and get the input into the job description.

In keeping with MGL Ch 41 S 10, Selectmen unanimously voted to add the position of School Committee for 1 year to the May 3, 2014 annual election ballot (rather than to fill the position in keeping with MGL Ch 41 S 11 by roll call vote of the remaining members of the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen.)

Topics

1. All Boards Meeting Review:

- Elaine really appreciates the 3 hours of presentations but was disappointed that no one came.
- See also response to letter from Jeffrey Lacy below under topics not anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours before the meeting.

2. School Committee Resignation. Michael DeChiara:

- Emily Bloch notified Michael that she is resigning from the School Committee effective February 12, 2014, creating an unexpected vacancy on the Committee.
- Emily also serves on the Union 28 Committee:
 - The next Union 28 Committee meeting isn't until April.
 - Superintendent Mahler has signed on for a second year as interim Superintendent.
 - The Superintendent search will begin in spring and finish in the fall.
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Select Board Action Items

- 1. Selectmen unanimously approved their January 14, and January 30, 2014, and November 19, 2013 meeting minutes as written.** Elaine remarked that with Wired West, it is a very good thing having Senator Stan Rosenberg from Western Massachusetts as the next Massachusetts Senate President.
- 2. Selectmen unanimously voted to authorize the use of the town hall by the Democratic Town Party on February 22 from 10 to 11:30 AM.**
- 3. Selectmen signed Vendor warrants totaling \$111,228.06.**
- 4. Selectmen signed Payroll Warrants totaling \$91,735.61.**
- 5. Selectmen unanimously voted to add the position of School Committee for 1 year to the May 3, 2014 annual election ballot.** (See appointments above.)
- 6. Selectmen unanimously voted to sign a statement of interest form required as part of the paperwork by the Massachusetts School Building Authority for financial assistance for repairs to the elementary school roof as follows:**

“Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2014, prior to the closing date, **the Shutesbury Selectboard**, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated February 14, 2014 for the Shutesbury Selectboard, 1 Cooleyville. Rd., Shutesbury which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future described herein: **Priority 5**, Replacement or renovation of a roof on the Massachusetts School Building Authority Statement of Interest Form (SOI). The deficiency being suffered and described briefly in Priority 5, of the SOI, is the leaking roof in the elementary school gymnasium; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.”

- Becky is working with Union 28 Director of Finance and Operations Michael Kociela to wrap it up.
- The project could be completed by the accelerated process in 18 months.
- Roofing Consultant Tom Ewing was concerned when the roof leaked after the repair.
- Structural Engineer Robert Leet was called back. He said that the additional work done on the roof 8 years ago was strong enough for the snow load figures. It’s an intermittent leak and not structural.
- Becky concluded, “We have a little bit of breathing room.”

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours in advance of the meeting:

- 1. In response to a letter dated February 8, 2014 to the Board of Selectmen from 29 Old Orchard Road resident Jeffrey “Jeff” Lacy, Elaine summarized that there are 20 to 25 people getting together regularly, who are trying to effect change in the manner of doing business in Shutesbury, and they are not going through the regular channels. Elaine added that she finds it “unproductive.” Elaine proposed to the Board that they take time to meet with the Finance Committee and invite Jeff and some others to an open meeting to discuss the points in Jeff’s letter:**

- April found it particularly upsetting because the Selectmen just had an All Boards meeting on February 4, that Jeff attended and none of these issues were raised.
- Becky questioned the use of the word “We” on a letter with only one signature, without backing it up with the signatures of others. She recommended that a letter of this sort should have the people of the “we” identified. “If this was anonymous we wouldn’t respond to it.” Becky: We’ve had letters from Jeff before; what kind of process is this?
- Elaine: In November we agreed to have a more open dialogue before town meeting.

- Becky: The letter is setting Elaine up to make assumptions. She is assuming who the “we” represents. Becky recommends going back to Jeffrey with, “We want to entertain these issue but we need better definitions.”
- April: We’ve discussed every one of these points in open town meetings. It’s unfortunate. We really have tried to make this is an open process, we’re not hiding anything.
- Becky: These are issues that have all gotten town meeting support and Jeff has supported some. Are they saying town meeting is irrelevant?
- Elaine: We could discuss the points, and there would be minutes. We could write a document that addresses positive and negative facts that lay out the points for each topic, and have it available for anyone to read. Elaine does not want to go to the up-coming annual town meeting and have a letter go out 2 days before that doesn’t have documentation and a rebuttal. So, Elaine wants a document that talks about each of Jeffrey’s points.
- Al: There are some valid points: 14% increase in salaries. Sometimes you look at the hours. Wendell roads are clean, they may not be blacktop. We just bought salt. These are small compared to the expenses of special needs. People at home see officials getting raises and they (the people at home) don’t get raises. People question, “Why do we need 3 full time police officers in town?”
- Becky: Al, you voted to support these increases. Now they are brought up in letters, you don’t.
- Elaine: The 14% raise is because similar positions in surrounding towns are getting paid much higher rates. As openings occur in surrounding towns, our officials are going to leave.
- Becky most of those people have had job opportunities offered. She uses another town as an example of what can happen if employees are not paid in keeping with other towns. The finance officials are the last people you want to lose. We have a very strong financial team here.
- Elaine: Asks Al, “What do you think would be the appropriate response?”
- Al: Answer truthfully. Al did not know this letter was being made up. I felt we needed a new front-end loader. A lot of people are still mad at me.
- Becky: All of these things were voted at town meeting. All the votes were 10 to one.
- April: These are the same people criticizing that previously criticized for not giving much of raises and now we’re criticized for giving raises. These are people that have not taken on the responsibility that want to be the policy makers.
- Al: A meeting won’t be well attended and it will just make them angrier.
- What should we do?
- Becky: Maybe have an open budget hearing with the Finance Committee and Select Board in April.
- Al: Discuss things coming up for the coming budget including capital items.
- Elaine offers to prepare a response to Jeff, thanking him for his letter and making the following points:
 - i. We spoke at our November 19 and February 4 All Boards meetings.
 - ii. We had very public open forums with lots of information.
 - iii. We will address all the new budget matters in an open meeting with the Personnel Board, Finance and Capital Plan Committees before town meeting.
 - iv. Please come to the alternate weeks Select Board meetings.
 - v. There is a range of opinions on all the committees.
- Elaine will craft the response and send it out. If the other Selectmen agree with it, it will get printed on town stationary and sent. Comments should be sent back to Becky so Selectmen are not deliberating by email.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 AM.

Documents Used During This Meeting:

1. Draft minutes of November 19, 2013, January 14, 2014 and January 30, 2014.
2. Resignation letter of Emily Bloch.
3. Document describing wording of vote required by the Massachusetts School Building Authority.
4. Request to use town property form.
5. February 8, 2014 letter from Jeffrey Lacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge
Administrative Secretary