

Shutesbury Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2015

Members present: Elaine Puleo/Chair and April Stein
Member present via videoconferencing due to vacation: Michael Vinskey
Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; L.A. Scott/Admin. Secretary

Meeting called to order at Shutesbury Town Hall by Puleo/Chair at 6:08pm

Guests: Gayle Huntress, Eric Stocker, Ayers Hall, and Steve Schmidt/Broadband Committee members and Karen Traub.

Unanticipated Topic:

Broadband Committee Update: Huntress explains that references to the special election in the Broadband/WiredWest insert were omitted as per the guidance of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF) and the Ethics Commission who subsequently approved the insert. Huntress: going forward, the Committee plans to create a “Friends of Broadband” to fundraise to cover the costs for the first mailing that contained references to the special election and future mailings promoting the special election. Torres: the Broadband Committee charge to create policy and advocacy and notes that the communication with the State resulted in needed information. Huntress: folks will pay for their own yard signs to be ready at the end of the week; a mailing encouraging people to vote at the Town Meeting will go out. Puleo: Select Board informational forums are scheduled for 4/22 6-9pm and 4/29 7-9pm, both at Town Hall; during the forums, folks will have the opportunity to ask questions on any warrant article item. Huntress: Broadband will have a representative present to answer questions. The School Committee and Finance Committees will be invited to have representatives present. Huntress requests guidance on the protocol for the Broadband presentation at Town Meeting. Puleo: the Committee will have the time and opportunity to do a presentation with PowerPoint; plan for 10 minutes followed by time for questions. Stein: include fiscal information on handouts; plan for 300-400 copies. Skype will be available in the school library. Stocker will be the FinCom representative to speak on the Broadband article. Puleo: Article will be a secret ballot vote. Stein: a 2/3 majority will be needed. Torres advises Huntress to leave special election information out of presentation and to only provide facts. Huntress: new dollar amount in warrant article is “not to exceed \$1,693,200.” Torres: public must be informed of the highest number possible; this is MBI’s highest figure plus the 2% bonding cost. Torres notes that the premise count could change one more time; MBI is being as conservative as possible using 850 premises in the formula to allocate cost. Huntress asks how to handle potential changes, before Town Meeting, to the dollar amount. Torres: the Committee will have an opportunity to update folks during the informational forums; changes, per MBI, will be acknowledged and explained at Town Meeting; WiredWest is validating MBI’s numbers. Schmidt: Article is authorization for the Treasurer to borrow. Vinskey: what is the mechanism if the borrowed money is not needed? Puleo: Article authorizes borrowing up to \$1,693,200; if subscriptions work well, Town will borrow only what is needed. Vinskey confirms:

WiredWest will bill Town for what is needed beyond subscriptions. Torres: system will be built in stages and State monies will be used first; some borrowing will be done, though, once the contingency fund is covered, towns will be refunded borrowed money. Torres continues: in the model, there is a \$2 million contingency line and a 7 year equipment replacement plan; this is a one time request for money and use of the money is restricted; with a debt exclusion, expenditures must be used for the specific use the money was borrowed for. Vinskey asks for further clarification about why the Town will be authorized to borrow up to \$1,693,200. Puleo: in the beginning, we will use some money to pay yearly bonding costs. Torres: there will be a timetable for repayment; 5 years of interest payments will be paid from operating or free cash. Schmidt uses the example of a construction mortgage and explains that dollar amounts will be apportioned out; money will be borrowed only as needed for construction of the system. Torres: the network costs will be apportioned. Huntress: average tax will be \$13 per household per month. Vinskey: best case, there will be no tax increase because subscriptions will cover cost, otherwise, 5 years of payments. Torres: cannot be longer than 5 years. Vinskey: we may not see tax increases for 5-6 years. Huntress: will explain using visuals at Town Meeting; plans for dry runs during forums. Huntress continues: construction won't start until votes pass; it is helpful that Wendell and New Salem are close to meeting their 40%; we have a good chance of being in the first round. At 6:43 pm, all Broadband Committee members leave the meeting.

Topic:

1. Review of Town Meeting Warrant and Budget

Vinskey, referring to the 2% pay raise for employees in the FY16 Budget, states that he is uncomfortable with receiving a pay raise as a Select Board member. Puleo: the \$134 Select Board salary increase is divided by three resulting in an approximate increase of \$44 per member. Puleo defers decision to Stein and Vinskey. Stein states she sees Select Board pay as a symbolic measure. Vinskey asks why the Select Board is paid. Puleo: because of the amount of work done by the Select Board; pay acknowledges the responsibility of the Board; it is a tradition she does not want to change. Stein: salary offsets expenses members incur, for example, the money could help with babysitting costs. Puleo: honors town commitment to having a Select Board and notes her concern about having less participation. Vinskey: okay with leaving as is. Vinskey asks for an explanation of "reasonable accommodations." Torres: this line will be used to pay for a new air filter and, at some future time, new tables and chairs for downstairs will be purchased.

Review of Warrant:

Article 7: Puleo explains that this will be a savings account; monies are not being spent and require a 2/3 vote to be taken out.

Article 11: Torres: appropriated transfers to capital stabilization preserves debt capacity. Vinskey: for the next five years, \$25-30,000 transfers to stabilization.

Article 17: Vinskey asks why the CPC Community Housing is building up an account when we don't have community housing? Puleo explains that the Community Housing account is required. Torres: there are other options for ways this money can be used, for example, Leverett is using CPC money to build senior

housing on donated land. Vinskey: housing expert, brought by Rita Farrell, to speak to the CPC noted that there might be a creative uses; aware it may be difficult to get dollars out.

Traub, town resident, asks for clarification about the \$10,000 request for a mediation consultant. Vinskey explains that money will be used to hire a consultant to work with folks to develop visions, goals and expectations toward updating the Master Plan and notes that there is no guarantee if we do it ourselves. Puleo: updating the Master Plan is a Planning Board project; consultant assists. Torres: if approved, hiring of the consultant will go out to bid. Puleo explains that the Planning Board sponsors the Article; the Select Board was split, therefore, did not vote and will comment as individuals. Puleo states that she does not feel this is a good use of town money. Stein states she would like to see use of an outside consultant tabled. Traub appreciates the Select Board community dinner and states that, especially as one who was at the forefront of the library issue and has gotten beyond it, does not feel money should be used to make amends for something a small group of people are holding onto; acknowledges the Master Plan has costs. Traub appreciates the availability of meeting minutes.

Select Board Action Item:

Motion is made and seconded to approve the 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant as presented. All Select Board members agree to approve and sign the 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant as presented.

List of Documents and Other Exhibits Used at the meeting:

1. 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
2. FY16 Town of Shutesbury Budget

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 2015 Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Avis Scott

Administrative Secretary