

Shutesbury Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2015

Members present: Elaine Puleo/Chair, April Stein, and Mike Vinskey
Staff present: Rebecca Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Admin. Secretary

Meeting opened at the Shutesbury Town Hall by Puleo/Chair at 6:30pm.

Guests: Dan Hayes/School Committee; Anna Aaron/Resident; Deacon Bonnar and Jeff Lacy/Planning Board

Appointments:

6:35pm: Police Chief Harding – not present

Topics:

1. **Review Town Meeting:** Vinskey wrote a letter appreciating the Broadband Committee for their coordinated, collaborative work. There was feedback that trash bag distribution could have started at 8:00am. Puleo shares her disappointment with the lack of attention to the budget and appreciates how hard the FinCom works. Vinskey: FinCom information sheets can be overwhelming. Puleo: Fact sheets are provided ahead of time and folks can ask for explanations. Hayes asks if the Select Board hears concerns about taxation. Puleo: no. Torres: yes. Hayes: hears concerns from folks about high taxes and wonders if a survey might be helpful; knows of five folks who are selling their homes because the taxes are too high; notes need to consider other choices, i.e. schedule for vehicle replacement. Torres: the vehicle replacement schedules are guidelines. Hayes states that he would like to see a year when taxes did not go up. Torres hears a lot of appreciation for our town's financial management; cites examples of problems nearby towns are experiencing; some towns and state departments spend every dollar in their budgets; our town does not do this. Hayes: in certain situations, Hunting/Highway Department cannot plow the school in time for opening because he needs to do the roads first; suggests more inter-departmental communication to get needs met. Stein notes need to find ways to invite more people to the table. Hayes suggests finding different venues for meeting with folks. Lacy: hears from folks that the budget discussion was low key this year because folks know that a regional assessment committee will be formed; Shutesbury may never be a low tax town because we have good schools and a residential tax base; we are doing okay as a town government, the question is how are the residents doing. Torres: government provides services; the towns with problems provide less service. Hayes: Shutesbury does a good job managing; emphasizes the need for the Select Board to think more about how people are doing. Torres: there are many folks for whom taxes are not an issue. Stein questions how best to reach out to folks who are struggling. Torres: receives broad feedback; it is important to note that Shutesbury has not had an override in eight years. Hayes: reaching out may provide more insight. Puleo: resolution of the regional assessment may provide some relief. Vinskey: maybe the question is

who is having a hard time paying their taxes. Stein suggests a smaller meeting. Puleo: people haven't come to forums. Hayes: need for folks to feel welcome and comfortable. Hayes suggests the idea of using the school as a community center with multiple activities. Torres: there is a need for folks to follow-up on their ideas, to step up and back their projects; has been trying to get a recreational committee formed; cites David Dann's work with the Council on Aging to get programs happening such as Tai Chi and Kathy Carey's annual swimming program. Torres: the Town has no authority over the use of the School library; there is new security for Internet use at the school. Puleo: use of the school needs careful consideration; someone needs to be in charge if the school is to be used. Hayes is looking for cost effective measures by using community resources. Lacy: some activities are being held at the school. Stein asks: how can we use the town more effectively for all of us? Torres follows up on the school plowing issue and notes that the plowing problem happens once or twice a year and additional strategies are in place, i.e. Tibbetts helps with plowing around town buildings. Puleo wishes to know more about what residents desire. Vinskey: usually three to four regular folks use the senior lounge on Mondays. Torres: a couple of other people have used the town Wi-Fi. Puleo: folks may not use the town hall Wi-Fi because they do not have computers; is willing to look into UMass as a possible resource for used computers. Vinskey: senior lounge may be open during the Saturday farmers' market. Hayes would like to be a part of the regional assessment committee. Vinskey asks how to address Puleo's observation about community lack of interest in the budget. Puleo: there are different patterns on different years. Stein notes that no one questioned \$25,000 allocation for the new library building fund. Puleo: did questions not come up because folks understand this is how we fund a new library or are folks against this allocation. Vinskey states that he was against it in the past and again this year and asks how a Select Board member would voice his concerns. Puleo: there is a need for Select Board members to bring their concerns, early on, to the Finance Committee. Stein: the Broadband issue was a big topic that utilized folk's energy. Lacy: visioning is moving toward a process that is needed before saving for a library. Torres: a large majority of the residents, who attend, come to Town Meeting to show support for all of the work that is being done on their behalf. Puleo appreciates Mosher's display depicting all the "hands" it takes to care for our town. Stein appreciates working together to pass Broadband.

- 2. Date for Special Election for the Purpose of a Debt Exclusion for the WiredWest Fiber Network:** In order to allow for the 35 days needed for preparation, Torres suggests June 10, 2015 as the date for the debt exclusion special election; the warrant needs to be posted seven days in advance; refers to handout for an explanation of required timelines. Motion made and seconded; Select Board votes unanimously to hold the Special Election on June 10, 2015. A town wide mailing with the Election Warrant will go out on Thursday, May 21, twenty days in advance of the election.

3. **Appointment process for members of the Master Plan Update Working Group:** Vinskey cites the need to plan for who will be on the committee and for the committee to be representative of different groups in town, i.e. ages, economic backgrounds and be a diverse group of people. Puleo suggests publicizing widely and asking for applications from people who are interested in being on the committee. Lacy: the Planning Board was responsible for the last Master Plan committee which included a member of the Planning Board; the working group will have its own chair; Dan Lass may be a good resource for assistance with solar farm tax calculations. Vinskey: members of the working group will be nominated by mutual consent of Planning and Select Boards. Lacy: scope says Planning Board and Select Board each appoint one member and the rest by mutual consent with there being nine to fifteen members; groups that may want to recommend a member: FinCom, School, Library Trustees, Water Resources Committee, Town Center, Lake Wyola Advisory Committee, Roads, Council on Aging, and the Historical Commission. Per Lacy, the first plan had more of an environmental focus. Puleo: does not want to restrict membership to those already on Boards; notes need to use talent of town by putting a notice out to the town. Torres suggests having folks write a letter of interest and sending a specific notice to boards and committees asking if they know of folks who may be interested. Puleo: the goal is to get the board formed by the end of summer; a different notice will go to the public and committees. Lacy: the Planning Board will draft a notice and send it along to the Select Board who will comment to Torres. Torres: Special Election mailing schedule is planned out; the Master Plan Update Working Group call for members letter will be included. Puleo: Committees may nominate an individual who will need to write a letter of interest.
4. **Assessment Review Committee Charge:** Vinskey, who wrote a draft charge, asks if more input from FinCom is needed. Stein and Torres agree. The FinCom will be invited to the 5.19.15 Select Board meeting; Vinskey will be present via Skype.
5. **WiredWest/MBI Update:** Torres: as of this evening, eight town meetings have voted in support of the WiredWest; one of the issues this week is Axia's proposal. Torres: the Broadband Committee wants to learn about proposals that are being floated, therefore, requests that the Select Board meet with Axia to learn/ask questions. Torres continues: in South Hadley, Axia is building out only where they have subscribers and are using all the MBI drops and community anchor connection points; Axia has high fees for connection point access to the Internet; they are much higher than rates on the open market. Torres: Axia plans to make money from each town, i.e. 1gig for \$20,000 for access between a town and Greenfield's point of access; MBI has a contract with Axia, awarded 5 years ago, to build the MBI network; Axia is the network operator. Stein asks how this differs. Torres: Axia owns the customer while WiredWest is a collective; WiredWest needs to find out if working with Axia is necessary. Vinskey: at some point will we have to use Axia? Torres: we probably have to get to Springfield using Axia; a network provider and an ISP are needed; Axia cannot be an ISP

unless they invest in the fiber; the ISP is the profit center. Torres will obtain a sample of South Hadley's contract with Axia; as a cooperative, WiredWest may not have to work with Axia. Vinskey: engineering is critical; asks if the town will have input. Torres: as a cooperative, we have more leverage. Stein: Town may be courted to go with a different regional model versus WiredWest. Torres: the WiredWest Executive Board will meet with legislators next Friday, including Kulik, Kocut, maybe Rosenberg and representatives from the Western delegation; WiredWest will be looking for regional network support from the legislators by asking them to give oversight on MBI and the grant application and to service communities and the cooperative versus private industry. Vinskey clarifies: MBI is getting offers to do business with private industry. Torres: up to this point, MBI was working closely with WiredWest. Puleo: MBI should be schooled by the legislators to work with towns. Puleo: resounding town votes demonstrate support for the cooperative. Torres: MBI has a new director. Stein: as a collaborative, WiredWest is transparent.

6. **Plan for Knotweed Forum:** Torres: knotweed is coming up; test plots need assessment. Puleo: one observer reported that the test spot is dead. Torres will call Bay State Forestry to assess test plots, as they may need a second year follow-up treatment. Torres will set up an educational forum with Lena Fletcher.
7. **2004 Crown Vic at Fire Station:** Torres spoke with Tibbetts who will put the vehicle out to bid by the end of the week; minimum bid will be \$300.
8. **Cowls Solar Project:** Vinskey attended last night's informational meeting with the same presenters and the same presentation as that of the March meeting including details about how equipment access will be handled; the presentation was done by Mickey Marcus/New England Environmental. Vinskey reports that abutters are concerned about truck dust and noise during the three to four months of installation; National Grid will determine if the substation will need to be upgraded; abutters concerned about substation making more noise than it does now and were told that it will not make more noise than it does now and there will be no change to electromagnetic interference. Vinskey, per presenters, some energy is lost as it goes through the lines; installation will not be seen from the road; about 25 acres will be clear-cut. Vinskey: Shane Bajnoci/Cowls Vice President of Forest Operations mentioned that there might be a Conservation Restriction of 800 acres plus other acreage; Kestrel Trust working with Cowls on this. Per Vinskey: the economic benefit for the town will be tax income of about \$8,000 per megawatt or about \$48,000/year tax revenue; Holmberg/Administrative Assessor estimates tax should be more like \$12,500 – \$13,000/megawatt; developers want to do a payment in lieu of taxes. Puleo and Vinskey note the need to get more information about the tax calculation. Vinskey: site will be remotely monitored and once a month physically monitored; abutters did not seem enthusiastic. Lacy: Chapter 61 reduces tax on land to 5%. Bonnar: State sets the value of land in Chapter 61; a Conservation Restriction reduces tax to 20%. Vinskey: next steps will be formal meetings with the

ConCom and Planning Board. Vinskey notes the value of the tax revenue to town. Torres cites the need for solid revenue projections/proposal.

Select Board Action Items:

1. All members of the Select Board agree to approve the Select Board meeting minutes for 3.24.15 as presented.
2. All members of the Select Board agree to approve and sign the June 10, 2015 Special Election Warrant.
3. Vendor Warrants in the amount of \$51,799.43 are signed.
4. Payroll Warrants in the amount of \$88,206.74 are signed.
5. All members of the Select Board agree to approve and sign thank-you letter to Tim McNerney for repairing the school clothes dryer; Hayes offers appreciation for this repair.
6. All members of the Select Board agree to approve and sign the Lake Wyola Association 6.14.15 Road Race special event form.

At 9:05pm, motion is made and seconded to go into Executive Session for reason #3: Salt Issue on Leverett Road and to resume Open Session. Stein: aye, Vinskey: aye, and Puleo: aye.

Select Board resumes open meeting at 9:12pm.

Vinskey asks about the status of FRCOG traffic counts. Torres: request for counts remains pending.

List of Documents and other Exhibits uses at the meeting

1. Axia Media Corporation summary
2. "Proposition 21/2 Overrides" section of the 1995 Secretary of the Commonwealth Election Resource Handbook
3. 4.29.15 letter from Shane Bajnoci/Cowls Vice-President Timberland Management
4. 6.10.15 Special Election Warrant
5. 5.6.15 thank you letter to Tim McNerney
6. Lake Wyola 6.14.15 Road Race special event form
7. 3.24.15 Select Board meeting minutes

Next meeting: Tuesday, 5.19.15, at 6:30pm.

Due to vacation schedules, the Select Board will meet June 2, 9, and 30.

Motion made, seconded, and all members of the Select Board agree to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary