

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
December 13, 2016 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Mike Vinskey/Chair, Michael DeChiara, and Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil

Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Susan Millinger/Positive Presence, Ellen McKay/Tax Collector, Attorney Donna MacNicol/Town Counsel, and Elaine Puleo/FinCom

Vinskey calls the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Agenda Review: No changes other than the addition of unanticipated items.

Public Comment: None offered.

Discussion Topics:

1. Tax Collector Review: Vinskey explains the Select Board process for conducting department head reviews and notes that the work of the tax collector is determined by Mass. General Law. McKay: yes, the MGL is very strict; the tax collector works closely with the financial team. Vinskey: because the Select Board hires the tax collector, how can the Board best supervise you? McKay states that she has been doing her job for forty-one years; the Board can help by scheduling the audit every two years rather than every three years as it will make the process easier and will cut down on the amount of storage needed for receipted tax documents. Torres: the Select Board and FinCom can change the time period between audits; Tom Scanlon, the town's auditor, stated that our financial team could go as long as five years between audits; the audit period shortens when there are financial staff changes or other transitions. Torres: it looks like the next audit will take place in February/March 2017; the period audited will run through 2016. McKay: some towns go out to bid for their auditing services and it may be time for Shutesbury to do so. McKay recommends re-instituting the "financial assistant" position that could serve the tax collector and treasurer; neither are cross-trained in the other's work. Torres: accountants are available through FRCOG and Weiss/Accountant has worked as a collector. McKay: when she worked as an "acting" collector in another town, the pay rate was \$40/hour. DeChiara: if an assistant is explored, the Select Board may want to talk with the school as an assistant could possibly help with collection of school lunch money, etc. McKay: the "financial assistant" job description should include prompt daily recordation of funds taken in as this is a critical function of the position; remote deposit capture makes the job easier. McKay: there is a lot of recourse for handling delinquency; Shutesbury had only 1.15% in outstanding tax payments due at the end of FY16. McKay: if people explain that they are in financial trouble, she will work with them; explains the process for notifying and handling delinquent real estate tax payments; excise tax delinquency will ultimately result in the inability to renew a driver's license and registration. Vinskey: are there a lot of people that are having trouble paying their taxes?

McKay: no, there are only a few and some people find it helpful to pay their taxes on a monthly basis. The Select Board appreciates McKay and her work.

At 7:02pm, a motion is made by Vinskey and seconded by Makepeace-O'Neil to go into executive session for reason #3/pending litigation and to return to open session: Vinskey: aye, DeChiara: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye.

Open session resumes at 8:21pm.

2. Preparation for 12.17.16 Four-Town Meeting: Vinskey refers to his pre-meeting notes relative to the 11.15.16 Select Board meeting with the FinCom and reads these notes into the record for guests. Vinskey: to consolidate, the Select Board and FinCom want a written commitment that the "ability to pay" method will be worked on in a concrete manner. DeChiara: verifying that the "ability to pay" is the "way to go" is the first step; if a written agreement is asked for, the work needs to be well underway before May town meeting – Shutesbury will need documented proof of the commitment, otherwise the Region will need to plan for a statutory budget. Puleo: we were moving on with "ability to pay" last year and if we are not going in that direction, the townspeople will be soured. It is agreed that Vinskey, as Select Board Chair, will state the town's position and other Shutesbury representatives will provide financial and other pertinent information. Vinskey: our stance is that we want commitment from the other towns regarding ability to pay. DeChiara confirms with Torres that budgets, once presented, can be decreased. Puleo: there is a difference between budgets and how they are paid for; we can warn the other towns that a statutory method may be necessary. Torres: Geryk's method was to cut the budget rather than redistribute reductions; we do not know how the interim superintendent will respond. DeChiara: if a statutory method is needed, the Region will have to use contingency funds rather than cut services; we are not about cutting the Region's services – we are trying to have a different kind of discussion with the other towns. Puleo: if they are willing to work on a more equitable method, we will be equal partners; if our hand is forced because the other towns are not willing to work together, it is not our fault. Vinskey: the decision is up to town meeting; the responsible thing for the Region to do is plan accordingly.

3. Review 11.15.16 Select Board/FinCom Meeting: Vinskey states that he is still not clear how the funds in free cash and stabilization will be used; notes that some will be used for OPEB and asks if the Board needs to look at how much will be going into these funds. DeChiara: it was clearly stated that OPEB is to be funded over a number of years; there was no consensus on the approach for funding and the use of free cash and stabilization; the Community Compact financial program may assist us in understanding options. The next joint meeting with the FinCom is scheduled for 1.10.17.

4. Meeting Accessibility/Time – Days: DeChiara, noting that the Historical Commission (SHC) meets in the middle of the day, suggests that at least half of the meetings held during the year need to be held in the evening when more people are able to attend; town government needs to be accessible. Torres: neither the Select Board nor town meeting has authority over when meetings are to occur; town meeting can only set the date/time of

town meeting. DeChiara: as a criteria of reappointment, could the Select Board consider accessible times for meetings? Torres: no; only if there is intentional scheduling of meetings for inappropriate times. Makepeace-O'Neil: we do not want to lessen the number of resident volunteers. Torres: evening meetings do not speak to elders, retired individuals, or at-home mothers. DeChiara: most volunteer town committees meet in the evenings. Torres: committees can be asked to be accessible for a special request; notes that the SHC changed their meeting time to accommodate an individual who ended up not attending. DeChiara: if we are talking about accessibility, different meeting times may be recommended. Vinskey: would it be appropriate to state the Select Board encourages meeting times to accommodate interested parties? Makepeace-O'Neil, noting the minimum 48 hour posting requirement, suggests tentative agendas be posted in advance and revised closer to the meeting date to facilitate awareness of and participation in meetings. Vinskey suggests carrying the item over to a future meeting for consideration of a concrete plan; ideas include: encouraging more flexible meeting times and posting meetings well in advance. Millinger notes that as a senior, who does not drive at night, it is a stretch to attend a late Select Board meeting.

5. Select Board Sponsored Dinner at SAC: DeChiara is unable to commit to participating at this time; Makepeace-O'Neil is willing therefore Vinskey will look into available dates at the SAC.

6. SBBC Request for Letter to Mass Technology Collaborative: The Select Board reviews the Broadband Committee 12.12.16 draft letter the purpose of which is to promote "greater engagement between MBI and Municipal Liaisons"; the letter is addressed to Peter Larkin/MBI Board of Director Chair and will be copied to Bill Ennen/MBI, Carolyn Kirk/Deputy Secretary Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, State Representative Kulik, and State Senator Rosenberg. DeChiara moves the Select Board approve and sign the letter, dated 12.12.16, from the Shutesbury Select Board and Municipal Lighting Plant to Peter Larkin; Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

7. Select Board Meeting Reports:

A. Farm and Forestry Committee: Torres: the Committee is putting together a Right to Farm bylaw for May town meeting.

8. Town Administrator Updates:

A. Board of Health Administrative Consultant: Torres reads the 12.5.16 email from Allen Hanson regarding a NextDoor conversation and the Board of Health paid position into the record. Torres: Hilton's position as Board of Health Administrative Consultant is appointed via an annual town meeting vote; Hilton is on the Elected Officials list as a member of the Board of Health; the goal, in response to Hanson's email, is to create clarification. Select Board members agree that Hilton's position as Board of Health Administrative Consultant is to be added to the Appointed Officials list indicating that the position is appointed by annual town meeting.

B. SES Camera: Vinskey asks if there are funds to cover the cost of the video camera that will complete the school's security system. Torres will be meeting with Mendonsa/SES

Principal regarding capital items and whether there is any flexibility in the school budget to cover the cost of the camera; another option is to ask the FinCom for funds to purchase the camera. Vinskey emphasizes the need for the camera purchase to be finalized. Puleo confirms that Torres will know whether the school has the funds for the purchase in advance of the 12.15.16 FinCom meeting.

C. Elementary Schoolteachers' Contract: Torres: Fred Steinberg/School Committee Chair requested the Select Board choose a representative to the schoolteachers' contract negotiations. DeChiara, noting that the Select Board can select a town representative, suggests that Elaine Puleo, who has experience, be asked to fill the role. Vinskey asks Puleo if she is interested in volunteering. Puleo requests additional information on the timing of the negotiations and who the union representative will be. Torres is willing to fill the role if Puleo does not.

Items Unanticipated by the Chair:

A. Email from Gail Fleischaker/Pipeline Opposition: Select Board members concur, that given the climate relative to energy issues in town, it does not seem prudent for the Board to initiate a warrant article opposing the pipeline. Makepeace-O'Neil will respond to Fleischaker and suggest the option of a citizen petition to initiate a warrant article.

B. Web Committee Name Change: DeChiara: once the Web Committee vote is confirmed, the Select Board will be asked to consider changing the Committee's name to "Web Communications Committee". This agenda item will be carried over to a future meeting.

C. COA Grant Contract: Vinskey asks for a motion for the Select Board to accept and the Chair to sign the COA Grant document for \$4,386.10; DeChiara moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion that passes unanimously.

D. Draft Town Announce and Web Site Policy: DeChiara provides draft "Town of Shutesbury Web Site Policy" and "Town of Shutesbury Subscribed Email Announcement List Policy" documents for consideration at a future Select Board meeting; the Web Committee will be reviewing the policies; Malcolm-Brown wants to ensure the procedures work before the policies are finalized.

E. Safe Streets Community: Puleo, noting that it was not pursued in the past, suggests the Select Board reconsider becoming a Safe Streets Community; FRCOG is available for guidance. Torres will gather information on the Safe Streets Community program for a future meeting

Future agenda items:

1.10.17: FinCom and School Committee, municipal solar, progress with Select Board goals, Internet policy, and digital commons/Google for Government (may be moved to 1.24.17). 1.24.17: Treasurer or Accountant review, town email guidelines, and policy manual. DeChiara suggests considering a potential warrant article about becoming a sanctuary town.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board Meeting Minutes: DeChiara moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds the motion to approve the 11.29.16 meeting minutes; the minutes are unanimously approved as amended.

2. The Select Board will sign Vendor Warrants totaling \$98,742.33.
3. The Select Board will sign Payroll Warrants totaling \$97,833.14.

At 10:03 pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves and DeChiara seconds the motion to adjourn the meeting; motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Town of Shutesbury Town Collector Job Description
2. Vinskey's Pre-meeting Notes for 12.13.16
3. 12.12.16 Letter to Peter Larkin/Chair MBI Board of Directors
4. 12.5.16 Email from Allen Hanson
5. 12.2.16 Email from Fred Steinberg
6. 12.10.16 Email from Gail Fleischaker
7. Department of Elder Affairs Contract for COA Grant
8. Draft "Town of Shutesbury Web Site Policy"
9. Draft "Town of Shutesbury Subscribed Email Announcement List Policy"

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary