

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2018 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Michael DeChiara/Chair, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Vice Chair
Staff Present: Becky Torres/ Town Administrator, Susie Mosher/ substitute minute taker

Guests: Jeff Lacy/Planning Board and Master Plan Working Group (MPWG), Anna Aaron and April Stein/Personnel Board, Rus Mizula and Wendy Masiuk/Police Sergeant

DeChiara calls the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Public Comment: Jeff Lacy detailed his history with town planning and Conway School projects. He objected to the decision that the Town Administrator be the communication contact for the grant and the Conway School Project. He feels shut out of the process. Lacy would like to be a co-contact with the Town Administrator. His statement was duly noted by DeChiara but not discussed further.

Discussion Topics:

1. Letters requesting list of Board of Registrars and Election workers: DeChiara signs the letters addressed to the Shutesbury Democratic Committee and Massachusetts State Republican Committee. Shutesbury currently does not have a town Republican committee so the state committee is notified as per the Election Resource Handbook. These letters solicit names for appointees for Board of Registrars and election workers. The committees have forty-five days to respond.
2. Consideration "Low Hanging Fruit" Committee: The concept of this initiative recommended by the MPWG was to solicit projects from Shutesbury citizens that would be low cost and have high impact to improve the quality of life in town, using a simplified process similar to the Community Preservation Committee's process. After some discussion it was decided that another town committee is not needed. In order to get the idea off the ground, a contest will be announced to generate projects. The Select Board will be the vetting committee. The projects would be evaluated and prioritized based on: durability, the number of people the project impacts, and low costs. There is no specific cost guideline. The funding for the projects would come from a specific request to the Finance Committee or as a town meeting warrant article. The deadline would be March 6, 2018. There will be an insert in the Winter *Our Town* newsletter that Torres will draft.
3. Follow up from Personnel Committee re: reviews/evaluations, police chief hiring, and contract renewal scheduling: April Stein says the Personnel Committee is basically happy with the original process as proposed – a goal setting process rather than an evaluation done in open session. The Town Counsel advised the committee about Open Meeting requirements and conflicts. If the responsibility for the evaluation process is assigned to the Town Administrator, consultation with members of relevant boards as advisors such as Personnel, Finance and Select Board wouldn't require an open meeting. Torres notes the pitfall of this system is that the Town

Administrator could hold the power too tightly, excluding others from the process. This leads to a discussion of the Select Board's role for supervising and evaluating department heads. Since the Town Administrator knows more about the day-to day activity for departments it makes sense that the Town Administrator hold the supervisory responsibility. It remains important for the Select Board to maintain good communication with departments, possibly through a regular rotation of a mutual checking in at Select Board meetings. Other towns wrestle with delegating responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of town employees. Torres gives examples from Athol, Buckland, Southampton, Amherst. Anna Aaron has a form used in Montague. There are mechanisms to address adequate airing of complaints. The Select Board retains supervision and evaluation of the Town Administrator. A complaint from a department about the Town Administrator supervision would be written as a letter to be considered in an executive session by the Select Board. The discussions between all parties would focus on goal setting, steps for improvement, professional development and co-ordination with other departments instead of power/personality clashes or merit-based rewards. The model of inter-department teams such as our successful Financial Team can improve the functioning of town government. This will be a less torturous process, with more informed recommendations and decisions made. Research what other towns are doing, propose a clearer shift in the supervisory and evaluation roles. A finalized proposal will be done by the Personnel Board to be presented to the Select Boar in a couple of months. DeChiara wants to start FY 19 with a plan in place. Once these changes in supervision/evaluation process and roles are finalized, communication to department heads is essential.

The Select Board requested and the Personnel Committee agreed to develop a draft job description for the Town Administrator that would change the position such that it had supervisory role over department heads. Michael suggested that this change could bring more cohesion to the town in terms of administrative and professional support for department heads and increased coordination. The Personnel Committee will bring back a draft job description for Select Board consideration in March.

4. Police Chief Hiring Process:

- A. Tom Harding will retire on June 30, 2018. The Personnel Board will review the job description, advertisement notices will be placed in the April MMA Beacon, in an online Police website and on the shutesbury.org site. A hiring committee will be appointed by the Select Board consisting of the school principal, the fire chief, police chief, Town Administrator, and a volunteer representative from the Personnel Board, Finance Committee and Select Board. One to three residents will also be selected for the hiring committee once the position is posted. Citizens will need to write a paragraph to explain their interest. If the hiring process doesn't successfully conclude by June 30, Officer Wendy Masiuk volunteers to fill in the interim. She offers help plan a retirement event.
- B. The contract renewal schedule is on-going for the Fire Chief. Over the next two weeks Makepeace-O'Neil will participate in the Police and Town Administrator contract renewal and DeChiara in the Highway and Fire Chief contract renewal.

- C. Russ Mizula asks about the vacant Tree Warden position. The Town Administrator will talk to the Deputy Tree Warden and let Russ know what the current status is.
5. Joint discussion of energy ideas with the Energy Committee: No one from the Energy Committee shows up to discuss energy ideas. This frustrates the Select Board. Energy issues are important to our town and the lack of response and action by the Energy Committee does not meet our town's need to think about energy issues. The Town needs a capital plan for energy projects to work toward over time. Torres says the Energy Committee did get a shipment of 200 LED bulbs procured. The Select Board has suggested some projects to the Energy Committee, but those ideas have been dismissed and the Energy Committee did not come in for further discussion with the Select Board. Should committee members be un-appointed? The COA has a process that if a member misses more than 2 – 3 per year, the committee can vote the member off. What criteria and process should the Select Board use to un-appoint? This will be on the next agenda.
6. Preparation for Four Town Meeting on Saturday, 1/27/18: DeChiara will be away. The Amherst Regional Public Schools Superintendent, Michael Morris emailed DeChiara and they will have a phone conversation for an update. Leverett still appears to be headed to a vote for statutory which will defeat the other three towns votes for the alternative proposal, S10. This may result in a \$1.8 million cut for the regional school budget because the statutory formula impacts the town of Amherst very hard. Amherst is facing big cost increases in their self-insured health insurance program. The Governor has announced a 3.5 or 3.6% increase in Unrestricted Government General Aid (UGGA) which Amherst will apply to their regional school budget gap. A motion by DeChiara and seconded by Makepeace-O'Neil passes to support any unanticipated Shutesbury UGGA money be designated for the regional school budget. In March the budget will be voted by the Regional School Committee. The Regional School Committee may bring the alternative proposal to each town meeting if the regional assessment committee does not pass it. Stan Rosenberg might address Saturday's meeting.
7. The Select Board reviews and approves the ABCC Annual Report.
8. The Select Board and TA express interest in the following FRCOG Local Technology Assistance Projects
- a. Well head Protection Plans
 - b. New Collective Purchasing Ideas
 - c. Creative Place Making / Pop Up Art
 - d. Regional Opioid Task Force
 - e. Succession Planning and
 - f. Abandoned Property Task Force
- DeChiara suggests posting the recently updated Hazard Mitigation Report on the town website.
9. Review of Lot O-32 Exploratory Committee charge: DeChiara notes the town has been through contentious and divisive issues in its recent past: the new library, the solar project and a Native American study committee. The Select Board agrees that the charge for the Lot O-32

committee is good but the timing for the grant and Conway School project is not good. There are tensions over housing vs solar vs library project components. Makepeace-O'Neil says to table the study committee. There is too much tension around the project now. DeChiara moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds a motion to table the Lot O-32 Exploratory Committee until July 2019. The motion passes unanimously. TA will contact the Conway School and the grant to inform them Select Board is not going forward at this time. The MPWG did not recommend a time line. Jumping on the grant pushed the project forward. There will be some dismay from Jeff Lacy and Meryl Mandell who worked to get the grant application in front of the Select Board and solicit a project with the Conway School. The Select Board agrees that the concept of the Lot O-32 Exploratory Committee and its charge holds, but as the Select Board is responsible for the well-being of the town, they vote for this delay.

10. Town Administrative Updates:

- A. Torres reports the Locks Pond Culvert grant proposal may be on the Governor's desk and the town may get word about the grant in the next week.
- B. The MMA conference legal workshop was good. There was some time to connect with officials from other towns and share concerns.
- C. The FCCIP did not receive a signed contract from Select Board. After minutes from the July meeting affirmed the Select Board decision to sign the FCCIP contract, DeChiara signs it again.

11. Committee Updates:

- A. Makepeace-O'Neil reports that the Emergency Management Team has a grant to get NOAA weather radios for people participating in the Neighbor Networks. These radios have the capacity to receive ham radio signals as well. Aaron Addison reported to the EMT that ham radio operations are all set to connect to county and Western Mass ham operators.
- B. Aggregation Proposal: Torres reports on the Regional Energy Committee efforts to create a way for individual household to purchase their electricity from greener energy sources. This would be an alternative to purchasing electricity from National Grid. The price per kilowatt would be lowered through the group's purchasing power. Select Board moves and seconds a motion to agree to participate in the Regional Electric Aggregation Project and appoints Becky Torres as its Shutesbury representative to the Regional Electric Aggregation Project. The motion passes. There will be an RFP drawn up to search for the position of an Aggregator. Town Meeting will have to vote to participate. There will be a post card to notify people of this warrant article. Individual households would be able to opt out at any time.

12. Administrative Actions

- a. Approved January 9, 2018 minutes as amended.
- b. Approved December 19, 2017 minutes as written.
- c. Select Board members will sign vendor warrants totaling \$549,070.48.
- d. Select Board members will sign payroll warrants totaling \$99,785.70.
- e. Select Board members will sign Broadband warrants totaling \$97,498.53.

13. Future Agenda items:

- a. Land Selling Policy - put information on web.
- b. Plan Select Board Volunteer Dinner
- c. Discuss removal of committee member process
- d. Discuss changing Board of Registrar stipend
- e. Feb. 20th meeting - Approve Personnel Board job description for Police Chief
- f. Mar 20 meeting discuss supervision/evaluation model

At 9:05pm, DeChiara moves the Select Board enter into executive session for reasons #1/Personnel and #3/Solar PILOT to consider approval of executive session minutes and not return to open session; the motion is seconded by. Roll call vote: DeChiara: aye and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. 1.23.18 Letters to the Shutesbury Democratic Committee and the Massachusetts Republican State Committee
2. 8.10.17 and 11.6.17 Personnel Board meeting minutes; 8.31.17 Finance Committee meeting minutes
3. 1.23.18 Town of Shutesbury Annual Liquor License Report for the 2017 Calendar Year
4. 1.16.18 FRCOG Local Technical Assistance Project Requests
5. Lot O32 Committee Charge
6. 6.22.17 Regional Agreements for FRCOG FCCIP Inspection Services
7. 12.11.17 FRCOG Regional Electricity Aggregation Project
8. Massachusetts Animal Fund Animal Control Officer Designation 2018

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Mosher/substitute minute taker

Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary – amendments