

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting and All Boards Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2019 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair, Elaine Puleo, and April Stein
Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator; Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Kevin Rudden/Administrative Assessor, Leslie Bracebridge/Assessors' Clerk, Steve Schmidt and Diane Jacoby/Board of Assessors, Ellen McKay/Tax Collector & Capital Planning Committee, Jeff Lacy/Zoning Board of Appeals, Allen Hanson/Community Preservation Committee, Ryan Mailloux/Treasurer, Grace Bannasch/Assistant Town Clerk, JoAnn Bernhard/Council on Aging, Gayle Huntress/MLP Manager, Mary Ann Antonellis/Library Director, Deacon Bonnar/Planning Board; Rita Farrell, James Walton and Eric Stocker/Finance Committee, Meryl Mandell/Recycling & Solid Waste Committee, Susie Mosher/Town Clerk, Tim Hunting/Highway Superintendent, Paul Lyons/Moderator, Katie Fiander/School Committee, Catherine Hilton/Board of Health, Walter Tibbetts/Fire Chief & Emergency Management Director and Gail Weiss/Town Accountant

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

Agenda Review: No changes.

Discussion Topics:

1. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to appoint Linus Mearian as a Cemetery Grounds Keeper and to sign the Cemetery Grounds Keeper Personnel Action Form; the motion passes unanimously.
2. Town Administrator Updates: the well line installation project is in process; extra work is being done to decrease the work area from freezing during the unseasonably cold weather. The next Personnel Board meeting is scheduled for 11.21.19.
3. Special Town Meeting Warrant: Torres: subsequent to the Select Board's 10.16.19 vote, the Attorney General's office confirmed that because Shutesbury's annual town meeting date was determined via bylaw, only a town meeting vote can change the annual town meeting date. Per Torres, an article to consider changing the date for annual town meeting to the last Saturday in April will be on the special town meeting warrant. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion for the Select Board to sign the 12.3.19 special town meeting warrant; the motion passes unanimously.
4. Tax Classification Hearing: The Tax Classification hearing, as posted, is called to order at 6:41pm. Steve Schmidt/Assessor refers to the "Tax Classification Hearing November 12, 2019" document prepared by Administrative Assessor Kevin Rudden: a split tax rate is not viable for Shutesbury therefore the Board of Assessors recommends staying with the single tax rate. Per Schmidt, the expected tax rate for FY21 is \$24.04/\$1,000 valuation which is a \$0.78 increase above the current rate. Torres: how does the increase in personal property, the system resiliency equipment, for the Wheelock solar site affect the tax rate. Kevin Rudden/Administrative Assessor: the Department of Revenue classifies the solar site as commercial industrial personal property. Schmidt: the amount

of the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) is set. Rudden to Torres' question: once the motions are approved, the LA-5 (Classification Tax Allocation form) will be available for electronic signatures; the excess levy capacity for FY20 is \$171,746,45. Rudden continues: the variables for FY21 include the solar site batteries, whether the cell tower is built and equipped, each carrier's equipment is valued as personal property, and the fact that DOR has a new process that will yield more valuation for utilities. Rudden to Stein's question: the new National Grid & Eversource utility poles represent the net new value for the broadband construction. Torres: the tax rate increase seems high. Rudden: DOR certified the numbers 11.7.19.

Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion that the Select Board vote to establish a residential factor of 1, meaning a single tax rate, for Fiscal Year 2020; the motion passes unanimously.

Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion that the Select Board vote not to adopt an Open Space Discount for Fiscal Year 2020; the motion passes unanimously.

Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stein seconds a motion that the Select Board vote not to adopt a Residential Exemption for Fiscal Year 2020; the motion passes unanimously.

Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion for the Select Board to vote not to adopt a Small Commercial Exemption for Fiscal Year 2020; the motion passes unanimously. Retiring Assessors Steve Schmidt and Diane Jacoby are thanked for their work. The need for new Board of Assessors members is noted.

All Boards Meeting: Makepeace-O'Neil welcomes all in attendance and introductions are made.

1. Board of Assessors/Steve Schmidt: this is major time of transition for the Assessors' Office – Ken Holmberg retired and Kevin Rudden was hired as the new Administrative Assessor; after eighteen years of service, Schmidt will complete his final term on 12.31.19 and Diane Jacoby's resignation is effective 11.30.19. Schmidt continues: the annual tax classification hearing was conducted just prior to the All Boards meeting; the role of the Board of Assessors is to oversee the department's operations, assess all property in town, follow state mandates and complete required certification training; the Board currently meets twice a month and receives an annual stipend of \$2,000.
2. Recreation Committee/Rita Farrell: the Recreation Committee focuses on filling in gaps for fitness classes by collaborating with the Friends of the Library and Council on Aging; the Committee planned and sponsored Shutesbury hikes and has trail descriptions on their webpage. Per Farrell: the Committee has one vacancy; meetings are typically held in the morning; other current members: B.Z. Reily, Christine Robinson, and Christine Marglin.
3. M. N. Spear Memorial Library/Mary Anne Antonellis: Antonellis reviews her handout "Library Snapshot - All Boards 2019"; all are welcome to attend library programs; participation in the current online survey is encouraged; the first annual Friends of the Spear Memorial Library calendar will be ready soon.
4. Municipal Lighting Plant/Broadband/Gayle Huntress: this has been a busy year with lots of construction; as of 11.8.19, 75% of the installs were completed with the last install scheduled for 12.19.19; the project is on budget and even a bit under budget due to the addition of approximately \$300,000 in State funds; with 42 road miles and 780 homes, the one-year build schedule has been aggressive. Huntress continues: the second TV seminar will be held at 10am on 11.16.19; with an 87% take rate, the price point is right.

5. Community Preservation Committee/Al Hanson: the role of the CPC is to channel funds, under the Community Preservation Act, for projects that benefit our town; there is detailed information in the CPC Plan and the application process on the Committee's webpage; the three eligible categories are community housing, open space/recreation, and historic preservation. Hanson continues: the newly approved projects (May 2019 annual town meeting) are the Building Committee's improvements to the Old Town Hall underpinnings and Pioneer Habitat for Humanity's purchase of property for a new home; the CPC does not initiate projects, it is up to town residents to propose project ideas.
6. Zoning Board of Appeals/Jeff Lacy: long serving member Tom Williams moved away; the other current members are Chuck DiMare/Chair and Andy Berg with Herb Gilmore as the alternate; the ZBA is a strictly regulatory Board with State law subscribing what it handles: appeals of zoning enforcement officer decisions; variances which have very strict tests are occasionally done; site plan reviews for "by right use", i.e. accessory apartments, residential ground-mount solar installations; and special permits for smaller projects, i.e. detached non-habitable structures; the Planning Board handles special permits for large projects; the ZBA also provides education/guidance for zoning questions.
7. Capital Planning Committee/Ellen McKay-Tax Collector: the Committee is planning their first meeting for the budget season during which detailed capital requests, due 11.5.19, will be reviewed. As the Town's representative to FRCOG, McKay encourages consulting their website for information about upcoming trainings.
8. Recycling and Solid Waste Committee/Meryl Mandell: Recycling Coordinator Gary Bernhard is very dedicated and does a fabulous job; the new Materials Recycling Facility (MFR) contract places the risk on towns; the new charge for recycling is \$93.50, about \$17,000/year– there is a formula, however, for some of this to come back to the Town; the current hauler is working out well as is the Leverett Transfer Station sticker program; there will continue to be one annual bulky waste day; shredded paper will no longer be accepted for recycling. Mandell continues: the Committee is working on the illegal dumping problem with the Town Administrator, Police Department and Highway Department; thanks to the FinCom, the RSWC will have their own shed at the school; the Celebrate Shutesbury recycling quiz will also be in upcoming newsletter.
9. Fire Department/Fire Chief Walter Tibbetts: the Department continues to need firefighters; there have been 138 calls so far this year which is higher than average; one firefighter recently graduated from the academy therefore is now a well-trained firefighter; the Department will be holding a "Stop the Bleed" class and another fire extinguisher training; the new washer is up and running however the new dryer has yet to be installed; the chassis change is pending and is expected to be underbudget.
10. Emergency Management Team/Director Walter Tibbetts: the team now includes a ham radio operator; we consider how to respond and be equipped for manmade/natural disasters and use grants to update equipment, i.e. uninterrupted power supplies and external hard drives for departments that need them.
11. Cemetery Commission/Walter Tibbetts: the Committee now has a volunteer conservator to help prioritize the headstones to be conserved; the expendable trust fund was used to purchase new mowers; the Cemetery Grounds Keepers taking pride in their work and a new worker has been hired to care for the Pratt Corner Road and Locks Pond Road

cemeteries and a surveyor has been hired to assist with establishing the baselines for the West Cemetery.

12. School Committee/Katie Fiander: the school is off to a great year; there are no new staff members, however, there is a new director for the after-school program. Per Torres, the replacement of both furnace burners in process and, prior to the four-town meeting on 12.7.19, there will be a three-board meeting 11.26.19 to talk about the regional assessment method.
13. Highway Department/Superintendent Tim Hunting: with 16 miles of dirt roads, the Department has been quite busy with only two staff members; the deployed staff member is expected to return in June 2020. Per Hunting, the catch basin installation at the end of Wendell Road/Locks Pond Road was a good project to complete; the paving contractor did an excellent job on the paving project from the intersection of Route 202 to the Fire Station; the water line project is in process – it will run about 3/8 mile from the rear of the Fire Station, along Leverett Road then under the road via conduit to behind the Highway Department onto the Watkins property. Schmidt thanks for the Highway Department for their help with the installations associated with the ShutesburyNet Hut.
14. Board of Health/Catherine Hilton: the twice/year water testing program is very popular. Board member Norene Pease is the delegate to the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition that works to improve the capabilities of local Boards of Health; she and Pease will be attending a mosquito control training.
15. Finance Committee/Eric Stocker: this year's budget, the highest ever, is \$6.92 million; it is early in the FY21 budget season; the tax rate is now \$23.26/\$1,000 (FY21 \$24.04) so we are reaching the \$25/\$1,000 threshold; the Town is in good shape regarding free cash and stabilization; understaffing in the Police Department returned \$70,000 to the FY20 budget; to date, \$530,000 of the \$2.5 million OPEB obligation has been funded; reserves, now at \$61,000, have been used to fund the Tree Warden position, pay for the new recycling shed and repair of the school's boiler. Per Stocker: future considerations are OPEB, capital projects and, noting the \$412,000 saved, a new library; there will need to be a decision on how to handle the additional \$300,000 in broadband funds from the State – broadband and Town funds are kept separate. Stocker continues: in general, the FinCom supports a move toward the statutory assessment method; the goal is to present a unified agreement at the four-town meeting; the potential impact of broadband on property values will greatly affect the tax rate; the potential purchase of the parsonage could be funded with free cash or stabilization.
16. Council on Aging/JoAnn Bernhard: since the untimely passing of David Dann, the members are committed to maintaining the work of Council –monthly community luncheons, a monthly foot clinic that is often oversubscribed, the Med-Ride program whose territory has expanded and the *Geezette* newsletter; the Council will be working with the Franklin Regional Housing Authority to develop a survey for seniors regarding their needs for affordable senior housing.
17. Town Accountant/Gail Weiss: the final reports for FY19 are being completed and preparations made for the FY19 audit.
18. Town Treasurer/Ryan Mailloux: has been Treasurer for about one year; working with Weiss, the books are balanced through the month of October; he is available to assist employees with the electronic payroll portal; new credit cards for department heads are

being obtained; School practices and improvements for monetary instruments are in process.

19. Town Clerk/Susie Mosher: introduces Assistant Town Clerk Grace Bannasch, noting that the transition to having an assistant has been good; Mosher will be retiring so the Town Clerk position will be on the annual town meeting election ballot; “My Town Government” is working well; the Town website home page is being used for notifications; committees/board members are encouraged to use a town email address, versus a personal email, for their Town work, - this is especially important for record requests; responses to the required COIT training are appreciated; the Office of the Inspector General’s “Guide for Members of Boards and Commission” is available in the Town Clerk’s office.
20. Record Storage Advisory Committee/Susie Mosher: the Committee looked into record storage issues for two years then presented the Select Board with a report and table detailing their research; the report/table will also be submitted to the Capital Planning Committee; it is hoped that the Town will continue to work to solve the record storage problem.
21. Web Committee/Susie Mosher: the Committee is working on some basic reorganization of the website and requests feedback from users about any problems with the use of pages.
22. Planning Board/Deacon Bonnar: the Board is involved with three things - the adjustment of lot lines through the Approval Not Required process, regulating larger projects through special permits, and monitoring the zoning bylaw for needed changes; recent projects include the permitting of a cell tower and a resiliency battery system for the Wheelock solar site; the Board’s next focus will be on zoning bylaw amendment recommendations for annual town meeting.
23. Conservation Commission/Linda Avis Scott – Land Use Clerk: long time member Penny Jaques will be retiring from the Commission 6.30.19; new member Robin Harrington recently joined the Commission leaving one seat vacant; the Commission conducts about five site visits/month and meets twice/month March-October and once/month November-February.

Huntress thanks Torres for her presence during broadband construction meetings and guidance on how to manage municipal projects, Stocker and the FinCom for their support, Mailloux and Weiss for assistance with bill paying, Antonellis for passing on the “word on the street”, the Web Committee for making its landscaping, Rudden for assistance in locating errant homeowners, the MLP Board for their trust in her and the Select Board for their leadership. Huntress is thanked for all of her hard, dedicated work.

Stein: the Select Board could not do our job without all of you. Puleo: your work makes it much easier for us to do our work. Stein: the Select Board has been able to work well together and come to consensus in our decision making. Leslie Bracebridge/Assessors’ Clerk thanks Schmidt for his eighteen years of service.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board members will sign vendor warrants totaling \$52,776.76.
2. Select Board members will sign payroll warrants totaling \$108,454.21.
3. Select Board members will sign broadband warrants totaling \$40,124.47.
4. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve the 10.16.19 meeting minutes; the minutes, as presented, are unanimously approved.
Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve the 10.29.19 meeting minutes; the minutes, as presented, are unanimously approved.
Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to approve the 11.1.19 meeting minutes; the minutes, as presented, are unanimously approved.

At 8:27pm, Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting

1. Personnel Action Form for Cemetery Groundskeeper Linus Mearian
2. 12.3.19 Special Town Meeting Warrant
3. 11.4.19 *Daily Hampshire Gazette* Tax Classification Hearing legal ad
4. "Tax Classification Hearing, November 12, 2019" by Rudden
5. "Library Snapshot – All Boards 2019" by Antonellis

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary