

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2020 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: Susie Mosher/Town Clerk, Police Chief Dan Fernandes, Police Officer Marcus Johannsson; Tyler Alves and Kristen Burgess/Police Officer Candidates, Thomas Hervieux, Town Counsel Donna MacNicol; Steve Sullivan, Katie Fiander, Lauren Thomas-Paquin, and Dan Hayes/Shutesbury School Committee; Bruce Turner/Union #28 Director of Finance & Operations, Jackie Mendonsa/Shutesbury Principal, Jennifer Culkeen/Union #28 Superintendent; Weezie Houle, Eric Stocker, Jim Hemingway, Bob Groves and Ajay Khashu/Finance Committee; and Jeff Lacy.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Agenda Review: Puleo will provide a report on the FRCOG 2020 Local Technical Assistance Request Form.

Public Comment: None offered.

Discussion Topics:

1. Municipal Vulnerability Grant Documents: Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to sign the relevant documents for the \$27,000 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness planning grant; the motion passes unanimously.
2. Board of Assessors: Puleo moves the Select Board appoint Howard Shpetner to the Board of Assessors; Stein seconds the motion that passes unanimously.
3. Town Hall Building Issue: Torres: the water damage to the Town Administrator's office wall has increased dramatically; from an attic inspection of the area with Nancy Matthews/Building Committee, it appears that pipes in the chase appear to be leaking/sweating; the abutting south wall of the Police Department evidence room has mold that has permeated some of the files stored in the room. Plan: to start, Torres will empty her office. Police Chief Fernandes notes that the chain of custody for evidence must be maintained during rehousing of the evidence removed from the room. Makepeace-O'Neil emphasizes the need for Fernandes to wear a protective mask while working on the evidence room contents.
4. Police Department Interviews/Appointments: Police Chief Fernandes introduces Tyler Alves and Kristen Burgess, part-time police officer candidates. Per Fernandes, Burgess graduated from the part-time academy and worked as a part-time police officer in Hinsdale; Alves was a UMass Police Cadet Officer and currently works full-time for West-Comm Regional Dispatch and is highly recommended. Stein states that she is impressed with both candidates' resumes. Puleo, while serving on the interview committee, met both candidates. Burgess explains that she is currently working as a Massachusetts Trial Court officer primarily in Springfield and is seeking to work for a

small-town department. Alves to Stein's question: he worked as a summer intern at the Hamden County Jail including the halfway house and is also looking to work in a small-town department. Puleo appreciates that Burgess is trained in Rape Aggression Defense (RAD). Fernandes notes that part-time Officer Shanley is also RAD trained and that two trained officers are needed to run a RAD program. Puleo congratulates Fernandes on the search as there were a number of good candidates. Fernandes: the department is continuing to go in the right direction; if approved, Burgess will bring experience and the good news, in light of Sergeant Hudock's departure, is that Officer Golann will resume doing shifts. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to hire Kristen Burgess and Tyler Alves as part-time Shutesbury police officers; the motion passes unanimously. After Burgess and Alves leave the meeting, Fernandes returns to answer Puleo's question. Per Fernandes, the other candidate interviewed by the committee had the part-time academy however did not have any on-the-ground law enforcement experience; Alves, who has the part-time academy, is working full time in dispatch, interviewed well and received very good recommendations.

5. Confer with Town Counsel:

- a. Watkins Agreement: Attorney Donna MacNicol/Town Counsel reports that the settlement agreement has been sent to all relevant parties, however, because Attorney Pill and Mark Watkins have been unable to review the document, MacNicol will attend the 1.29.20 Superior Court status conference and ask for a continuance to a date in February 20; resolution of the matter remains with Watkins and Pill.
- b. Saleem Agreement: MacNicol reviews the changes to the "Agreement between the Town of Shutesbury Selectboard and Lori Saleem" requested by Saleem. All agree with the change to paragraph two "from the same neighbor" and that there be no change to #4 "Payment". Regarding #5 "Special Provisions" item "d", MacNicol and Torres observe that if the dog, Mocha, is still barking, it means Saleem is not monitoring her dog. MacNicol, noting that there is an order requiring Saleem to remove Mocha which she has not done, asks what the Select Board wants to do if the conditions are violated. MacNicol suggests that the Board could require Saleem to attend a Select Board meeting and that this Agreement would then become an "order". Torres suggests starting with the Agreement. MacNicol will revise the Agreement with "from the same neighbor" being the only change and email the revision to Attorney Bass/representing Saleem; if Saleem refuses to sign, she will be requested to attend a meeting with the Select Board for refusing to obey the original orders; the Select Board will then issue a new order indicating that she either controls the dog or it will be removed. Select Board members agree with MacNicol's recommendation.

6. Police Department Resignation: Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to reluctantly accept Police Sergeant Tom Hudock's resignation; the motion passes unanimously.
7. Select Board Annual Report: The "Selectboard Report Town of Shutesbury Fiscal Year 2019" drafted by Stein is reviewed and amended by the Board.

8. MLP Manager Extension: Torres requests the Select Board consider extending the MLP Manager position to 2.29.20 allowing time for Gayle Huntress to distribute the MLP Manager chores. Puleo moves to approve the MLP Manager extension to 2.29.20; Stein seconds the motion that passes unanimously.
9. Cultural Council Grant: Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to approve and sign the Mass Cultural Grant Local Cultural Council Allocation to the Shutesbury Cultural Council for \$4,800; the motion passes unanimously.
10. DEP Small Initiatives Grant: Stein moves the Select Board approve the DEP Small Initiatives Grant of \$500; Puleo seconds the motion that passes unanimously.
11. Chapter 90 Reimbursement Request: Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to approve the Mass DOT Chapter 90 Reimbursement Request for \$156,258.05 to cold plane/pave Leverett/Cooleyville/Prescott Roads; the motion passes unanimously.
12. 2020 Local Technical Assistance Request Form: Puleo completed the document, assigned designees and submitted the form to FRCOG. Puleo reads the ranked priorities into the record: 1. Explore feasibility of shared police services, 2. Update Open Space and Recreation Plan and 3. Age and Dementia Friendly Community Planning.
13. Conservation Commission Appointment: Puleo moves and Stein seconds the motion to appoint Liam Cregan to the Conservation Commission; the motion passes unanimously.
14. Board of Registrars and Election Worker Letters: Letters to Jim Lyons/Chair of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee and Penelope Kim/Chair of the Shutesbury Democratic Town Committee are signed by Makepeace-O'Neil.
15. Unanticipated Item:
Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) FY2020 Statement of Interest: Bruce Turner/ Union #28 Director of Finance & Operations presents the language for the Statement of Interest vote (see attached). Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to sign the Massachusetts School Building Authority FY2020 Statement of Interest for Shutesbury Elementary repair of the roof and boiler; the motion passes unanimously. Torres notes that the MSBA application has been approved by the School Committee.
16. Elementary School Budget with Finance & School Committees: Lauren Thomas-Paquin/School Committee Chair refers to the draft FY21 budget prepared with Jackie Mendonsa/Principal and Bruce Turner/Union #28 Director of Finance and notes that demands consistently go up as grants and other funding sources decrease; we are pleased that the budget increase is under 1%. Superintendent Jennifer Culkeen refers to Line #110: the increase is .86%; the need for Rural Aid is being recognized at the State level. Mendonsa: the increase is representative of salary increases; her goal is to present the leanest possible budget and still having a great school. Dan Hayes/School Committee credits Mendonsa's approach which helps keep students in our school and notes that this year's Rural Aid is fortunate. It is noted that Shutesbury Elementary is the smallest

school in Union #28 comprising 22.65% of the Union #28 allocation. Culkeen notes that some of the savings come from changes in accounts payable staff and the student supports coordinator position. Hayes: currently the central office is being housed in Erving however, the Town will be doing something different with the building so a new Union #28 office location is being sought. Turner: the current monthly rent of \$6,000 is split between Shutesbury, Leverett and Wendell. Culkeen: Shutesbury received some Rural Aid this fiscal year and the hope is that Shutesbury will receive this aid again in FY 2021. Mendonsa: this is a contract year which will impact the budget. Puleo to Groves' question: yes, health care coverage is part of the contract negotiations. Torres: previously, Rural Aid was not anticipated because the Town's per capita income was too high. Thomas-Paquin: Rural Aid is a gradual acknowledgement of what the State's research has shown. Culkeen is part of a group advocating for the small rural schools in Western MA. Groves: the school has run short the past couple of years therefore suggests planning conservatively to avoid going into reserves. Hayes: the school's goal is to plan conservatively; many school districts pad for unexpected expenses; Shutesbury school and the Union use a balanced budget approach - a fresh approach each year. Puleo recommends including the Rural Aid in the budget and, if needed, the School Committee can come back to the Finance Committee for specific items. Mendonsa: we have School Choice funds in reserves. Torres to Hemingway's question: the number of income eligible children has increased therefore their corresponding family incomes contribute to eligibility for Rural Aid. Culkeen: also, there was more Rural Aid money to distribute to towns. Mendonsa: enrollment is now at 130; there are expected financial needs that occur, i.e. an out of district placement or a student with special needs. Torres: the role of reserves is to respond to a crisis. Mendonsa to Jeff Lacy's question: there are 18 students in the Pre-K program; next year, there will 35 eligible Pre-K students in town. It is noted that houses are starting to sell and adding children to the community. Mendonsa to Grove's question: there are 12 "choice-in" in students and about 5 "choice-out" including home schoolers. Torres: the net is about \$50,000 after the charter assessment and "choice-out". Turner to Stocker's question: Mendonsa is working on a plan for the Rural Aid funds, i.e. computer upgrades that have not been done. Hayes: some of the things that would have been in the budget are being covered by this year's Rural Aid. Mendonsa: the goal is to get the curriculum and tech upgrades done so these costs will not be in the FY21 budget. Hayes: if there is a surplus, it will be returned to the Town. Mendonsa to Lacy's question: Pre-K has a rolling tuition; those students that are free lunch qualified and need special education services are free. Hayes and Culkeen: the school is mandated to provide Pre-K services for free lunch qualified and special education students; opening the program to the whole town helps offset the costs. Hayes: the tuition is competitive and scaled based on affordability; there are always students with special needs coming in. Ajay Khashu: children will be more successful having attended a Pre-K program.

17. Prep for 2.1.20 Four Town Meeting: Eric Stocker: the FinCom discussed recommending a 3% reduction in Shutesbury's contribution and a move toward statutory. Steve Sullivan/Regional School Committee: the Regional School Committee is discussing the budget during their meeting 1.28.20. Torres: State aide figures have come in and there does not appear to be a dramatic swing in aid for Shutesbury; enrollment stayed steady in Region and assumptions hold for the 3% reduction and move toward statutory. Groves: if

we go with this position, what does that mean for next year? Katie Fiander/School Committee: the other towns did not seem interested in considering multiple years. Lacy: Shutesbury needs to be clear that the percentages translate to statutory; we don't want the other towns to lose sight that Shutesbury wants to get to full statutory. Torres: Amherst's tax rate went down. Groves: their average tax bills increased due to reassessments. Hayes: it needs to be made clear that Shutesbury supports the budget, it is the assessment that needs to be different. Khashu asks if there has been any follow-up from the December meeting and Superintendent Morris' presentation that addressed the dramatic increase that Leverett would experience and may result in a budget decrease. Fiander: Leverett did not receive Rural Aid because their income is higher. Torres cites relevant town-wide incomes for Leverett, Shutesbury, and Pelham and notes that these statistics can be referred to during the four-town meeting; more insight into the budget process could be asked for.

18. Town Administrator Update: Jamrog has dropped the price for the school water heater by \$2,000 to ~\$12,000; the leak remains stable; installation is expected in about five weeks; a surveillance camera will be installed. Stein notes the need for the Building Committee to prioritize repairs. Torres agrees that an assessment of need is necessary though outside assistance may be needed to do so. Puleo suggests adding such an assessment to the capital plan.

Administrative Actions:

1. Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to approve the 12.23.19 meeting minutes; Puleo abstains and Stein and Makepeace-O'Neil approve the minutes as amended.
2. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve the 1.7.20 meeting minutes; the minutes are unanimously approved as presented.

At 9:00pm, Puleo moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant documents
2. Resumes for Police Officer candidates Kristin Burgess and Tyler Alves
3. Selectboard Report Town of Shutesbury Fiscal Year 2019
4. Agreement between the Town of Shutesbury Selectboard and Lori Saleem
5. Shutesbury Cultural Council Mass Cultural Grant Local Cultural Council Allocation
6. DEP Small Initiatives Grant
7. Mass DOT Chapter 90 Reimbursement Request
8. 2020 Local Technical Assistance Request Form
9. Letters to Jim Lyons/Chair of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee and Penelope Kim/Chair of the Shutesbury Democratic Town Committee
10. Massachusetts School Building Authority FY2020 Statement of Interest
11. 1.28.20 draft Shutesbury Elementary School FY2021 Budget

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott, Administrative Secretary