

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
March 17, 2020 Shutesbury Town Hall

Select Board members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair and Elaine Puleo

Select Board member present by remote access: April Stein

Staff member present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator

Staff member present by remote access: Linda Avis Scott/Administrative Secretary

Guests: Police Chief Dan Fernandes, Police Officer Marcus Johansson, Town Clerk Susie Mosher, Town Moderator Paul Lyons, Library Director Mary Anne Antonellis, Rita Farrell/FinCom, Kevin Rudden/Administrative Assessor, Walter Tibbetts/Emergency Management Director and Mark Foster/Fire Department Engineer

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 6:42pm.

Agenda Review: Carry over warrant and budget review to a future meeting.

Public Comment: None offered.

**Discussion Topics:**

1. Police Academy Training: Police Chief Dan Fernandes explains the plan to hold open a fulltime position for Officer Marcus Johansson upon successful completion of his Police Academy training and that the "Agreement" will keep Johansson on the payroll throughout his training. Per Fernandes, Johansson passed the physical exam though the aptitude test remains pending; the goal is to sign Johansson up as soon as possible, however, the status of the current class is uncertain. Officer Johansson: the tentative start date is 8.31.20. Fernandes: a letter of support from the Select Board is required by the Academy. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve and sign the 3.17.20 "Agreement" between the Town of Shutesbury and Officer Marcus Johansson; the motion passes unanimously. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve and sign the 3.17.20 letter to Police Chief Dan Fernandes in support of Officer Johansson attending the Police Academy, maintaining his payroll during training and holding a fulltime position upon successful completion of the training; the motion passes unanimously.

Fernandes to Torres' question: There are new COVID-19 directives limiting any unnecessary police contact with the public; some communities are talking about suspending "license to carry" applications for thirty days; currently, the Shutesbury Police Department does not plan to do so, however, contact will be limited as much as possible; per MA law, it is not possible to suspend this service. Fernandes confirms for Stein that the officers have gloves and because the majority of Shutesbury's applications are for renewals, the Department is working on how to do the process without the applicant present, i.e. via mail; fingerprinting is required for new applicants. Fernandes to Rita Farrell's question: the Mass Police Chiefs Association has had no discussion, thus far, on plans for residents to "shelter in place". Fernandes has been talking with Walter Tibbetts/Emergency Management Director about how to support the elderly.

2. COVID-19 Protocols: Tibbetts/Emergency Management Director: it is prudent for the Select Board to declare a state of emergency; doing so will allow the Town to seek

reimbursement for emergency related expenses. Torres suggests closing Town Hall to the public; she has talked with staff and those who are able and wish to do so, can work from home. Torres to Susie Mosher/Town Clerk's question: if the decision is made to close Town Hall, arrangements will be made for outside document pickup/drop-off. Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director shares about her first day providing service to patrons from outside of the library: the patron lets her know when they have arrived, she then puts their requested materials outside on the ramp and goes back inside allowing the patron to retrieve their bag. It is noted that Town Hall has a doorbell if an individual does not have a cell phone to notify staff of their arrival. Torres: the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee has given permission for residents, who are out of town bags, to use a bag of similar size until trash bag distribution which is still set for 4.25.20. Torres: staff can check their office phone messages remotely; the Town Clerk's office hours will be reduced because the Assistant Town Clerk is already working remotely. A notice with town official phone numbers including the police dispatch number will be displayed on the doors. Makepeace-O'Neil suggests encouraging residents to call, however, if they have to leave a message, they may not get an immediate response. Fernandes notes that the Police Department will be encouraging the use of email; if an officer is in the department, residents can use the office number. Torres: her plan A is to regularly be in the office. Puleo confirms that doors will be locked. Torres: per Town Counsel Donna MacNicol, in this situation, the public includes all committee/board members. Mosher emphasizes the need to encourage residents to sign up for the Town Announce system. Torres suggests a postcard mailing. Torres recommends Zoom be used to conduct virtual meetings; Gayle Huntress has offered to an online training. Logistics regarding the use of Zoom are discussed. Torres will reach out to all boards/committees about the online training. Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion for the Town to use Zoom.com to conduct virtual meetings; the motion passes unanimously. Tibbetts recommends using any of the various methods to get the message about the closure of Town Hall and virtual meetings, i.e., CodeRed email, text, landline and Town Announce. Makepeace-O'Neil requests a motion to declare a COVID-19 State of Emergency in Shutesbury. Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to declare a COVID-19 State of Emergency in Shutesbury. Torres to Farrell's question: the State of Emergency will remain in place until the Select Board votes otherwise. Tibbetts requests a copy of the Town of Shutesbury Emergency Declaration in order to officially notify MEMA.

3. Revised Plans for Annual Town Meeting and Elections: Torres: annual town meeting is currently scheduled for 4.25.20; the Select Board has the ability to postpone this meeting up to 6.30.20; Saturday 6.27.20 is recommended; given the current situation, this allows more time to prepare. Paul Lyons/Town Moderator to Mosher's question: because the warrant for annual town meeting has yet to be posted, the Select Board has the authority to set a new date regardless of the current bylaw requiring annual town meeting be the last Saturday in April. Torres to Stein's question: the emergency legislation allows Select Boards to reschedule annual town meeting to dates up to 6.30.20. Torres: town officials will retain their positions until 6.30.20. Torres to Puleo's question: there are five weeks to the 4.25.20 date and, right now, the focus is the COVID-19 emergency. Lyons: it will be necessary to ensure Town Counsel and others staff can be present for the new annual town meeting date. Puleo moves that due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Select Board

reschedule annual town meeting and town elections from 4.25.20 to 6.27.20; Stein seconds the motion that passes unanimously. Torres to Lyons' question: if the school is not available for annual town meeting, a virtual town meeting is an option depending on the situation at the time. Tibbetts: contingencies will be made if the emergency is still in place. Torres: we need to think differently right now.

Mosher: per Town Counsel, it may be necessary to convene the Registrars of Voters in order to request special legislation to free up current election requirements for a new, yet to be determined timeline; how municipal elections will be held has yet to be declared by legislation. Torres affirms that the new town meeting date will be used as a timeline for Shutesbury. Torres to Farrell's question: the Governor's action includes the ability to extend the dates for annual town meetings to 6.30.20 and the relief of quorum for virtual meetings; the Governor can take some action while others are legislative.

4. Election Worker Appointments: Per Mosher, the proposed list will be in effect until 8.14.20; after that date, it will be updated for future approval in advance of the September primary and November general elections. Mosher reports that 20 workers counted the 900+ March primary votes by 10:10pm; because turnout is expected to be high, additional counters will be needed in November. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to approve the updated "Appointed Election Workers for 2019-2020...and end no later than August 14, 2020"; the motion passes unanimously.
5. COVID-19 Concerns:
  - a. Scott speaks to concerns about the need to alter the usual "Our Town" newsletter strategies, i.e. bringing the digital file and paper to Amherst Copy, volunteer collating and staff delivery to the bulk mailing center, and suggests a virtual issue. Antonellis notes that not all residents have broadband and those that do not are usually elderly and that there are companies that print, compile, and bulk mail. Torres notes that 88% of Shutesbury households have broadband. Puleo supports one time use of a mailing service company. Antonellis volunteers to investigate resources for this service. Torres: management of the annual town meeting mailing will be considered at a later date. Mosher: what information is needed in the newsletter? Puleo suggests the issue focus on the emergency. Torres: other material brings a sense of normalcy.
  - b. Foster asks how/if the school food program will continue. Torres: if 50% or more students qualify, the school must continue the Federally funded program, however, that is not the case for Shutesbury Elementary; this week, bags of food from the school were given to families in need. Torres refers to the 3.17.20 email from Principal Jackie Mendonsa asking about the possibility of opening a food pantry at Town Hall; given the closure of Town Hall, this will not work; there are specific requirements for taking donations. Torres recommends sending donations to organizations already set up to do so, i.e. the Amherst Survival Center. Puleo suggests collecting donated grocery store gift cards. Strategies and concerns about gift card donations are considered. Antonellis offers to assist with sorting out a process.
  - c. Torres to Foster's question about quarantined individuals: coordination will flow from the Board of Health; they will know who needs services. Makepeace-O'Neil: the Board of Health has been working on developing Neighborhood Safety Networks; some folks may be willing to do more to get to this program up and running; also,

Village Neighbors may know who needs help. Puleo: cities, i.e. Seattle, have developed models for getting food to those in need.

- d. On behalf of the Conservation Commission, Scott asks for guidance on conducting site visits. Torres, noting that all Commission site visits are out of doors, recommends calling the homeowner in advance to ensure there is no contact and continuing the visits. Kevin Rudden/Administrative Assessor: for the record, the Assessors have suspended all inside visits and only outside visits will be conducted.
6. Proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendments: Torres explains that per Town Counsel Donna MacNicol, the Planning Board 4.13.20 public hearing will be rescheduled relative to the new annual town meeting date. Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion for the Select Board to receive the Planning Board proposed amendments to Section 8.10 Ground-Mounted Solar Electric Installations, Section 8.4 Sign Regulations and Article V Open Space Design of the *Town of Shutesbury Zoning Bylaw* and return the same proposed amendments back to the Planning Board. The motion passes unanimously.
  7. Town Administrator Updates:
    - a. Assistant Town Clerk Grace Bannasch is working with Catherine Hilton/Board of Health to create a single web page for all relevant Town related COVID-19 information. Torres: when part-time employees without benefits work from home, they will be paid as usual. To Stein's question, Torres explains that the Town has long had a sick time bank for municipal employees suffering from a catastrophic illness. Puleo: benefited employees can use sick time if they are ill. Torres notes that if an employee is quarantined but not ill, they may work from home and suggests the Personnel Board consider emergency exceptions for the current situation.
    - b. Torres suggests the Select Board designate one member to sign the warrants during the State of Emergency. Puleo moves that during the COVID-19 emergency and closure of Town Hall, the Select Board designate Makepeace-O'Neil to sign all warrants; Stein seconds the motion that passes unanimously.
    - c. Town Administrator office remediation update: an air quality test will be done; thus far, Torres has been unable to find a contractor to remove the unused vents in the wall.
    - d. Per Torres, a contractor is needed to paint the new recycling shed. Puleo recommends the painting be done by volunteers and suggests herself and Makepeace-O'Neil.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board members sign vendor warrants totaling \$110,534.68.
2. Select Board members sign payroll warrants totaling \$99,492.15.
3. Puleo moves and Stein seconds motion to approve the 3.4.20 meeting minutes; the minutes are unanimously approved as presented. The 2.18.20 meeting minutes will be considered during a future meeting.
4. Given the annual town meeting date change, those who have yet to submit FY19 Annual Reports will have additional time to do so.

At 8:37pm, Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion passes unanimously.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. 3.17.20 “Agreement between the Town of Shutesbury and Officer Marcus Johansson”
2. 3.17.20 letter to Police Chief Dan Fernandes
3. “Shutesbury 3.17.20 Declaration of Emergency”
4. KP Law guidance: “COVID-19 Emergency Response: Implementation of the Governor’s Order Suspending Certain Provisions of Open Meeting Law”, “March 16, 2020 COVID-19 Update” and “Process for Continuing Town Meeting in the Case of Inclement Weather of Public Safety Emergency”
5. 3.14.20 email from Gayle Huntress “Online meetings for Shutesbury”
6. “Appointed Election Workers for 2019-2020”
7. 3.17.20 email from Jackie Mendonsa/SES Principal “Food”
8. Proposed Planning Board amendments to Section 8.10 Ground-Mounted Solar Electric Installations, Section 8.4 Sign Regulations and Article V Open Space Design of the *Town of Shutesbury Zoning Bylaw*

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary