

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 3:06pm.

Select Board members present: Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair, Elaine Puleo, and April Stein

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

Guest: Rita Farrell/Finance Committee and Kevin Rudden/Administrative Assessor (brief)

Agenda Review: No changes.

Public Comment: None offered.

Discussion Topic:

1. Chapter 53 Section 10-12 of the Acts of 2020: Makepeace-O'Neil confirms that the 4.14.20 Select Board decision to waive interest and penalties for unpaid FY20 fourth quarter real estate taxes was not allowable. Torres: per review of Chapter 53 Section 10 with Town Counsel Donna MacNicol, this section allows the waiver of penalties and interest on payments made by 6.29.20. Torres reads sample language from "Letter #2" into the record: "The town/city has also voted to waive interest and other penalty for late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment thereof, water rate or annual sewer use or other charge added to a tax for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 where payment is made late but before June 30, 2020". Torres continues: payment must be made on or before 6.29.20; payment made after 6.29.20 will be subject to penalties and interest. To Puleo's question, Torres reads from the Division of Local Services 4.15.20 guidance: "If the bill is paid on June 30, 2020 or after, it is paid too late for the waiver to apply. Interest will run from the date the bill is due to June 30, 2020 (or the date after June 30, 2020 that it is paid). Torres: the due date for tax payments may be extended to 6.1.20. Puleo: the problem with this is that escrow companies may hold off on their payments. Stein: "Letter #3" is the best the Select Board can do for taxpayers. Torres to Puleo's question about the timing of the Board's vote: the newsletter is being held up for this information. Torres to Makepeace-O'Neil's question: escrow companies will need to call Tax Collector Ellen McKay to inquire about due date extensions; so far, McKay has advised them that the decision had yet to be made. Stein: this needs to be done to assist taxpayers. Puleo acknowledges that McKay assists people with payment plans. Puleo moves the Select Board revise their 4.14.20 vote to extend the property tax due date to 6.1.20 and waive interest and penalties for payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 where payment is made late but before June 30, 2020; Stein seconds. Roll call vote: Puleo: aye, Stein: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

Unanticipated Item:

Torres reports that the MSBA has extended their funding requirement to 30-year roofs therefore work on the 26-year old Shutesbury Elementary School roof was again rejected; the age of roofs covered is based on the amount of funding available. Per Torres, an email has been sent to State Representative Natalie Blais, who will be in touch with State Senator Jo Comerford, as well, an email was sent to MSBA asking if their decision is final. Torres to Puleo's question: due to the cost of project, the roof work cannot be done as a Town project with local contractors; if no

MSBA funding is available, there will be a need to look into other sources of funding and whether there are any exemptions from the State requirements.

At 3:22pm, Stein moves and Puleo seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Stein: aye, Puleo: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020
2. Letters #2 and #3 composed by Tax Collector Ellen McKay and Administrative Assessor Kevin Rudden
3. Division of Local Services 4.15.20 "Frequently Askes Questions 'An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19' Section 10 and 11 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020"

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary