

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
June 2, 2020 Virtual Meeting

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: Paul Lyons/Town Moderator, Susie Mosher/Town Clerk, Catherine Hilton/Board of Health, Walter Tibbetts/Emergency Management Director, and Police Chief Dan Fernandes

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Agenda Review: Puleo would like to begin drafting a letter from the Select Board and the Shutesbury Police Department regarding racial disparity issues and the Town's response to these issues. Stein supports this suggestion. Torres reminds all that the meeting needs to adjourn by 6:45pm to prepare for the 7:00pm Finance Committee meeting.

Public Comment: None offered.

**Discussion Topic:**

6.27.20 Annual Town Meeting Plans Under COVID-19 Conditions: Torres provides a report on the survey results: 198 responses were received with 124 indicating they plan to attend annual town meeting and 74 who do not plan to attend; 70 responders were comfortable with an indoor meeting and 129 were not; 169 responders were comfortable with an outdoor meeting and 29 were not; participants were requested to answer all questions and the percentages remained essentially the same throughout the survey. Makepeace-O'Neil acknowledges Puleo's recommendation for a hybrid arrangement and notes the majority of responders prefer an outside setting. Stein observes that both outside and inside settings will require a lot of work and asks if it is possible to offer both. Torres: it depends on the location; using the school gym would be difficult due to the distance between the gym and the outdoor site; the field behind town hall could be used with the potential for a small inside space. Susie Mosher/Town Clerk to Makepeace's O'Neil: due to the changing angle of the sun, it would be difficult to arrange pop up tents for shade; the tents could be used for the work of tallying votes that will occur later in the day; the tallying needs to take place where the voting occurs; if it is too hot, the ballot box will need to be transported to a cooler area. Torres: the school field is flat; the town hall field is larger with nooks and shady areas. Torres to Puleo's question: if the town hall field is used, parking sites could include the Highway Department, Lot O32, the Town common and the church's parking area; a parking area behind Town Hall could be reserved for those with limited ambulation; golf carts and/or other such vehicles could transport those that need assistance. Torres continues: the field behind Town Hall would allow the election and vote counting to occur in the same place. Puleo notes the advantage of cell service at the Town Hall site (There is no cell service at the school). Torres, noting that there is some internet service as far as the picnic table, will investigate the possibility of a booster; the sound system works well, however, an auxiliary may be needed. Walter Tibbetts/Emergency Management Director also has a sound system. Mosher: another advantage is that there are two bathrooms in the downstairs of town hall. Catherine Hilton/Board of Health: portable toilets can be used. Requests are made for the portable toilets to have water and handicap access. Hilton to Torres question about the need for a portable toilet at the boat ramp site: if it is sanitized daily, the compost toilet at the boat launch can be used. Makepeace-O'Neil: portable toilets have an active chemical sanitizer. Paul

Lyons/Town Moderator: selection of the site for annual town meeting is a Select Board decision. Puleo: if an electrical storm or other weather event occurs, a quorum of 9 will decide to continue annual town meeting to a date certain. Torres suggests 6.29.20 or 6.30.20 with a 5:30pm start as it stays light until 8:00pm. Makepeace-O'Neil: it looks like a decision has been made to use the field behind town hall. Puleo to Mosher's question: per State Representative Natalie Blais, provisions for a blended format have yet to be approved. Torres: State Senator Jo Comerford and John Robinson/MMA are also lobbying for a blended format; an auxiliary speaker could be set up for those more comfortable sitting inside. Lyons: Lexington decided to hold a Zoom town meeting with the understanding that it will be eventually be approved and that the approval will be retroactive; as this occurred 6.1.20, details about their process, i.e. voting, will be forthcoming; the use of an additional space seems to not be an issue. Makepeace-O'Neil: the senior lounge could be a cooling station. Mosher suggests residents be encouraged to bring their own chairs to be placed in marked out spaces. Tibbetts observes that because there will be 6 feet of distancing, it is okay for individuals to take off masks to drink water. Hilton concurs with Tibbetts' observation. Stein: socially distant squares will be marked off; some chairs will need to be offered, and, due to the lack of shade, folks may want to bring sun umbrellas. Hilton: the only marked spaces on the ground will indicate one-way aisles; ushers will delineate the space with the attendee's blanket and will fill the area from front to back; there will be no coming and going; Board of Health ushers will ensure seating is sufficiently separate. Torres: folding chairs can be made available. Puleo: Arlene Read/Board of Health will be available to assist with adherence to the rules. Police Chief Dan Fernandes: the Police Department will be present to assist with giving directions. Hilton: bringing children will be discouraged. Puleo: throughout the meeting, Lyons will regularly reinforce the rules. Hilton: at least 3 Board of Health members wearing identifying vests will be present; temperatures will be taken. Lyons notes the need to funnel attendees through one location for check-in. Fernandes, noting the need for traffic control to be in place, will look into an electric sign; Route 202 west bound traffic will be diverted. Mosher: voting begins at 8am; annual town meeting starts at 9am. Torres will provide an inventory of the available small tents and the price for renting a large tent. Lyons: space-wise, small tents will not be very efficient and may not be worth the effort; there may be competition for large tents. Tibbetts: small tents may provide an invitation to congregate. Torres: town hall folding chairs have been used outside in the past. Makepeace-O'Neil: the plan is to bundle the warrant flow to increase speed. Hilton: the goal should be to get through quickly before the sun is high in sky. Torres will send Lyons an updated warrant. Lyons: some towns are doing only what is essential. Torres: there are three proposed zoning bylaw amendments that may be time consuming; with some adjustments, the warrant could be finished in 3-4 hours. Lyons is concerned about that length of time and the need to avoid a recess therefore recommends speaker time be limited and the warrant be completed in 2-3 hours at the most. Puleo suggests boards/committees record presentations on Zoom and that there be a mailing of relative documents. Torres: the warrant and budget will only be available online. Stein notes the need to be as efficient as possible. Torres: if Saturday, the 27th is rained out, the event will be rescheduled for Monday/Tuesday, the 29th and 30th of June. Puleo: a prior estimate for a 40'x120' tent was \$2,400. Torres, noting the need to plan for 150-160 attendees: three tents of that size would be needed for the back space. Lyons: a 40'x120' tent would accommodate 80 people. Stein: if a tent is available, it would provide shelter for a significant number of attendees; basically, there is a structure for annual town meeting. Mosher notes the need to reduce the time needed to accomplish the warrant. Stein agrees; the warrant needs to be reviewed for articles that

can be postponed. Puleo recommends separating the Zoning Bylaw amendment articles by considering the solar bylaw on 6.27.20 and postponing the others. Scott questions whether doing so would demonstrate a preference and notes that Planning Board public hearing on the proposed amendments is scheduled for 6.22.20. Lyons: other towns are avoiding handouts. Makepeace-O'Neil suggests handing out a packet of all the documents rather than folks picking up individual documents. Hilton: the risk of transmission through handouts is very small. Torres: there will not be a town wide mailing; residents will be encouraged to go online for documents that will be available two weeks before annual town meeting. Puleo recommends an internet booster so folks can read the documents online during town meeting. Torres: the Finance Committee will be having a pre-town meeting public hearing. Stein: the town meeting framework will be very different. Lyons: some familiarity will bring legitimacy. Lyons recommends a subcommittee meet to view the space and plan logistics. Puleo volunteers to be the Select Board representative. As well, Lyons, Tibbetts, Mosher, Hilton, Fernandes and Torres will be part of the working group. Mosher: in the past, the Town Administrator, Town Clerk and Moderator did the initial planning then involved others as needed. Torres suggests the whole group meet to view the site. Lyons emphasizes the need for communication to the townspeople. Makepeace-O'Neil: the homepage will have information about links to the pertinent documents and residents will be encouraged to view the materials in advance of town meeting. Puleo stresses the need to use Town Announce and plans to contact Scott Merzbach to arrange for an article in *The Daily Hampshire Gazette*.

Unanticipated Item:

Puleo states her willingness to initiate a letter to the community from the Select Board and Police Chief Fernandes regarding racial inequities and the Town's response. Stein appreciates Fernandes' response to a community member's concerns expressed via email. Puleo appreciates the timeliness of Fernandes response. In response to the individual's request, Fernandes has offered to hold a Zoom meeting with himself and/or the Police Department as a whole. Makepeace-O'Neil suggests a Town Announce with a link to Town website where the letter will be posted; this will encourage use of Town website. Puleo will submit the final draft to *The Daily Hampshire Gazette*.

At 6:45pm, Puleo moves and Stein seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Stein: aye, Puleo: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary