

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2020 Virtual Meeting Platform

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

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Agenda Review: Torres requests adding the Emergency Management Planning Grant to the agenda.

Public Comment: None offered; there are no guests present.

Discussion Topics:

1. Halloween Plans: Torres: the event, as planned, is scheduled for Halloween/10.31.20; volunteer bagging of donated candy will take place in Town Hall later in the week; Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director has been promoting the event; the Fire Department will be bringing lights and supporting the event.
2. Conservation Commission Appointment: Farrell moves and Stein seconds a motion to accept Russ Mizula's resignation from the Conservation Commission. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stein: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries. Per Torres, the Commission is recommending Mary David's appointment; David has been attending Commission meetings since the summer; Penny Jaques intends to resign after the December Commission meeting. Farrell moves the Select Board appoint Mary David to the Conservation Commission; Stein seconds the motion. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stein: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.
3. Status of Reopening Plans: Torres: Town Hall continues to remain closed; some citizens are interested in having it reopen; after being open, Erving Town Hall had to close down due to a positive COVID-19 case therefore staying the course is recommended. Per Torres, the new air exchange system has been installed; the downstairs area will be cleaned before the election. Torres toured the library with Director Antonellis who is ready to reopen to patrons only by appointment; Antonellis is moving ahead though will be able to back track if needed. Farrell asks where the pressure to reopen Town Hall is coming from and notes that Zoom enables more participation and equitable access. Torres is unsure why folks are interested though some wish to meet in person; trash bag distribution continues to be outside. Stein notes the increase in COVID-19 cases statewide. Farrell: it does not make sense to risk reopening.
4. Town Administrator Updates:
 - a. The new air exchange system for the downstairs area of Town Hall was installed earlier 10.27.20. The Board has a tour of the new air exchange system via Torres' screen; a dramatic improvement in the environment is expected. Per Makepeace-O'Neil's inquiry, Torres will consult with Jamrog about possibilities for improving air circulation for the upstairs offices.

- b. Election update: early voting is being held in the police garage; 45-50 people voted on 10.23.20; usually 5-10 people have been voting during the two-hour period; 900 ballots have been submitted so far; the Town Clerk has more election volunteers than needed.
- c. Administrative Assessor Kevin Rudden presented the tax exemption program proposal during the 10.20.20 Finance Committee meeting; one member of the public was not in favor of the proposal while most Committee members were in favor; Rudden is prepared to meet with the Select Board about the proposal in December. Per Torres, Rudden is working on the recap with Town Accountant Gail Weiss; the recap is projected to be better than anticipated and the tax rate is expected to go down. The classification hearing is scheduled for 11.17.20. Based on last year's plan, the Select Board is scheduled to meet with the FinCom on 11.10.20 to prepare for the annual four-town meeting however, to date, a four-town meeting has yet to be scheduled and the recap will not be complete until 11.17.20. Farrell: at this point, to meet with the FinCom seems premature. Stein: last year's focus was on the assessment method. Torres, at Stein's suggestion, will reach out to the Region for an update. Torres: SES enrollment numbers are lower due to a number of homeschooling families however, SES is receiving choice students from Leverett; enrollment will affect aid numbers which are necessary to finalize the recap. The plan is to hold off on a joint 11.20.20 meeting with the FinCom and plan a subsequent joint meeting with the FinCom and School Committee. Farrell emphasizes the need to obtain enrollment numbers from the Region and SES.
- d. Stein notes that, in the past, the Select Board would be planning an All Boards meeting; it is helpful for committees to hear from one another though it is uncertain if a Zoom format would be conducive to such a meeting. Date suggestions and formats are considered. It is noted that the FinCom meets with the Highway Department on 11.17.20; the Select Board meets with the Shutesbury Athletic Club 11.24.20 and Clark Auto Wrecking on 12.8.20. Makepeace-O'Neil suggests 12.15.20 as the date for a virtual special all boards meeting; Stein and Farrell agree. The meeting will be scheduled to run from 6:30-8pm; there will be one spokesperson per group with an allocation of 2-3 minutes/board; presenters will be asked to speak about priorities, the impact of COVID-19 on how the group is functioning, the need for additional support, and if they have not been meeting, why. Stein will manage the time. Farrell suggests Torres and the FinCom give an update on the budget process so far. Torres confirms that the Building Committee has not met for months though, because Bob Groves/Building Committee Chair is a member of the FinCom, he is aware of the FRCOG/school roof agreement. Torres will reach out to Groves to find out when the Building Committee will meet. Farrell notes the need to re-energize a long term look at town properties and that perhaps the Select Board should meet with the Building Committee. Stein: perhaps members need to re-evaluate their role because the Select Board needs to hear about the Committee's short/long term assessments of Town buildings. Torres notes that former member, Andrew Webster, began a detailed building assessment and that the Building Committee needs to broaden out their work load with a mix of talent; the goal is for the Committee to schedule a meeting and, if they do not, the Select Board will reconsider the topic.
- e. Torres: the Emergency Management Planning Grant pro forma documents from Emergency Management Director Walter Tibbetts do not list the requested items; the grant amount is \$2,700. Makepeace-O'Neil notes that Tibbetts does well utilizing the grant.

- f. Michael Broad's work to improve the storage shed is appreciated. Funds are now available for the Recycling and Solid Waste Committee to purchase a new shed; a shortage of materials for shed construction is delaying the acquisition.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board members will sign vendor warrants totaling \$533,649.14.
2. Select Board members will sign payroll warrants totaling \$104,098.67.
3. Stein moves and Farrell seconds a motion to approve the 10.15.20 meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stein: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the minutes are approved as presented.

At 8:15pm, Farrell moves and Stein seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Farrell: aye, Stein: aye, and Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; the motion carries.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. FY21 Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing and Standard Contract Form for the Emergency Management Planning Grant

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary