

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
November 30, 2021 Virtual Meeting Platform

Select Board members present: Rita Farrell/Chair, Melissa Makepeace-O’Neil, and Eric Stocker

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

Other Staff present: Administrative Assessor Kevin Rudden, Assessors’ Clerk Leslie Bracebridge, Board of Assessors Chair Jeff Quackenbush, Assessor Susan Reyes, and Library Director Mary Anne Antonellis

Library Board of Trustees: Kate Cell & Michelle Regan-Ladd/Co-chairs, Brad Foster, Tim Logan, Melanie DeSilva, and Savanna Ouellette

Guests: Miriam DeFant and Henry Geddes/Historical Commission, Gail Fleischaker, and Jim Hemingway

At 5:46pm, Farrell calls the Select Board meeting to order.

Public Comment:

1. Henry Geddes/Chair of the Historical Commission, regarding a flurry of email received from the Cachat family: the allegations are unfounded; the Commission has done a great deal to advance Native American issues both locally and beyond and is considering a formal response to these emails; we are proud of what we have accomplished thus far.
2. Leslie Bracebridge appreciates Geddes’ comments and has none of her own.

Agenda Review: Completed by Farrell.

**Discussion Topics:**

1. PILOT Transfer of Ownership: Farrell: the Select Board received a letter from NextEra/DG Massachusetts CS 2021, LLC asking the Town to agree with a Collateral Assignment; Torres consulted with Town Council Donna MacNicol who followed up with NextEra to ensure the document is in order. Per Torres, MacNicol reviewed and is comfortable with the document which states that the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement is being transferred to the indirect “sponsor” of the owner, DG Massachusetts CS 2021, LLC, formerly known as LSDP 12, LLC. Farrell confirms the Assignment is for the Wheelock site and does not affect the PILOT agreement. Torres: the Assignment is possible only if both parties agree.
  - Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the “Amended and Restated Agreement for Payment in Lieu of Taxes for Personal Property for Solar Energy Systems” dated November 16, 2021 from DG Massachusetts CS 2021, LLC. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
2. Property Tax Classification Hearing: Kevin Rudden/Administrative Assessor: This is the annual classification hearing for the Select Board to determine what property tax options will be adopted for the Town of Shutesbury for Fiscal Year 2022. There are four separate decisions for you to vote upon: 1. To have a single or a split tax rate. 2. To adopt/not adopt an Open Space Discount. 3. To adopt/not adopt a Residential Exemption. 4. To adopt/not adopt a Small Commercial Exemption.

- At 5:55pm, Stocker moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds a motion to open the property tax classification public hearing as described by Rudden. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

Rudden asks the Select Board to continue the hearing to their 12.6.21 meeting due to an incorrect digital file; once the file is identified, the Department of Revenue (DOR) will approve the LA-4 Assessment and Classification form. Rudden anticipates that the tax rate for FY22 will be dropping; how much is yet to be determined and having the exact number for the tax rate is crucial; the Board of Assessors were updated on the situation with DOR during their 11.29.21 meeting. Rudden: tax payers will be notified about the changes in the next tax bills; the process was explained in an article in the last issue of the *Our Town* newsletter. Rudden continues: COVID has resulted in an unprecedented increase in property values across the state; Shutesbury experienced a 6% increase in values; the number of sales are going down and sale prices are moderating; FY23 will be a revaluation year; once completed, the listing of values will be posted on the Assessors webpage to allow a comment period; the tax base is 95% residential with three utility accounts. Rudden confirms that the average taxpayer will be paying more with the revaluation. Once the DOR has approved the LA-4, Rudden will submit a report to the Select Board. It is noted that in FY21, free cash was used to lower the property tax. Rudden reports the cell tower is under construction and, thus far, AT&T is the first carrier; the land will go to full tax value and the roadway and concrete pad will also be taxed; the primary value is the carrier equipment.

- At 7:30pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to continue the annual property tax classification public hearing to 12.6.21 at 7:30pm. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

3. M. N. Spear Memorial Library “Small Library Pilot Program” Submittal: Kate Cell/Board of Library Trustees Co-chair: this has been the largest Giving Tuesday ever with over \$30,000 raised thus far; the Trustees voted to approve and sign the Small Library Pilot Project application; Shutesbury is one of two towns applying; the proposal is to build an appropriate efficient library to meet the Town's needs. Cell continues: the application process has been an amazing experience with Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director's leadership, the number of volunteers, and reaching out to the public to receive and welcome feedback. Per Cell, the Select Board has received the grant application documents and is being asked to support and sign the application which is due 12.3.21. Cell states that she is honored to speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees and Antonellis. Farrell confirms that the only change to the document will be the inclusion of the final Giving Tuesday donation amount. Farrell appreciates the diligence and persistence of the Board and Antonellis; the resounding success of Giving Tuesday is a confirmation of the residents' desire to have a new library built.

- Stocker moves and Makepeace-O'Neil seconds a motion to approve and sign the application for the Small Library Pilot Project. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

Gail Fleischaker congratulates the Trustees, Antonellis, and the Select Board for a transparent diligent process and the final sign off on the application.

At 6:25pm, Cell notes that the brief Board of Trustees meeting is adjourned.

At 6:26pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. "Amended and Restated Agreement for Payment in Lieu of Taxes for Personal Property for Solar Energy Systems" dated November 16, 2021 from DG Massachusetts CS 2021, LLC
2. Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners "Application Small Library Pilot Project"
3. M. N. Spear Memorial Library "Library Building Program November 30, 2021"

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary