

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
December 21, 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: Jackie Mendonsa/SES Principal, Bruce Turner/Union 28 Finance Director, Jennifer Culkeen/Union 28 Superintendent, and Acting Police Chief Kristin Burgess
School Committee members present: Dan Hayes/Chair, Bethany Rose, and Steve Sullivan
Finance Committee members present: Jim Walton/Chair, Susie Mosher, Bob Groves, George Arvanitis, Ajay Khashu, Melody Chartier, and Jim Hemingway
Guests: Doc Pruyne/*The Reminder*, Mike Vinskey, Forest Carvalho, and Irmayr Olmedo

Farrell calls the Select Board meeting to order at 5:33pm.

Hayes calls the School Committee to order at 5:33pm.

Walton calls the Finance Committee to order at 5:33pm.

Agenda Review: Public Comment will occur after the elementary school budget discussion.

FY23 Elementary School Budget: Dan Hayes/School Committee Chair refers to the Elementary School FY23 11.18.21 draft budget page 2: the major drivers show and 9.15% increase however, including the funding sources results in a 2.48% increase. Jackie Mendonsa/Principal: to answer questions regarding the use of School Choice and ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) fund, an explanatory document was created. The "Shutesbury Funding Sources for FY23 Draft Budget", an overview of funding sources outside of the general budget, is screenshared and explained by Jennifer Culkeen/Union #28 Superintendent. Culkeen: the funds address the mental health, health and safety needs of the students; there is funding for an adjustment counselor to meet the social and emotional needs of students and an essential needs teacher to assist in making up learning loss during the pandemic; a portion will also to be spent on a paraeducator to assist; some of the grant funds do need to go towards retirement; we are obligated to provide ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction therefore School Choice funds are being used for a teacher and paraprofessional as well as increasing the hours for the speech pathologist to full time equivalent (FTE); in addition, School Choice funds will be used to support outdoor science education which also supports health and well-being. Mendonsa confirms that this is just for FY23; Bruce Turner/Union #28 Finance Director will be able to provide a projected balance.

Turner: to start the year, incoming School Choice was \$291,000; \$69,000 more is expected and we are on pace to spend \$82,000 from this year's School Choice and may need to put more funds toward it as it is expected that \$100,000 will be spent; we will probably end the year about where we started at about \$300,000. Turner: FY21 was the first year of the three year ESSER. Culkeen: the ESSER grant needed to be written for the full three years; we are assessing all students relative to State standards so more ESSER funds may be needed. Hayes: we need to help our students succeed. Turner: the positions are budgeted and offset by the ESSER funds. Hayes: the overall increase is 2.48%; the goal is to have a clear and transparent budget. George Arvanitis/Finance Committee asks for clarification on the School Choice and ESSER funds noting that \$28,000 seems to be covered by the operating budget rather than School Choice. Turner/Mendonsa: these numbers will be reviewed. Hayes: we will get back to you with a definitive answer. Ajay Khashu/Finance Committee: it would be helpful to have a number that reflects the portions directly responding to the pandemic needs our students have and that can be shared with the Town, i.e., post pandemic learning loss. Culkeen: almost everyone we are paying is doing more to address pandemic needs; the impact is felt beyond

the dollar figure. Khashu notes the need to communicate to our town that a significant portion of the increase is being used to address unique pandemic needs. Culkeen and Mendonsa will determine an appropriate explanation. Hayes: pandemic staff are not put into the budget as recurring expenses. Bob Groves/Finance Committee: the 9.15% increase jumps out; it is understood that there are specific pandemic needs that are not going to recur; in the past, we did not put these kinds of expenses into the school's foundation budget; ESSER is specifically funding pandemic related expenses for schools and he has no issue with the items though is concerned that the 9% increase will be permanent. Culkeen: School Choice is being used for these one time or short term expenditures for ESL that will serve a small population of English learners.

Turner: the costs reflected, especially labor, are included in what you are being shown. Hayes: to Groves' point, trying to differentiate the costs did not clarify as much as we wanted; it may be helpful to create a driver page. Groves: it is important to separate funding for temporary items in a different way. Hayes: we need to know the total costs and total revenues. Groves agrees that a separate driver page will be helpful. Arvanitis: knowing what portion is temporary will be helpful; a policy explaining how decisions to spend School Choice funds are made is needed, i.e., the situational rationale for how funds are managed. Hayes agrees: the School Committee has been pondering this; this year is an example of using the funds in ways we never imagined. Hayes appreciates Susie Mosher/Finance Committee and Groves for providing information on how other schools use their School Choice funds. Culkeen suggests coming up with a protocol or a procedure for how School Choice funds are used. Hayes: use of these funds is student directed; we are being mindful with how they are used.

Arvanitis acknowledges Turner for his work and asks for his perspective. Turner: Chapter 70 is tied to the inflation rate which is tracking around 4.5-5% so we may see some increases in Chapter 70 funding; Senator Hinds work to obtain Rural Aid is a nice addition; Culkeen also served on this Committee. Turner continues: a .6 FTE ESL teacher is being funded; if we had a better way to move our students to a combined program for the four schools, one teacher could be teaching several more children and sharing costs at the Union level, i.e., using a circuit rider teacher or transporting children to one site. Turner: it has been his pleasure to work with Shutesbury. Turner is thanked for his work.

Khashu acknowledges that in the past the School Committee has been asked to reflect use of School Choice in the budget; suggests pulling out the staff positions funded with ESSER or School Choice with line explanations flagging them as School Choice/ESSER funded items that will come out of the budget in the future. Suggestions to achieve clarity are entertained. Culkeen: paraprofessional positions respond to specific needs, i.e., a pandemic focus now could become a special needs focus in the future. Groves confirms that the assessment from the Union is based on enrollment. Turner: yes, School Choice students are reflected in the assessment. Groves would like to see School Choice as a revenue source supporting the budget; we need to continue the discussion on how to use School Choice funds. Hayes agrees the discussion on the best way to use School Choice needs to continue and the School Committee will continue to consider this; feedback/input is appreciated. Mosher to Turner: Shutesbury made multiple attempts to get funding from the State for the school roof and asks if the loan program is getting stronger. Turner: it has been frustrating that Shutesbury has not received funding for the roof; on the other hand, he has heard that the State has set aside \$100 million for HVAC work in schools which may be helpful in upgrading the school's system. Hayes: with the uncertainty of the pandemic, our funds need to be spent wisely. Torres received an email from State Representative Natalie Blais who is following up on the fourth rejection for roof funding. Hayes thanks Torres for seeking help from Blais.

Farrell wishes Turner well in his retirement and thanks him for his work. Hayes thanks those present and encourages continuing to work together. Hayes: the School Committee is adjourned. Groves adjourns the Finance Committee.

Public Comment: None offered.

Discussion Topics:

1. Police Department Update: Acting Chief Kristin Burgess: the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) developed the Bridge Academy training for part-time officers to bring them to full time status with online courses and three weeks of in-person training in firearms, defensive tactics and EVOG (Emergency Vehicular Operations Course). Currently Burgess and Officer Taylor are enrolled and about half way through the course; they have finished firearms training, will take defensive tactics training in January and EVOG in March; the online portions are done independently. Burgess: if an officer does not meet the requirements, they are no longer certified as police officers in MA; Officer Masse will be enrolled in year two; Officer Warner will be enrolled in year three; enrollment is alphabetical; those is the second and third years are certified until the time for their training and officers are given time to complete the academy. Burgess: officers' salaries and academy expenses are paid during the training, i.e., ammunition, pepper spray; the online training is provided along with handouts and paperwork. Torres: the Department received a \$4,000 grant from FRCOG to assist with out of pocket costs for the first two enrolled officers. Burgess: Irmayr Olmedo is interning with the Department to finish her college degree; her professor asked Burgess to consider Olmedo as an intern and the Department is excited to bring her on; she has a vast background and is very helpful. Olmedo needs to complete an 80 hour internship in Criminal Justice by January 2022; she is enrolled in Cambridge College and her future goal is to work with juveniles in criminal justice.
2. New Cows' Easement/Leverett Road Land Swap: Torres screenshares the "Subdivision Not Required Plan of Land Prepared for W.D. Cows, Inc." dated 11.20.21 by Harold L. Eaton and Associates, Inc. Torres: the wishes of the Select Board related to determining the flow of the easement were communicated to Cows; the access route Cows originally chose would need an annual town meeting vote however, this would not be necessary if the access only runs through the swap parcel as depicted on the map. Torres continues: if the Select Board agrees, the final survey will be done in order to transfer the parcel to the Town of Shutesbury; one benefit of the land swap is that all Highway Department buildings will be on Town property; the access will not cross the berm.
 - Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the Cows easement related to the Leverett Road parcel swap as shown on the map "Subdivision Not Required Plan of Land Prepared for W.D. Cows, Inc." dated 11.20.21 by Harold L. Eaton and Associates, Inc. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
3. COVID Policy/Board of Health Changes: Torres screenshares the 12.21.21 draft "COVID Policy for Shutesbury Employees" with edits from Arlene Read/Board of Health and reviewed by the Board of Health. Additional clarifying edits are made. Stocker asks who will pay for testing if a fee is required. Torres suggests waiting to see if there is a cost in the future and confirms that this document reflects current Center for Disease Control guidance.

- Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the amended “COVID Policy for Shutesbury Employees”. Stocker asks if staff are paid for the time needed to get tested. All agree to add “outside of work hours”. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye, the motion carries.

Torres: the policy will be emailed to all employees and reviewed with department heads. Stocker suggests and Farrell agrees for the policy to be posted on the Town website.

4. COVID Bonus/Gift Cards: Torres and Scott summarize research into the employee gift cards voted on by the Select Board 5.18.21: the approved Visa or Mastercard gift cards are only available in increments of \$25 and \$50 (the approved amounts are \$30/part-time staff and \$50/20+hours/week staff); these cards have additional fees ranging from \$3.94-\$5.95/card, may expire and/or have additional fees attached to them. Scott: Stop & Shop offers store cards for \$25 and \$50; Big Y offers cards in any denomination, has no fees, and offers a 2-3% corporate discount, the cards can be ordered online and then picked up. All Select Board members agree to the purchase of Big Y gift cards for employees serving during FY21 COVID pandemic.

5. Land Use Clerk Appointment: Per Torres, the appointment is postponed to the 1.4.22 meeting though may be accomplished at an extra Select Board meeting on 12.28.21 at 9am.

6. Town Administrator Updates:

a. Open Space & Recreation Plan: Gail Fleischaker and Penny Jaques have been working on the Open Space and Recreation Plan update; the Select Board needs to certify that the Town Administrator, by job description, is the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Coordinator; Martina Carroll, deceased, was the chair for a number of years; the “ADA Coordinator Designation Form” is to be attached to the Open Space Plan.

- Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion for the Select Board to sign the “ADA Coordinator Designation Form”. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

b. Certificate of Adoption: Word had been received word that the Town’s Hazard Mitigation Plan has been approved by FEMA; the next step is for the Select Board to formally adopt and sign the “Certificate of Adoption”.

- Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion for the Select Board to adopt the Town on Shutesbury Hazard Mitigation Plan by signing the “Certificate of Adoption”. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

c. Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant: The Select Board will discuss the MVP action grant during the 1.4.22 meeting. Farrell: the Planning Board’s recommendation is to seek funding for storm water management. Noting that the Open Space & Recreation Plan is in the final stages of completion and that the Select Board is identified as the lead entity for some aspects of the plan, Farrell recommends the Board review the document in preparation for the 1.4.22 meeting specifically the action items. Torres: the Select Board needs to consider the seven year action plan; the Open Space Committee also needs a general letter of support for the plan. Farrell suggests waiting until the Board has had an opportunity to review the action plan before writing a letter of support. Torres will follow up with Tamsin Flanders/FRCOG.

d. Hauling Contract: The Town requested a one year extension with a price to be determined; the hauler stated the method they use for hauling in Shutesbury is unsafe so

they will not continue the contract. Meryl Mandell/Recycling & Solid Waste Committee Chair, Gary Bernhard/Recycling Coordinator, and Torres met with the hauler to discuss what services they would provide; the hauler will use a sidearm truck requiring all residents to have a curbside cart (Toter is a brand name) resulting in a contract cost increase from \$66,000/year to \$130,000/year. The RSWC is working on a Request for Proposal during their 1.8.22 meeting; the small haulers have been absorbed by larger organizations; this could be a huge hit to our budget. Various options are being explored including a Town owned truck and hiring someone in-house to operate the truck; the current contract expires 6.30.21. The original trash pickup program was funded by an override.

- e. Energy & Climate Action Committee: Stocker refers to Gail Fleischaker's 12.21.21 email "offer of services" regarding solar data collection and suggests the Select Board consider her offering. Torres, as the holder of the passwords and data, has had an ongoing conversation with Fleischaker who would like to do the data collection in lieu of being on the Energy and Climate Action Committee. Torres will work with Fleischaker as soon as she has collected the relative materials. So far, four individuals have expressed interest in serving on the committee: Miriam DeFant, Gary Rehorka, Michael DeChiara and Graeme Sephton; depending on timing, an article about the Committee may be submitted to the upcoming issue of "Our Town" newsletter or another Town Announce may be put out.

Administrative Actions:

1. Select Board members will sign vendor warrants #22-14 totaling \$120,959.07.
2. Select Board members will sign payroll warrants #22-14 totaling \$114,019.45.
3. Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the 11.30.21 meeting minutes. Roll call votes: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the minutes are approved as presented.

At 7:42pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roll call votes: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Shutesbury Elementary School FY23 Budget 11.8.21 draft
2. Shutesbury Funding Sources for FY23 Draft Budget"
3. "MPTC Bridge Academy Training Program: Eligibility, Requirements, Exemptions" dated 8.18.21
4. "Subdivision Not Required Plan of Land Prepared for W.D. Cowls, Inc." dated 11.20.21 by Harold L. Eaton and Associates, Inc.
5. "COVID Policy for Shutesbury Employees" 12.21.21 draft
6. ADA Coordinator Designation Form
7. Hazard Mitigation Plan Certificate of Adoption
8. 12.21.21 email from Gail Fleischaker "offer of services"

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary