

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes  
January 12, 2022 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/Volunteers present: Arlene Read/Board of Health, Acting Police Chief Kristin Burgess and Fire Chief Walter Tibbetts

At 5:31pm, Farrell calls the meeting to order.

Agenda Review: The Federal FY22 Fire Safety Grant will be considered as unanticipated business.

**Discussion Topic:**

1. Review COVID Policy/Board of Health & Department of Public Health (DPH)

Guidance: The COVID Policy for Shutesbury Employees” (dated 12.21.22 amended 1.4.22) with new edits by Arlene Read/Board of Health is screenshared. Read: the new edits are consistent with the Mass Department of Public Health (DPH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) who are opposed to requiring testing prior to return to work; the PCR test is so sensitive it can pick up remnants of virus material for up to 90 days; employers and schools are advised not to require tests for return; if tests are required, it is recommended that antigen (rapid) tests be used as they pick up a higher load of virus; the problem with home tests is that they can be contaminated and the readings misinterpreted. Read continues: the CDC changed the isolation period to 5 days of strict isolation followed by 5 days of strict masking; with the new (omicron) variant, symptom onset/contagiousness is quicker than with the other variants; the change to 5 days of isolation is due to work place depletion and concerns about mental health; the first five days is when most transmission happens; this is risk reduction not elimination. Per Read’s contact with the State epidemiologist, they would not recommend testing before return to work; using a time/symptom based strategy is recommended; for example, for a long-term care worker, if on day 6, they are positive, they are to stay home until day 10 and, if still positive, they can return to work. Read: strict isolation for 5 days; if there is no fever and symptoms are significantly decreased, the person must then strictly mask for 5 days; the CDC and Mass DPH do not recommend testing to return to work; if an employer chooses to do so, do not test beyond day 10.

The policy is reviewed and further clarifying edits are made per Read: no fever in the preceding 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication; instead of minimal, state that symptoms have substantially improved; reduce isolation from 10 to 5 days; the CDC and Mass DPH are focusing on masking 100% of the time when around other people using a high quality mask. Torres has been providing KN95 masks to department heads. Torres to Farrell’s question: KN95 masks are required for unvaccinated Town employees. Read clarifies for Acting Police Chief Kristin Burgess: day 0 is the first day of symptoms or if no symptoms, day 0 is the day of the positive test; stay home for 5 days counting from the first day of symptoms or test date whichever came first. The Select Board appreciates the time Read has spent reviewing the policy.

- Stocker moves the Select Board approve the “COVID Policy for Shutesbury Employees” as amended; Makepeace-O’Neil seconds the motion. Roll call

vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries. Torres will post the document on the Town website.

Unanticipated Business:

1. Firefighter Equipment Grant: Per Walter Tibbetts/Fire Chief, the Department of Fire Services FY22 Firefighter Equipment grant is the second in a five year grant cycle; this is a competitive grant with an approved equipment list; the Fire Department has been approved for the grant and the equipment requested; Select Board approval is timely as the equipment needs to be ordered and reimbursement requested prior to 6.30.22.
  - Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to execute the Department of Fire Services' FY22 Firefighter Equipment Grant. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.

At 6:04pm, Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to adjourn the 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. "COVID Policy for Shutesbury Employees" dated 12.21.22 amended 1.4.22
2. "Department of Fire Services' FY22 Firefighter Equipment Grant" contract, scope of work and budget

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Avis Scott  
Administrative Secretary