

Shutesbury Select Board Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2022 Virtual Meeting Platform

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

Staff present: Becky Torres/Town Administrator

Other Staff/Volunteers present: Police Chief Kristin Burgess, April Stein/Personnel Board, Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director, and Jeff Lacy/Zoning Board of Appeals

Speaking Guests: John Montanari and Mike Vinskey

Farrell calls the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Procedure explained by Farrell.

John Montanari confirms he will be able to speak during the first agenda item.

Discussion Topics:

1. Black Lives Matter Banner & New Poster: Mary Anne Antonellis/Library Director: the Black Lives Matter banner is worn after two years and the grommets are coming out so it cannot stay attached to the building. Antonellis: while considering how to continue the sentiment, she met Shutesbury artist Bobby Brown whose website exhibited a Black Lives Matter poster; Brown subsequently created a new poster which he donated to be on permanent exhibit in Town Hall. Antonellis proposes a formal ceremony for removal and preparation of the banner for archiving; visitors to Town Hall will be able to view the installed poster. Farrell: this item was discussed at a prior Select Board meeting however it was added to the agenda with short notice; it is being reconsidered now in order for John Montanari to speak on the matter. Makepeace-O'Neil: it is time to remove the banner; she supports Montanari speaking. Stocker agrees with Makepeace-O'Neil. John Montanari reads his statement, in full, into the record. Torres requests Montanari submit his statement for the record (see attached). Stocker supports taking the banner down for reasons Antonellis stated as well as some of the reasons Montanari stated. Stocker does not support a policy (as recommended by Montanari).

Mike Vinskey asks if Antonellis is presenting the idea for a poster as a citizen or as the Library Director. Vinskey is curious about what the poster looks like and asks why there has not been a call for the public to add their ideas; the poster idea is coming from one person, a Town employee. Antonellis states she is speaking as a 33 year Shutesbury resident living on Pelham Hill Road: the idea for the banner came as the result of the vigils held on the common after the murder of George Floyd; the idea for a banner on the church did not move forward therefore Antonellis proposed hanging the banner on Town Hall which was approved by the Select Board; on 6.19.20, during the height of COVID, 100 people wearing masks attended the ceremony to install the banner; racism, violence, and oppression of black people is a function of government in our country; anti-racism needs to be a function of our government. Antonellis continues: the library sponsored a reading of White Fragility attended by 24 individuals; an ongoing group is studying racism, an emergency needing attention. Antonellis screenshares the proposed "Tree of Life Black Lives Matter" poster created by Bobby Brown; she personally paid for the framing; the overall size is approximately 12"x18". Vinskey hopes the Select Board will do something about process/policy regarding things of this nature; currently, the process seems random. Farrell: Antonellis is here as a private citizen. Vinskey clarifies the need for a policy and notes that one private citizen is able to get

on the agenda at the “drop of the hat” while another citizen has no idea how to get an item on the Select Board agenda.

Makepeace-O’Neil supports taking down the outside banner; refers to church’s request to place a Christmas tree on the common and the Select Board’s willingness to consider other symbols of celebration, i.e., a menorah, if a request was brought to the Board; now we have the art poster to consider; perhaps the Board may consider a general policy to codify how to decide on displays without affecting freedom of expression. Makepeace-O’Neil, noting that it is a donation, is wavering on the Board’s acceptance of the poster and needs more time. Stocker: how would a policy be setup? Makepeace-O’Neil: it would provide guidelines. Stocker: to the point about citizens on the agenda, there have been plenty of citizens who have had items on the Select Board agenda; feels the donated poster should be graciously accepted. Antonellis: Black Lives Matter is a little like Christmas, it is becoming ingrained in our society; the poster would represent a historic moment. Montanari: to the contrary, the Black Lives Matter organization is at its lowest approval; Eric Adams, a Black ex-cop, was voted into office on an anti-Black Lives Matter stature; numerous Black American scholars have extremely harsh critiques of the organization; affected parents and others have not benefitted from the organization.

- Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds motion to remove the Black Lives Matter banner from the front of Town Hall. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
 - Stocker moves and Makepeace-O’Neil seconds a motion to accept Bobby Brown’s poster as a gift to the Town. Farrell recommends developing a policy; supports accepting the poster and sees the words “Black Lives Matter” as distinct from the same named organization and not a political movement. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: abstains, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
2. VADAR Contract: Torres: funding for purchase of the VADAR software for the financial team was approved by annual town meeting; the full price for the first year is \$22,910, the budgeted amount, plus the balance of the costs that are included in the Town Accountant’s expense line.
- Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the five year contract for the VADAR software purchase and maintenance. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
3. Leverett Fire Department Inquiry: Farrell: Torres was contacted by Leverett Town Administrator Marjorie McGinnis who asked whether or not Shutesbury may be interested in sharing a fire chief. Farrell subsequently spoke with Tom Hankinson, Chair of the Leverett Select Board; their chief currently works 25 hours/week. Farrell advised Hankinson that Shutesbury’s study committee previously considered sharing a chief, the Town has received a number of resumes and a hiring committee will soon be underway. April Stein, former member of the Fire Chief Study Committee: the Committee explored a shared chief model and concluded that doing so was not feasible; this request complicates the matter; the Committee recommended staying with a full-time chief. Farrell: engaging in a shared chief agreement is a long process and would leave us in limbo. Stocker agrees. Makepeace-O’Neil: in good faith, the advertisement was for a full time chief as recommended by the Study Committee. Police Chief Kristin Burgess, former Fire Chief Study Committee member: we did come to the conclusion that if we could not find a full-time chief, we could hire a part-

time deputy chief and part-time chief. Stein: in the end, a shared chief would not save us money or provide the same, if not better, service. Torres and Farrell will follow up with Leverett.

4. Review Fuel Bids: Torres screenshares the fuel bids received from FRCOG. The gasoline bid is reviewed first. Per Torres, Burke is the only provider to give a set price/per gallon (\$4.50); the others set a “rack price”; Burke has provided the Town with adequate service for almost a decade; the contract is for 5,500 gallons after which the Town is subject to the market price; the bidders cannot back out at this point. Torres: for vehicle fuel, the Town needs reliable as well as emergency deliveries. Torres: in the past, Sandri did not provide the correct winter fuel; outside of that incident, there were no other problems. Stocker confirms this is a one year contract; the current rack price for 87 octane gasoline is \$4.19/gallon. Torres: the tank is 1,000 gallons; deliveries are 500-700 gallons at a time. Stocker: by signing the contract now, the Town will be saving money at least initially. Torres: diesel prices are much higher now; the budget does not reflect the higher fuel prices; for diesel options, Burke has the lowest fixed price at \$4.795 (plus \$.04 for winter blend). Per Torres, the Town has not contracted for heating oil particularly after the installation of minisplits.
 - Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve Burke’s gasoline fixed price bid. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
 - Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve Burke’s diesel fuel fixed price bid. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries.
5. Personnel Board Representative/Fire Chief Hiring Committee: Makepeace-O’Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to appoint April Stein as the Personnel Board representative to the Fire Chief Hiring Committee. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O’Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the motion carries. (Stein will replace Peg Ross who is unable to serve on the Committee.)
6. ZBA Membership: Jeff Lacy/Zoning Board of Appeals: as of 7.2.22, with the retirement of Chuck DiMare and Herb Gilmore, ZBA membership will diminish to just himself; two members plus two alternates are needed. Lacy is aware of two people interested in serving and suggests the Select Board cast a wider net. Farrell agrees with the need to solicit interest in serving and the need to have a discussion about expanding the ZBA to five full members in the future. Torres will initiate a Town Announce to include contact information for questions about the work of the ZBA. Farrell: appointments will be made during the 6.21.22 Select Board meeting.
7. Town Administrator Updates:
 - a. Cowls: Per Town Counsel Donna MacNicol, subsequent to her conversation with Attorney Reidy representing Cowls, proposed changes to the language of the deed will require scheduling of an additional executive session.
 - b. HVAC/School: Work is underway at the elementary school; CORI checks were completed; it will take 14 weeks for the pump listed in the bid to be delivered; those supporting the project, including the engineer, agree that an alternate pump will be acceptable; this pump will cost an additional \$3,500 requiring an additional ARPA request unless another source of funding is identified.

- c. Personnel Action Forms (PAFs): Appointments will be conducted during the 6.21.22 meeting; board/committee chairs have been asked to confirm members whose terms are expiring and their willingness to continue to serve; the Select Board is encouraged to review the current list in advance of the meeting. It is anticipated the PAFs will be ready for approval during the 6.21.22 meeting.
- d. Preschool: For the first time in two years, the preschool will be returning to Town Hall for a tour and will meet with the Police Department, Library staff and participate in a mock town meeting and election arranged by Town Clerk Grace Bannasch and Town Administrator Becky Torres to be held outdoors under a tent.

At 6:48pm, Farrell states the Select Board will enter executive session for reason #7, (Police Chief Recertification Review), to comply with, or act under the general authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements; MGL c. 4, sec. 7(26)(c), for the purpose of the review Private Personnel Records and not to return to open session. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye and Farrell: aye; the motion carries. All present confirm that they are alone in the room and no one else can hear the proceedings. Torres discontinues recording.

Administrative Actions:

1. Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the 5.21.22 meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the minutes are approved as presented.
2. Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the 5.23.22 meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the minutes are approved as presented.
3. Makepeace-O'Neil moves and Stocker seconds a motion to approve the 5.24.22 meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Makepeace-O'Neil: aye, Stocker: aye, and Farrell: aye; the minutes are approved as presented.
4. Select Board members will sign vendor warrants #22-26 totaling \$114,373.51.
5. Select Board members will sign payroll warrants #22-26 totaling \$119,253.62.

Documents and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Comments made by John Montanari
2. "Tree of Life Black Lives Matter" poster by Bobby Brown
3. VADAR contract
4. Franklin Regional Council of Governments Fuel Bids

These minutes were compiled from the 6.7.22 Zoom recording.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Avis Scott
Administrative Secretary