

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
February 25, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

Selectboard members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Co-Chair, Eric Stocker/ Co-Chair  
Staff present and Guests: Gabriele Voelker: Interim Town Administrator, Chief Burgess, Gail Fleischaker, Tom Siefert, Brennan Mailloux, Jennifer Wallace, Leslie Cerier, Michael Hootstein, Mark Rivers, Michael DeChiara, Mary Lou Conca, Mariah, Pam Ososky, Miriam DeFant, Penelope Kim, Elizabeth, Sam Spisiak.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:02pm

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Mary Lou Conca asked the Select Board to enter their executive session with compassion and come up with a wholesome decision.

General Business:

- I. Further discussion on the 2 Lake Wyola Boating Safety request, on how we are going to address this.

And schedule a meeting date:

- a. The board agreed to invite the Conservation Committee to their next meeting on March 11th to discuss the matter of the dredging of the sediment that has backfilled.

- II. Hiring Town Administrative Asst. Brennan Mailloux, Candidate:

- a. The Select Board approved the hiring of Brennan as the new Administrative Assistant for the town, noting his educational background, skills, and enthusiasm. Brennan gave a little introduction to himself by describing his eagerness to help communities, get involved, and his ability to work effectively both independently and collaboratively. Voelker expressed that in his interview, his appreciation towards diversity was an important factor. He also shared he was an Orange resident, with a Criminal Justice degree and an Anthropology Degree.

**VOTE:** Stocker makes a motion to hire Brennan Mailloux as Administrative Assistant to the Town Administrator and Select Board, Makepeace-O'Neil seconds. Roll call vote  
Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- III. Check in on the Public Forum for Lake Wyola, date set for March 13, 2025:

- a. The Board plans to change the date from March 13 to March 27, 2025.  
Makepeace-O'Neil advises she will let the school know about the change. At the same time, same process.

- IV. Review of Town Hall and Town Common Use Policy:

- a. The team discussed the implementation of a Town Hall and Town Common Use Policy, which was adopted in November but not yet officially implemented. The policy includes a lease agreement for space use in the Town Hall, which will be renamed to a use agreement. Voelker stated Individuals will sign up through Mailloux and he will put them on a Google Calendar.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to edit and amend the town usage/town common policy and to implement it immediately, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

V. Discussion on snow shoveling and snow closure policy:

- a. The board discussed the need for a snow shoveling policy, with a focus on liability and accessibility issues. The board agreed to invite Dave Grenier from the Highway Department to a meeting to discuss potential solutions, including hiring a snow shoveling removal person or creating a job description. This is a need because the front of the Town Hall gets slushy and becomes an ADA issue. The same problem will arise with the library. They considered maybe it would be a job for one of the private snow removal companies. Voelker mentioned you also need to make sure you adequately pay for the job. Voelker also mentioned it could be an individual who does landscaping in the summer and does shoveling in the winter. Makepeace-O'Neil offered the idea of heat pads in addition to a snow shoveler.
- b. The team also discussed the need for a snow closure policy, with a suggestion to follow the school's lead in closing the town if the school is closed. The team agreed to draft a snow closure policy and bring it back for further discussion. Voelker offered to draft something up. Voelker mentioned she usually talks with the Highway Department about snow storms and watches the road conditions as the Town Administrator. She believes the Town Administrator should make the decision and the admin will be responsible for posting it on the town's website.

VI. Review the current draft budget for FY26, not in final form:

- a. Shutesbury discussed the town's budget, highlighting a 19% increase in health insurance costs due to pharmaceutical expenses such as new weight loss practices. The town is considering hiring a custodian for the library and adjusting the custodial budget accordingly. Shutesbury also mentioned the need to find \$369,000 to cover the deficit. The possibility of using free cash for one-time expenses like PFAS mitigation was discussed, with Shutesbury suggesting a potential budget of \$50,000 for this purpose. The town's revenue growth was noted as low, with a 2% increase in income and few 2% expenditures. The team agreed to review the budget further and consider the implications of these changes. Voelker also stated PFAS tests for houses can be between \$287 and \$500 for bigger houses and mailing them costs \$1 a piece due to being sent in large, brown mailers.

VII. Review of Town Hall Building Needs:

- a. The board and Voelker discussed the need for repairs and upgrades to the town hall building, including the replacement of the elevator panel for \$5,000 and the installation of a fire alarm system. Mailloux added the potential need for carbon monoxide detectors as well. Other upgrades could be beautifying the meeting room, adding sound proofing to help with the audio echo, and potentially new tables for meetings. Chief Burgess added Knox Boxes for housing a universal key for the Fire Department in case of an emergency, to the list of needs.
- b. Voelker mentioned the need to fix the fence surrounding the generator and the potential for volunteer labor and grants to improve the council on aging room.
- c. The decision was made to compile a list of necessary repairs and send it to the buildings committee for consideration.

VIII. Town Administrator Report:

- a. Voelker discussed that for the next meeting there are to be added two appointments asks on the agenda.
- b. Voelker said Jo Comerford and her people asked the town for immediate support for the passenger rail trail. Voelker will call the number and get in contact with her to offer support.
- c. Voelker asked if we have any cannabis agreements as the town has a company called Pineapple Express that wants to provide a delivery service to Shutesbury to deliver cannabis. They are essentially asking for support. Voelker said she will put it on a future agenda.
- d. Voelker had Chief Burgess discuss her idea of revamping the field behind the fire station for a softball field/ recreation area. Chief Burgess asked that the town appoint a committee to research it, as well as use the Recreation Committee's support to help bring it to fruition.
- e. Burgess shared a story of how talking with an "old timer" brought up a comment that the individual misses having a place where they could watch sporting events, feel safe and offer a place that allows community members to have fun.

IX. Meeting adjourned at 6:33pm

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 pm, and enter Executive Meeting for reason #2, To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel: Police Chief contract negotiations and to approve executive session minutes from previous Town Administrator negotiations. Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

1. Voelker to draft a snow closure policy.
2. Voelker call Comerford contact to offer town's support

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brennan Mailloux  
Administrative Assistant  
Town Administrator/Select Board

\*\* A full version of the 2/25/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's  
YouTube page: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef\\_U9DtwvO4&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef_U9DtwvO4&t=2s)

