

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

Selectboard members present: Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil/Chair, Eric Stocker/ Vice-Chair, Rita Farrell/ Board Member

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Gail Fleischaker, Nettie Harrington-Pangallo, Catherine Hilton, Tom Siefert, Grace Bannasch, Frank McGinn, Greg Day, Matteo Pangallo, Jean Fontaine, Mark Rivers.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 4:05pm

Agenda Review: As posted.

Public Comment: Catherine Hilton shared that at Elliot Park some personal watercrafts are being stored there unattended on the town's property, which is a liability issue and a mosquito issue, and she is asking the Select Board for help so that it will not keep reoccurring. They are killing the grass and acting as obstacles in the way of the water. She plans to talk with the Conservation Commission about putting up signs and the Select Board agreed to put this on a coming agenda to further discuss it.

Nettie Harrington-Pangallo summarized that our previous Annual Town Meeting was very long in length with 46 articles, and it is hard for individuals to sit down and be attentive and focused to important matters for that period of time. She suggested splitting up the long meeting into numerous meetings such as a Spring one that deals with financial and capital matters tied to the Fiscal year and then another Fall one. She suggested options such as a resolution put on the Special Town Meeting Warrant, where the town can voice their opinions on whether this is something they would like to do through votes. She also suggested having the Town Clerk put a non-binding public opinion advisory question on the ballot for our next regularly scheduled Town Election. It was decided this discussion will be added to the coming agenda.

General Business:

I. Review and Approve Meeting Minutes for 7.17.25:

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the meeting minutes for 7.17.25, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

II. Vote to approve and draft a Release of Liability Letter for Walter Tibbetts to scuba and clean the trash rack at Lake Wyola:

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the drafted Release of Liability Letter for Walter Tibbetts to scuba and clean the trash rack at Lake Wyola, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

III. Appointment of Greg Day to the Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC):

- a. Gail Fleischaker expressed her support in having Greg Day be appointed to the Energy and Climate Action Committee. She stated that Greg had expressed his support and interest in electric vehicles.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to appoint Greg Day to the Energy and Climate Action Committee, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

IV. Review and approve Financial Transfers for FY25:

- a. The total of the overdrawn accounts is \$11,819.24.
- b. The majority of overdrawn accounts were from Legal.
- c. The summary of total sources would be \$47, 621.13. These are from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund and other budget categories.
- d. The Finance Committee will sign off on the FY25 Transfers in addition to the Select Board.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the Financial Transfer for FY 25, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

V. Discussion of holding a Special Town Meeting in the Fall:

- a. Bolton shared the driver of this is that the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust is looking to increase our rates by 20% starting on October 1st of this year. We are currently paying \$619,000 and this would be increased to \$742, 800 (+\$123,800). To secure the funding for this, we need to hold a Special Town Meeting. The Trust is saying if they do not do this increase, they will essentially dissolve financially.
- b. Bolton shared she does not want to see employees or those retired to lose coverage.
- c. There will be a stakeholder meeting on 7/30/25 to discuss this increase. Senator Comerford is aware of the issue.
- d. Town Treasurer Ryan Mailloux wrote a letter for the Select Board to review and hopefully sign allowing him to explore different health coverages, compare them, and come up with a plan. It also expresses support for the increase so that Town Employees and those retired do not lose their needed coverage.
- e. Farrell stated if you look at the Blue Cross Blue Shield variance in May 2025, there was an increase from 5.5 million up to 8.4 million.
- f. Moving on from Health Insurance discussion, The Town Clerk, Grace Bannasch, shared she would like the Special Town Meeting to be held the second or third week of September. Farrell stated she would prefer to not do it on a Saturday

but rather during the week. Bolton shared she would check with the school to see if either the 16th or 23rd of September at 6:30pm works best for them.

- g. The Board plans to meet on August 4th at 4:30 pm to discuss the scheduling of the Special Town Meeting to be held in September.

Two votes were made during this segment:

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to execute the letter of support drafted by our Town Treasurer, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to authorize Town Administrator, Hayley Bolton to vote to support the requested increase to Hampshire County Proof of Insurance Trust, for the 20% increase in the Group Insurance, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VI. Unanticipated Agenda Item: Reviewing and signing the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) Contractor Evaluation Form for the new Library project.

- a. For DCAMM projects after 50% completion, you need to fill out an evaluation form grading the work done thus far. The Library Building Committee filled it out and needed it signed by the Board.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to sign and submit the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance Standard Contractor Evaluation Form, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VII. Town Administrator Report:

- a. Bolton shared today there was a meeting with the Fire Chief, Acting Police Chief, and Highway Superintendent to discuss some opportunities for MassDOT for different grants. These grants would fund studies which help secure grants. They would like to do a speed study on Leverett Rd and do a traffic analysis on Prescott Rd at the intersection of 202. They are going to be working on applications which are due in November.
- b. Bolton shared the state did a decarbonization site visit last Thursday which is a step required for the Town to receive a Climate Action Leader Certification from the state. This will open more grant opportunities.
- c. Bolton shared she sent out the new Code of Conduct and has received a good amount of responses back, so she has optimism.
- d. Bolton said she talked with Green Communities and hopes to finish the lighting project at the school by the start of the school year. She stated there was a water leak in the school's underground oil tank, but that was due to a missing cap on the roof. This too should be resolved before the new school year starts.

- e. PFAS now tests for 9 contaminants instead of 6 in our Town's water, so retesting will need to be done. The next round of testing will be conducted in and around October, so we can expect to see some bills coming in eventually.
- f. Bolton shared she received acoustic options for the basement Meeting Room at Town Hall. This will help with the noise issue by absorbing noise instead of bouncing it. There are different material options and funding options. They would work best installed on the ceiling. We could have the company we purchase them from install them, or we could buy the material and have someone we desire install the foam. Bolton shared we could pick from different colors and shapes. Overall, this will be between \$4,000 and \$7,000 depending on the chosen foam. The installation is a pricey aspect. This will come out of technology.
- g. Bolton shared at our Department Head Meeting they discussed making the new hours of the Town Hall 9am to 4pm, Monday through Thursday, and 9am to 12pm on Fridays. She would like this to be posted to the public.
- h. Bolton shared she talked with Acting Police Chief, Devon Pelletier and he stated multiple employees who no longer work for the town are registered with the Town's Verizon and AT&T accounts. He stated he needs Select Board authorization to have them removed and have him put on the accounts.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to remove the former employees from our AT&T and Verizon accounts, and to give permission to our Acting Police Chief Devon Pelletier to be put on the accounts, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

f. Bolton shared the proposed charge for the Police Chief Search Committee. The committee will consist of seven members, a Select Board Member, the Town Administrator, a community representative, a Personnel Board member, a Law Enforcement Officer, a school community representative, and a senior representative from the Council on Aging. They will establish a recruitment strategy such as candidate screening, initial interviews, reference checks, a finalist recommendation, and maintain confidentiality throughout it.

VOTE: Farrell makes a motion to approve the Police Chief Search Committee draft as amended, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:15 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, Contract for Fire Chief. The board will **not** return to public session.

Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

1. Discuss Special Town Meeting at upcoming meeting
2. Bolton to reach out to the school to see if either September 16th or 23rd at 6:30pm work for hosting a Special Town meeting.
3. Bolton to reach out and touch base with committee chairs about potential Special Town Meeting Warrant articles.
4. Discuss Elliot Park at the upcoming meeting.
5. Makepeace-O'Neil to send confidentiality agreement for Police Chief Search Committee members to Bolton.
6. Bolton to publicly post new Town Hall hours online and outside of the building.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minutes Draft for 7.17.25
2. Greg Day Appointment Letter to the Energy and Climate Action Committee
3. FY25 Financial Transfers Spreadsheet
4. Treasurer Letter in support of 20% Health Insurance Increase
5. DCAMM Contractor Evaluation Form

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

** A full version of the 7/29/25 SB meeting will be available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page.

