Web Committee Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2015
Shutesbury Town Hall – Technology Room

Members present: Chairman Paul Vlach, Webmaster Fred Steinberg, Michael DeChiara (also Select Board Liaison), Town Clerk Susie Mosher, and Jamie Malcolm-Brown. Member Absent: Willa Jarnagin.
Guests: Police Chief Harding and Sergeant Wendy Masiuk, and Leslie Bracebridge who was invited by the Chairman to and accepted responsibility to take minutes.

Chairman Vlach called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and recognizing the presence of Police Chief Harding and Sgt. Masiuk, moved immediately to agenda item #6:

6. Website policy and town announce email policy. Review & discuss – (including use of Nextdoor Shutesbury (NDS) vs town web and email list.) Points raised:
  1. All agreed the Select Board's goal at the October 20, 2015 All Board's meeting was to encourage better dissemination of information.
  2. Harding: NextdoorShutesbury (NDS) is privately owned – it could be monetized someday.
  3. Several: The Recorder and the Gazette are also privately owned. Newspapers sell advertising. Some committee notices are statutorily required to be put in those papers. The point is to be mindful of what is being done in which media methods and to do it thoughtfully.
  4. Several: There are a lot of people to reach. If there's another way for town officials to engage the public, it should be considered.
  5. Vlach: The town's website and email list are announcement, not discussion methods.
Web Committee Chairman Vlach introduced Nextdoor Shutesbury: NDS has just under 500 subscribers. It offers an opportunity for back-and-forth conversation.
  1. Members must be Shutesbury residents or town officials.
  2. Vlach again invited the whole Police Department to join NDS, so they could see what residents are "chattering" about. An example of the kind of topics that might be of interest to the department would be exchanges about illegal dumping.
  3. People are going to use this medium. People are going to get information to and from their neighbors if town government does not participate.
Web Committee Chairman Vlach summarized the town announce system:
  1. There are just over 500 subscribers: These overlap with NDS members. There are also different people in each of the information groups.
  2. The position of Public Information Officer (PIO) was discussed last night at the Emergency Management Team meeting: In Emergency situations the PIO will prepare announcements.
  3. Because the current is Patrick Callahan working to get out as he might be needed elsewhere. Last night it was voted by the group that fire-fighter Paul DeMarco and Paul Vlach would be "Co-PIO's".
  4. Paul Vlach questioned if there are any concerns about his multiple roles as Web Committee Chairman, NDS Moderator, and PIO? No one voiced any concern, and gratitude was expressed for his voluntary efforts.
  5. Paul explained that any knowledge gained in confidence as a PIO, would not go out to the general public on the NDS announcements.
  6. PIO information is pre-approved by Emergency Management leadership before it goes out on town announcements.
Michael DeChiara: Gives an example of lack of use of town media: The Regionalization discussion is tomorrow at the school. The announcement went out in the elementary school's Roadtown Newsline, but did not go out on "town announce"

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Web Committee Chairman Vlach: Who do you want to reach? How do you want to reach them?
Chief Harding: Agrees there is not a lot of traffic or dissemination of town information on the town website. He sees NDS as a private potentially commercial, unofficial entity. He asks, "What's wrong with the town system that we have, if we could use it more?"

1. Web Committee Chairman Vlach: People are going to NDS more often: Its appeal may be the back-and-forth exchange. Web Committee Chairman Vlach agrees that the town announce and the website in general are underutilized.
2. Chief Harding: Offers made to "modernize" Police Department outreach; he favors FaceBook over NDS; because Facebook has an "official kind of feel to it."
3. Web Committee Chairman Vlach: The positive of NDS is that it is only for residents; Facebook goes to the world, but may reach few actual residents. Town Announce emails go to primarily town residents, but can include others as well.
4. Chief Harding: If you compare numbers, FaceBook has more than 500 01072 users.
5. Sgt. Masiuk has offered to develop a Police Department Facebook page: If there is an issue with trash or dogs, announcements can be made on Facebook. The Department does not want to invite discussion on the Internet. They favor telephone or face-to-face communication. There's a limit to what Chief Harding feels comfortable with on the Internet.
6. Chief Harding: Doesn't want to invite chatter about what is going on.
7. As a town official, Selectman DeChiara doesn't want to delve into NDS. He is not in support of pushing out beyond the official town site, but recognizes that different people feel comfortable in different mediums.
8. Sgt. Masiuk wonders what sort of controls there are on NDS? With Facebook, there are very specific controls. On Facebook, you can post without people being able to comment.   It is open to anyone not just who lives here. It has a lot more accessibility and controls on what can be done with it.
9. Web Committee Chairman Vlach: Public officials can post on NDS without participating in public exchanges. If something inappropriate comes up, officials can say, "Call me privately." It's not possible to post on NDS so others cannot comment, and it is possible to also have an exchange beyond the posting. If others chime in, it becomes a judgment call. If exchanges become inappropriate, Paul as the moderator can remove those postings.
10. Sgt. Masiuk: Facebook has settings. A lot of departments are going to a Facebook page.
11. Chief Harding: The controls that Wendy speaks of are what the Department is looking toward.
12. Town Clerk Mosher: Is concerned of creating too many platforms where townspeople would want responses. If there are too many places to respond to, and one gets missed, the writer could feel "dissed" if he/she doesn't get a response. It's easier to use the phone for communications. People write on NDS and expect they are being counted. Understands town announcements and prefers them, rather than creating another platform.
13. Selectman DeChiara: One could have a summarized posting on NDS, linking people back to the official website. Michael wants to facilitate more communication in the town. Michael doesn't want the Police Department to interpret this that they have to do more. The intent of the Select Board was more that each department have an assigned person to respond to emails.
14. Chief Harding: Sees Internet media as a way to release very succinct information. In the last few months there have been several issues where town announcements have worked well, and others not so well.
15. Selectman DeChiara suggests: It might be a useful strategy to "troll" NDS.
16. Sgt. Masiuk: Doesn't want to weed through everything on NDS. She knows how Facebook operates. She is interested in getting the information out there and if people want to respond, they can come in or call us. Lots of times their information is not correct.

17. Web Committee Chairman Vlach: For years the town has had out-going announcements and information on the website. He encourages officials to use the town announce and website more. There's a danger of using Blackboard Connect for announcements, the "Cry wolf" problem of people then ignoring emergency messages.

Tom: The community is the human beings, hesitant to move the virtual side.

Paul: Not trying to get information to Police via social media, that should still be in person.

Tom: Things get "ramped up, and can get destructive.. We operate best person to person. Facebook is more to announce things than a discussion group as is Nextdoor Shutesbury.

Michael: Many people don't know www.Shutesbury.org exists. Technology can increase information flow. There's a lack of engagement by the community. Not knowing who to call, how to connect. Trying now to communicate in different ways. He sees them as another source, and mostly as a guide to look on the town website, then to call so and so. For him, that's where he is coming from. If dit's ifferent for police, that is cool.

Tom: Should there be a Town Facebook page?

Paul personally feels Facebook is less controlled than NDS, and then someone (or several) would have to maintain it. We're not looking to take that on.

Jaimie: If the police have a Facebook page, we could just note it that it's there on Nextdoor.

Wendy: If anyone would see a posting on Facebook, people could then post it to NDS

Leslie: Thinks that Nextdoor's main appeal is small town commerce and gossip.

Susie: Neighborhood comes to you. Website you have to go to. Email is coming to you: Open or not. A lot of people cannot get online. A committee recently wasn't clear how to get email addresses from website. They want to keep their workload down, limit the number of places to check, and make information back and forth easy to understand.

Michael: Just make sure that one person responds to that committee's email.

the web committee assists. Get Web committee to help them forward the email to another address.

Susie: Doesn't know all the technical answers.

Paul: Returning to Police Dept. concerns : Concept of a lawsuit – using a Town address versus a personal one - opens up personal emails to legal disclosure for each member, where a Town address doesn't affect personal email. Asks Tom, who says he rarely gets requests for information to policechief@shutesbury.org. Paul notes that his town email all forwards to his personal address, has he noted those which are forwarded? He had not.

Tom: Primarily he is contacted for police business by telephone and walk-ins, or flagged down on patrol. Very rare that he gets an email. Wendy says she has a work-only Gmail. More often than not, residents bring info in person . Many times they have to come to town for wifi anyway.

Paul: Is the low email volume because it isn't being encouraged? In person is an 8 hour out of 24 option, but email could be any time. He firmly believes in face-to-face taking of reports or complaints, but inquiries can be handled otherwise. Police must be different from other departments.

Fred: Important that the emails are responded to, though.

Michael: Facebook is great, it expands options. Facebook premise started as individuals

Fred: If Facebook page represents town police, it should not be a personal email address.

Paul: Now it's one more point of contact.

PauL: For consistency they should post and use a Shutesbury.org email address

Tom: Creating a Facebook page creates one other place for people to go to. We need to keep it simple.

Paul: Thinks it is further fracturing consistency to go to Facebook. As Susie points out, we're scattering a bit. Where would you expect to find info? Go to town hall and keep website up-dated.

Michael: A future option could be for police department to use "push" updates.

You can have a posting on Facebook, and you can get Facebook to send that to the PD website.

Jaime: Believes we can set that up under Drupal. Can double check it.

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Paul: We can get you set-up for a new email address for Facebook contact, Police@shutesbury.org and forward to whoever the department wants, or to everyone in the PD.
Tom thanks for Web Committee's consideration and will work with Paul to set-up police@ email.

Susie offers to go through the contact page emails and assure that it goes to a person. How do people know that they will be responded to. Fincom was here that night, Susie called Fred: they were in a meeting not discussing that problem. Paul: That's frustrating, as after we issued their town email address more than a year ago, and Russ was the listed chair at the time for whom he had an address, he sent several emails. After no replies, he made a phone call. no answer, another address, then talked to Becky: Paul requested Becky tell Russ to call him, but never heard back. Susie: Gary is now the Chair. . Weezie might be on Fin Comm and is doing it. Weezie asked Fred how to log in. Fred told her to got o GMail.
Paul: Who is having trouble because he spent a lot of time setting up.
Michael: Can we have a place on the website for town committees to log-in?
Paul: Adds layers of complexity
Michael: On home-page there's a log-in. they don't have to understand it they can just do it.
Fred: Will set that up.
AGENDA ITEM 2
Paul: Chart created: springboard from All Boards:
Michael: How did all boards go? Agreed that would wait for Linda to finish minutes and cut and paste and send to all committees. Next meeting is December 1. Next is a matter of turning it around: Both an email and a hard copy letter. Then it's officially out there.
Paul: Sharing of info: Thought that with Administrator and a secretary, that info could have gone out more promptly.
Susie: It's been less than a month. Has to be done through minutes. Minutes are an agreement that this is what was said. Then someone can distill it. We have to have a process.
Michael: Of both minds Process and promptness. Minutes make it more of an official document.
Michael: Some Committees Select Board does not have supervision over. Can't imagine it will be done in December.
Paul: Next steps to be taken on-hold.

Agenda 3: Classified page?
Michael: Select Board voted. Have TA let the Web Committee know. Michael tells us now officially. If we create the "bucket" of the page than others can fill it in.
Paul: TA just needs to type up a list and we will plug it in. Fred: Why did it require a vote of the Board? Michael will have TA create the content and send it to web@shutesbury.org.

NEW BUSINESS:
Domain name has been renewed. set up for automatic annual payments. Pantheon is billing directly to Treasurer

#5: Screening of web content requests.
Paul: Web Committee role is to make sure it is in compliance. Committee has to create the email, and must comply with policy, from a town entity, factual, not opinion or influence. The 2 policies apply to the same principles. Paul did training session for people making adjustments. Those not comfortable with doing it, we do it for them, assuming we're not doing monthly changes.
Michael: email is straightforward: subject content and done. Trying to create a webpage is more complicated.
Fred: The policy has not been up-dated since moved to Drupal. Now people are up-dating their own pages.
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Paul: Those who don't have pages, we'll create pages, we'll teach you how to do it.
Fred: Policy needs to be updated because now everyone updates.
Paul: Not doing policy review tonight. Just take info home and digest it. What about adding policy info on town calendars?

Not Anticipated:
Michael moves to approve October 22, 2015 minutes. Unanimously approved.
Michael moves to approve Sept. 8, 2015 Paul would add an addendum: from Select Board meeting where Michael gave his liaison report to Select Board: Paul would like to see these attached as a component of the Web Committee meeting because they reflect what happened before Susie broke from office hours to attend, and it addresses the complexity as pertains to web committee vs liaison roles: because discussion in greater depth, including email use and offers made to help people use the web and announcements. Approved as amended: Unanimous.

Paul wants to know if Susie wants assistance from the committee in getting minutes from boards and committees. Susie is just getting them one at a time. Susie hasn't figured it all out. It's a process. Will have to figure out. Fred suggests adding a request to the Town Clerk page. Michael: If we are going to be up-grading: we need to figure how it will go onto new Drupal. Susie is still figuring out how she's going to collect minutes.
Michael: Next meeting should put website to top of agenda .

Jaimie: When Willa was here, did not think it useful to use Google Analytics, Jamie thinks it could be useful: The old host had a built-in, but not in Drupal. It's not system wide. Fred and Jamie can turn it on.

Next Meeting: Item 7 forward, bring laptops. Susie: if she sees towns she likes or others can look at website. DECEMBER 16th. 9th if 16th is not good. Paul will follow-up with Willa about the next meeting date.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

Minutes prepared by Leslie Bracebridge

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