

July 30, 2026 Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Chairperson Howard Shpetner and Member: J. April Stein.

Also present: Administrative Assessor John Whelihan, and Assessors' Clerk Leslie Bracebridge.

Member absent: George Arvanitis

Guests: None

1. Chairperson Howard Shpetner opened the meeting at 5:30 PM and identified all people present.

2. Public Comments: April was thanked and welcomed for her reconsideration to stay on the Board.

3. Annual Officer Reorganization: April stated she was not interested in chairing the Board at this time. Without George's presence, or any member's knowledge of his interest in chairing the Board, **April moved to elect Howard as Chairperson of the Board of Assessors for Fiscal Year (FY) 27.** Howard stated his willingness to serve as Chair, and by "Rule of Necessity" seconded the motion. **Approved as nominated: Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.**

Howard moved, and April seconded, **to elect George Vice-Chair of the Board of Assessors for FY 27.** **Approved as nominated: Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.**

4. A motion was made and seconded to approve the June 25, 2026 meeting minutes: No changes were offered. **Approved as written: Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.**

5. A motion was made and seconded to approve the following Accountant report:

- Motor Vehicle Abatements:**

<u>Commit. Year</u>	<u>Report Date</u>	<u>Total Amount Abated</u>
2026	July (2026)	\$1,051.78

No changes were offered. **Approved as provided: Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.**

6. A motion was made and seconded to approve the fourth Motor Vehicle Commitment for 2026:

<u>Commit. Date</u>	<u>Commitment #</u>	<u>Total Commitment Amount</u>
July 30, 2026	Fourth for 2026	\$10,021.45

No changes were offered. **Assessors approved as provided: Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.**

7. Old Business:

a. 2028 Certification Directives: John distributed copies of the 2023 Department of Revenue (DOR) Division of Local Services (DLS) Bureau of Local Assessments' (BLA) directives for the FY 28 recertification:

1. Cyclical re-inspections: With ten-year cyclical inspections already behind the directive emphasized in capital letters, "...ALL REAL PROPERTY NEEDS TO BE REVIEWED AT LEAST ONCE IN EVERY TEN-YEAR CYCLE..."

- During Shutesbury's four-year search to find a qualified ½-time Administrative Assessor, inspections fell further behind.
- John is presently conducting recent years' building permit inspections, the first step to get ahead of the ten-year cyclical backlog.
- John is in communication with DOR officials about the backlog. He asked Board members to sign a letter to the BLA requesting an extension out to FY 29, with a workplan likely to include an outside consultant, to get cyclical inspections back into a 10-year cycle.
- Inspection data collected in the field must be entered into the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system upon return to the office, so each inspection requires much time.

A motion was made and seconded to sign the proposed letter to BLA Chief Christopher Wilcock:

Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

2. **Personal Property – Rediscover & Re-list:** As with real estate, personal properties need “re-discovery and re-list” and a new analysis of second home personal property is required.
3. **Other Directives:** Create a new neighborhood map detailing neighborhood pricing. All municipalities are being directed by DOR to create a neighborhood map layer to current maps. Shutesbury’s map provider CAI (Cartographic Associates Inc.) Technologies will likely be able to do this task for Shutesbury.

8. New Business: As John becomes familiar with Shutesbury’s Assessors’ Department, he foresees additional expenses, such as the mandatory neighborhood map enhancement. John will wait for George’s return to outline to the full Board a request for a possible financial transfer.

9. Administrative Assessor’s Report:

- a. John has scheduled a meeting with the CAI Technologies President Franco Rossi in August to review Shutesbury’s map procedures and discuss the neighborhood map task.
- b. John re-subscribed to the Multiple Listing Services (MLS), a critical tool in valuing properties. Shutesbury’s MLS account had lapsed between Administrative Assessors.
- c. John took a required course at the 2026 MAAO (Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers) Annual School, which will also come out of the operating budget.
- d. Leslie reminded the Board that when the Assessors’ operating budget was reduced by the Finance Committee, she was reassured that the Finance Committee would restore the cut in keeping with the needs of the department, once an active Administrative Assessor was hired.

10. Schedule Next Meeting: Thursday September 17, 2026 at 5:30 PM

11. The Chair saw no need to enter executive session.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 6:30 PM: Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

Respectfully submitted, as approved on September 17, 2026,

**Leslie Bracebridge
Assessors’ Clerk**

List of Documents used at the meeting:

1. July 30, 2026 meeting agenda.
2. June 25, 2026 draft meeting minutes.
3. Summary to Accountant as detailed in minutes.
4. 2026 fourth motor vehicle commitment to Collector
5. 2023 DOR directives for 2028 revaluation.
6. Draft letter to DOR