

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2025 5:00 pm Virtual Meeting Format
[approved by Select Board 12/17/25]

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

Staff present and Guests (Some repeated in multiple committees): Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Leslie Bracebridge.

Buildings Committee- Frank McGinn, Stephen Dallmus, Jeff Quackenbush, Phil Parker.

Capital Planning- Ellen McKay, George Arvanitis, Nate Longcope.

Energy and Climate Action Committee- Michael DeChiara, Nate Heard, Gail Fleischaker, Greg Day.

Finance Committee- Ajay Khashu/Chair, Susie Mosher, George Arvanitis, Jim Walton, Molly Moss.

School Committee- Anna Heard, Nate Longcope.

Makepeace-O'Neil calls the meeting to order at 5:00 pm

Agenda Review: As posted.

General Business:

1. Committees to call their meetings to order:
 - a. (3) committees with a present quorum called their meetings to order at 5:01 pm.
 - i. Energy and Climate Action Committee, Buildings Committee, Capital Planning.
 - b. Finance Committee with a present quorum called their meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

2. Discussion of clean energy funding opportunities
 - a. Michael DeChiara started the meeting off by discussing the green community state in which the Town is in, and how we can further improve with upcoming clean energy funding opportunities. He stated we are on track to get our Climate Leader Community status which was applied for a few weeks ago and that we are now waiting to hear back on, potentially in January. DeChiara discussed the Decarbonization Roadmap and how it looked into the energy usage of all the municipal buildings in Shutesbury.
 - b. Frank McGinn shared the Town Hall and Library are having an energy audit conducted right now, and he has been working on gathering fuel bills from the past year. He hopes to see the school get an audit done next. Energy Source is the company doing the audit for the Town.
 - c. DeChiara shared two grant opportunities: The Green School Works Grant (due February 13th, 2026) and the Climate Leader Communities Decarbonization

Accelerator Grant Program (due by February 6th, 2026). DeChiara shared that he believes we are highly competitive for the Climate Leader Grant, and it is up to \$1 million dollars. If we do not apply for it February, we could apply for it in August. The Green School Works Grant awards up to \$3 million dollars.

- d. Nate Heard discussed what the grants are looking for and stated they prioritize school districts that serve higher numbers of low-income students. They have a goal of transitioning away from fossil fuels and making our schools healthier. This can be technology such as ground source heat pumps in schools, rather than oil heating systems.
- e. Mosher discussed issues the school is dealing with such as replacing the oil tank, putting in an above ground tank, putting in a 30,000-gallon tank for water for the Fire Department, and paving the parking lot. She stated these were not included in the assessment. She raised a bunch of priority questions.
- f. Farrell asked Jeff Quackenbush if it's realistic to think about ground source heat pumps for a building like the Elementary School. Quackenbush responded by saying he believes the school is a candidate, but experts need to be called upon to help with the process. He stated ground source heat pump systems do not typically produce temperatures as hot as oil burners. He stated that all the mechanical equipment in the mechanical room and potentially the classrooms would most likely need to be replaced. McGinn agreed by saying the Town should hire engineers to tell us what to do.
- g. DeChiara believes we may be looking more at August for the Climate Leader Grant, as we should see what is going to happen with the M.N. Spear Library Building.
- h. Heard shared the Green Schools Grant allows you to use some of the grant for soft costs, like design work. She stated the Town could hire some consultants to do the scoping work for it and give us a quote on what it would cost to install a ground source heat pump at the school. She stated if we get moving on this in a timely manner, we may not need to even consider investing in a new oil system.
- i. DeChiara shared that Mass Clean Energy Center told him, Anna Heard, and Nate Longcope that applicants that use the Mass-Save Comprehensive Building Assessment have better budgeting numbers in terms of the project and therefore are more competitive for the Green Schools Grant.
- j. Rita Farrell and Ajay Khashu both shared in agreement that they do not think that we are ready as a Town to put forth a viable, competitive Green Schools proposal for the February 13th deadline. Farrell stated we should do planning for the school but focus more on the Climate Leader Grant now, for the Town Hall and M.N. Spear Library Building.
- k. Both McGinn and Longcope shared comments that the heating system at the school needs to be addressed, as it has been a drain on the economics of the Town.
- l. Bolton would like to see these grant opportunities be put on a timeline that co-aligns with Capital Planning.

- m. DeChiara raised the question of bonding, and Khashu shared the Finance Committee hopes to host a fiscal summit meeting in either January or February, to figure out what strategies are going to be on the table and available to the Town to fund the FY27 budget.
 - n. The Building Committee will further look at costs, engineering firm opportunities, and grants as the next scope of steps.
 - o. There was agreement that we as a whole need to do more planning, take closer looks at all the different angles and avenues, and host another joint meeting in the future, such as in January.
3. Adjourn the Meeting at 6:18pm:
- a. All committees voted to adjourn their meetings at 6:18 pm.

VOTE: Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 pm, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Farrell: aye, Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Shutesbury Roadmap 11.20.25 FINAL
2. RFP Green School Works Implementation Grants FY26
3. DOER Climate Leaders Communities Decarbonization Accelerator Grant Program
4. DOER Advancing Massachusetts Power Program Manual
5. Mass.gov Climate Leaders Grant-Specialized Stretch Energy Code
6. Clean Energy Funding Opportunities-Winter 2026

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

** A full version of the 12/16/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: https://youtu.be/7b_9Pv7jXcc