

Shutesbury Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
August 26, 2025 Hybrid Meeting Format

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

Staff present and Guests: Hayley Bolton: Town Administrator, Brennan Mailloux, Frank McGinn, Gail Fleischaker, Howard Kinder, Leslie Bracebridge, Henry Geddes, April Stein.

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

Agenda Review: As posted.

General Business:

- I. Approve Meeting Minutes for 8.12.25:
  - a. Eric Stocker made the amendment that in section number IX (9) it should read a \$17/ton loss instead of just \$17 loss.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for 8.12.25 as amended, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

- II. Check in with Gate and Dam Keeper Howard Kinder:
  - a. Howard Kinder shared that there is a new beaver dam at the culvert that is about 3 feet within the top of it. It is also about a foot higher than the lake. He would like to see it removed every Spring and checked a couple times a week. Bolton shared that Brennan has been in contact with Beaver Solutions, but they have been reluctant to put in a deceiver because it would cause backlash from individuals using that area as a point of entry for their canoes and kayaks. Makepeace-O'Neil shared that she believes this could become a health issue due to bacteria and she thinks we should investigate trapping and other more permanent solutions. Howard said this typically costs about \$1,500.00 to trap.
  - b. Kinder shared that the water is murky, stagnant, and down about 5 inches due to dryness. He has never seen it like this before.
  - c. Kinder shared that the vegetation at the dam (northeast end of the spillway) was partly removed from the Highway Department just before the Fourth of July but was never finished. His question was who oversees clearing that vegetation if the Highway Department is not in charge of it? Makepeace-O'Neil shared that Highway is down a member, but maybe the individual that does their mowing could help with the vegetation.
  - d. Lastly, Kinder asked for an update on the town's land deal for the parking spot by the dam because nothing has moved forward with it and next year, he anticipates work will need to be done on the dam. This will require equipment to

be able to get in and out. The space will need to be about 20 feet wide. He thinks we will need to talk to the abutter regarding liability. A potential land deal could work out.

III. Appointment of Janice Stone to the Historical Commission:

- a. Henry Geddes shared that Janice served the commission very well in the past and even helped with running the commission for a while. Henry stated Janice plans to serve temporarily and is keen on seeing the Historical Guideboard Project be completed.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the appointment of Janice Stone to the Historical Commission, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

IV. Appointment of Bert Fernandez to the Historical Commission:

- a. Henry Geddes shared that Bert Fernandez is willing to serve on the committee until the town finds other individuals willing to serve. He would then like to transition to the position of Associate Member, Leslie Bracebridge shared. Leslie also shared that Bert has been working on scanning historical documents and records, putting in 8 plus hours over the last month.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the appointment of Bert Fernandez to the Historical Commission until a replacement can be found, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

V. Review and vote on a revised Town Announcements Policy (#020813)- Web Communications Committee:

- a. Gail Fleischaker shared the reason for this change is that the original language for the policy was vague and has since been updated to guide individuals on what is appropriate to be sent where. She stated Town Announcements are for non-urgent matters such as a meeting, a luncheon, a program, etc., whereas Code Red is for more urgent matters. She also shared that it states that images cannot be inserted nor can attachments be made to Town Announce as Mailchimp will not allow it. She said links can be added to access the images though.

**VOTE:** Stocker makes a motion to approve the revised Town Announcements Policy (#020813), Makepeace-O'Neil seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VI. Review and sign Whelihan proposal for setting the FY 26 tax rate:

- a. Hayley Bolton shared on behalf of the Assessor Search Committee that they are very thrilled with the proposal from Mr. Whelihan. He has agreed in essence to do our tax recap to the tune of \$250. He has also agreed to be a support for our Assessor's Clerk, which they are very excited about. The town would like to

proceed with this agreement for him to work on the tax rate and also in the future to offer him the position of Administrative Assessor when it is better aligned with his retirement schedule.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to accept the Whelihan proposal for setting the FY 26 tax rate and for giving both the Assessor Clerk and Mr. Whelihan password access to Gateway for signatures, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VII. Review and sign Cover Letter and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Agreement to be sent to Temenos to renew the agreement. -Assessors:

- a. Leslie Bracebridge shared there was a negotiated agreement made by Kevin Rudden and Becky Torres in the past, and then there was change in administration and an absence of an Administrative Assessor. Bracebridge found that the expiration for the agreement was FY25, so the Assessors created a new agreement with no expiration date. Bracebridge shared Assessors cannot bill, but the town will need to send out requests for payment to Temenos twice a year. The total is \$850 a year, broken down into two requests for \$425.

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to approve the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Agreement to be sent to Temenos, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil: aye; motion carries.

VIII. Town Administrator Report:

- a. Hayley Bolton shared that the Police Chief Search Committee has representation from Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil from the Select Board, herself as Town Administrator, April Stein from the Personnel Board, Mary Jo Johnson from the Council on Aging, and Chief Gabriel Ting from Amherst for the law enforcement representation. The school has not reached out about representation so Bolton shared she would like the community member representation to increase to two members instead of one. She has already conducted numerous interviews for the community member positions and hopes to wrap those interviews up soon. There have been 10 applicants so far for the committee. Makepeace-O'Neil advised Bolton to locate the Confidentiality Agreement that they used for the Town Administrator Search Committee.
- b. Bolton shared the Police Chief position has been posted as of August 18th. We have received a few quality applicants so far.
- c. Bolton shared she has a meeting with another town's, experienced Town Clerk tomorrow the 27<sup>th</sup> to potentially fill in as our town's Interim Town Clerk until the next Town Election.
- d. Bolton shared one of the members of the Finance Committee is not available on alternating Tuesdays, so the Finance Committee asked the Select Board to switch

from the first and third Tuesdays of every month to the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month.

- e. Bolton shared that the well in the Common connecting to the church was leaking so it had to be repaired. The church was having trouble with the well running dry, but it was due to the leaks in the line. Stocker asked whose well it is, and Makepeace-O'Neil shared that it is the town's water running to the church. The church owns a foot and a half out from the building, so the Highway repaired the leak and the town paid for the repairs up to the church's portion. The church paid for their portion and what they had done inside of the church. Stocker raised the concern of liability and Bolton shared she would reach out to Town Counsel Donna MacNicol for advice.
- f. Bolton shared one final item about the Building Committee and our Town Hall's basement renovations. They expressed interest in a joint meeting with the Select Board to discuss their Charge and clarify some questions around what they oversee in renovations and the budget.

IX. Meeting adjourned at 6:05pm

**VOTE:** Makepeace-O'Neil makes a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 pm, Stocker seconds. Roll call vote Stocker: aye, Makepeace-O'Neil aye; motion carries.

Administrative Actions:

1. Discuss Beaver Dam Issue at a future Select Board Meeting. Invite camp members, Board of Health, and Conservation Commission. Mailloux to look into trapping options.
2. Schedule a Select Board meeting for September 4<sup>th</sup> at 4pm to go over Police Chief Search Committee appointments.
3. Schedule Select Board meetings for September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. October's will be scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.
4. Bolton and Mailloux to send out our request for payments twice a year to Temenos.
5. The Board to discuss the town's parking spot by the lake and a potential purchase of the land.
6. Bolton to check with Town Counsel about the legal aspects of the Town supplying water to the church.
7. Bolton to schedule a joint meeting with the Building Committee sometime in October.
8. Bolton to locate the Town Administrator Search Committee Confidentiality Agreement.

Document and Other Items Used at the Meeting:

1. Meeting Minutes Draft for 8.12.25.
2. Appointment Letter for Bert Fernandez
3. Appointment Letter for Janice Stone

4. Revised Town Announcements Policy Draft (#020813)
5. Whelihan Proposal Agreement for setting the tax rate
6. Cover Letter and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Agreement

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

\*\* A full version of the 8/26/25 SB meeting is available to view on the Town of Shutesbury's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfA3gWIG9jQ>

