Web Communication Committee – Minutes for September 12, 2018

Present: Jamie Malcolm Brown, Chair, Fred Steinberg, Gail Fleischaker, and Susie Mosher

Absent: Michael DeChiara, Stephen Grettenberg. Dan Bilodeau was not able to come to observe

Meeting began at 6:05 pm

Minutes of July 18, 2018 meeting approved with some corrections from Fred Steinberg.

The Web Committee will have a space at Celebrate Shutesbury on September 15, 2018. Susie will set up a Web Committee display with other Town Government boards (Board of Health, Voter Registration, Select Board) using her lap top open to the town website. She will solicit feedback about the website and answer questions.

Jamie has not had time this summer to work on committee tag fix – redirecting the program away from sending searches to the taxonomy pages. He will try to get to this in the fall.

Susie said she is working on the My Town Government (MTG). The initial round of questions from the web committee were answered. 1. There is archiving on the MTG. Fred speculated in an email related to the question, "A reasonable approach might be to keep our historical records on Shutesbury.org and add to them tin the future by exporting new stuff from MTG."

 2. As far as proprietary concerns, Joshua Smith, the creator of MTG, "…has no plans to ever stop providing the service, and in the event that something happened to me, I've written up a transition plan in my estate to ensure continuity of the service."

3. Yes citizens can receive notifications of meetings.

Three more questions were raised at this meeting: 1) Is the MTG a secure website (https//:)? Because MTG would be a link on our town web page, the committee wants the link to be secure. 2) Is there a way to export all archived data from MTG easily? And 3) How is the data backed up? Is there a recovery plan for an accidental deletion? Susie will follow up on these questions.

Gail Fleischaker spent a lot of time checking out the web pages and how the web site works for the citizen users looking for information. She gave us a detailed list of the positives and negatives she found.

The consistent righthand sidebar is very helpful and user friendly. Now would be a good time to have committees review and redesign the left-hand side of main body of their page to eliminate any duplication or broken links because some of the information is provided in a more updated and accurate format on the right side.

The Finance committee wants to maintain a list of minutes that are by FY calendar, not calendar year. We discussed a way to implement that using a link to bring up a FY by date.

The Drupal search option is less direct than the drop-down menu navigating. The problem with the taxonomy coming up when the search is for a committee or board needs to be fixed. Once this is done, the search option needs to be retested. The drop-down menus work well as far as getting the user to the information. A horizontal list will be easier to click on.

We are aware that the use of the web pages and contacts by committees are still quite uneven. This creates a problem if the information on a web page becomes outdated and stale or if a citizen uses the email address from the contact list but gets no response. One way to check if committees are monitoring their email is to send a message once a year, "if you get this message, please reply."

At the All Boards meeting this fall (now scheduled for Tuesday, November 13) we can reinforce the committees' awareness and purpose of the righthand sidebar. We can let them know broken links will be taken off the left side and encourage them to update their pages.

This led to a discussion about what tasks the web committee has for maintaining, updating and creating on our town website. Each year there are "housekeeping' tasks such as updating committee member changes and posting annual lists. At other times there are minutes to post, new committees to add, new committee members that need help.   Jamie has spent a lot of time updating to Drupal 8 and creating the search function has fallen almost entirely on him. Fred offered that the maintenance and managing the web and the email contacts are too onerous for volunteers. He suggested it is time to pay someone to do the work. Susie said it would be important for web committee members to list all the tasks we do now, or need to be done, that might be consolidated into proposal for a hired person's position.

We scheduled the next meeting for October 17 at 6 pm. Members should bring the list of tasks that concern managing and maintaining the web.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Mosher