

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
2_15_2023	5:00 PM EST	On Line Zoom Meeting
Facilitator	Gayle Huntress	
Minutes keeper	Jim Hemingway	
Committee Attendees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gayle Huntress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hemingway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Schmidt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Martin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	
Other		
Approved minutes January 18, 2023		

Hut Report: Graeme met with Jamrog, the Town’s HVAC consultant, very recently to fix the damage caused by mice nesting in one of the 2 mini-splits/air handling units. Mice had chewed through wires that control the air louvers. The Jamrog tech said he would order replacement parts and that they would schedule another visit when they had them in hand. Graeme has also put eco-friendly mice bait in both the hut and the generator housing next to the hut even though there was no sign of their presence there at that time. Jamrog also said that annual maintenance on the air handling equipment didn’t seem to be necessary considering how clean the screens and filters were at this time, thanks to Graeme’s careful maintenance of the hut. Graeme is also interested in monitoring our electric power consumption over time to see how efficiently our air handling equipment (heating and cooling) is performing. Graeme will look into purchasing the devices needed to monitor our power consumption in the hut in a much more precise way than we are currently able to do.

SHELD met with Crocker today at the hut which allowed Crocker to remove the last of their equipment which they used during their tenure with ShutesburyNET.

Lengthy discussion about finding or recommending a reliable UPS for our subscribers that could provide backup power for a 24 or a 48 hour period during a power outage. Graeme thought finding a device that provided 117 VAC would be best rather than a 12 volt DC device similar to the Cyberpower units that some of our subscribers chose to purchase during our installation phase over 3 years ago. A 117 VAC device would have the advantage of providing power to both the ONT and the router during a power outage. But most 117 VAC UPS devices are designed to put out a burst of power for a short period of time when the power fails but not a small amount of power for an extended period of time which makes finding a good one that works well over a 24 to 48 hour period a bit of a challenge. The other problem is that the MLP cannot, by law, recommend the purchase of specific devices including UPS devices, and so any appropriate recommendations would have to be done by a third party. And so that would make such an investigation not all that easy to administer.

Maintenance and Service Report. Gayle currently has \$17,648 in service invoices that came from repair work done as a result of the snow/ice weather event a short time ago. She expects that there will be more invoices to come once all of the service problems from this storm are sorted out. The MLP has a \$10,000 deductible with its current insurance policy. In the future we will need to get the insurance company to send out an adjuster to survey the damage as soon as possible after such a weather event, and we will need to provide better photo documentation of the storm damage to the adjuster and the insurance company. But for a claim this relatively small this time, the lack of documentation should not be a problem.

Financial Report: MLP fees collected to date in this fiscal year amount to approximately \$250K. There is currently around \$312K left in our annual budget.

Gayle will move ahead with ordering safety vests and some clothing with our logo on it for the five of us. Funds to pay for these items will be coming from a private donation to the MLP and not from our subscribers or tax dollars.

Lengthy discussion about router replacement. There was general agreement that we should use the Calix Gigaspire U4 and U6 devices when we decide to replace the Linksys EA7300 routers we have provided and have continued to provide for our subscribers. We will be able to buy the U4 and U6 units directly from Calix. But when should we make or offer such a replacement? The Gigaspire U6 router currently costs \$146.30 and installation of these routers would bring the cost per subscriber up to approximately \$200. In addition there is also the monthly cost, currently \$2.38 per month per customer, that would enable our subscribers to receive a much more detailed insight into how their internet service was working inside of their homes should any problem occur, since Command IQ software would be included with this package. Both Calix and SHELD feel that this upgrade, significant as it is, would reduce truck rolls/service calls and improve subscriber's satisfaction with ShutesburyNET internet and phone service. Service calls might also be significantly reduced due to the increased ability of being able to diagnose internet and phone problems remotely within the subscriber's home with this upgraded service. And so would this upgrade be worth the additional cost? Will the Gigaspire U6 router, which uses the latest WiFi 6 protocols, provide better coverage within the home? Even though few if any of our subscribers have WiFi 6 savvy devices which could take advantage of the U6, would this make a significant performance difference? Would WiFi calling be significantly improved by this Calix upgrade? Many questions were raised, few of which had good answers at this stage of the discussion which will be an ongoing one. Gayle offered to set up a presentation of the Calix hardware and their support network during our April meeting with a sales representative from Calix. Ultimately the additional cost of this possibility would have to be borne by our subscribers in one way or another.

Gayle gave a presentation of our FY24 fiscal budget which will be presented to the Finance Committee in March and at our Annual Town Meeting in May. Motion to accept this MLP budget for FY 24 was offered by Sephton, seconded by Schmidt. Vote 3-0 in favor – Hemingway, Aye; Sephton, Aye; Schmidt, Aye.

Gayle spoke briefly about her discussion with the Shutesbury Web Committee about how to redesign the FAQ section for ShutesburyNET in the town's web page. The FAQ section contains over 50 questions and can be difficult to navigate. She hopes to add a localized search function that might make it easier to find answers to many commonly asked questions.

A recent WiredWest survey of all the towns who have built their broadband networks recently revealed that ShutesburyNET has the lowest subscriber rates by \$10 in addition to having the highest take rate of any of the towns included in the survey. All of us were surprised to find out that some of the towns in the survey have signed an unusually long 10 year contract with Westfield.

At the end of January ShutesburyNET had 9 delinquent bill payers according to SHELD. All of these subscribers had not responded to SHELD's invoices since August, 2022. SHELD made several attempts to reach all of them via email, phone calls and mailed letters. All of these subscribers called within a few days of service termination to pay their bills and got their service restored with SHELD, their new provider.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.