

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
4_19_2023	5:00 PM DST	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 March 15, 2023		

Hut Report – the hut now supports a new electronic metering system thanks to Graeme’s recent installation which records line voltage variations and surges as well as power consumption. Already some unexpected results have shown up. Graeme has noticed that the power consumption of the equipment in the racks has been mysteriously dropping from 1500 watts to 1050 watts for short, irregular durations. He will consult with SHELD to try and determine whether this is an indication of some sort of problem with the power supplies that provide power to all of the critical equipment that connects all of us in Shutesbury to our fiber network. Jamrog will fix one of our mini splits that controls the temperature within the hut which died due to a power surge that took place during the last big storm.

Storm damage from the second snow/ice storm during March now totals \$28,623.64, most of which was labor (\$27K). We received over \$7,000 from the insurance company for the storm damage claim from the first snow/ice storm in February.

Since then Jim and Shutesbury’s Tree Warden, Don Wakoluk, toured all of the roads, both paved and unpaved, in town and created a list of problem trees that Don will submit to National Grid for trimming and removal.

Gayle’s upcoming article in the next Our Town newsletter will be mostly about the storm damage this winter, and she will ask all of our subscribers to pay particular attention to trees and branches that could cause future problems on their property if not taken care of as soon as possible. She will also warn Shutesbury residents that their driveways must be plowed before SHELD service trucks can or will make any service calls to their homes. During the last storm in March, SHELD made 61 service calls in Shutesbury, 25 of which required reattachments of the fiber cables to our subscriber’s homes, fiber cables that did not break but were dislodged by falling branches. Hence the importance of preventative maintenance by all of our subscribers to help prevent damage from future storms. February and March were very costly months for the Shutesbury MLP; Wendell also suffered that same sort of storm damage but Leverett was spared. Fortunately, our two recent claims for storm damage are likely not to affect our insurance rates at least for the time being.

Financial Report: Gayle met with the Shutesbury FinCom in March and presented our budget for the upcoming FY24 fiscal year. Our retained earnings for FY 2022 will go into the 2024 fiscal year emergency reserve once voters approve this move which will require a warrant article at an upcoming town meeting. Even after the debt payment this month we will see an operational surplus of over \$100K, barring any other unforeseen expenses.

MLP FEES	DEBIT	BALANCE
\$467,089.06	\$237,174.00	\$229,915.06

Lengthy discussion about the possibility of updating our ShutesburyNet website. Google analytics indicates that we currently get 283 site visits per month on average to the ShutesburyNet section in the Town's web page. There was a big surge/spike last September, however, during the transition period from Crocker to SHELD. Should we consider a website upgrade utilizing WordPress which would take the form of a separate web page altogether since WordPress is not internally compatible with Drupal, which is the software used to power the Town's website? Gayle checked into the costs of creating such a separate site, and estimates ranged from \$2K for a low-experience freelancer to \$30K using a professional firm. There would be hosting fees from about \$50 to \$300 per month.. Gayle noted that we have not had any complaints about our current Town-hosted web page but it has limited text editing capability to make it look cleaner and more searchable. Fortunately, the recent Drupal upgrade the town made a few weeks ago does allow for separate searches within the ShutesburyNet web page which will make our FAQ section a lot easier to navigate for those who have specific search questions to ask. Discussion concluded with the thought that we should stick with what we currently have on the Town's website rather than shoulder the expense of creating a separate website for the Shutesbury MLP.

The router question came up for discussion once again. Gayle asked SHELD to purchase another 20 Linksys EA7300 routers which may turn out to be the last ones we will be able to get. When they become unavailable, we will, most likely, turn to the Linksys EA7500 router which looks the same as the 7300 and has some modest improvements. Would a town-wide upgrade to the Calix U6 Gigaspire and the managed service that comes with it be worth the additional cost? The cost of the new U6 routers is one thing, but added to that would be the cost of the managed service that comes with this router which amounts to \$24K per year and cannot be separated from the purchase and installation of the U6 routers. Gayle looked into how many of our monthly service calls/truck rolls are due to problems with the Linksys routers, and these calls only amount to 2-3 calls/truck rolls per month. In other words, the cost of these service calls is far less than the cost of a town wide upgrade to the U6 router which, apart from the cost of the U6 router and the one-time installation costs, would be far less than the \$24,000 we would have to spend on Calix's CMS, their customer management service. There are also other considerations which could make future contractual negotiations with SHELD and Calix somewhat problematic because the use of the U6 router would bind us to both in ways that would be difficult to break or change. One of the reasons why our monthly subscriber rate is the

lowest of all the towns who built their own fiber networks is because we do not include a Calix run customer management service similar to the one that Westfield now employs in their Nokia/SmartRG router package which includes SmartRG's version of a managed router service. The only other town that has no customer management service with their subscribers is Leverett, which has, among other things, a much larger budget for managing their service calls. We spend on average about \$10,000 per year for service calls/truck rolls unless we have some winter storms like the two we have had recently. Graeme especially likes the possibility of using the U6 router because, among other things, it utilizes a more advanced WiFi 6 protocol, but there are a number of consumer routers existing and future that will also embrace WiFi 6. It was generally agreed that the life expectancy of any router would be about 7 years. We are likely to continue this ongoing debate about routers well into the future.

Gayle proposed a group photo of the Shutesbury MLP fab 4 plus Gayle herself with all of us dressed to the hilt in our new ShutesburyMLP swag that was paid for by a contribution of \$1,500 to the MLP from Asha's company via a private donation several years ago. Asha was a former Broadband Committee member who moved some time ago from Shutesbury to the Boston area. And so no public tax dollars or subscriber fees were used to purchase the safety vests or the logo swag that was gifted to the MLP team.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35pm.