

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
6_21_2023	5:00 PM DST	On Line Zoom Meeting
Facilitator	Gayle Huntress	
Minutes keeper	Jim Hemingway	
Committee Attendees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gayle Huntress Steve Schmidt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hemingway Craig Martin
Other		
Approved minutes May 25 and June 6, 2023		

Town Hall utility pole replacement saga – Gayle was not notified in advance, and was not surprised about that, given the fact that she has never been notified by the Utility companies about such matters especially when they involve our fiber network on their poles. During the current major pole replacement project along the Leverett/Shutesbury road and Wendell road, there was a power glitch/temporary outage that took place 6/19/23 that resulted in a temporary loss of service for some of our subscribers. Apart from that in the hut, another Eltek power supply module failure was found yesterday by Lee Masters from SHELD which probably happened during the time when this temporary outage took place. Graeme also noted some voltage sags as well during this time when National Grid has been replacing a number of poles in our town. Lee will be overseeing the transfer of our fiber cables from the old to all of the new poles in the near future. Gayle will confer with Lee and Bobby Liswell at SHELD about when this transfer of our fiber to the new poles will be taking place.

Graeme wants to install a Gigaspire router in the hut to replace the Linksys one which he hopes could be included as a part of the upcoming hut equipment review that SHELD will be making in the near future.

Jamrog has not fixed the heat pump in the hut, and so we are still running on just one heat pump at the present time. Gayle will submit the invoices she has received for the repairs that Jamrog has done to the town for reimbursement, for our insurance doesn't cover this type of loss which took place at the same time the Fire Department lost one of their heat pumps during the power outages brought on by the winter storms this year.

Who is responsible for the tree work necessary to protect our fiber on private land that is strung from the utility poles to our subscriber's homes? We really can't do preventative maintenance on trees located on private property. SHELD will remediate small tree work (no more than 4 inches), during a repair or new installation but we can't do anything more than that to prevent future outages. Gayle will re-emphasize the importance and responsibility of our subscribers in the Our Town newsletter and in other ways to monitor and take care of such possible problems on their land with problem trees and limbs that could cause a disruption of their broadband service.

Gayle has not yet received any notes or information from SHELD about hut equipment upgrades that they would like to recommend.

Graeme and Jim do wind up doing some occasional service calls for issues that SHELD is not responsible for taking care of. We will continue to keep up this personal touch as an ad hoc service and will continue to think of long-term plans for how to offer personal service.

Gayle will have a full financial report in July for the FY23 fiscal year at our next meeting. We will again have at least \$120K in retained earnings as in past years.

The \$250 reconnection fee about which we have debated in the past seems to be working fine – no complaints so far about it, no need to make any changes. Less than 10 people are currently using our seasonal disconnect fee.

Gayle is still working on the IRU with New Salem over the legalities concerning their wish to connect to CrownCastle on Pratt Corner Road in Shutesbury through our fiber network much like Leverett currently does.

Last Tuesday Digital Equity Summit which Gayle attended – 150 in attendance, \$42.5 billion is currently available from the Feds nationwide. Allocation summary: first in line is support for unserved communities. Gayle would like to hire a professional consultant to figure out what our needs are which could include providing fiber to currently unconnected homes, educational seminars for those who need it in our town, for new or upgraded internet equipment (like providing Chromebooks) for eligible households and eligibility for federal financial support for internet service for those who qualify. But we can't apply for any of this funding until we can identify our local needs. We will apply with MBI for a professional consultant that MBI would pay for with funds that they currently have for such efforts. Becky Torres, our Town Administrator, is the town official who needs to write a letter to the MBI to apply for this funding on behalf of the Town of Shutesbury. Gayle has requested this.

We should be getting \$10K from the CAF-2 funding program sometime during the FY24 Fiscal year, the first of ten similar installments that should continue for the next 10 years. Westfield Gas & Electric is in charge of this program which can now move forward because the broadband construction efforts in unserved and underserved communities in Western Massachusetts during the last 10 years is now complete.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.