

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
03_20_2024	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 Craig Martin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	
Other		
Approved minutes February 23, 2024		

Hut report: No significant news to report. There was a minor problem with the numbered combination buttons on the door lock freezing up due to unusually bad weather, but this was the first time it has ever happened. Gayle and Graeme will locate the manual for the lock to see if there are any solutions offered by the manufacturer for this problem.

Graeme recently talked to a tech at the ATT cell tower just off of Wendell Road who confirmed that ATT is still the only provider on the tower.

Graeme thinks that the fiber splitter for FSA-04 by the State Park beach at the northern end of Lake Wyola should remain on a separate pole because of the difficulty in moving the splitter box over to the new three phase pole. He also feels that it would be more physically secure if left where it presently is. Gayle will check with Verizon and SHELD to see if this two pole solution is possible.

Maintenance and Service – 43 service tickets last month, little change from the previous months. There was a brief discussion of the problems some of our subscribers have been having with ATA devices, which are currently used by about a dozen subscribers to provide them with a second phone line. There have been some complaints about them, for they often have to be manually reset after a power outage.

Finances: We are still \$67K in the black, but we do have some big expenses coming up. Gayle is expecting the cost of moving our fiber over to the new 3 phase poles to be over \$100,000, final amount unknown. The transfer process is ongoing; many of the poles on Locks Pond Road and Lake Shore drive have yet to be taken care of.

Graeme and Steve have submitted the necessary paperwork to put them both on the upcoming Annual Town Meeting ballot this year. The Town Clerk has approved their submissions for an upcoming 2 year term (Graeme) and a three year term (Steve). Gayle plans to put in a marketing push to look for some new MLP members should Graeme retire in two years if re-elected this spring.

Gayle was able to find a new insurance policy through MIIA that comes with a 15K deductible coupled with a modest increase in the cost of the policy. The older policy had a 10K deductible.

Yesterday, Gayle met with SHELD and others in So. Hadley yesterday to attend a promotional meeting that featured the newest and latest technology from Calix. One of the items of interest was a router that can also broadcast a local WiFi signal that would enable better local coverage for users outside of the immediate household, a feature that might be useful for suburban installations but not of much use to rural Shutesbury subscribers. Calix also now has a new Gigaspire router called the U10X which supposedly provides better coverage. This WiFi 6 router is currently available. All of these new router products come with management. Some of these new managed routers might be particularly useful in public places and buildings, like our Town Hall, Library and School.

Graeme was asked by the library folks for advice for how and where to install approximately a dozen ethernet ports in and around the new library, all of which will be wired with CAT 6 cable. Graeme felt that one of the new Calix routers plus 2 MESH extenders would give them the coverage they would need in the new building and possibly an additional one made specifically for outdoor use.

Digital Equity Update: MBI has set aside \$70K for the Shutesbury MLP providing we meet certain criteria. Gayle will initiate this process which, with the help of FRCOG, would allow us to receive and use up to \$100,000 for improvements to our fiber network. Presently there is no indication of what the funds can and will be used for, but nevertheless the money will be there once the research process is completed due to the reserved funds. There are and will be lots of steps to follow in order to claim this award.

There have been some changes to the fees stated in the IRU the Shutesbury MLP has with New Salem for a dark fiber connection. Gayle found a math error in the calculations. Apart from the 10 year fee which New Salem will pay up front for \$13,920 for the use of dark fiber to provide them with a CrownCastle connection, there is also a yearly maintenance fee which was miscalculated. It should be \$50 times 5.8 – the number of miles between the substation on Pratt Corner Road and the New Salem town line on Cooleyville Road and not \$50 per month, resulting in a drop in income from \$600 to \$290 a year. This income will be a one time event and not spread out over 10 years. The MLP voted to approve this change – 3-0... Hemingway, aye; Sephton aye, Schmidt, aye.

As predicted, the ACP \$30 a month support benefit that 21 low income subscribers are currently receiving does run out at the end of March, 2024. Gayle proposed supporting ACP households through the end of this fiscal year on July 1st at which time the MLP will decide what to do next. Gayle also looked into the legality of our being able to provide these subsidies which we can do indirectly through SHELD. They have been handling the administration of this subsidy up to now and will continue to do so by simply deducting \$30 from the MLP fee they send us for these 21 households. And so this three month subsidy will cost the MLP \$1890 up to

July 1, 2024. The MLP voted to support this proposal by Gayle – 3-0 – Hemingway, aye; Sephton, aye; Schmidt, aye.

Meeting concluded at 6:23pm.