

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
06_19_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"/> Steve Schmidt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hemingway Craig Martin
Other		
Approved minutes May 15, 2024		

The ‘All Boards Meeting’ last week, which Gayle and Graeme attended, included an announcement that videos of all future department meetings would automatically be posted on YouTube. A reminder that any vote the MLP takes would have to be a roll call one rather than a simple raising of hands, even for simple items like approvals of minutes.

Hut Report: Gayle met with the technician from PV&E a short time ago about the repair to the HVAC units, particularly HVAC #2. The technician installed surge protectors for both units as well as some new louvers that the mice had damaged some time ago. The technician felt that the recent problem with HVAC #2 that caused it to stop working was most likely due to the mice damage to the wiring inside this unit, and, coupled with the new surge protectors, he felt that the chances were pretty good that all the many problems we have been having for some time now were fixed. Furthermore, he went on to check the error codes stored within each unit and determined that no additional electronic problems were indicated. He was pleased that we had two identical units, one of which would always serve as a backup, and felt that this arrangement would be now much more dependable considering the problems that we have been having with them both in recent years.

Hut issue #2 – We continue to have problems with the lock on the hut’s metal door. When Lee Masters from SHELd arrived last week to get into the hut, the lock on the door was jammed. Fortunately, the Town Hall was open and Becky was able to provide him with the key to open the door manually. Since then, Graeme has extensively tested the lock on the door and has added some padding to the door that would help cushion it when it is closed that may turn out to fix the problem. There was a lengthy discussion how to provide the door key should technicians from SHELd need to get into the hut at times when the Town Hall was closed. Gayle will ponder this problem and provide the MLP with a solution before our next meeting.

Very few service calls last month – SHELd reports that there were only 25 service/tech calls, most of which had to do with billing issues. The new Salem Crown Castle connection through Shutesbury was completed a week or so ago. Lee Masters met with a tech from Westfield to complete this arrangement that will provide New Salem with a new Crown Castle connection to

the World Wide Web. This connection was made despite the very short notice that Westfield gave us to obtain access to our hut. Gayle felt that any such future access will only be granted if she or the MLP are given notice of at least 4 days in advance. Only SHELd can do maintenance work on the fiber equipment in the hut.

New Salem wishes to pay for the new Crown Castle connection that will be in place for the next 10 years all in one lump sum. What followed was a lengthy discussion as to whether this payment from New Salem be received and processed in FY24 or FY25. This discussion included another source of income that the MLP is about to receive, namely \$44,396 from CAF II grant funding. Steve felt that it would be best if both payments – CAF II and New Salem – were made during the current fiscal year since it will take a Town Meeting vote to enable the MLP to spend both as it wishes. Consequently, Gayle will deposit both checks by the end of this month in our current account which will mean that both income sources will become a part of the retained earnings for FY24.

Gayle estimates that the cost of moving our fiber from the old poles to the new three phase ones will cost the MLP approximately \$109K, which will come from the \$136K that we set aside for repairs during FY24, an allotment that was voted on and approved by Shutesbury voters at the Special Town Meeting earlier this year. Steve and Gayle will go over the finances later this month before our next meeting when they will both have a better idea of what these costs will actually turn out to be.

The Leverett/Shutesbury digital equity survey has been sent out to everyone in both towns. The NextDoor site which tracks clicks has had over 400 clicks, but only about half of those resulted in a completed survey. Paper surveys will be sent out by mail to those who do not have an internet connection.

Collins Electric has become the new on-call service provider for Shutesbury, a change which Gayle feels is a fortunate move since Collins is more local to us than Sertex, though both are likely to be involved in our future service needs. Up to now, Collins Electric has been working with Leverett for many years.

Gayle reports that the new 585 Wendell Road fiber connection is now completed at least up to the final pole. National Grid installed 7 new poles to facilitate this connection on Wendell Road.

Our dwindling supply of replacement Linksys routers may become a more pressing issue. The results from the Digital Equity survey will factor into what choices we may have to make concerning managed vs. unmanaged routers.

Concerning tree work/pruning on drops from the poles to our subscriber's homes, a local homeowner wants us to ask SHELd to disconnect then reconnect the fiber line to their home so that such tree pruning can be done more easily. But who should pay for this? The MLP thought that this should be the responsibility of whoever was doing the tree work. Any contractor hired to perform such work by an individual homeowner or by a utility company is and should be

responsible for any damage to our fiber connection. The MLP voted on this issue – vote was 3-0 (Hemingway, aye; Schmidt, aye and Sephton aye) for making any damage done to our fiber network the responsibility of whoever was doing the work. This will become a new addition to our policy, and Gayle will add this decision to the description of our policies in the broadband manual and distribute it to SHELD so they are aware of it.

Crown Castle announced that they would be performing maintenance on their network on July 11th beginning at midnight, at which point our backup connection with MBI will come into play. This will be a good test of our backup arrangement with MBI.

Gayle was pleased to announce that she won the baking competition at the All Boards Meeting last week and was awarded two boxes of freshly picked strawberries as a prize even though she confessed that the bars she brought were made by her partner since she is a terrible baker. This was followed by a lengthy discussion of the various virtues of how meetings were to be staged in the future. The MLP is very much in favor of conducting them on-line as we have for some time now. For other departments, hybrid meetings were an attractive option. We favor remote meetings which was generally agreed to by most who were in attendance at the All Boards meeting last week.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.