

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
11_20_2024	5:00pm EST	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 October 16, 2024		

Hut Report: Hut Temps are not quite cool enough at this time to switch over to Winter Mode. The hut normally maintains a temperature at around 68 degrees F. Even during the winter months, it has not been necessary up to now to provide any heat in the hut to keep the equipment and especially the batteries in the UPS warm enough.

In October 53 tickets were generated, an unusually large spike over average of about 43 tickets. 6 tickets were from one subscriber who couldn't log into a secure website because our ISP was not properly whitelisted with this website. Among the 53 tickets there were about 13 actual service problems in the mix, along with about 22 internet and router problems.

The Shutesbury Library plans on purchasing a managed router for their use in their new facility. Currently there are currently 5 Gigaspire U6 routers in use in Shutesbury. The three MLP members are using them on a trial basis along with two others. Graeme pointed out that a majority of router manufacturers now suggest rebooting one's router once a month which would refresh its cache and, in some cases, increase its performance.

The Shutesbury MLP's digital equity grant has been approved by the MBI (Massachusetts Broadband Institute). More paperwork will be necessary for us to receive the proceeds from this grant, which in total at the present time amounts to about \$57,000. There is a list of some specific uses for which monies from the grant can be used in our Digital Equity plan already submitted to the MBI. Most of these uses would be for one-time costs, not recurring ones.

Graeme has been volunteering with Village Neighbors for tech assist days to provide support for those in the 4 town area (Leverett, Shutesbury, New Salem and Wendell) who need help with internet based issues. Such support, however, can be a challenge to administer, but Village Neighbors is hoping to find a way that such tech support can be provided to those who are living in the 4 town area which could be staged, perhaps, at the local libraries in each of the towns. The MLP's support for broadband related tech issues is, however, limited to what we and Netegrity can provide for the equipment we have installed in the homes of our subscribers.

Whether the use of managed routers could provide an additional level of tech support of the sort that Village Neighbors is looking for is hard to predict at this time.

MLP accounting – we have \$18,825 currently in our account. Gayle has been trying to find a way to get the \$188,000 the MLP spent on transferring our fiber network over to the new three-phase poles reimbursed since this was a cost imposed on the MLP by National Grid. She was hoping Jo Comerford, our State Senator, could find a way to use earmarks to help cover this significant cost. After consulting with a number of possible avenues of support without much luck, Gayle brought the issue up with Elena Cohen, Jo Comerford's district manager, who explained to Gayle that Shutesbury had received \$200,000 a few years ago in the form of an earmark grant for the school roof, which turns out to be proportionally more than other towns the size of Shutesbury have received in earmark support. And so it is very unlikely we will be reimbursed for this most unexpected cost at any time in the future.

Coming up in the months to come, Gayle will be working on our upcoming FY26 budget as well as the paperwork involved with the digital equity grant. She will also be working on updating the Broadband Manual in addition to taking a preliminary look at what costs are likely to increase as we begin to discuss the upcoming ISP contract renewal process with SHELd. Our current contract with SHELd expires August, 2025.

Concerning the FY26 budget, Steve suggested removing the \$5K line. He would also like to know more about what SHELd has to say about those costs that are likely to increase as we begin our contract negotiations with SHELd. Maintenance costs are likely to rise in the future along with repair costs.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55pm.