

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
4_15_2026	5:00pm EDT	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 18, 2026		

Hut Report: Problems with the HVAC units continue. The north unit is still leaking coolant. The south unit appears to work reliably when it is set to cooling mode. Both units have a tendency to shut down intermittently when they are set to auto mode. We need to replace the north unit should it fail completely. We will replace the north unit with a Mitsubitshi one, which are readily available and reasonably priced.

No outages reported during the severe thunderstorm we had last night.

Graeme is trying to determine the R value of the walls and ceiling of the hut in hopes that we can install some sort of insulation to reduce our electric consumption. He estimates that the R value of the hut is less than 5 which is about what one would expect of a building that is made of concrete. It might be possible to insulate the outside of the hut in some way rather than inside where there is little room for insulating materials to be installed.

Gayle and Graeme are planning on working on creating a maintenance review plan that will help the MLP manage the maintenance in the hut once he retires from the MLP this coming July.

Gayle and Graeme recently installed a new router, a Netgear one, at the Shutesbury Athletic Club. They plan on extending the WiFi coverage to the recreation room area once an ethernet cable is checked for continuity and quality that could be used to connect the Netgear router to an external MESH or remote unit.

33 service tickets in March, about average. Nothing unusual to report. The MLP's current financial balance is \$152,096. There is a debt payment of approximately \$97,000 that will come out of this total balance at the end of April. The repair bill for the recent damage to our fiber on January Hills Road amounted to \$2,152, much less than expected. Sertex did the repair. However, this repair invoice does not include the cost of the 1,000 feet of fiber cable that was used in this repair.

Lee Masters from SHELD has taken a look at the surplus fiber cable leftover from our network installation 7 years ago and is interested in our offer to give it to him and SHELD. But he is not sure how to transport the 20 or so wooden reels of fiber, some very large, from where they are currently stored behind the Shutesbury Highway Department's garage and move them all to South Hadley. But finding a new home for all of this leftover fiber is not that simple, due to state regulations. Gayle needs to find a way to determine the value for the cable. If it is less than \$10,000 Mass General Law allows for it to be donated and avoid the bidding process to locate a buyer. She will ask around for a way to determine the depreciated value of the fiber. Graeme doesn't think the fiber we have has a value anywhere close to \$10,000, but nevertheless that value has to be determined before we can give it away. Gayle proposed a draft policy that the MLP voted on that would allow the MLP to give unwanted surplus material to other non-profit organizations, providing the value of this surplus material does not exceed \$10,000. Vote was 3-0, pass.

Router Wars continued: the FCC recently proclaimed that only routers made in the USA could be sold and used by consumers in the USA. Unfortunately, there are no router manufacturers in the USA with the exception of those made by Starlink which can only be used with that network. So what do we do? Are there any current routers available for sale that would be legitimate for us to purchase and give to our subscribers? There is much uncertainty about what we can do to purchase and give replacement routers to our subscribers especially during the MBI grant period, the funds for which will come to an end by the end of August 2026. Here are two links that discuss this issue at length:

<https://www.cnet.com/home/internet/fccs-foreign-made-router-ban-one-popular-brand-just-got-the-first-exemption/>

<https://www.netgear.com/letter-from-the-ceo-fcc-conditional-approval/>

Gayle will ask both SHELD and MBI for their advice on this turn of events. She wonders whether there are any other MLPs currently contemplating a similar move with router replacement. Netgear claims to have met this new FCC criterion. Others will have to follow, or be shut out of the US market. But can they be approved in time for our project before the grant timeline runs out?

Meeting adjourned at 6pm.