

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
3_18_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 February 18, 2026		

Much damage was done to our fiber network when an Eversource pole was taken down in a wind storm in the neighborhood of January Hills Road, March 16th. 1000' of fiber cable had to be replaced, but not that many of our subscribers were affected because January Hills is located at the outer edge of our network. Gayle authorized the down-sizing of the replacement cable fro 96 to 24 fiber strands. Gayle's estimate for the cost of this repair is around \$12,000, which is not covered by insurance, for our deductible is \$25,000. All in all, we have been lucky this year not to have that much storm damage even though the winter has been more severe than the more recent ones.

Gayle wants to give SHELd our large stockpile of backup or left-over fiber that is currently on a number of wooden spools behind the town garage. She wants to do this before the fiber become a landfill problem once the wooden spools, being exposed to the elements, begin to rot significantly. Not sure who else would be interested if SHELd doesn't want our surplus fiber left over from the installation of our network many years ago. Lee Masters from SHELd will take a look at our spare fiber inventory in the next few weeks. Gayle will check on how to legally transfer it to another municipality.

Much drama at the Hut recently. The overheat alarm went off during the brief hot spell we had a week or so ago. Graeme investigated and found that the north heat pump wasn't working, and so he fired up the south heat pump which had been turned off and was not being used. Not long after, the smoke detector in the hut triggered for unknown reasons. When Graeme investigated and punched the PIN code into the SimplySafe network, the alarm shut off, a function of the system. The fire department was called and was present during this disturbance. Not wanting to trust the smoke detector after this false alarm, Graeme installed a replacement smoke detector. Graeme and Lennie from the Fire Department both thought it would be a good idea to install two smoke detectors and adjust SimpliSafe not to make any emergency calls unless both detectors sounded off simultaneously. Graeme also wants to install a 5 watt light inside the hut so that the existing camera could actually see something when accessed remotely. The camera has some infrared capability, but can't see much if there is no light source in the hut.

Gayle talked to Lennie about the smoke detector network in the Town Hall which may be upgraded sometime this year. The Hut will, she hopes, be included in this upgrade.

And so one of the Daikin Heat Pumps had totally failed, namely the north one. Graeme met with PVE, our service contractor for the heat pumps who said it was a refrigerant leak. PVE topped up the refrigerant but is unable to replace the Daikin unit because it is now obsolete. Gayle and Graeme will meet with a senior tech from PVE to discuss a replacement, perhaps from a manufacturer other than Daikin, the heat pumps of which have proven to be rather troublesome since they were first installed, A new replacement heat pump is likely to cost around \$10,000. Gayle will send around the new replacement estimate for MLP members to take a look at in the near future.

23 service tickets for February. Nothing unusual to report..

Financials: We currently have \$98,270 in our account, and so we are in good shape to complete this fiscal year. We recently received our mid-year digital equity grant allocation for approximately \$10,000.

Warrant article discussion: There are three of them which Gayle will be submitting next week to the Town. Much discussion about the subtlety of the wording in the three articles except for the budget article, which is little changed from last year. Curiously enough, our insurance cost has not increased dramatically in the last year or so, most likely because the deductible has risen from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Andy Regan has submitted his nomination papers to the Town Clerk in his bid to run for Graeme's seat on the MLP. Graeme will be retiring from the MLP at the end of this Fiscal Year.

Router Wars, continued: We have some test results from Jim and Graeme who have been working with the 3 MESH routers that Gayle ordered a month or so ago – the Eero, sold by Amazon, the Deco, made by TP-Link and the Orbi made by Netgear. Both Jim and Gayle are not in favor of these MESH systems which they feel are too specialized to be useful to all of our subscribers. Craig will also submit some test results for these MESH systems within the next two weeks. Graeme did like the Orbi for a variety of reasons but was less enthusiastic about the TP link and the Eero. Ease of setup remains a prime and perhaps the most important requirement. Gayle wonders if we should take a look at some WiFi-6 routers as well. It was generally agreed that it would be a good idea to replace our subscriber's Linksys routers with new ones, given the average life expectancy of 5-7 years for most routers. And then, 7 years or so from now, we should take a look at replacing all of the ONTs with new ones that can deliver Wi-Fi with speeds up to 2.5Gigs. Such an upgrade would also involve replacing a number of circuit cards in the OLTs in the hut as well. In the meantime, Gayle will order some WiFi 6/6e routers for the MLP members to test and perhaps some Wi-Fi 7 dual band routers, which would be a minor step down from the tri-band Asus and TP-Link routers we tested earlier this year.

It was noted that we have had just one single call for in-home help from SHELD that we offered free to our subscribers which would be funded from our digital equity grant.

Meeting ended at 6:30pm