

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
9_17_2025	5:10pm DST	On Line Zoom Meeting
Facilitator	Gayle Huntress	
Minutes keeper	Jim Hemingway	
Committee Attendees	☒ Gayle Huntress	☒ Jim Hemingway
	☒ Steve Schmidt	☒ Craig Martin
	☒ Graeme Sephton	
Other		
Approved minutes August 20, 2025		

It will cost about \$16,000 to install a new splitter/fiber distribution cabinet on West Pelham Road. We are out of available fiber for new installations at that location. SHELD will likely move ahead with this purchase and installation in the very near future. In addition, Gayle has to notify National Grid about our plan for placing the box on one of their poles even if our fiber cable is already there and attached. Steve and Graeme were surprised that there wasn't more capacity in place in that part of service area FSA-01 which might help solve the shortage of available fiber connections in that area. Graeme will call Lee Masters at SHELD tomorrow to inquire if there are some other possibilities.

\$3,237 is the current balance in our MLP account. Gayle and Graeme will take a look at the fiber installation that is being prepared for the new Library tomorrow. The letter offering free installation costing up to \$5,000 for those under or unserved households in Shutesbury will be going out next week. Monies for doing these installations will be coming from the Grant. For other, more standard fiber installations for new construction, for example, Gayle suggested we raise the support we will be giving for such installations from \$500 to \$700. The average cost for a new installation is about \$1000. Every year we average about 4 or so new customers. MLP voted 3-0 to make this \$500 to \$700 change.

There was a lengthy discussion about other possible policy changes. Not infrequently there are service calls to repair a fiber installation when some sort of an accident has taken place, such as a customer trying to move and damaging a fiber cable due to painting or other house repairs. There are a number of accidental service problems the MLP and SHELD have encountered somewhat frequently that are caused by painters or homeowners doing repairs on their homes. Should we waive the repair charge if the customer asks us to temporarily move or take down the fiber if some maintenance or repair on their home is required to keep from damaging it? Craig wondered how other utilities handle a request like this. Most if not all charge for this service. If contractors, such as a tree company, for example, damage a fiber cable while working at a customer's home, they are responsible for covering the cost of the repair. Same would be true for painters or other contractors. And so it was decided not to make any changes to the current service policy concerning this issue.

Discussion about the cost of other service issues and who should pay for them followed:

ONT failure – no change. The MLP pays for this repair.

Storm damage to the fiber connection – the MLP pays for this as well.

ONT working fine – all lights green – but no phone connection. Netegrity service support will recommend connecting a telephone directly to the ONT thus bypassing issues with the phone cabling within the customer's home. If the home phone wiring seems to be at fault, SHELD will not repair it, and the customer will need to contact an electrician.

SHELD is interested in offering a home service diagnostics visit for difficulties a customer might be having with most wireless issues that might occur in someone's home for a flat fee of \$250. This could be offered if phone support from Netegrity is not sufficient to fix or address such a problem. Gayle suggested using \$8,000 from the Grant to cover this possibility either completely for our subscribers or perhaps with a \$200 deductible, leaving the customer with only a \$50 bill to pay for such a service up until the \$8,000 grant money is used up for this service. Administratively, this would be a relatively easy process to administer and obtain reimbursement from the Grant for offering such support to our subscribers, at least for the next 9 months.

All of these possible uses of the \$55,000 Grant have to be used up or spent by June 30th, 2026.

Router Replacement – \$28,000 from the Grant has been allocated for funds that can be used to replace our subscriber's routers. Gayle is trying to work out a way of standardizing the cost for every new router installation with SHELD so that we can calculate with greater precision what all of this will cost when we start the process of replacing all of our Linksys EA7300 routers. At this point in our ongoing discussion about routers, it is generally agreed that we will not be using managed routers when it comes time to provide our subscribers with new WiFi 6 or 7 routers. More research needs to be done on which router we should choose for this upcoming upgrade.

Steve wanted to know when the next generator maintenance service call by Pachiorek, our contractor for the hut's generator maintenance and repair, will be taking place, which will most likely be next month. Steve was hoping that with Graeme and Pachoriek present at the hut when that service call takes place that the transfer switch be tested by simulating a power failure at the Town Hall by cutting the power temporarily to the hut.

Graeme touched up some of the peeling paint on the hut. He also wondered whether there could be any flexibility to the \$450 truck roll service charge from SHELD if a service call turned out to be much shorter than expected or was combined with another service call shortly after the first one had been completed. But this would be difficult to administer. Gayle thought it would be best to emphasize that the 3 hour \$450 service charge was a fixed, minimum charge that a customer would have to pay if SHELD rolls a truck for a problem that the MLP is not responsible for paying for.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37. Next MLP meeting October 15, 2025.