

Shutesbury Broadband Committee			
4.15.2020		5:30 PM DST	On Line Zoom Meeting
Facilitator	Gayle Huntress		
Minutes	Jim Hemingway		
Committee Attendees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gayle Huntress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Frank Citino <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hemingway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Schmidt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eric Stocker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Martin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ayers Hall <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kent Whitney
Other	Becky Torres, Town Administrator		
Approved minutes for 3/18/2020			

Hut Report: tiles inside the hut to be glued down; Graeme suggested putting two big rocks in front of the hut and generator to help protect them from vehicles similar to the one that is protecting the solar panels. He also requested a good working humidity gauge in order to track the humidity level inside the hut.

Maintenance and Service: 48 trouble tickets in the last month, 24 concerning VOIP, 24 internet related, most if not all have been resolved.

Steve: financial report – \$32K left from the town’s original \$105K appropriation for start-up costs, should drop to \$17K by the end of this fiscal year.

\$100K currently in the Enterprise account, which should have a balance of \$215K by the end of this fiscal year. The Sertex construction phase has been concluded and turned over to us but Tri-Wire is still on the hook for unfinished business, making them responsible for any damage to our network that might take place in the future.

Discussion about the upcoming grant money from the State. The drop grant from the State will be \$312K. Also \$164K from the State is also expected for the make ready work. Decision made to meet with Ryan, Shutesbury’s treasurer, before the end of May to be sure that rolling over the remaining BAN(Bond Anticipation Note, due 8/21/20) is the best way to handle the the \$793K that we borrowed two years ago to finance the drop costs unless we have received all the grant money from the State before that time.

4 new requests for service. Crocker handles new requests for service. We could supply the router and the ONT to a newcomer. Should we subsidize such new installations? We have 898 potential customers/households in Shutesbury, 850 of which we currently have. 765 or 85% of the town have service though not all may be using it at any one time. Gayle thinks we will have no more than 10 new requests for service a year. Suggestion was to offer a \$300 subsidy or grant for each new installation, as opposed to a reconnection which Crocker handles and charges for. Vote(9-0) to approve this policy for the next fiscal year. If the new customer pays the \$200 installation fee, we will provide a \$300 subsidy for the cost of the new installation. If this new installation costs more than \$300, the new customer pays the difference for the cost of the installation.

Calix has not reimbursed us yet for the repair that occurred with the ground lug that got left inside one of their pieces of equipment – they want to discuss this issue with us.

740 to 750 ONTs(and therefore households) are currently active. Steve receives a list of all the active customers once a month, There are ways we can audit/double check the connection list for accuracy.

The \$250 reconnection fee policy will continue for another year.

Graeme raised a question about the ~\$7,000 annual pole "surety bond" fees added on top of the pole rental fees that Shutesbury's licensing agreement which Verizon currently requires. He pointed out that such surety bond requirements were introduced by utility pole owners legitimately, to cover the risk that CATV companies sometimes go broke and there needed to be a way to pay for removal of their abandoned cable installations. The application of such a requirement against a town MLP is unnecessary because on the rare occasions when towns file for bankruptcy, historically all town utility bills still get paid by the receivership administrators. Our fiber would never need to be removed if the town went broke.

Graeme believes that this actually contravenes FCC regulations and explicit directives and rulings against "unreasonable or unnecessary" utility pole fees to third party pole users like CATV and MLPs. This committee therefore asked Graeme to reach out to the Massachusetts DTC(Department of Telecommunications and Cable) to see if they would be willing to take up such an issue if our Select Board filed some sort of complaint. He will report back to this committee on this matter.

Set Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2020, 5:30pm