

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
9_20_2023	5:00 PM DST	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 August 16, 2023		

ACP, the Affordable Connectivity Program, was discussed at length by Graeme and Gayle. Thanks to Graeme's participation in Village Neighbors, he has made inquiries about how Shutesbury residents, who currently do not have broadband service, could qualify for broadband with assistance from ACP. Gayle mentioned that we have been participants not only in this program but the Lifeline one as well since 2020, and that the MLP has been very active in promoting these programs in Shutesbury in various ways. As a result we now have 14 Lifeline subscribers and 21 ACP subscribers. Despite this promotional push, we know that there are still a number of households in Shutesbury who currently qualify for ACP and Lifeline support. The barrier to entry for joining either program is the application process and the paperwork. What is needed is someone who would be able to coach those who are interested in applying, possibly someone associated with Village Neighbors. Graeme reports that there is currently no one in Village Neighbors who could provide this support, but he feels that there are some members who might be willing to coach others having already gone through the process themselves. The application has now been reduced to a two step process which will hopefully make things easier. The MLP is not directly involved with the application process, given the fact that the ACP application is initially made to the FCC and, once approved, is then forwarded to SHELDT. One complication for those who would like to apply is that one needs to have a computer available to make and complete the application to the FCC which has to be done online. Perhaps the Shutesbury Library could be of help in this regard as a place to go to complete the application process on line. We currently do not know how many residents here in Shutesbury could qualify for the ACP or the Lifeline assistance program. The MLP will continue to track this matter closely in the months to come.

The Shutesbury MLP currently has about 780 subscribers.

Hut Report: we are still waiting for Jamrog to do the final visit to fix the ailing HVAC unit which has been dead since the last big snowstorm in March when power surges knocked it out of commission. Apparently the replacement parts for the Daikin HVAC unit have been difficult to obtain. The 4 backup batteries for the hut's fiber equipment have also been recently replaced, the original ones having lasted about 4 ½ years. Both Jim and Graeme feel that they should have lasted longer, and they are going to devise a scheme to monitor how well the trickle charging of the batteries is working in the months and years to come.

Gayle reports that about 30 tech support calls were received by SHELD in August which is less than the average which is around 50, like in Julys. Sertex has completed the transfer of all of our fiber optic cable over to the new three phase poles along the Leverett/Shutesbury Road.

The MLP is now successfully registered with DigSafe, and Gayle has received two requests so far. SHELD is working on appointing someone on their staff who will administer these DigSafe requests. Gayle will be handing this responsibility over to SHELD in the near future, although Gayle will get the notifications as well. DigSafe notifications have to be acted on within 72 hours, and so it would be best if SHELD received these requests directly instead of being relayed through Gayle. In the meantime Gayle has received a DigSafe notification for all the digging for the new three phase poles that are about to be installed along Shore drive by Lake Wyola from the Leverett line up to Camp Anderson and the Wendell town line.

\$78,676 is currently in our MLP account. Our monthly income averages around \$29,600. Gayle reports that most of the accounting issues that have come with the transition to SHELD have now been successfully worked out.

Does our MLP have bylaws? Like all MLPs in Massachusetts, we follow those that are listed in Chapter 164, Section 47C found in Massachusetts General Law. The Shutesbury MLP does have a very detailed manual about how we operate which we can share with anyone who asks, as was the case when someone from Falmouth recently asked Gayle about whether we had our own set of bylaws that we were following in the administration of our MLP. Our manual of operations, which is on our website, compiled over the years, would be very useful to those interested in creating a MLP in their community.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.