

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
08_21_2024	5:00pm DST	On Line Zoom Meeting
Facilitator	Gayle Huntress	
Minutes keeper	Jim Hemingway	
Committee Attendees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gayle Huntress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Schmidt Graeme Sephton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hemingway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craig Martin
Other		
Approved minutes July 17, 2024		

Hut Report – Gayle is still working on the replacement spare key issue for the door to the hut. She decided to take the key to Foster-Farrar in Northampton where it can be duplicated sometime in early September.

July: 107 support tickets, all but 35 of which were related to the outage in July, and so it was otherwise a fairly routine month for support calls. Steve asked whether a service request call could be sent as a text message rather than a phone call, but Gayle said that this is currently not possible. Gayle will check to see whether texting service problems and issues might be possible sometime in the future.

Gayle just received the final FY2024 end of year figures and results for the MLP from Gail Weiss, the Town of Shutesbury’s accountant, which she will discuss with Steve next month when both Gayle and Steve will have the time to dig into this matter.

The cash in our Capital Stabilization fund has been transferred into a new account which has a much higher interest rate yield.

The MLP received the \$44,396.36 CAF II funding check which after many years of waiting finally arrived in late June of 2024. CAF II funding grants are administered through Whip City Fiber, and we will continue to receive checks from them for the next 7 years for a lesser amount - roughly \$14.8K per year. The use of these funds by the MLP in FY2025 does not have to be approved or voted on at our Annual Town Meeting.

Gayle is working with SHELD on a new emergency notification plan for the Town should another widespread fiber blackout take place similar to the one Shutesbury had last month.

Gayle reported that SHELD used a lot of our pre-connectorized inventory of spare parts during the big snow storm last year during which these parts were particularly useful. The MLP and SHELD both have an inventory list that has been updated by SHELD every time they use some of them for repairs.

Some additional expense for moving our fiber from poles 69 & 70 on Locks Pond Road over to the new 3 phase poles will occur in order to complete the task of pole to pole transfer which started some time ago. This particular move is quite a complicated one and needs to be done before Verizon can move their lines over to the new poles which, when done, will then allow Verizon to remove the old poles. This should be the final step in the process of moving our fiber from the old single phase poles to the new three phase ones - a process that has been an expensive one for the MLP over the last two years.

The MLP's portion of the cost of the town's audit, which is normally done every two years, is \$2,000 a year, according to Tom Scanlon of Scanlon and Associates, the outfit that audits the town's finances. Previous to this, the MLP has allocated \$850 per year for this service. The \$4,000 cost every other year is the MLP's portion of the overall Town audit bill, which is around \$17,000. Originally with the assistance of the accountant, the MLP budgeted \$850 every year for audits based on our relative dollar portion of the overall town budget but this calculation is apparently too low because of the audit process for an enterprise fund which is more complex than for other town departments. The MLP was not informed until now that the allocated amount is too low, and so we've had the same number in the annual budget since 2019. At the present time Gayle was informed that Leverett pays the same amount as we do for their audits, that is, \$2,000 per year. Steve felt that we can and will make this change to our FY2026 budget but not before then, since we did not receive any notification of this increased expense prior to the creation of our budget for FY2025 which was approved and voted on at our recent Annual Town Meeting. There is also the matter of the requirement of doing the audit on a stepped up basis every year until 2026 because the State requires yearly audits for towns like Shutesbury that are receiving, in this case, a substantial grant from the State for building the new library. The MLP feels that this additional expense for this stepped up audit schedule (\$4,000 every year instead of every two years) should be paid for with funds from the new Library Construction fund and so voted on this matter during its last meeting. On the matter of raising the annual cost for the audit in our yearly budget from \$850 to \$2,000, the MLP voted to make this change in the FY2026 budget but not in FY2025, since it cannot go back and change this amount in the audit line in the MLP's FY2025 budget since it has been already approved and voted on by the Town. The vote: Hemingway, Aye; Schmidt, Aye.

Craig reported on his experience with a problem he was having with his Calix Gigaspire U6 managed router that he has been testing and evaluating since the MLP made the move from Crocker to SHELd. When he called our service support number to ask about the problem he was having, rather than taking advantage of the remote management capability of these routers to (potentially) diagnose the problem from the service center, the technician offered instead to send someone out to do a service call. Craig declined the service call because he felt that the problem has since, and preliminarily, been attributed to a wiring issue inside his home. Interesting to note that in the recent survey results, our subscribers liked the idea of having a managed router and the service support that came along with it, but did not like or want to pay for the additional monthly cost that would come with installing and using managed routers.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55pm