

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
09_18_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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jim Hemingway Craig Martin
Other		
Approved minutes August 21, 2024		

Hut Report: The heat pumps now seem to be working fine after all the trouble we have been having with them in the past. Indicator lights on the new surge protectors that were installed recently will reveal if there have been any surges that have affected their operation. If the normally GREEN indicator light changes to ORANGE or RED, the surge limiting element should be replaced. The surge protector will not cut off the power to the heat pump. If the normally green indicator light goes OFF, the circuit breaker in the hut panel has likely tripped.

44 service tickets for August which is normal. Temporary fiber to the new library construction site has been installed and is being paid for by the construction company. This fiber connection will be rerouted underground to the new library once the construction is completed.

We currently have \$1,900 in our Enterprise account. Bookkeeping at this time of year is often full of odd discrepancies due to the complicated accounting that bridges the previous fiscal year that ended on June 30th, 2024 with the new one that began on July 1st which includes the cash we have in our reserve account as well as our retained earnings. There is currently a shortfall of roughly \$10,000 in our Enterprise account despite the fact that we have approximately \$70,000 in our reserve account. Gayle and Steve will get together to discuss this issue and possibly meet with the Town’s accountant, Gail Weiss, to clarify these issues and possibly find a way to make it easier to make the ledger of all of our economic activity easier to follow, especially when it comes to understanding the figures that are listed in our year end report.

Gayle raised the question about how the Shutesbury Subsidy that handles the discounted fees for subscribers should be administered. Currently, SHELD supplies a list of all subscribers along with the MLP charges for each with a sum total. Subscribers who get the fee reduction are also shown by a sum total and then that amount is deducted from the amount of MLP fees that we receive from SHELD. We discussed if this should instead be invoiced from SHELD as a fee that we would “pay back.” Steve suggested we should instead match our budget to the way the accounting works in this regard and reduce our annual expected revenue by the \$5000 Shutesbury Subsidy. This will not only reflect reality but will also prevent another set of invoices and payments from having to be generated and tracked. Gayle will make a note to change our

budget to reflect this next year and reduce our budget by the subsidy amount and/or have a line item for this reduction shown in our annual budget.

Manager report: Gayle feels that the texting option that Steve thought would be a useful addition for service requests and support would indeed be a good feature for our subscribers, but Netegrity, which would have to supply this support, does not want to take it on for a variety of reasons. Providing such support would be much more complicated than the chat help feature often found on many sites on the internet. Liability issues and cost for this possibility, according to Netegrity, would be substantial since accepting and queuing texts requires an entirely different infrastructure than pure phone support.

Gayle was unexpectedly given a bill for \$3,500 for audit expenses from Scanlon and Associates, the auditor for the Town of Shutesbury. For some time now we have allocated in our budget monies for paying our share of the audit. Based on recent calculations, our share of the audit cost has been too low, but no one in Town Hall has asked us to alter the agreed upon amount for our share of the audit which is done every two years. And so the MLP has continued to set aside funds for the audit year after year in its annual budget which have been approved by voters at our Annual Town Meeting. Having been approved in this way, we cannot go back and make changes to a budget that has been already approved by the Town. The MLP has never contracted with Scanlon and Associates directly, but has instead contributed agreed upon indirect cost payments to the Town for not only the cost of the audit but for other costs as well such as propane for the standby generator and electricity from National Grid. Gayle sought legal advice concerning this issue from Donna McNicol, the Town's lawyer, who suggested that it might be best to turn to the Select Board for settling this issue rather than to try and bring it up at a Town meeting. Donna can not formally advise on this issue because she also represents the Town as their legal representation. It has only been in the last few months that this issue has come to light, and the MLP is prepared to rectify this issue by budgeting \$2,000 every year for our share of the cost for the audit every two years beginning in the FY26 budget that we will be presenting at our next Annual Town Meeting. Gayle will continue conversations with the Select Board to negotiate an agreement based on the MLP Board's directives.

The MLP will begin our discussion of the upcoming contract negotiations with SHELD in a few months which we may renew for another 3 years depending on the terms offered.

MLP meeting concluded at 6:10pm