

Shutesbury Broadband Committee		
1_28_2026	5:00pm EST	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      Craig Martin <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graeme Sephton	
Other	Andy Reagan	
Approved minutes December 17, 2025		

Hut Report: Graeme installed a new space heater which will keep the hut from dropping below 55-60 degrees F. The hut did drop to 57 degrees on the coldest night we had recently. Graeme also worked with Frank McGinn, a member of the building committee, who was collecting data for a Town wide energy audit. Graeme gave him the data that we have been collecting from our hut’s electrical consumption for the last two years. One of our HVAC units is currently turned off. Steve wanted to take a tour of the hut and be updated on some of the newer details about the operation of the hut that he might be unfamiliar with.

30 support tickets for December, a pretty normal month. The MLP is currently in the black by \$112,300, which seems like a lot, but we have a \$100,000 loan payment coming up in April. Despite this, our cash flow position is good.

Verizon is going to raise pole rental rates by 20%. No such word from National Grid and Eversource as to whether they will follow suit. Only 17 poles will be upgraded on Pratt Corner Road by National Grid once they get the blessing of the Conservation Commission. This means that we will have to pay to have our fiber moved from the old to the new poles. Consequently, Gayle will raise the pole rental allocation by 20% for our upcoming FY-2027 budget since it is likely that these two utility companies will follow Verizon’s lead in this matter.

Gayle is working on the half year report for the digital equity grant we received last year. Much of the work we have done to date with the funds from this grant went to WiFi support at the new Library which has been done in great part by Graeme. Part of the grant went to paying for some new laptops and monitors in the Library’s conference room. We are still working on the the Town Hall to extend the Library’s guest network for those who want to log in while at the Town Hall. Only one subscriber used the allocation that was set aside for personal device detailed home WiFi installation support and use. 6 people attended the WiFi support group that Gayle and the Council on Aging helped organize. Only one potential unconnected subscriber may be able to take advantage of a new installation paid for in part by the grant once the weather is more favorable. Graeme reports that over 200 people have logged into the public WiFi network at the library so far. Steve wants to take a look at the list of the “non-install”

locations that have not opted to connect to ShutesburyNet, despite the offer of a free installation - a list that Gayle will send to him.

Routers: Extensive and complex discussion about the router testing that Jim, Craig and Graeme have been doing to date. Gayle, especially, was disappointed that there was no standout winner in the router comparisons that have been done so far. It turns out that the Linksys router we have been using for the last 6 years has been very dependable and works about as well as the two, more expensive WiFi 7 routers we have tested – The TP-Link/Archer BE550 and the Asus RT-BE92U. In some cases the old Linksys EA7300 worked better than these two new WiFi 6/7 routers. One thought was to use the grant money - \$25,000 – that is set aside for router purchases and offer a new router to those subscribers who could install them on their own and evaluate them for the rest of our subscribers. One of the problems is that many of our subscribers use MESH WiFi extender units with their Linksys routers which, though they connect to their router or any router with a WPS button, are lacking in performance because other MESH units also have some built-in proprietary software that is designed to work with a specific router and not one that comes from a rival router manufacturer. Of the two routers we have been testing, the Asus seems to work the best, and so Gayle decided to order some Asus MESH units that are designed to work with that specific router to see if using them really makes a big difference. She will also look at some different router choices that include MESH extenders in a single package that would be WiFi 6 compatible.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15pm