



Date Approved: March 11, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

February 25, 2021

4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

VIA ZOOM

1. Call to order

Steve Huffaker, the Chair of the Addison County Communications Union District (“ACCUD”) dba Maple Broadband, welcomed the representatives of the Executive Committee to the meeting, called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

Steve Huffaker, Chair, Ferrisburgh;
Nancy Cornell, Vice Chair, Starksboro;
Dan Sonneborn, at large representative from Bristol
Magna Dodge, at large representative from Cornwall
Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer, ex-officio, Ferrisburgh
Adam Lougee, Clerk, (ACRPC)
Robyn King, Minute Taker

2. Approve the Agenda

Nancy Cornell made a motion and Magna Dodge seconded to accept the meeting agenda, all members present consented to the agenda.

3. Previous meeting minutes approval

There was discussion of review of the meeting minutes and it was confirmed that the Magna Dodge had reviewed the meeting minutes and had made comments as had Arabella for the month of January. Steve Huffaker explained that the comments did not change the overall tone or direction of the meeting minutes. There was discussion of finding additional resources for meeting minutes for Executive Committee meetings that were outside of the Thursday meeting time.

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Shoreham
Whiting

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro

Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Waltham

Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Weybridge



Magna Dodge made a motion that the Executive Committee accept the minutes for all meetings from January 7, 2021 to February 18, 2021, which was seconded by Nancy Cornell, all members present consented to the motion.

4. Operator report

Steve Huffaker noted that he sent the Memorandum of Understanding to WCVT and they returned a signed copy and that next steps include a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with WCVT which will need to be reviewed by WCVT. Steve Huffaker explained the NDA was important given that Maple Broadband is subject to Open Meetings Law, and that there may be information that can be confidentially shared between the two parties.

Nancy Cornell asked when Maple Broadband might get clarity on WCVT’s build schedule and flexibility in Addison County, with the understanding that she is interested in knowing when Town residents may be served. Steve Huffaker noted that some of the town building typology may be a bigger issue, and there was language in the MOU to address conversations about the build. Steve Huffaker went on to explain that this could mean a lease situation if WCVT is not interested in building in Maple Broadband’s territory, and the language allows for these conversations.

Nancy Cornell asked about RDOF limitations in Maple Broadband’s territory, and Steve Huffaker noted that there are no constraints in regards to RDOF and Maple Broadband has the ability to build where it sees fit. Nancy Cornell noted that it was her understanding that Maple Broadband may want to build prior to RDOF timelines, and Steve Huffaker explained he did not see any Maple Broadband development happening in a vacuum as there will be other providers who may be interested in building in the territory and coordination will be important.

Magna Dodge noted that an entity like NRTC, if interested in being a building partner, will likely be knowledgeable on the different parties’ plans and Maple Broadband could lean on this entity for services. Nancy Cornell asked if WCVT may have relationships with other providers and could help with coordination, and what the thinking was on the role that NRTC might play. Dan Sonneborn noted that there may be an overlap, and the NRTC perspective is geographically broad and could improve the end product. Steve Huffaker noted the last WCVT interview indicated they have visibility of efforts across Addison County and Maple Broadband can continue outreach to parties like Otelco.

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Adam Lougee asked if ValleyNet would be comfortable working with WCVT on a business plan. Steve Huffaker clarified that ValleyNet has been aware of this, as has WCVT and Magna Dodge noted that there is likely a regional awareness of business activity.

Arabella Holzapfel asked about next steps with WCVT, and asked if after the NDA is signed what the meeting schedule with them might look like. Steve Huffaker explained that after the NDA, as they have a signed MOU, he has arranged for a call with Carole, Alex, and Magna in the next week to discuss next steps. Steve Huffaker noted that a key item of the MOU was the business plan, which is critical for funding. Steve Huffaker explained that ValleyNet and WCVT will need to work together closely on the business plan and there will be a lot of conversation over the coming months. Steve Huffaker noted that the MOU is also critical for some local relationships.

Nancy Cornell explained that she expected that they may receive approximately \$133,000 from state funding, and asked if this funding might be able to be used for a high-level design. Steve Huffaker noted that they may want to ask this of NRTC, and it was confirmed that WCVT noted they had pole surveys of their territory.

Adam Lougee asked if there may be a step that includes outreach to GMP and Velco about pole information so they could have a baseline. Steve Huffaker noted that he would be prepared to reach out to both utilities for a quick conversation and it would be good to do this in the near future as there may be more information available. It was noted that the Rob Fish from the Public Service Department is meeting with Regional Planning Commission staff as well as Steve, Nancy, and Magna each Monday and he could be asked about some of this coordination as the PSD is helping the startup CUDs. There was further discussion on the relationship between CORI and RISI.

5. Office Assistant position

Steve Huffaker noted he would like to table this item until later in the agenda.

6. At-large position

Steve Huffaker noted he would bring this up at the Full Board meeting and would note that someone with a background in Quick Books would be helpful.

Magna Dodge noted that there's another option to post in respective Front Porch Forums to ask for interest in a local bookkeeper position. Steve Huffaker explained that he imagined this would be a fairly low lift starting out, and Arabella Holzapfel clarified that it was her understanding they would be seeking possibly a CPA or someone with a similar background to act as a Treasurer. Steve Huffaker thanked Adam Lougee for ACRPC's help with Quick Books, and noted that he could understand the value of having someone with that background be in the role, but thought Arabella Holzapfel was doing a good job, which Magna Dodge echoed.

It was discussed that with incoming grants, Quick Books could be helpful, but there will be a need for someone to work on the administration of those grants, given that the workload has been fairly heavy in the grant season. Adam Lougee noted that his staff could be of assistance with Quick Books and it was confirmed that for the near future, with the current grant load, that ACRPC could handle the workload.

Steve Huffaker explained that during this slow time, it would be good to identify resources that could help with the fiscal administration. Nancy Cornell noted that she would prefer that Arabella continue participating, which Steve Huffaker echoed. Steve Huffaker noted he was supportive of Magna Dodge drafting a Front Porch Forum posting on a volunteer position, after the Full Board meeting which may yield results.

7. Operations

a. Volunteer to help - Help Request - Pre-Subscription

Steve Huffaker explained that this has been transitioned to O365, and these inputs are being collected directly. Dan Sonneborn gave background on the transition to O365, an in-house tool in Office, and noted that this was done in interest of security and visibility. Steve Huffaker noted that there were things that could be tracked and driven through this tool, like pre-subscriptions, and he would have a conversation with Dan Sonneborn on reporting.

Steve Huffaker explained to Nancy Cornell that the appearance of the site is the main difference, but there is similar functionality and people will be able to get help, request help, or pre-subscribe. Steve Huffaker noted that this site will need daily attention, and he is hoping to carve out this role. Dan Sonneborn noted that there were no requests for help, 3 people submitted an interested in fiber survey, and 2 people who were previously known that volunteered. Steve Huffaker asked if Dan would be willing to do a similar

report on weekly meetings, and Dan Sonneborn noted he would be comfortable taking this on.

Magna Dodge noted that she gave a brief presentation at an informational meeting of the Select Board in Cornwall and noted that anyone on the Executive Committee could do the same, and she has become a permanent part of the Agenda for bi-weekly updates. Arabella Holzapfel asked about the information that could be shared during these types of presentations, such as the MOU with WCVT and if the NDA would have any exclusions.

Steve Huffaker explained that he has been exploring how much information can be shared, and noted he would like to connect on sharing the partnership with the broader community. There was discussion on the specifics of what could be shared, and it was agreed that it would be good to be transparent that there are preliminary conversations taking place, but a full press release may not be appropriate at this point.

b. Info @ email

Steve Huffaker noted he could monitor this for the time-being.

c. 377-3713 (retired)

Steve Huffaker noted that it was his intent to retire this until someone could answer the line. Nancy Cornell noted that a number of the grant applications ask for a phone number, and Steve Huffaker noted that calls are transcribed and emails are sent with the transcriptions and generally calls so far have been general inquiries for internet subscriptions. It was discussed that the operations position could be the solution for answering calls.

It was discussed that some of the early mission focused on helping people connect with available internet in lieu of fiber being built, and Steve Huffaker noted that there are available volunteers that could be of assistance with technical questions. It was agreed that there was a need to identify a volunteer to answer the phone, given the customer experience. Dan Sonneborn noted that the get help survey questions may need to be modified so that people didn't think that Maple Broadband had the capacity to help with individual device questions or individual internet connectivity. Nancy Cornell

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pointed out that the Equal Access group would be working on this in the future, and may be of assistance with these types of questions. It was discussed that of the three forms available on the website, there may need to be a revisiting of which forms can be responded to given the resources at this point in time.

Steve Huffaker suggested that the introductory language on the RISI outreach be re-written to direct people to call if they need help, and it was agreed that this would be a good pathway forward and a volunteer to answer would need to be identified. Adam Lougee noted that their Americorps volunteer would be willing to take on some tasks and would like to have a more well-defined scope. Steve Huffaker noted that he would further scope out this topic as well as make connections with possible volunteers so that they could create a clear resolution at the next meeting.

Nancy Cornell confirmed that the phone number could be used for grant applications.

8. Marketing report

Magna Dodge asked if all materials on ACRPC's website have been migrated over, and Adam Lougee noted he would get back to her on this. Steve Huffaker noted that he had taken the minutes and other materials from ACRPC's website and posted it to Maple Broadband's website and informed staff that posting materials was no longer necessary. Nancy Cornell explained that having a presence on ACRPC's website would be helpful for grant applications, and Adam Lougee offered there be a description of Maple Broadband's efforts and a link. Adam Lougee noted that their new website would be live mid-March and he would create a paragraph a a link that would be on the new website.

Steve Huffaker noted that they still have 6 months of Front Porch Forum Ads to use, and this may be up to the Marketing folks.

9. Financial report

Magna Dodge noted she had a meeting with the head of the Vermont Banker's Association who understood the issues, and asked for numbers on pre-construction funding. Magna Dodge explained that he offered to make some inquiries and

connections and that he had been the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Economic Development as is very aware of Economic Development issues. Magna Dodge noted that he advocated for convening a group of financing stakeholders, such as the Banker’s Association, credit unions, VEDA, and bankers to explore options and asked if people were supportive of that idea. Adam Lougee noted that they may want to approach leadership at the Department of Public Service to see if there’s interest in convening this type of group to discuss financing of broadband, and he imagined that such a request would be seen favorably by the stakeholders.

Nancy Cornell asked if this would be focused on Maple Broadband, and Magna Dodge noted that this would be a broader industry conversation. Adam Lougee explained that this would be financial stakeholders primarily with some background on what the broadband need would be for discussion. Magna Dodge explained that she focused on pre-construction, given that this is the phase Maple Broadband is in, and she had put some numbers together for discussion and imagined other CUDs were in a similar situation. Adam Lougee noted that he thought this may be a discussion topic for Rob Fish.

Nancy Cornell noted that she is continuing to work on smaller grants, and she will be meeting with the USDA and Fred Kenney.

10. New town(s): Whiting, Bridport

Steve Huffaker noted he was aware that Whiting had officially joined, and Adam Lougee noted that Whiting had selected Ellen Curlmeyer as their delegate and had sent along paperwork.

11. Other business

Arabella Holzapfel asked where the CARES Act figure came from, and Nancy Cornell clarified that it was the greater pool of funding that had been mentioned, divided by the CUDs. It was noted that there may be some adjustments to the figure, based on additional information.

12. Future meeting: March 4

13. Adjourn

Magna Dodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 pm and all members present consented to the adjournment.



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