



Date Approved: March 25, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

March 11, 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
Ellie Hagopian, non-voting participant
Adam Lougee, Clerk, (ACRPC)
Robyn King, Minute Taker

2. Approve the Agenda

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

3. Previous meeting minutes approval

Nancy Cornell made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the February 26th, March 2nd, and March 4th meetings and all members consented to the approval of the minutes.

4. Operations:

a) Ops meeting report

Steve Huffaker noted that there was an Operations Meeting held and it was noted that a volunteer (Jancy) had agreed to coordinate responses to questions that came in that need attention. Steve Huffaker explained that he is still the

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Shoreham
Whiting

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Panton
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Ripton
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Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Weybridge

Chair of the Committee, and Jancy had agreed to be the Vice-Chair. Steve Huffaker explained that Jancy would be able to access both Info @, Volunteer to Help and Help Request forms and Dan Sonneborn would continue to be responsible for the Pre-subscription form. Steve Huffaker noted that a pool of experts was identified that Jancy could connect with for questions, and Dan Sonneborn would work up a spreadsheet to have record of the communications. Steve Huffaker explained that the group would meet on a monthly basis, on the second Tuesday of the month.

Steve Huffaker explained that there may be an opportunity to receive reduced rates for Office licensing due to Maple Broadband's non-profit status, which Dan Sonneborn clarified would be in effect one year from now. Nancy Cornell noted that Maple Broadband may be a not-for-profit instead of a non-profit given they are a municipal corporation akin to a solid waste district. There was discussion of access levels for volunteers and others associated with Maple Broadband within Office 365, and Dan Sonneborn noted that he would create a framework for review.

Steve Huffaker explained that there was discussion of a blog during the last meeting, and he had followed up and found that the blog could be created under the Support page at no cost to Maple Broadband, which could be helpful for users and volunteers helping to answer questions.

5. Marketing Report

Steve Huffaker explained that there was discussion of a blog during the last meeting, and he had followed up and found that the blog could be created under the Support page at no cost to Maple Broadband, which could be helpful for users and volunteers helping to answer questions. Steve Huffaker explained that this can be raised at the Marketing Committee meeting occurring next week for input. There was discussion of whether this would be better placed as an FAQ, and it was clarified that there may be two different functions as one could be static content and the other could be more of a news feed.

Steve Huffaker noted there was an idea of getting in front of the Boards of member communities and he had started work on this, but that this was open. Nancy Cornell asked about Adam Lougee's email regarding the opportunity to present to Select Boards given the potential for incoming moneys, and Adam Lougee explained about a potential \$56 MM coming to municipalities and an additional \$121 MM of County

monies and noted that the \$56 MM may be able to go to broadband or other activities. Adam Lougee explained that the specifics on these monies had not been made clear yet, but it may be advantageous to define a message that could be delivered to member Select Boards that noted Maple Broadband's mission and vision and how these monies could go towards broadband access. It was clarified that the spending timeline for these monies was three years.

Magna Dodge noted that as each town is different, there may be different ways they prefer to spend the money so there should be thought given to these varying circumstances. Adam Lougee clarified that the intent would be to help give a perspective that broadband was a potential use of the money, which Magna Dodge agreed with. There was discussion of the presentation strategy, and it was agreed that it would be advantageous for Steve Huffaker to continue with the plan to present to member Select Boards in April.

Nancy Cornell asked about the status of the second mailer that had been agreed upon with the marketing company, and Steve Huffaker noted that it had been sent out after the website went live and this content was sent out to the full Board and Committee. Steve Huffaker explained that there were some extra hours they could use from Place Creative.

6. Financial Report

Nancy Cornell noted that a ten-page document had been created to help those that want to assist with grant writing for Maple Broadband and that it could be used universally. Nancy Cornell explained that they had a grant budget that they were making use of during the grant writing process. Nancy Cornell noted that they were preparing to submit for a \$30,000 USDA grant for office operations, and a \$150,000 USDA grant for a high-level design for the network and that Fred Kenney had been working on these grants and also a Northern Borders grant. Nancy Cornell reported that there was a positive meeting with USDA representatives in Montpelier and they were interested in reviewing the grant. Nancy Cornell noted that she was also preparing for a \$50,000 grant reviewed quarterly from Hannaford and Magna helped facilitate a peer review. Nancy Cornell answered a question that Dan Sonneborn had on resume preparation for grants.

Magna Dodge noted she had a conversation with Jim Anderson of Municipal Partners in relation to zero coupon bonds which do not have an ongoing interest rate. Her conclusion was that they may not be advantageous, given that that the bond is

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expensive debt, and the timing may not work. Magna noted the Jim discussed a CUD could potentially go to market based a pre-subscription offer with a significant waiting list and that a deposit did not have to be required which is a new piece of information.

Magna Dodge noted that she had also connected with Sarah Cowan Chief Credit Officer of the National Bank of Middlebury, and Ms. Cowan would follow-up on a few pathways for pre-construction costs including a USDA loan guarantee program that the National Bank of Middlebury has engaged with in the past. Magna Dodge explained the other option noted by Ms. Cowan was a small group of private investors who may have interest, given the tax-free nature of this kind of investment, and she would be connecting with some stakeholders.

Magna Dodge explained she has intention to reach back out to Middlebury College, given the progress that has been made. There was discussion of the timing of outreach to these entities, relevant stakeholders, how to coordinate the information sharing, and how to share information on progress. It was agreed that keeping in touch with area stakeholders that have been presented to in the past would be advantageous especially in the wake of potential new monies.

7. Other Business

Steve Huffaker explained that there was follow-up with NRTC and information shared about progress made, and it was agreed that NRTC would take the feasibility study to run it through their model. A meeting has been scheduled next week to discuss the results., The outcome of this meeting would be shared at the next Executive Committee Meeting.

There was discussion of where the feasibility study was located on the website, and it was agreed that there may be an opportunity to change language to better clarify locations documents.

8. Executive Session

Steve Huffaker moved that he found that premature general public knowledge of Maple Broadband’s discussions with WCVT would clearly place Maple Broadband at a substantial disadvantage because it risks disclosure of Maple Broadband’s negotiations strategy if it were to be communicated to the public, the motion was seconded by Nancy Cornell and all members present consented to the motion.



Steve Huffaker moved to enter into Executive Session for a discussion regarding WCVT and other pressing business under Title 1, Section 312, Subsection A of the Vermont Statutes which was seconded by Nancy Cornell and all members present consented to the motion.

9. Future Meeting: March 18

10. Adjourn

The Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:35 pm by consensus.

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