



Date Approved: March 11, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

March 4, 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

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

Given that Executive Committee Members had not had a chance to review the minutes, the approval of the February 26, 2021 minutes was deferred.

4. Executive Session

Steve Huffaker moved that he found that premature general public knowledge of Maple Broadband’s discussions with WCVT and other related Maple Broadband activities would clearly place Maple Broadband at a substantial disadvantage because it risks disclosure of Maple Broadband’s negotiations strategy if it were to be

Maple Broadband Member Towns

Bristol
Lincoln
Orwell
Shoreham
Whiting

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro

Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Waltham

Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Weybridge

communicated to the public, the motion was seconded by Magna Dodge 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 Magna Dodge and all members present consented to the motion.

Magna Dodge made a motion to exit out of Executive Session which was seconded by Nancy Cornell and all members present consented to the motion.

5. Operations:

a) Volunteer to help, Help Request, Pre-subscription, Analytics

Dan Sonneborn noted that a few weeks ago, the forms from the outreach tool had been migrated to Office 365 and reviewed the form via a presentation on his screen. It was noted that there were four responses to the pre-subscription survey since the outreach tool had been migrated and there was varying data on interest in speed and length of driveway. It seemed 3 were interested in subscription. Dan Sonneborn noted there were no responses for Volunteering to Help. It was clarified that it would be a challenge to aggregate data from the older form submissions and this new platform, and Dan Sonneborn was willing to help on data presentations for grants.

Dan Sonneborn presented website analytics pertaining to number of hits and page traffic, and the most frequently hit page is the home page. Dan Sonneborn noted that the home page in the last 90 days, there were 1,663 visitors, and approximately 230 people were in and around Addison County which can help with marketing targeting. Magna Dodge asked where the other visitors were from, and it was clarified that the visitors were from all over the world and these visitors seemed irrelevant.

b) Info @ Email, 377-3713, Volunteer to Help, Help Requests

Steve Huffaker noted he had connected with a volunteer who would be willing to help manage when questions come in and forward those questions along to Board Members as appropriate. Dan Sonneborn asked for clarity on the process, and if there would be capacity by the Board members to be technical experts on different questions that may be forwarded by the volunteer. Nancy Cornell explained that Steve Huffaker had written some copy responses on

typical questions that could be used. Dan Sonneborn noted that Steve Huffaker’s content could be a blog of frequently asked questions for self-service.

Steve Huffaker noted that the volunteer showed a great amount of enthusiasm and he expects that he could pre-screen call questions and delegate based on the content. Steve Huffaker noted that emails coming in may not be pre-screened but there could be an expectation that these emails could be forwarded to Committee Members if necessary and training can be provided to help bolster responses. Adam Lougee asked about scope, and Steve Huffaker noted that there may be a learning curve based on question types. There was a discussion on the types of questions that Maple Broadband may have the capacity to answer, the channels in which questions come in, and a frequently asked questions document may help. Steve Huffaker asked Dan Sonneborn to prototype a frequently asked questions area on the website.

Adam Lougee asked a question on pre-subscriptions, and it was explained that the Executive Committee gave indication that it may be too early to get people excited about pre-subscriptions given the long-term build timeline.

6. Marketing Report

Steve Huffaker noted there was no substantial Marketing update.

7. Financial Report

Magna Dodge noted that there was a conversation with Rob Fish of the Public Service Department on the convening of different financial stakeholders and it was expressed that it may be too early to move forward on this, given all of the activity on the state and federal level. Magna Dodge expressed that she had advocated for a two-week waiting period to revisit the idea, which is in alignment with the next meeting date.

Magna Dodge noted she had reached out to Jim Anderson from Municipal Capital Markets who provided testimony in the hearings and spoke at the CUD Accelerator during which he referenced the zero-coupon bonds which could be expensive, but there would be no interest service on the bonds. Magna Dodge had recently gotten a response and was interested in meeting to better understand what was needed to move forward with this avenue as this could potentially help with Maple Broadband’s financing needs.



Magna Dodge noted she would be reaching out to Sarah Cowan, the Chief Credit Officer at the National Bank of Middlebury to better understand what they may be looking for.

Magna Dodge continued to explain that the latest Bill from the House did not include any specifics on VEDA but it has been expressed that VEDA may continue to be a stakeholder. There was discussion on VEDA's role, subordinated versus senior debt roles, and longer term sustainable funding discussions at the state level.

Nancy Cornell noted that Mr. Rob Fish explained that the CARES Act leftover money would be funneled into the CUDs and this could be up to \$400,000 less what has already been disbursed through CARES which could translate into an additional \$270,000 for Maple Broadband.

Nancy Cornell explained that the COVID-19 Bill that's moving through the federal process includes municipal monies that may be accessed by the CUDs, and there may be monies earmarked for broadband in the infrastructure funding as well. Nancy Cornell explained that Fred Kenney is writing the Rural Business Development grant on Maple Broadband's behalf due at the end of the month, and that this grant is for \$30,000. Nancy Cornell explained there was another \$150,000 grant available that's due in May through the USDA and there's a meeting with the USDA next week that seemed promising.

Nancy Cornell noted that she was also pursuing a Hannaford grant for \$50,000 and these applications are reviewed quarterly. Magna Dodge noted that there's a webinar on a \$3 MM funding source called NTIA and some of the rules around this funding are being written. Nancy Cornell explained more of the specifics around the Hannaford grant, explaining that this was a corporate grant program, and that this work could benefit Hannaford.

Nancy Cornell explained that she was writing a document to help create a roadmap for volunteers to help with grant work and thanked Magna for her help with this document.

8. New Town(s): Whiting, Bridport

Nancy Cornell noted that Fred Kenney had made connections in Addison, and there may be interest from the Selectboard

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Weybridge

9. Other Business

Steve Huffaker noted that there was interest from Ellie Hagopian in joining the Executive Committee as an at-large member and it was remarked that her experience would be very helpful. Steve Huffaker noted that her technical knowledge would be very helpful, and that she was helpful in the review of an RFP. It was agreed that she would be welcomed to sit in on Executive Committee meetings.

Adam Lougee asked if the by-laws allowed for alternates on the Executive Committee meetings, and Steve Huffaker noted he would clarify this and get back to Adam. Nancy Cornell explained that it may be beneficial to have a Leadership Team structure that included others, as this has been pointed to in grant applications.

Magna Dodge noted that Rick Scott from Bridport had been nominated as the delegate, and he seemed to be a key area stakeholder that could offer resources, and Steve Huffaker explained that he had been in contact with him.

10. Future Meeting: March 11

Steve Huffaker explained that there is a regularly scheduled meeting on March 11.

11. Adjourn

The Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:33 pm by consensus.