



Date Approved: April 15, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

April 1, 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 4:02 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
Ellie Hagopian, non-voting participant
Cy Tall, Book keeper
Robyn King, Minute Taker

2. Approve the Agenda

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

3. Previous meeting minutes approval - March 25

Magna Dodge made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the March 25 meeting which was seconded by Dan Sonneborn. Nancy Cornell noted that in Item 5, the RDBG grant was for \$30,000 instead of \$50,000.

There being no further points for modification, all members present consented to the approval of the modified March 25th meeting minutes.

4. Operations

Maple Broadband Member Towns

Bristol
Lincoln
Orwell
Shoreham
Whiting

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro

Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Waltham

Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Weybridge

a. Forms Metrics Update

Dan Sonneborn noted there were no updates on any forms in the past week.

b. Ticket System

Steve Huffaker explained this was a confirmation item that the inquiry ticket system was working, and could remove this item from next week's agenda.

c. Website Email Collection

Dan Sonneborn noted he was working on migrating this over to the desired location on the website.

5. Marketing Report

Steve Huffaker explained that he had received a PR Policy draft document from LaMoille Fibernet and explained that Dan Sonneborn could do with this what he saw fit. Steve Huffaker presented a slide in the slide deck that he uses for presentations to local Town Boards, and explained that it was a valuable set of information. Steve Huffaker noted he had done a presentation to Shoreham in the past week, and he pointed out that 39% of Addison County is unserved, and generally customizes this presentation so that he points to the percentage of underserved area in each Town. Steve Huffaker also noted there is general information presented on pre-construction costs per Town, and an ask for a commitment to providing American Rescue Act funds when they become available.

Magna Dodge asked if Adam Lougee had perspective on the timing of the American Rescue Act funds, primarily the understanding that part would be coming this year, and part would be coming later such as a year from now, and Adam Lougee explained that this was his understanding. Adam Lougee went on to explain that the parameters of this funding was still under development but that there's a three-year spending horizon, and that he estimates it could amount to \$300 per person including both town and county funds. Steve Huffaker explained that he had reached out to Vergennes to make a presentation, and that he was on a call where Congressman Peter Welch noted that the first disbursement of half of the American Rescue Act funding would be in 60 days in the next would be in one year.

6. Financial Report

a. Grants Update

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Nancy Cornell explained they had submitted the USDA SIFTAF Grant for \$150,000 and the \$30,000 Rural Business Development Grant was submitted, and there was a letter of intent submitted for the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant for \$1 MM and was thankful for the letters of support. Nancy Cornell noted that one of the members of the Financial Committee, Jessica Teets is applying for a Cerf grant through the Vermont Community Foundation which is due at the beginning of May. Nancy Cornell noted that they are open to looking for more grants, and Magna Dodge is assisting with finding grant writers.

Nancy Cornell noted that they had expended the funds to pay Fred Kenney for his grant writing, and that they may need to figure out how to continue his compensation. Nancy Cornell remarked that Fred Kenney was great to work with, and very prompt, and confirmed that his funding had expired.

b. Treasurer’s Report

Arabella Holzapfel noted that the \$70 check to pay for Zoom storage had cleared and noted that there is approximately \$26,660 in the bank. Steve Huffaker noted that he anticipated they could cancel the additional Zoom service given the reduction in meetings.

c. Other

Magna Dodge noted that in a conversation with the National Bank of Middlebury, they noted that they could provide gap funding, so long as there was a grant that would be coming in for additional funding. Magna Dodge explained that she was unsure of the timing of the grants, but this was good to know in the event they may need it and the staff member she worked with was very knowledgeable. Magna Dodge noted that she thought they could bring in Middlebury College for a discussion with the National Bank of Middlebury on potential solutions and this was a positive conversation.

Magna Dodge noted that she and Nancy Cornell had a conversation with Hugh McLaughlin who proposed a short-term appeal to get funding for high-level design, and it was explained that given the timing of the RFP, this may not be the opportune time to pursue this. Magna Dodge explained that this funding should be considered for a broader Program, and that there was also conversation about assistance in pursuing donations for low-income services which they can revisit when Maple Broadband is ready.

Magna Dodge explained she has a meeting on the coming Tuesday with Middlebury College to discuss the possibility of them furnishing a grant writer as well as funding opportunities with the National Bank of Middlebury. Magna Dodge explained that pre-construction costs will be a focus, and that construction funding seemed attractive to the National Bank of Middlebury.

7. High-Level Design RFP status

Steve Huffaker noted that they did issue answers to bidder questions and that bids are due on the 6th and the weeks after would be work on bid leveling. Steve Huffaker explained that they had received some additional information from Carole Monroe regarding the architecture that should be chosen, and after back and forth with Ellie Hagopian, it was agreed that the architecture should be incorporated into the high-level design. Steve Huffaker noted that they would like to have a meeting with WCVT on their architecture, and that they would like to discuss the high-level architecture with one or two bidders previous to awarding the work, to ensure that the architecture can be incorporated.

8. Quickbooks

Steve Huffaker explained that Cy Tall noted that it would be a good idea to have an independent Quickbooks system, as if Cy Tall took over bookkeeping it would be good to have redundancy. Steve Huffaker explained that it would be roughly \$140 a year to have a cloud-based system that would accommodate up to 4 users. Steve Huffaker explained that writing checks may be a challenge, and Cy Tall explained that with the Cloud-based system check writing may not be feasible, given the expense.

Adam Lougee confirmed that they did have a desktop-based version of Quickbooks and could continue writing checks, until there is a significant pipeline of payments, such as during a construction project. It was confirmed that status quo would be sufficient for the time-being. Cy Tall noted that she was working her way through financial documentation.

9. Update on WCVT

Steve Huffaker explained they had received a fully executed version of the NDA from WCVT that had been approved by Maple Broadband's counsel.

Steve Huffaker noted that the Vermont 10-year Telecom Plan that had been sent along was something that Maple Broadband may be interested in commenting on. Steve Huffaker noted that there was a survey involved with the effort that the organizers had advocated that citizens take part in, and he wanted to be sure if there's an effort to post this that it is coordinated. Steve Huffaker noted he imagined that the distribution of this survey could be done via delegates' posts on Front Porch Forum but he wanted to collect feedback on timing. Nancy Cornell explained that this could be good for brand awareness and she imagined the copy that could be created would be very specific. Steve Huffaker explained he had gotten copy from RISI that could be used, and it was agreed upon that at least two postings would be a good idea.

Magna Dodge explained that Town Clerks, such as the Town Clerk in Cornwall, may have email lists that they could share and distribute this through. Dan Sonneborn noted that this may also be a good opportunity to orient people to the pre-subscription survey. Steve Huffaker confirmed with Nancy Cornell that she would finalize copy and that this could be done sooner rather than later to get a few posts done in time.

Ellie Hagopian noted that she could see there being two messages with two slightly similar calls to action and asked about the timing of the Consumer Survey, and Nancy Cornell noted they could speak about this further.

10. Other Business

Nancy Cornell explained that there was an invitation to testify on H360 to the Senate Finance Committee to all of the CUDs, and the invitation was for one person from each CUD to attend a meeting on April 7th to give context on progress as a CUD. Steve Huffaker noted that he accepted the invitation.

Nancy Cornell clarified that she was creating a Resolution for Full Board consideration so that there was an ability to submit grants and for Steve Huffaker to sign off on them, and Steve Huffaker explained that he was satisfied with the idea, given the strategy for matching grants, which may be of interest to the Full Board.

11. 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 about WCVT under Title 1, Section 312, Subsection A of the Vermont Statutes which was seconded by Dan Sonneborn and all members present consented to the motion.

The Executive Committee came out of Executive Session at 5:26 pm.

12. Future Meeting: April 8

13. Adjourn

Magna Dodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:27 pm by consensus.

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