



Date Approved: April 15, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2021

4:00 PM - 5:10 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;
Dan Sonneborn, at large representative from Bristol
Ellie Hagopian, at large representative from XXXX
Magna Dodge, at large representative from Cornwall
Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer, ex-officio, Ferrisburgh
Adam Lougee, Clerk, ACRPC
Cy Tall, Bookkeeper
Robyn King, Minute Taker

2. Previous meeting minutes approval - April 1

Steve Huffaker asked if all had the opportunity to review the minutes, and there being a consensus for a deferral, Steve Huffaker explained that they would defer meeting minutes approval until the meeting on April 15th. Steve Huffaker explained there were a few edits requested in regard to names mentioned during the meeting minutes.

3. Approve the Agenda

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

Maple Broadband Member Towns

Bristol
Lincoln
Orwell
Shoreham
Whiting

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro

Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Waltham

Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Weybridge

4. Operations Report

Ellie Hagopian explained that there had been no activity in the past week, which is to be expected and that there would be an Operations Committee Meeting on Wednesday of the following week. After discussion, Ellie Hagopian noted that she would use Teams for the meeting instead of the Zoom platform, and Steve Huffaker noted that Ellie Hagopian could report back on its efficacy and any issues experienced.

5. Marketing Report

Dan Sonneborn noted that Steve Huffaker had sent along a document from Lamoille that detailed strategies on Public Relations, standardization, and policy on public-facing communications. Dan Sonneborn explained he would like to customize this for Maple Broadband and share this document with the Executive Committee for review.

Dan Sonneborn noted that he and Ellie Hagopian had worked on a document collaboratively to work out the types of resources that they wanted to share with the community and presented this to the Executive Committee. Dan Sonneborn explained that this effort was to conceptualize a way to define topics that could be shared with the public and a timeline to do so. Dan Sonneborn noted that the organization of this work that was being presented provided topics covered, platforms to use, time horizons, and metrics and was intended to be a content calendar.

Dan Sonneborn asked for feedback on the plan presented and its structure, and Steve Huffaker asked how they would measure success based on the metrics identified. Dan Sonneborn gave an example of a Facebook post possibly increasing followers and other efforts potentially increasing website traffic.

Magna Dodge asked about the relationship between platform use and awareness metrics, especially if there are a variety of platforms used and the end-metric relates to only one platform. Magna Dodge went on to explain that she was interested in knowing more about segmentation in measurement, as well as interpretations that could be drawn from different activities. Dan Sonneborn explained that he would be able to identify the source of the traffic as it pertains to the website, and that to begin with, they would like to drive awareness. Dan Sonneborn noted that raising brand awareness at this stage was of value to the organization.

Dan Sonneborn noted that if the structure of the document was agreeable to the Executive Committee, he would be seeking volunteers to help with posting the content so that this didn't fall on the Executive Committee Members solely. Dan Sonneborn

explained, as an example, that there were five blog posts planned over the next five months, and he may be seeking volunteers to see if they can commit to creating material such as blog posts on certain topics or twitter posts, or Front Porch Forum posts.

Magna Dodge noted that she thought that there may be candidates who may be able to help from the Finance Committee, which Dan Sonneborn was supportive of.

6. Financial Report

a. Grants

Magna Dodge explained that with the assistance of Fred Kenney, they had submitted the USDA grants that were due in March.

Magna Dodge noted that during her meeting with Middlebury College, there was an agreement that Middlebury College would take on the \$1 MM Northern Borders Regional Planning Commission Grant, which would represent a huge cost savings to Maple Broadband given that it could take 16-24 hours to complete. Magna Dodge explained that there was also an opportunity to develop a deeper relationship with Middlebury College. Magna Dodge noted that this grant was due on May 14th, and the letter of intent had already been sent. Magna Dodge noted that this represented a great opportunity with Middlebury College and the individuals she met with were very enthusiastic.

b. Treasurer

Arabella Holzapfel noted that the balance was currently \$26,662.06 and she will be signing a check next Tuesday for an entity that helps take minutes for CUDs, and the check was in the amount of \$17.

c. Other

Cy Tall noted that she will be putting together a document with basic guidelines and policy on who is authorized to sign different types of documents, how money moves, and that this will be more significant when there's additional dollars administered by Maple Broadband.

Magna Dodge noted that Middlebury College offered a summer intern if there is enough work for that intern to focus on, and that she relayed that they were grateful but noted the need to discuss workload and capacity. Magna Dodge explained that Middlebury College noted that they anticipated this would be an

exciting opportunity for an intern, and they may be able to help with GIS, although ACPRC may have this capacity as well.

Dan Sonneborn asked if an intern might be able to help with social media. Magna Dodge explained that the responsibilities of the intern could be flexible, and Dan Sonneborn expressed an interest in hosting an intern. Steve Huffaker expressed an understanding that the expectation might be for full or near-full time work.

Steve Huffaker explained that the high-level design RFP included GIS work and that after discussions with WCVT it was assumed that they would be working to refine what was produced during the high-level design to ensure consistency. Steve Huffaker explained part of the recent conversation was where hubs may be located or where electronics may be located, and it would be good to be able to confirm locations with stakeholders. Steve Huffaker explained that the turnaround after awarding the RFP was likely to be fairly quick, and Ellie Hagopian confirmed that it would be in the 9-14-week range. Steve Huffaker noted that this meant that there would be a significant focus on this work over the summer.

Adam Lougee asked about the potential for a door-knocking campaign, and Steve Huffaker noted that this kind of activity seemed more appropriate for shortly before the build, but he appreciated the need to continue to be present and acknowledged in the greater community. Magna Dodge noted that she thought door-knocking seemed challenging as an activity to task someone to do. Adam Lougee explained that there have been solar companies, like SunCommon who have used these tactics and had been successful.

Adam Lougee explained that ACRPC would be happy to share an intern and support a GIS role as these Middlebury students are of high-quality. Steve Huffaker explained he would like to get back to Middlebury College in a timely manner, and Magna Dodge committed to reaching out to the intern coordinator to better understand current opportunities.

7. High-Level Design RFP status

Ellie Hagopian explained that they had eight responses to the RFP, one of which did not respond in a way that qualified them. Ellie Hagopian noted she had reviewed the responses and created a spreadsheet-based tool for evaluation. Ellie Hagopian went



on to note that the pricing had a significant range, and all the firms had design expertise with some having specific expertise in field-verification, operations, or building services. Ellie Hagopian noted that at least four applicants seemed very strong, and she was optimistic about opportunities for selection. Ellie Hagopain explained that she and Steve were meeting next week to review the results and there was an expectation that they would be able to report back to the Executive Committee at the next meeting.

Magna Dodge noted that the high-level survey cost estimate was \$200 per mile and asked if she could report back so there was a better sense of a need to adjust projections. Ellie Hagopian explained that some of the responses were by foot or by mile and she would standardize this information for analysis. Steve Huffaker explained these metrics may be important for grants as well, and that a preliminary estimate was \$200,000 for the high-level design which still seemed reasonable. Steve Huffaker explained the review process, noting that they would be doing a comparison, possibly reaching out to bidders, reaching out to references, and doing follow-up interviews for clarification and consistency on architecture.

Magna Dodge noted that the \$200,000 figure represented the entire county and clarified that the RFP was for the non-WCVT territory and that if considering the territory included, it would be roughly \$160,000-\$170,000. Steve Huffaker explained there were quality respondents that were under budget and they would need to carefully consider quality in their review. Steve Huffaker explained that they still had time before the next Full Board meeting so they could deeply consider the options for a future presentation.

Adam Lougee asked about outreach to Green Mountain Power (GMP) and VELCO and their ownership of helpful infrastructure. Steve Huffaker explained that data on the poles that GMP and VELCO may own would be in the state GIS database, so there is solid information about the pole infrastructure. Steve Huffaker explained that Carole Monroe from ValleyNet noted that a typical pole survey could be abbreviated, given that GMP has been cooperative in adding information about the poles to each pole.

Adam Lougee acknowledged that he understood GMP to be very cooperative and suggested outreach to GMP and VELCO so that the two entities could mutually understand activities and opportunity for collaboration. Steve Huffaker explained he in his delegate role, he had gotten an update for 16 passings on one street from CCI.

Maple Broadband Member Towns

Bristol
Lincoln
Orwell
Shoreham
Whiting

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro

Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Waltham

Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Weybridge

Steve Huffaker asked Adam Lougee for a VELCO contact person and noted that the outreach message could be for an introduction and intent of activity.

Ellie Hagopian noted that the state GIS maps may be out of date, and it may be helpful to ask for any up-to-date information they may be able to share. Steve Huffaker explained there were two separate layers for VELCO and GMP on the state GIS maps, but noted that it would be good to verify updates.

Arabella Holzapfel asked if there was a role for WCVT to assess the bids. Steve Huffaker explained this was a good idea, and he would have a more robust answer when there was more information about WCVT's role. Steve Huffaker noted that there seems to be a general desire to include WCVT in the assessment of bidder responses, and more information on that should be available in coming days. Steve Huffaker explained absent a formal partnership, it makes sense to include WCVT's input.

Steve Huffaker explained he had received an email from Carole Monroe asking if she could share the RFP with other CUDs, which seemed like a positive indicator.

Ellie Hagopian noted that they would be compiling a list of questions they would ask the references, and it was agreed that keeping WCVT as part of the focus would be important as would lessons learned.

8. Operating Agreement Update

Steve Huffaker noted that the Governing Board meeting the previous evening was the most recent update. Steve Huffaker explained that he and Magna Dodge had met with Roger Nishi and it was a challenge to work through the proposed structure. Steve Huffaker explained it was a two-fee structure, one for passing a subscriber, and another for the subscription. Steve Huffaker explained there was an upcoming meeting with ValleyNet and part of the conversation would focus on options for different operating models.

Ellie Hagopian asked about WCVT familiarity of models or preferences. Magna Dodge explained that while it was on the table for discussion, there wasn't clarity on the issue and that there was a focus on arriving on a model that works for both entities. Magna Dodge noted that being as simple and as transparent as possible is the mutual goal, and there is an understanding that leasing fiber has been done by others so there should be a way to come to consensus. Magna Dodge explained that the conversation with ValleyNet should result in ideas on how to adjust models or levers to meet needs.

Magna Dodge explained that some of the proposal as it currently stands needs some balancing between the organizations.

Magna Dodge explained that both parties agreed to meet for several hours over the next few weeks to work through various parts of the operating agreement and there were a lot of components. Steve Huffaker explained that while at first, there was a focus on financial model inputs, it was good to take a step back to speak at a higher-level. Steve Huffaker explained that Magna Dodge prepared a list of questions that helped with overall clarification. Ellie Hagopian explained she could understand preliminary concerns raised by WCVT with the current operating model, and how the different fees might have impacts given the rural build.

Arabella Holzapfel asked for clarification on the scope, if it was the network that would be built in Maple Broadband's territory, and if WCVT would be charged for each house passed, and an additional fee for each house that Maple Broadband's network would be connected to. Steve Huffaker noted that WCVT would be taking in the revenue so it is a charge for using Maple Broadband's infrastructure. Steve Huffaker confirmed that Arabella's understanding was correct. Magna Dodge explained that there was also clarification on strategy on drops during the recent conversation with WCVT, and Steve Huffaker noted it was a valuable back and forth with other points like insurance discussed.

9. Future Meeting: April 15

Steve Huffaker noted there were three weeks until the next Full Board meeting so there was a bit of time to select a firm for high level design to propose to the Full Board.

10. Adjourn

Magna Dodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:04 pm by consensus.