

Addison County Communications Union District
DbA Maple Broadband

Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 3, 2021

5:00 p.m. – 6:30p.m.

VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89422191775?pwd=ZlJlYlVlGSEhEVm4lUUhOSHFpS2YzUT09>

Meeting ID: 894 2219 1775

Passcode: 571606

Join by phone: 1 (646) 558-8656

Steve Huffaker, Chair of the Addison County Communications Union District (“ACCUD”) confirmed a quorum was present, welcomed the representatives of the member towns, and called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

1. Welcome/Introductions/Roll Call

The following people were present:

Carl Siebecker, Delegate Shoreham;
Dan Sonneborn, Delegate Bristol;
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;
Howard Hall, Delegate Panton;
Paul Vaczy, Alternate Salisbury;
Magna Dodge, Delegate Cornwall;
Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer, Ferrisburgh;
Jancy Butterworth, Alternate Lincoln;
Spencer Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;
Mark Gibson, Alternate Bristol;
Ellie Hagopian, Alternate New Haven;
Paul Forlenza, Delegate Lincoln;
Rick Scott, Delegate Bridport;
Bill Johnson, Alternate Cornwall.

Adam Lougee, Clerk, non-member representing Addison County Regional Planning Commission (“ACRPC”).

2. **Agenda Approval.** Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Hearing no changes, Magna Dodge moved the agenda. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion, which passed without dissent.**

3. **Adoption of February Meeting minutes:** The minutes were posted to the website and distributed prior to the meeting. After noting some non-substantive alterations to the minutes, **Nancy Cornell moved to adopt the minutes as amended. Carl Seibecker seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.**

4. **Committee Structure Memorandum:** Steve noted he was following up on the Committee requests the Executive Committee had received.
Steve will be sending information out to the Marketing and Operations Committees this week after the meeting.
Magna Dodge, the Chair of the Finance Committee will also be setting up a Finance Committee meeting shortly.

5. **Maple Broadband Operator Partner Update:** Steve noted that the Executive Committee had worked hard on the Board's behalf since the last meeting trying to locate the best possible operator partner for Maple Broadband. Following February's authorization by this Board, the Executive Committee interviewed both WCVT and Valley.net as potential Operating Partners. Following the interviews, the Executive Committee concluded that WCVT was the best operator Partner to pursue. As authorized by the Board in February, the Executive Committee entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with WCVT to work together to determine what a partnership agreement might look like. Steve noted this is a great first step. However, he also cautioned that we have a lot of work to do and the negotiations may result in nothing. He confirmed the Full Board will need to approve any operating agreement the Executive Committee develops. He is hopeful that the operating negotiations will be quick and successful and that Maple Broadband can use the information it learns to build out its business plan.

Steve also explained that Maple Broadband is also looking for partners to build the fiber system. However, as recommended by the Feasibility Study, securing an operator is our most important priority, as it will allow Maple Broadband to identify and define all of its other costs and a strategy for developing a build-out plan to put out to bid.

6. **New Addison County Members:** Steve reported that ACCUD membership expanded to 18. Bridport and Whiting have joined. Steve welcomed Rick Scott, the Delegate from Bridport. Steve and Adam will continue to reach out to Addison and Vergennes.

7. **Equal Access to Broadband.** Nancy Cornell explained that as a communications union district, Maple Broadband desires to make sure the network it builds can provide access to all that need it, including low-income individuals and families. Nancy requested that she would like Maple Broadbands support for her joining the Board of Equal Access to Broadband Charitable fund as a representative of Maple Broadband. **Magna Dodge moved to support Nancy Cornell**

representing Maple Broadband on the Board of Equal Access to Broadband. Spence Putnam seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

8. **Treasurer's Report.** Steve noted Maple Broadband still had a fund balance of \$26,731, or about the same as we had last month. We are currently incurring no significant costs beyond minute taking for the Executive Committee.

9. **Clerk's Report:** None.

10. **Other Business:** The Full Board considered the following items:

- a. Steve asked if anyone knew of a volunteer with skills in QuickBooks that could serve as a Treasurer. **Rick Scott stated he had a person he would ask.**
- b. Steve noted that Billy Sneed had stepped down from the Executive Committee. Steve thanked Billy for his work in forming Maple Broadband, especially his work in establishing its operations. **Steve noted the Executive Committee needed another member and invited members interested in joining to speak to him or another member of the Executive Committee.**
- c. Nancy Cornell noted that the Finance Committee was pursuing two USDA grants and needed resolutions of the Full Board to pursue the applications.
 1. Motion to authorize Maple Broadband to make application to the USDA for a Rural Business Development Grant of \$30,000, with a 1:1 match; and to authorize Maple Broadband Board Chair Steve Huffaker to sign and submit the grant application. **Paul Forlenza moved to approve applying for the RBEG grant noted above. Carl Seibecker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
 2. Motion to authorize Maple Broadband to make application to the USDA for a Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant of \$150,000 for consulting services related to developing a preliminary design for the Addison County broadband network; and to authorize Maple Broadband Chair Steve Huffaker to sign and submit the grant application. **Ross Conrad moved to apply for the USDA Technical Assistance grant noted above. Paul Forlenza seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
- d. Paul Forlenza noted that the Hotspot created in Lincoln is experiencing issues because it is tied to the wrong account. Steve Huffaker volunteered to help solve the issue.

11. **Future Meeting Schedule.** April 7th, 2021.

12. **Adjourn** – Magna Dodge moved to adjourn and the members voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk