



Approved: September 23, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District (dba) Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2021

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Location: 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury VT

VIA ZOOM

1. Call to order

Recording of the meeting was announced and the meeting was called to order at 3:34 pm by the Chair

PRESENT

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, at large representative from New Haven

Adam Lougee, Clerk, Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC)

Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer (ex-officio)

2. Approve the Agenda

Vote to approve the agenda was inadvertently missed. Agreement with the agenda was demonstrated by the group proceeding through all the items in the posted agenda with no changes.

3. Previous meeting minutes approval: September 2

Magna D. MOVED / Nancy C. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes with changes specified by Ellie H. Motion passed.

4. Financial

a. Grants update

- Nancy C. asked Vermont Community Foundation for an extension of the grant period, as all funds granted are not yet spent.
- Maple Broadband (MB) was not awarded a grant from Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training (CFTAT) from USDA.
- The Executive Committee is likely to hear the decision about the Rural Business Development grant from USDA by the end of September, as this is the end of the fiscal year for USDA.
- Coming up - the opportunity to apply for a grant from Northern Borders Regional Commission. Nancy C. expects that Request for Proposals (RFP) for this grant to be available soon. A grant writer will be needed for that application. In preparation for this grant application, the grant writing basics document needs to be updated.
- The Town of Weybridge has recently approved an allocation of \$40,000 for MB, from their American Recovery Act Plan (ARPA) town funds.

Addison

Bridport

Bristol

Cornwall

Ferrisburgh

Leicester

Lincoln

Middlebury

Monkton

New Haven

Orwell

Panton

Ripton

Salisbury

Shoreham

Starksboro

Vergennes

Waltham

Weybridge

Whiting

- Steve H. has completed the draft of materials for a packet to be distributed to delegates and alternates in each member town. Because Whiting has no delegate to MB, it was suggested that the packet be sent directly to the Whiting Select Board.
- Adam L. had a positive communication with Katie Buckley at the Vermont League of Cities and Towns regarding their messaging to towns about ARPA funds.
- A written agreement between MB and member towns allocating funds is in draft form, that includes the agreement that MB will be responsible for all the mandated accounting and reporting of ARPA funds.
- The application for the pre-construction grant administered by Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) is in process. The committee discussed line items in the budget for this application in regard to marketing, legal fees, insurance, network design, and contingency funds of 20% (due to variables). Next steps - Steve H. will complete the draft by this weekend, Magna D. will review. The goal is to submit the application by September 14 or 15.

b. Auditor RFP - decision

Magna D. will review and consult with Ellie H. Approval is postponed until the next meeting. Meanwhile Ellie H. will distribute the list of potential bidders to all.

a. Bookkeeper search update

Cy Tall is recommending that MB focus on using bookkeeper resources at Addison County Regional Planning Commission. The Committee will follow up with Cy T. on this matter at the next meeting.

b. Treasurer monthly update - standing agenda item, not due this week.

5. Operations

a. Ellie report

One person is interested in fiber, one person is interested in the newsletter, and one person filled out the "get help" form to find the internet provider(s) serving their area.

b. High-level design update

Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) has a deadline of September 13 for delivery of the high level design and has asked for an extension to September 20, as they have been engaged doing as requested in a discovery of cabled and un-cabled poles in the MB service area. The results of this discovery has provided very useful information relevant to the build sequence. VPS has been very responsive, doing exactly what MB has asked them to do. The new deadline of September 20 is thus quite reasonable.

c. Insurance update

MB currently has insurance coverage with two companies. During the construction phase, Green Mountain Power will require that MB also have umbrella coverage. Estimated cost for umbrella coverage has been requested but not yet received. For the purposes of the 18 month pre-construction grant, the additional cost of umbrella coverage need not be included.

6. Marketing

a. Dan report

- Public website has been updated to allow for direct link to newsletter subscriptions
- After the conversation with Pivot at the September 16 meeting, next steps will be formulated on an RFP for a marketing partner
- Steve H. asked Dan S. to coordinate with the committee members for a demo of Crowd Fiber

- Dan S. said he had not yet contacted the person who would like to volunteer to write content, but will follow up with him.
- It was agreed that Adam L. could be assigned a license so he can post information to the website.

7. Other business

a. Modified process for reviewing/approving minutes

Steve H. suggested a modification to how drafted minutes are distributed, reviewed, corrected, and approved. Minute-taker Sharon T. will distribute her drafted minutes in PDF format to all members. Members are asked to review and send any needed changes to Sharon by email. She will then make any corrections and send the corrected version to all. Approval will be on a two-week cycle, instead of the current one-week cycle, to give more time for this new process to take place.

b. Magna D. wondered if MB would be interested in having a full time intern for the month of January from Middlebury College, during the so called "J-term". A previous such intern assisted with GIS work.

c. It was mentioned that there may be only one vendor that can supply cable. However, an RFP still needs to be done, according to the financial policies, which Adam L. confirmed.

d. Ellie H. asked Steve H. how she should respond to the person in the Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom area who asked when they could expect broadband service. She emphasized the importance of a timely response. Steve H. said he will formulate some answers once the VCBB grant application is submitted. Meanwhile, the FAQ on the website might provide some answers for this inquirer.

8. Executive session - not needed

9. Future meeting: September 16 - Pivot Group presentation (4:00)

10. Adjourn

Magna D. MOVED / Nancy C. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker