

Maple Broadband
Addison County Communications Union District

Monthly Meeting Minutes

October 6, 2021

5:00 p.m. – 6:30p.m.

VIA ZOOM

To attend the meeting via your computer or mobile device:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88108054091?pwd=K3drdUdxempoeE5GY3VGVm1aQ0tsQT09>

To attend the meeting remotely by phone, without video:

call +1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 881 0805 4091, Passcode: 973267

Nancy Cornell took the roll call listed below.

Steve Huffaker, Chair of Maple Broadband welcomed the representatives of the member towns, and called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

1. Welcome/Introductions/Roll Call. The following people were present:

Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;
Dan Sonneborn, Delegate Bristol;
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;
Magna Dodge, Delegate Cornwall;
Cy Tall, Alternate Cornwall;
Mike Sheets, Alternate Bridport;
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;
Carl Siebecker, Delegate Shoreham;
Spence Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;
Howard Hall, Delegate Pantton;
Paul Vaczy, Delegate Salisbury;
Ellie Hagopian, Alternate New Haven;
Jim Walsh, Delegate New Haven

Adam Lougee, Clerk, non-member representing Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Will Anderson, representative from VCUDA

2. Agenda Approval. Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Magna Dodge moved approval of the agenda. Dan Sonneborn seconded the motion, which passed by a voice vote/show of hands.**

3. Approve meeting minutes September 1, 2021. **Magna Dodge moved approval. Shannon**

Haggett seconded the motion to approve the September 1, 2021 minutes. All approved the minutes from the previous meeting as amended to include corrected grant amounts.

4. Grant Report. Nancy reported that the grant report had a little bad news, a lot of good news and some great news. The bad news is that we did not get our USDA for \$150,000. The good news, includes:
 - a. we received an extension from Vermont Community Foundation on the grants they previously gave us.
 - b. USDA reported that in the new federal budget they will award us \$30,000.
 - c. We are currently operating from a \$62,000 grant from the DPS.
 - d. We are one of two Vermont applicants with WCVT for an NTIA grant of \$8,000,000.

And lastly, for Great news, MB received a pre-construction grant of \$2.3 M from VCBB to fund all of our pre-construction activities. Nancy specifically thanked Steve and Magna for their good work on the grant.

Steve explained we had already started our pre-construction work with our engineering firm VantagePoint Solutions. This puts us one step closer to going to construction in 2022. Steve also noted that while we have received notice that we will get the money, it has not been awarded yet and we have very little money in the bank. He asked delegates to ask their towns to do what they can to support MB. Any money will help us provide service sooner and for less cost.

5. Treasurer's Report. Cy Tall, Maple Broadband's Treasurer, sent financials prior to the meeting. Steve asked if any had any questions. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.
6. Business Plan. - Magna reported that we had sent a close to final draft back to our consultants to create a final business plan. As we advance our mission, the business plan will need to change, but having a good, solid plan will serve us well as we move forward and adapt it.
7. Auditor RFP Update. Steve reported we need to create an audit for the end of the year. We have created an RFP and are soliciting responses from auditing firms. We are also working on our budget and annual report for 2022. We need to approve the budget and annual report prior to October 21, 2021 to satisfy our State reporting requirements. Therefore, we need to hold a meeting prior to that date. Steve polled the delegates about a date for a special meeting. **The delegates chose 3:00 p.m. on October 15th as a time for a special meeting to approve the budget and annual report.**
8. Pre-Construction tasks update. Steve summarized, we have a window of opportunity to do the work in Maple Broadband's entire territory. We expect WCVT will work with Maple Broadband to do all the pre-construction work in Maple Broadband's fiber territory with the funding available.

After funding pre-construction, we hope to purchase all long lead time items (Cable, electronics) so we will be ready to build in 2022. WCVT will warehouse all pre-purchased equipment. In order to make this work, Maple Broadband will need money beyond the State and Federal funding. Maple is currently looking to find cable. Steve's investigation revealed that we could get fiber in 26 weeks, but we will need to move fast. Steve estimates we will spend at least \$600,000 on our initial purchase of fiber. Steve intends to issue an RFP for fiber shortly and hopes to bring results to the full board at its November meeting and ask for approval. Steve is also working with

our operating partner, WCVT, to purchase the same strand type of cable that they use to pool resources so we can both build. Steve noted that scarcity is everywhere. We also need to pre-purchase network electronics, but cable is the longest lead time item.

Steve also introduced Will Anderson from VCUDA. Will noted that a lot of other CUDs are interested in purchasing fiber. VCUDA is interested in bulk purchasing for all and is working with VCBB to purchase up to 100,000 miles of fiber cable from NRTC.

VCUDA can only purchase 2 types of fiber.
Looking at 48 strand and 244 strand cable
About 50-50 of each type.
26 week wait time

Will noted VCUDA hoped this will help fulfill Maple Broadband and all other CUD's need for fiber. They recognize they cannot do it all, but can help substantially.

Steve thanked Will. Steve noted he hopes their efforts will bear fruit. However, he also noted that Maple Broadband will hedge its bet and also try to find cable itself to keep on track for construction next year.

Steve also noted that labor will also be an issue. Workers to string fiber are in high demand. Maple Broadband will continue to drive toward a build in 2022. Maple Broadband will issue an RFP for contractors this winter for the beginning of the construction season. We cannot get a good quote until we have a detailed design and therefore we need to wait on creating an RFP for contractors until we have construction bid documents.

9. Executive Session: None needed.

10. Other Business: Steve spoke about our partner WCVT. WCVT has been building fiber for years. Per our network management agreement, they must build as much fiber as Maple Broadband. Over the next months we will be working with WCVT to ensure they honor that commitment. The NTIA grant we applied for jointly with WCVT would give WCVT the ability to build to 1,600 addresses.

Steve also noted he/Magna is available to address questions any selectboards may have regarding Maple Broadband's need for funding, including ARPA funding. He noted we should have the business plan next week.

11. Future Meeting: Our next meeting will be on October 15, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

12. Adjourn: **Magna Dodge moved to adjourn, and the members voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:05 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk