

**Maple Broadband**  
**Addison County Communications Union District**

**Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**February 2, 2022**

**5:00 p.m. – 6:30p.m.**

**VIA ZOOM**

**To attend the meeting via your computer or mobile device:**

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85946155619?pwd%3DSTFNeEJNN091dBYeXhXa0tPVGfjZz09>

Meeting ID: 830 5303 8682

Passcode: 164132

Join by phone: +1 646 558 8656

Steve Huffaker, Chair of Maple Broadband welcomed the representatives of the member towns.

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

Paul Nikolich, Alternate Addison;  
Rick Scott, Delegate Bridport;  
Mike Sheets, Alternate Bridport;  
Dan Sonneborn, Delegate Bristol;  
Cy Tall, Alternate Cornwall;  
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;  
Kate Mc Gowan, Alternate Lincoln;  
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;  
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;  
Mark Boltz-Robinson, Delegate Monkton;  
Ellie Hagopian, Alternate New Haven;  
Jim Robinson, Delegate Orwell;  
Howard Hall, Delegate Pantons;  
Paul Vaczy, Delegate Salisbury;  
Carl Seibecker, Delegate Shoreham;  
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;  
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;  
Andrew Martin, Delegate Waltham;  
Spence Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;

Adam Lougee, Clerk, non-member representing Addison County Regional Planning Commission

**2. Agenda Approval.** Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Paul Nicolich moved approval of the agenda. Carl Seibecker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**

3. Approve meeting minutes from January 5, 2022. **Ross Conrad moved approval of the minutes from January. Shannon Haggett seconded the motion to approve the minutes. All approved the minutes from January's meetings, which passed by a voice vote/show of hands.**
4. Meeting Location (Hybrid/Virtual): Steve noted that the Governor had changed the open meeting law to allow people to meet all virtually during the Covid pandemic. Steve asked whether we wanted to do that. He asked Adam at ACRPC for his thoughts. Adam noted that he was willing to host a physical location as long as delegates wanted one. Steve thanked Adam and noted that we would keep a hybrid option in place as long as Adam felt safe holding in person meetings.
5. Grant Report. Nancy reported that Maple Broadband and WCVT are jointly one of two Vermont applicants for an NTIA grant of \$8,000,000 and that we expect to hear that announcement shortly. We have received a \$30,000 grant from USDA, but it will not be funded until the federal budget passes. We have our pre-construction grant for \$2.3M and will be amending that grant to ask for a little extra. Steve and Magna are working on our construction grant and expect to complete that application by Mid-February.
6. Pre-Construction Grant. Steve noted that we currently have \$2.3M from this grant. He noted that this funding will cover us for all non-construction work for 2022. Steve noted we are in the process of asking for an additional \$800,000 - \$1,000,000 to cover our capacity work in 2023 and 2024. We hope to submit that supplemental application later this month and will update the Board next month.
7. Town Contribution Update. Steve reported that 8 of our 20 towns had contributed \$335,000. He was pleased with that to date and encouraged delegates from towns that had not contributed to speak with their selectboard.
8. Marketing Agency Selection: Steve noted that we are currently hiring a marketing firm to help us with pre-subscription and other marketing services. The pre-subscription will be key to where we go to help our cashflow when we start delivering service. He handed the floor to Dan Sonneborn from Bristol to discuss the marketing RFP and results to date. Dan noted that since we are volunteers, we need help to make sure we reach our customers professionally and consistently. We reached out to 10 or so marketing firms to help us. Dan noted we are still speaking with two finalists. We have a range of numbers from our two finalists, but still need to complete our interviews with them. **Dan moved that the Full Board enable the Executive Committee to choose a marketing firm for between a range of \$125,000 and \$185,000 for the first year of service. Shannon Haggett seconded the motion.**

The board moved to a discussion phase. They discussed local consultants versus those from elsewhere. Dan noted we had solicited local talent, but had not received as many local bids. We also set the bid criteria in the RFP and need to follow it.

At the end of discussion Steve asked for a vote on the motion. **The board voted unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands to approve the motion.**

9. Pre-Construction tasks update. Steve stated that Maple Broadband was moving forward with its pre-construction tasks. VantagePoint Solutions ("VPS"), Maple Broadband's engineering firm,

has its design work well underway. Additionally VPS has a crew on the ground in the region to field verify data. They will start down in Orwell and work north. They are currently driving the roads to ground truth the network they designed in high level design. Next they will work on pole surveying to see what work on existing poles needs to be done for us to hang fiber on those poles.

10. Material Pre-Purchase Update: Steve noted we are in a hurry to purchase equipment, but we also need to wait on our engineer's findings to make sure we purchase the correct equipment. We have a line of credit to pre-purchase equipment. We are currently developing an RFP for electronics to get those out to bid for pre-purchase. He hopes to have that out and back so we can ask the board for approval for pre-purchase of the electronics at our March 2nd meeting. He also expects to get an RFP out for cabinets, and present those bids, if not the final choice to the board also in March, so we will really need a quorum in March.
11. Executive Session. **Steve Huffaker moved to find that premature public knowledge of Maple Broadband's contractual negotiations would clearly place Maple Broadband at a substantial disadvantage in those negotiations. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion and all approved. Steve then moved that Maple Broadband enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Maple Broadband's contractual negotiations. Spence Putnam seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss confidential business matters at 6:42.**
12. Other Business: Steve noted we still need to get a delegate from Whiting. We continue to look. Steve asked other delegates if they have a friend in Whiting willing to serve to ask them to apply to the selectboard to serve as a delegate.  
  
Rick Scott asked about the cost of our marketing proposal. He expressed some concern about our customer service acquisition costs.
13. Future Meeting: Our next meeting will be on March 2, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.
14. Adjourn: Nancy Cornell **moved to adjourn seconded and the members voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:50 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk