

Maple Broadband
Addison County Communications Union District

Monthly Meeting Minutes

July 6, 2022

5:00 p.m. – 6:30p.m.

VIA ZOOM

To attend the meeting via your computer or mobile device:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86582210488?pwd=VnZ3MlIrdHo0dmdDeGtjS28yMTNrUT09> Meeting ID:

865 8221 0488

Passcode: 568348

Join by phone: +1 646 558 8656

Steve Huffaker, Chair of Maple Broadband opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the representatives of the member towns.

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

Paul Nikolich, Delegate Addison;
Rick Scott, Delegate Bridport;
Mike Sheets, Alternate Bridport;
Dan Sonneborn, Delegate Bristol;
Magna Dodge, Delegate Cornwall;
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;
Kate McGowan, Alternate Lincoln;
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;
Ellie de Villiers, Delegate New Haven;
Jim Robinson, Delegate Orwell;
Howard Hall, Delegate Pantons;
Billy Sneed, Alternate Ripton;
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;
Andrew Martin, Delegate Waltam;
Spence Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;

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

Cy Tall, Treasurer Cornwall

Sophia Holm, Middlebury College Intern

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

3. Approve meeting minutes from May 10, 2022: **Ross Conrad moved approval of the June meeting minutes. Shannon Hasggett seconded the motion to approve the minutes. All approved the minutes, by a voice vote/show of hands.**
4. Public Comments: No members of the public attended to make comments.
5. Construction Grant Update: Steve noted that our construction grant is still in limbo at VCBB. Steve shared a timeline regarding actions he intends to take on behalf of MapleBroadband within the next month. He noted he hopes for approval of the Construction Grant next Monday. If we successfully receive the construction grant, Steve noted we will hold a special meeting at the end of July where the Executive Board will request permission to award contracts for construction of Phase 1A of Maple Broadband's network. The Board continued its discussion with a number of questions that Steve addressed speculating possible outcomes. In the end all agreed to wait for the VCBB decision and then reconvene later in July to move forward.
6. Rural Business Development Grant: Nancy noted that we had received this \$30,000 grant from USDA. She is working on the paperwork for USDA. The grant is for operational expenditures. We hope to have the cash soon.
7. Delegate Appointments Reminder: Steve noted that two towns, Leicester and Whiting, had not appointed delegates and that we are still looking for delegates from those member municipalities. **Hugh McLaughlin stated he would pursue a Leicester delegate.**
8. WCVT Pre-Construction subgrant: Steve shared a chart that we will use comparing build rates between WCVT and Maple Broadband. **He stated WCVT will provide a progress report on its activities in the Maple Broadband region at our next Board meeting.**
9. Operations Report.
 - a. Onsite Project Development Representative and vote: Steve noted Maple Broadband has received responses back to the RFP it issued for an Owner's representative to oversee the contractor constructing the line. Steve noted we had received three bids. Ellie de Villiers reviewed a summary of the three bids with the Board. She noted that both Byers Engineering and VantagePoint Solutions had submitted good bids. She also noted that the Executive Board recommended proceeding with VantagePoint Solutions. Since they have designed the system, they are very familiar with it and will not need time to get up to speed. We have also been very happy with their service in the engineering phase and expect they will use elements of the design team for the inspection. Ellie explained that the RFP was for Phase 1A of construction. However, she also noted that if we liked the Owner's Reps work, we would like to extend the contract. **On behalf of the Executive Committee, Ellie moved to award the Onsite Project Representative Contract to VantagePoint Solutions Steve Huffaker seconded the motion. All approved by a voice vote, show of hands.**
 - b. Hub Site Development: Steve noted this work is moving forward. Andrew Martin, our delegate from Waltham, has been very helpful in creating construction documents for our hub locations. We have an agreement in principle with a willing landowner for our first site and will sign it pending receiving the construction grant. We will go to bid very soon.
10. Town Contribution Update: Steve reported that given the operational challenges noted above, he

had not solicited funds, but expects to solicit funds again after the construction grant award. Andrew Martin stated Waltham will be making a contribution to Maple Broadband

11. Other Business: Dan Sonneborn reported that the Marketing committee had selected a marketing firm, vetted the contract and will be ready to go soon, timed with our construction cycle and the VCBB decision. Dan also noted that after we receive the construction grant we will need to start managing its subscribers. Toward that end the marketing committee has been looking at subscriber management software that it would like to purchase shortly. Dan estimated the cost of the software at about \$20,000. After some discussion, Nancy Cornell moved that Mable Broadband authorize the Executive Board to expend up to \$25,000 per year for subscriber management software. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.

The Executive Board noted that they would like to bring on some staff once we receive the construction grant. They will want to hire an Executive Director after we receive the construction grant.

Financial Information. Cy Tall noted she had sent out financial information before the meeting. She noted the line of credit had allowed Maple Broadband to purchase long lead time materials so we will be ready to build this fall. Our cash flow remains positive, largely because of the line.

12. Future Meeting: **Steve Huffaker moved that Maple Broad not meet in the month of August. He noted we will be meeting at the end of July and that August will be a good time for a break. Shannon Haggett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.** Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 7th, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. unless Steve feels the need to call a special meeting in July after the VCBB meeting. Steve will let all delegates and alternates know the result of the VCBB meeting as soon after they release their decision as he can. WCVT will join us in September.
13. Adjourn: **Magna Dodge moved to adjourn. Dan Sonneborn seconded the motion and the members voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:20 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk