

# Maple Broadband Addison County Communications Union District

## Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 7, 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/89076150730?pwd=MklXUHcvcHpWME1aMEIEOW1MYjZyUT09>

Meeting ID: 890 7615 0730

Passcode: 374757

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. Given the packed agenda, Steve moved quickly to introduce Roger Nishi and asked Roger to present WCVT build plans for Maple Broadband towns.

1. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom: Build plans for Maple Broadband towns:
  - a. Presentation — Roger Nishi noted that WCVT has made 80 connections in the Addison Region this year. It plans to add up to 200 more in Starksboro in the Big Hollow area. It has applied for two grants that have delayed its construction, because they waited for the grant results (They did not receive the NTIA grant that they applied for with Maple Broadband.) They have, however, done a lot of engineering, especially in the Addison, Bridport and Panton exchanges. In addition to the people within those towns, those exchanges also include approximately 300 customers outside of those towns in Ferrisburgh, New Haven and Shoreham. WCVT will focus its construction on areas within its service territory where the service is worst because of the condition of its own copper wire services. WCVT will also be deploying the same crowdfunding software that Maple Broadband is using. Roger also noted that WCVT houses Maple Broadband's supplies, and we are working on joint marketing, banking and billing software so we will be operational as soon as possible.
  
2. Welcome/Introductions/Call to Order. The following people were present:

Paul Nikolich, Delegate Addison;  
Rick Scott, Delegate Bridport;  
Dan Sonneborn, Delegate Bristol;  
Magna Dodge, Delegate Cornwall;  
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;  
Kate McGowan, Alternate Lincoln;  
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;  
Mark Boltz Robinson, Delegate, Monkton;  
Ellie deVillers, Delegate New Haven;  
Jim Robinson, Delegate Orwell;  
Howard Hall, Delegate Panton;  
Paul Vaczy, Delegate Salisbury

Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;  
Rich Waren, Alternate, Starksboro;  
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;  
Andrew Martin, Delegate Waltam;  
Spence Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;

Adam Lougee, Clerk, non-member representing Addison County Regional Planning Commission  
Roger Nishi, WCVT  
Chris E Weybridge  
Dan Borden, Cornwall

3. Agenda Approval. Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Magna moved to approve the agenda. Paul Nikolich seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**
4. Approve meeting minutes from July 6th and July 25, 2022. **Ellie deVilliers moved approval of the July meeting minutes (revised to reflect \$30,000 USDA grant and respell Eustis). Nancy Cornell seconded the motion to approve the minutes. All approved the minutes, by a voice vote/show of hands.**
5. Public Comments: Dan Borden asked about service to Cornwall and how the overbuild rules were impacting Maple Broadbands service rollout. Steve noted the rules are still in process and we will work to serve as many addresses as we can within the rules.
6. Zoom vs. Microsoft Office 365 Teams: Steve noted he would be shifting our platform to “Teams” since his zoom subscription is expiring and we have been using the teams operating system.
7. Magna Dodge status change: Magna will be retiring from the board, but will stay on as a chief financial officer. CFO will be a volunteer position and will allow us to maintain her on our team. **Steve moved to appoint Magna Dodge as CFO on a volunteer basis. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote, show of hands.**
8. Maple Broadband Executive Committee member search and vote: Steve advertised for a new member of the Executive Board. Carl Seibecker of Shoreham has volunteered. No one else came forward. **Steve moved to appoint Carl Seibecker to the Executive Committee. Nancy Seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**
9. Maple Broadband Executive Director search report: Steve noted that he wanted to discuss our negotiations for an ED in Executive Session.
10. Executive Session: **Steve Huffaker moved to find that premature public knowledge of Maple Broadband’s contractual negotiations to select an Executive director would clearly place Maple Broadband at a substantial disadvantage in those negotiations. Magna Dodge 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 for selecting an Executive Director. Magna Dodge seconded the motion. The Board voted**

**unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss confidential business matters at 5:31.**

The Board exited the Executive Session at approximately 5:38.

11. Executive Director decision and vote:

**Magna Dodge moved that the governing board approve the recommendation of the Executive Board to select Ellie deVilliers to serve as Executive Director, subject to a mutually agreeable contract. Spence Putman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**

12. Construction Phase 1 equipment pads. Steve noted this work is moving forward. We have hired a contractor to build the pad to move forward on the Cornwall pad.

a. Permitting - We are working with our delegates from Shoreham and Orwell to get permitting and that work is progressing well. We should have it in place long before we need it.

b. Generators - There is no urgency to get a generator because our battery service should cover the service for a considerable amount of time. Also, generators are available at the Cornwall and Shoreham sites already and we are looking into using them. Ross Conrad is also working to identify non-fossil fuel generator alternatives. Ellie will work with Ross with any other members of the governing board that would like to investigate this issue. Ellie invited anyone else interested in serving on the committee to contact her.

13. 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. **He asked the delegates for their continued help in trying to identify appropriate municipal candidates.**

14. Construction grant: Steve noted that our construction grant has been granted by VCBB. Steve thanked Ellie for all her work to help us secure that funding. He asked Ellie to speak about the grant conditions.

a. Grant conditions review/Overbuild challenge process: Ellie noted our grant came with some operating restrictions. For our purposes, if GoNetSpeed announces it will build a route, then they will get time to cover that area and Maple Broadband will not be allowed to use grant funds to build in those areas. Ellie noted that this draft policy upsets many CUDs and does not reflect the intent of Act 71, because it harms CUDs business viability. Additionally, Act 71 supports consumer choice because the market competition is a good thing for customers. VCUDA, the association of CUD's, will be working with the Vermont Community Broadband Board to try to persuade them to adopt a policy more friendly to the interests of the CUDs.

b. Pole make-ready report - Steve noted that we need Green Mountain Power to help us get telephone poles ready to attach fiber. Ellie has been in charge of our make ready applications. We have submitted all applications necessary for our Phase 1A build. GMP is having trouble getting telephone poles. Maple Broadband needs GMP to replace about 45 poles. GMP does not know when it will get the poles, but has been otherwise accommodating to allow all other work to go forward. This obviously impacts our construction, because we need the poles in place. We are working hard to keep our contractors busy.

c. Construction start date. The poles will impact our construction. We are working on it.

15. Town Contribution Update: Steve reported that he has begun to solicit funds again after the

construction grant award. Steve pitched Ferrisburgh last week. He asked the delegates to please reach out to selectboards and ask for additional funds. He specifically mentioned towns that have already contributed. Paul Nicolich asked if he could bring the maps WCVT shared with us to the selectboards to demonstrate the commitment. Steve noted that yes, it is public information. Howard Hall noted he hoped other towns would step up and donate some of their ARPA funding. Steve noted the Town money is important because it is timely and the less we need to borrow and the less we will charge to subscribers. Starksboro's ARPA Committee will be reviewing an application from Maple Broadband next week. Waltham will be making a contribution to Maple Broadband

16. Marketing report: Dan Sonneborn reported that Pivot, the marketing firm, has started to create content and a marketing plan (door knockers, digital marketing). Marketing's timeline is dependent upon construction and when we can actually start to deliver services. The marketing committee has purchased subscriber management software from Crowdfiber that is going very well. WCVT also uses Crowdfiber. Ellie also noted she would be reaching out to delegates in our first phase build to help with local marketing plans.
17. Other business:
18. Next Meeting: October 5th, 2022 Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.
19. Adjourn: **Nancy Cornell moved to adjourn. Dan Sonneborn seconded the motion and the members voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:21 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk