

Approved November 17, 2022

**Addison County Communications Union District (dba) Maple Broadband**

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**November 10, 2022**

**3:30 pm - 5:00 pm**

**Location: 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, VT**

**VIA ZOOM**

Recording announced.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by the Chair.

**PRESENT**

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - Chair

Carl Siebecker (Shoreham) - Vice-Chair

Nancy Cornell (Starksboro) - At large

Dan Sonneborn (Bristol) - At large

Shannon Haggett (Vergennes) - At large

Ellie de Villiers – Executive Director (ex officio)

Magna Dodge - Chief Financial Officer (ex officio)

Cy Tall – Treasurer (ex officio)

Adam Lougee - Clerk (ex officio)

2. Approve the Agenda - MOTION to approve the agenda as amended, by deleting presentation on EAB and adding a few items in the Financial section, was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote.

3. Approve Minutes - November 3, 2022 - MOTION to approve the minutes as posted, was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote.

#### 4. Public Comments - none

#### 5. Chair Report - Steve Huffaker

Steve H. said that he and Magna D. have been working on the challenging permitting process in Orwell and Shoreham. He informed the Executive Committee that he will not be involved in permitting processes going forward, but will provide documentation of the process in both towns for those who will be facilitating the permitting process for subsequent towns. Ripton is the next town, in about one year. It was suggested that the representative(s) in each town, be asked to engage in the permitting process, as they have the most knowledge of their Town officials and processes.

#### 6. Operations

a. Construction update - multiple missteps were made in the northern end of the build area. All missteps have been addressed with the parties involved. Lessons learned are being applied, so that these gaffes do not happen again.

b. Hubs update - Overall progress on hub site acquisitions is steady. Steve H. went on a field trip with representatives from Green Mountain Power, Vantage Point Solutions, Syracuse, and the electrician, to hub sites in Shoreham and Orwell. Shoreham was surveyed and hub site located. Engagement documents are being prepared for hub pad contractor.

#### 7. Marketing -

a. Marketing cadence review - The Executive Committee would like Pivot to provide a written recap of the marketing cadence that was discussed at the last meeting. Dan S. will follow up. Ellie dV. said that once the hub cabinet is shipped/received, and once the holidays are over, active targeted marketing to potential subscribers in the area(s) being built should begin. Nancy C. proposed some language to answer questions about the launching of Maple Broadband's service: "expect our first subscribers to be on line in the first quarter of 2023."

b. Website refresh - launch of the refreshed website with integrated CrowdFiber functions is expected by the middle of next week, including a search widget embedded in the website.

c. CrowdFiber update - see 7b above.

## 8. Financial

a. Matching program - Ellie dV. said she has reached out to Rob Fish and is waiting to hear back for clarity on when Maple Broadband can request matching funds from Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) for funds that Maple Broadband has already received from municipalities.

b. Business plan updates - tabled

c. Pre-purchasing materials - Maple Broadband's request to VCBB for a policy change regarding purchasing construction materials with pre-construction grant funds is an urgent matter that has so far resulted only in a response from VCBB that is likely to further delay the process of approval. Ellie dV. said that there is no clear mechanism for a Communication Union District (CUD) or the Vermont Communication Union District Association (VCUDA) to escalate an issue with VCBB, and that is a problem. The policy change that is sought is that if materials are purchased with pre-construction grant funds, and then a construction grant is received, that the material purchase expense can be moved to the construction grant, so as not to drain pre-construction funds needed for the next phase. Ellie dV. will continue to follow up with Rob Fish and Christine Hallquist on this issue.

d. Subsequent overbuild issue - the issue of subsequent overbuild is still outstanding, and is another pressing issue needing resolution. Magna D., Steve H., and Ellie dV. have a call planning with Laura Sibilias, of the VCBB, to discuss.

e. Excess hardware and materials - hardware and other construction materials were ordered and purchased but are not now needed. Ellie dV. is working on options for what to do with them.

f. Financial dashboard - at a previous meeting, a dashboard for financial accountability was discussed / promised. Cy T., Magna D. and Ellie dV. are working on the structure for it. Cy T. is currently reviewing a draft by Magna D.

g. Bookkeeper - the scope of the job of keeping the books for Maple Broadband has significantly increased beyond what had been expected

at this point in time. Steve H. reported that a thoughtful search for a bookkeeper has begun, with a target date having said bookkeeper start work on January 1, 2023.

9. Executive Session - not needed

10. Other Business

- Nancy C. said that she has been working on the report for the grant from Vermont Community Foundation.
- Nancy C. thanked Cy T. for her dedicated work on the ledgers each month. Cy also helps Nancy with the extensive reporting required for the \$30,000 grant from USDA and her assistance is greatly appreciated.

Future Meetings: November 17, 2022

11. Adjournment -

MOTION to adjourn the meeting was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker