

Approved _____, 2022

Addison County Communications Union District (dba) Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

November 17, 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 3:34 pm by the Chair.

PRESENT

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - 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)

Holly Groschner, , Board Chair, Equal Access to Broadband (EAB)

Andra Daunhauer, Executive Director, Equal Access to Broadband (EAB)

2. Approve the Agenda - MOTION to approve the agenda as posted, was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote.

3. Approve Minutes - October 27, 2022 and November 10, 2022 - MOTION to approve both sets of minutes as posted, was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote.

4. Public Comments - none

5. Chair Report - Steve Huffaker

Ellie dV. has been unanimously elected to serve a two year term as the Chair of the Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA). Steve H., Ellie dV. and Magna D. met with Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) member Laura Sibilia, who advised Maple Broadband that an effective way to get important issues in front of the VCBB is to have them presented by VCUDA. Ellie dV. added that VCUDA staff needs to reach out to the Communication Union Districts (CUDs) to see what issues the CUDs want to be put on the agenda of VCUDA meetings. Two issues important to Maple Broadband that it wants VCBB to address are the need to pre-buy construction materials and the issue of the restrictions on overbuilding in GoNetSpeed territory.

6. Operations

a. Construction update

- Construction across a railroad line in the Phase I area has been completed. Railroad crossings involve special permissions, special insurance, and many other requirements. Ellie dV. noted that the process of subsequent railroad crossing builds should be done in one tenth the time as this first one.
- Active cabinets have shipped and are expected to arrive next week at Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) for outfitting with equipment. The cabinets will then be delivered to the Cornwall hub site where they will be wired up and powered up. If all goes well, the network could then be operational early in December. Syracuse will have finished construction by then and engaged in the next step of testing every strand of fiber.
- Meetings with Green Mountain Power (GMP) are happening every other week. GMP has been very helpful, has assessed the remaining 29 poles in the Phase 1A area, and in short order, Maple Broadband will be fully licensed in the 1A network area.
- 5 households in Cornwall have already signed up as subscribers, despite the fact that active marketing to subscribers has not yet commenced.

- b. Hubs update - Steve H. reported that a field trip with all hub “players” took place recently. The hub site in Shoreham was finalized and the group visited the proposed hub site in Orwell.

7. Marketing -

- a. Website refresh update- website has been refreshed.
- b. CrowdFiber update - CrowdFiber is now live on the website.

8. Financial

- a. Matching program - the latest word from Rob Fish is that matching funds are not currently available, contradicting previous information. This is another issue that needs to be escalated through VCUDA.
- b. Business plan update - Ellie dV. plans to begin updating the plan tomorrow, with current data and in a monthly format. The plan is expected to be ready for review in a few weeks.
- c. Dashboard update - Cy T. and Magna D. continue to work on the draft and expect to have something for the committee to review next week.
- d. Meeting with WCVT - Steve H. reported that he had a long meeting with WCVT to discuss hub planning and adjustments to the overall design. More numbers are needed from Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) and WCVT. Steve H. learned that Maple Broadband will be able to participate in WCVT’s generator program at no cost. The generator program moves generators around whenever they are needed. The generator task group may still be needed for planning regarding Ripton, a network member town that has frequent outages and is more remote.

e. Equal Access to Broadband Presentation

Holly Groschner and Andra Daunhauer presented information about the non-profit organization Equal Access to Broadband (EAB), its mission, goals, services for consumers and CUDs, and costs for CUDs. EAB works with trusted community organizations such as libraries, schools, health care providers and service organizations to reach low income households, provide digital literacy services, and help consumers in qualified low income households apply for subsidies from the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) through their internet service provider (ISP). The process of applying for a subsidy and then re-certifying eligibility annually is so

daunting, that the EAB was created to provide needed assistance. Affordable broadband is an access issue. The next step for Maple Broadband is to provide build plans for Phase I to EAB. EAB can then provide some information to assist Maple Broadband in estimating what percentage of the take rate in Phase I is from low income households. Holly G. said she will send a term sheet for the committee to review, Dan S. raised the question - is affordability part of the mission of Maple Broadband? Ellie dV. spoke to the issue of timing and Nancy C. advocated for beginning the planning phase as soon as possible.

9. Executive Session - not needed

10. Other Business - none

Future Meetings: not mentioned

11. Adjournment -

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:44 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker