

Approved January 5, 2023

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**December 22, 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 Executive Director.

**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)

2. Approve the Agenda - MOTION to approve the agenda as modified by adding “1C update” to Operations 7c, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

3. Previous meeting minutes approval: December 1, December 8 - MOTION to approve both sets of minutes as posted was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

#### 4. Public Comments - none

#### 5. Chair Report - Steve Huffaker

- The conditional use permit for the Orwell hub site has been approved with no conditions.
- GoNetSpeed does not participate in number portability. This means that Maple Broadband customers residing in GoNetSpeed territory signing up for Maple Broadband phone service, will have to be assigned a new phone number. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) will handle communication with potential customers about this issue.
- Steve H. showed the committee photos of the newly installed hub pad and equipment cabinets on Sperry Road in Cornwall. Installation cost of the equipment cabinets was higher than expected, due to a mix up with installation of components resulting in additional labor costs, but the problem has been resolved, and procedures modified so that will not happen again.

#### 6. VCBB status updates

- a. Data & overbuild policy status - at the December 12 meeting of the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), the proposed policy change regarding data and overbuild (with one “friendly” amendment) was passed. As a result, Maple Broadband can now build in GoNetSpeed territory that was unserved or underserved at the time the construction grant was received. The 20% rule was eliminated, and Maple Broadband can now be authorized by the VCBB to move expenses from one grant to another.
- b. Materials purchase status - at the December 12 meeting of the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), the proposed policy change regarding materials purchase did not pass (no vote was taken) as it turned out that staff already had the authority required to authorize moving expenses from one construction grant to another.
- c. Other - the State Auditor will soon be releasing a report regarding areas of recent examination.

## 7. Operations

- a. Construction update - At the Cornwall hub, the active electronics cabinet has been installed. All the strands are up in the construction area, fiber is up, spicing is next. Green Mountain Power has been scheduled to come out, but a serious storm is coming this weekend, that could delay GMP's work in preparation for the service launch.
- b. Service launch update - Ellie dV, Steve H. and several staff from WCVT met this week to plan/coordinate the service launch. This group now has a clear set of written action items and will be meeting weekly. Cy T. has been working many hours to resolve an issue having to do with customer payments, the bank used by WCVT and the trade name of Maple Broadband. Once the "ownership" of the trade name has been transferred, that will satisfy the bank so that customers can write their checks out to "Maple Broadband".
- c. 1B and 1C update - Ellie dV. has been investigating the scope of construction in these areas, to see how many poles are needed and what needs to be buried. She will be providing this data to Vantage Point Solutions (VPS). She has a list of the permits needed for 1B and 1C. She will submit permit applications in January for March construction. Ellie also submitted the renewal application for the annual maintenance and construction permit from the Vermont Department of Transportation.
- d. Other - Steve H. is going to ask the Governing Board for assistance in locating secure materials storage closer to the construction area. Ellie dV. reported that Syracuse can build 10 miles per month per aerial crew. The fastest build they can do for Maple Broadband is 40 miles per month with 4 aerial crews.

## 8. Marketing update

- a. Soft launch - a small group (10-12) households/facilities in Cornwall has been selected for the soft launch in January. The soft launch will give ample opportunity to test out the system and the partnership with WCVT, and work out any problems before the official launch.
- b. Direct mail postcards - postcards were mailed yesterday to all household in Phase 1A in the construction area who have not

already contacted Maple Broadband to express interest in or signed up for service.

- c. Newsletter and social media- Maple Broadband newsletter will go out in January. Information about Maple Broadband offering high speed internet in Cornwall will also go out in the January edition of the Cornwall newsletter. Marketing on social media has yet to happen. Dan S. will check to see if this is included in the retainer with Pivot or not.
- d. Other - The Town of Salisbury has asked for a Salisbury-specific version of the Maple Broadband report for their Town Report.

## 9. Financial

a. Procurement policy draft - in process. Shannon H. drafted, Ellie dV. provided comments, and Steve H. accepted the changes. Anyone else on the committee who wants to comment, should submit their comments to Steve by January 3. The plan is to discuss at the next meeting on January 5, and vote to approve, as having this policy in place is very important.

b. Financial model update - still in process but nearing completion

c. Bookkeeper update - an engagement letter is being prepared for Darlene Palmer. MOTION to authorize Steve H. to sign this letter after it is reviewed by Ellie dV., Cy T. and Magna D. was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote. The Bookkeeper will report directly to the Treasurer. Cy T. will work with the current bookkeeper and the new bookkeeper during an overlapping transition period.

d. Affordability research update - Carl S. gave an overview of his research on the indicator of the rate of reduced price and free school lunches, comparing data for Vermont and data for Addison County. Ellie will look at the Grand Lists in the 20 member towns for property values and will meet with Holly Groschner to see what other leads she may have. Carl will research Medicaid data. It was also suggested that an optional question for new customers would be to provide information about the Equal Access to Broadband program and ask if they think they might be eligible.

e. Single Audit preparation - Cy T. reported that preparations are going well. She has been working to organize and centralize the needed documentation and has been working with the current bookkeeper on financial issues. The plan is to have everything in the hands of the auditor by January 15.

f. Other - Nancy C. reported that the first reimbursement check from the USDA grant has been received and added that the first reimbursement from the construction grant has also been received.

10. Executive Session - not needed

11. Other Business

a. Ellie dV. reported that minute-taker Sharon Tierra's availability challenge to the FCC for her household in Shoreham was approved and now GoNetSpeed must correct their data for her location on the FCC broadband map. Sharon plans on talking with her neighbors about doing the same.

b. Ellie will be away from early March to early April and plans on working remotely part time during this time.

12. Future Meeting: January 5, 2023, 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

13. Adjournment -

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:31 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker