

Maple Broadband
Addison County Communications Union District
Monthly Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2022 5:00 p.m. – 6:30p.m.
VIA TEAMS

1. Call to Order:

Steve Huffaker, Chair of Maple Broadband opened the Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m. and welcomed the representatives of the member towns and members of the public. The following people were present:

Mike Sheets, Alternate Bridport;
Magna Dodge, CFO, Delegate Cornwall;
Steve Huffaker, Chair, Delegate Ferrisburgh;
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;
Hugh Mc Laughlin, Alternate Middlebury;
Ellie de Villiers, Executive Director, Delegate New Haven;
Howard Hall, Delegate Panton;
Paul Vaczy, Delegate Salisbury;
Carl Siebecker, Vice Chair, Delegate Shoreham;
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;
Richard Warren, Alternate Starksboro;
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;
Spencer Putnam, Delegate Weybridge

Adam Lougee, Clerk, non-member representing Addison County Regional Planning Commission
Cy Tall, Treasurer Cornwall
Valerie Capels, Bristol Town Administrator

Public Hearing:

Steve invited members of the public to provide comments on Maple Broadband’s annual report or budget that it had sent out prior to the meeting.

Valerie Capels, the Town Administrator for Bristol asked if a map existed showing construction progress.

Steve Huffaker responded that we did not have that specific map beyond Phase 1. He noted the work on Phase 1 will be primarily in Cornwall, Shoreham, Orwell, Whiting, and Salisbury.

Ross Conrad asked how long Maple Broadband will stop working this winter because of conditions.

Steve responded the answer will depend upon weather, progress of the Phase 1A build and the make-ready work that GMP needs to do for Maple Broadband.

Ellie de Villiers, Maple Broadband's Executive Director, noted that she is hoping for a March restart, which she believes will give GMP enough time to replace all the poles that Maple needs to do its work.

Hearing no other public questions, Steve noted we still had time left in the hearing, left the hearing open and moved on to other business noting he would close the hearing at 5:30.

2. Agenda Approval. Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Magna Dodge moved to approve the agenda. Carl Siebecker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**
3. Approve Meeting Minutes from October 5, 2022. **Steve Huffaker moved to approve the October meeting minutes. Ross Conrad seconded the motion to approve the minutes. All approved the minutes, by a voice vote/show of hands.**
4. Public Comments: none, see hearing above.

The hearing closed at 5:30 p.m. without further comment.

5. Chair Report: Steve reported that last month he had asked the full Board to consider moving the board meeting from the first Wednesday of the month to the second Tuesday of the month, with the time remaining consistent from 5:00 - 6:30 p.m. Steve noted that the comments he had received had generally been favorable and it will help give the Treasurer an extra week to report finances at the end of each quarter. **Hearing no objections, Steve noted that we would proceed with the new meeting time.**
6. Underground drops contractors process review. Steve previously requested contractor recommendations from the members capable of providing the underground infrastructure for fiber entry to subscriber homes. He thanked the Delegates for their suggestions and noted that Maple Broadband currently had a list of 4 contractors that we have pre-qualified to provide underground drops to customers requesting that service, which should adequately cover the demand at our current build pace.
7. Construction Phase 1A status report. Steve noted that Construction of Phase 1A began on October 4, 2022. VantagePoint, Maple Broadband's project engineers are the acting onsite supervisor. We have signs out with our crews and people are seeing Maple Broadband out in the community. Steve stated that the cable work is moving along smoothly with Syracuse Utilities, our main contractor. We did have an issue with a small contractor hired to

complete the pad in Cornwall. Steve noted that we had terminated that contractor and have hired Syracuse Utilities to do the work, so it should not impact our construction schedule. Steve also noted he would do a field trip to the pads in Orwell and Shoreham next week.

Steve moved the conversation to the Town of Ripton. Steve noted that Maple Broadband was shifting its Phase 2 plans to bring service to the Town of Ripton earlier than it had initially planned. Steve noted that Ripton was now the town in the worst shape regarding having access to broadband. Since our mission is to bring service to areas without service, Steve noted a pivot to Ripton was appropriate. Steve estimates the cable for the first portion of Phase 2, including Ripton, will cost about \$400,000.

In order to stay ahead of supply chain issues, Steve moved that Maple Broadband authorize the Executive Board to purchase fiber cable for its Phase 2A build in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 as soon as the Executive Board deemed it fiscally prudent. Carl Siebecker seconded the motion.

In discussion, Rich Warren asked if Maple Broadband's initial decision to serve Ripton later had been an oversight? Steve responded that it was not. First, Ripton had just recently lost its service provider. Second, Maple Broadband had just recently updated its plans to serve only those portions of Ripton served by the grid. This reduced the cost and scale of the bid dramatically.

Howard Hall asked if the decision not to serve camps would become a policy.

Steve replied that Maple Broadband would default to the Act 71 requirement that service is not required to off grid camps or other structures.

After the discussion Steve called the question and the delegates supported the motion to empower the Executive Board to purchase up to \$400,000 of cable by a voice vote/show of hands.

Steve also asked the Board for permission to pre-purchase splitter cabinets and splitters. He noted these were the longest lead time items and that the cost would not exceed \$80,000. Steve moved that the Board give the Executive Committee the authority to purchase splitters and splitter cabinets up to \$80,000 to facilitate the Phase 2A build. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion. All approved the motion by a voice vote /show of hands.

8. Delegate appointments reminder – Leicester, Whiting. Steve asked that members continue to seek out potential delegates from Whiting and Leicester.
9. Marketing report. Ellie reported that marketing continues to prepare for launch. She hopes that the CrowdFiber website will be ready for testing next week. After that we will send a

postcard to all addresses within the Phase 1A build area. After CrowdFiber is live we also intend to set up a content calendar and to put out a newsletter.

10. Town contributions update. Steve thanked Waltham for their recent \$45,000 dollar contribution and looked to the Delegates to persuade their boards to contribute other funds soon. We will get a VCBB dollar for dollar match on all funds raised.
11. Other business. None
12. Next meeting: December 13th.
13. Adjourn. **Magna moved to adjourn the meeting. Nancy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote, show of hands at 6:11 p.m.**