

Approved February 16, 2023

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**February 9, 2023**

**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 3:32 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)

Adam Lougee, Clerk (ex officio)

2. Approve the Agenda - MOTION to approve the agenda as modified, with the presentation of the Dashboard added under Financial, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

3. Previous meeting minutes approval: February 2, 2023 - MOTION to approve the minutes as presented was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

#### 4. Public Comments - none

5. Chair Report - Steve Huffaker - After discussion, MOTION to approve the issuing of a purchase order to Calix in the amount of \$157,917.65 for electronics to power the central hub in Vergennes was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote. Steve H. noted that this was a single source purchase and duly vetted.

#### 6. Vermont Community Broadband Board (CBB / Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA) status updates

- VCBB staff are in Washington DC this week to meet with staff from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) regarding Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding requirements and restrictions. VCBB staff are reviewing the federal legislation pertaining to BEAD funding and comparing that with relevant laws. Potential conflict between federal and state rules is causing uncertainty at this time.
- VCBB regular board meeting is scheduled for February 13, board packet is available.
- The VCUDA make-ready working group met briefly on February 6. The group has not yet formulated a clear action plan.

#### 7. Affordability - Equal Access to Broadband (EAB)

- After discussion of the timing of starting with the EAB program and the process of working with EAB, it was agreed that the next step is to obtain the work plan from EAB, and then decide when to start the program. Maple Broadband customer service provided by Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) will have a major role in working with EAB.
- Ellie dV. added that in the first 4-6 weeks once we start the EAB program, Maple Broadband will need to provide to EAB the names and contact information of community partners in Addison County, such as schools, health care providers and service organizations. Trusted organizations such as these, are in a position to let households with low-income know about subsidies that help pay for high speed internet, as well as the assistance with the application that EAB provides.

- Ellie will send out the EAB work plan to the Committee, once she receives it. Discussion and the decision on when to start, will be on the agenda of the February 16 meeting.

## 8. Operations

- a. Launch update - the launch group (Ellie dV., Steve H., and 10 people from multiple departments at WCVT) met recently to discuss all aspects of service readiness. Technically, all systems are go. The first soft launch customer that Ellie spoke with had positive and helpful feedback about his experience. In the 1A build area, there is a backlog of 49 households who want to sign up for service. The official launch date has been set as February 14. WCVT will begin by contacting these 49 households to schedule site visits and installation dates.
- b. Phase 1B/ 1C update - permitting list is being finalized. All pole applications have been submitted to Green Mountain Power (GMP). GMP has not completed 4 applications that were due in November, and will not commit as to when they will be done. This is an issue that other CUDs that have to work with GMP also contend with, and one that the Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA) is working to address and resolve.
- c. Phase 2 update - Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) has reviewed the Phase 2 plans and will submit the pole applications next.
- d. Vergennes hub update -
  - Steve H. and Ellie dV. met with the generator group.
  - feedback has been received from the Vergennes City Council regarding the draft option agreement. The option was sent to the town of Vergennes and Steve H. and Shannon H. will attend the City Council Meeting on February 14. They will either have a designated place on the agenda to present the option agreement or will present it during public comments.
  - potential bidders responded to the RFP for an easement survey with some questions that Ellie dV. answered. The deadline for bids is February 15 and bid opening is February 16.
  - Steve H. reported that later this month, an RFP for hardware will be issued

- plans for the purchase of a refurbished shelter structure and generator are on track.

## 9. Marketing

- Dan S. reported that Pivot has now provided a content calendar, and will manage social media marketing under the existing retainer.
- Discussions are underway regarding a proposal for Pivot to host and maintain the Maple Broadband website.
- The first newsletter is scheduled to go out around 5 pm today. It is not the role of Pivot to respond to newsletter comments.
- Ellie dV. posted the intern job opening with Middlebury College.
- Carl S., who works at the high school, offered to contact the guidance counselor, who could inform students who need community service hours of the opportunity to volunteer to distribute Maple Broadband door hangers in neighborhoods where fiber has been built.

## 10. Financial

- a. Phase 2 materials purchase update - see Chair report for vote on purchase order.
  - b. GMP pole applications - none to approve this week
  - c. Single Audit preparation - Cy T. has been busy fielding auditors' questions, with help from Elle dV. Nancy C. also assisted by providing a grant report. Cy reported that the auditors are on track to provide the draft document by the end of February.
  - d. Financial policies update - Nancy C., Magna D., Cy T. and Ellie dV. met last Friday and have drafted a "broad strokes" document. Once VCUDA has gotten more information from the financial consultant, the document can be further updated.
  - e. Dashboard - Cy T. presented the Dashboard showing the cash position as of January 31, 2023.
- d. Other
- final invoices have been received from Syracuse and VPS for the labor on the build for 1A.
  - Syracuse actual labor cost is 10% less than their bid.

- VPS Onsite Project Representation (OPR) costs need to be reigned in. An OPR is needed but their efficiency needs significant improvement.

11. Other Business - Celebratory dinner is scheduled for February 16 at 6 pm at Fire and Ice in Middlebury. Ellie dV. has made the reservation.

12. Future Meeting: February 16, 2023, 3:30 - for bid opening and short discussion of EAB

15. Adjournment -

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker