

Approved March 9, 2023

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**March 2, 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 3:31 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 posted, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

3. Previous meeting minutes approval: February 23, 2023 - MOTION to approve the minutes as presented was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

4. Public Comments - none

5. Chair Report - no report today

## 6. VCBB/VCUDA status updates

- a. Vermont Communication Union District Association (VCUDA) meeting is next Tuesday.
- b. The Senate version of the Budget Adjustment Act was passed. The outcome of the Budget Adjustment Act is that the VCBB has 30 million dollars as a match for any federal program, not just the “middle mile” program.
- c. The make-ready issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA). Representatives from VCUDA will meet with senior staff from Green Mountain Power (GMP), and will present VCUDA’s list of expectations. Ellie dV. will post said list in Google Docs for the Executive Committee to reference.

## 7. Performance review

Ellie dV. sent in her self-assessment, as the first step. The self-assessment form is based on the job description. When she returns from her trip, the Executive Committee will provide feedback and discuss job and organizational performance with Ellie. All agreed that the job description is a living document that can be updated as needed as time goes on.

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

- a. EAB - Ellie reported that Andra from EAB did finally get back to her and that the delay was caused by a technical problem with email.
- b. Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Registration - Ellie reported that Christine Hallquist will be signing a letter as proof that the Community Union Districts (CUDs) in Vermont have the right to offer broadband services. Approval must be given by the FCC in order to register for ACP, and the FCC requires proof of the right to offer broadband service. Once Maple Broadband obtains a Certificate of Public Good, (CPG) that will provide the needed proof, but meanwhile, it is hoped that the letter from Hallquist will suffice.

## 9. Operations

- a. Launch update - full launch is underway. 74 people have submitted orders, including the 9 soft launch customers. Most of the scouting has been done, the installation plan is in progress, and installations for this next group of subscribers will start soon. The first report regarding installations and activations has been received from Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT). All agreed to look at the reports to see if more detail was required.
- b. Phase 1B / 1C update
  - GMP provided the final 4 pole survey results in 1B that had been overdue by 2 months
  - 1C surveys are in progress
  - still waiting on pricing from Syracuse for 1B construction
- c. Vergennes hub update - Steve H. reported that several options continue to be considered, including land that the City of Vergennes owns, land that the State owns, and private land. Off the table is the idea of siting a hub in a building that Maple Broadband does not own. Received advice from GWI that under no circumstances should this be done.
- d. Phase 2 update - the pole applications should be submitted by Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) this week.
- e. CPG and Dig Safe updates -
  - Ellie dV. has signed the DigSafe form and the next step is to send maps. The firm Centerline does locating for WCVT. Magna D. asked if Maple Broadband could tag on to WCVT's contract with Centerline.
  - Ellie is working through the requirements in making application for a Certificate of Public Good (CPG). It was noted that the Disaster Recovery Plan that is needed for submission with the CPG application needs to be coordinated with the Disaster Recovery Plan of WCVT.
- f. Other - Steve H. shared information on quotes for new and refurbished shelters and the pros and cons of each. After discussion, it was agreed that the quote for the refurbished shelter from Cellsite was inclusive, comprehensive, and given that VPS has a proven track record with this company, the best option. MOTION

to authorize Steve H. (with Ellie's peer review and approval) to begin negotiations with Cellsite for purchase of a refurbished shelter (final price to be determined) and the issuance of a 50% purchase order as down payment, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

## 10. Marketing

a. Public webinars - the Committee discussed the pros and cons and decided to hold off for now.

b. Dan S. said that Pivot is finalizing a flyer that will be going out to households in the 1A build area that have not signed up to date.

c. Pivot is also working on a handout to give to the households that need buried service. Ellie dV. added that while 12 households in 1A need buried service, only 3 need conduit.

d. Next newsletter is scheduled to go out in April. Content needs to be sent to Pivot in March. Suggested topics for content include the service launch, testimonials from soft launch customers, information about what towns are in the next phase.

e. In person events were identified an effective way to share information and enthusiasm in towns that are in the active build phase.

## 11. Financial

a. Easement survey - Ellie dV. completed the bid leveling. There were 2 bidders. Only one bidder complied with the RFP criteria and was also the lower bidder. MOTION to authorize Ellie to inform Barnard & Gervais that Maple Broadband wants to award them the bid to perform the survey for the Vergennes central hub and will finalize the award once the easement on the parcel for the hub is procured, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote. Ellie will also inform Barnard & Gervais that the start date is contingent on procurement of the easement. The award is also contingent on the the price and the performance period not changing, if the parcel is changes. While the location of the parcel in Vergennes may change, the scope of the survey will not.

- b. GMP pole applications - Ellie dV. presented information about one invoice and two tariff rider estimates. MOTION to approve the payment of the invoice for PA 5098497 in the amount of \$16,884.70, the signing of the tariff rider for PA 5098495 in the amount of \$1,614.79, and the signing of the tariff rider for PA 5098494 in the amount of \$16,205.29, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.
- c. Single Audit - Cy T. reported that she expects to have the draft back from the auditors very soon and will have something to share with the Committee next week.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### Executive Session

MOTION was made to find that premature general public knowledge of Maple Broadband's business strategy would clearly place Maple Broadband at substantial disadvantage and risk disclosure of Maple Broadband's pending activities, if they were to be communicated to the public. Motion APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

MOTION was made to enter into executive session to discuss Maple Broadband's business strategy related to Maple Broadband's progress under Title 1, Section 313, Subsection A of Vermont's Statutes. Motion APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

The Committee went into Executive Session at 4:40 pm. and came out at 4:50 pm. No action was taken.

- d. Congressionally Directed Spending - Nancy C. has been in communication with Erhard Mahnke from Senator Sanders' office regarding a request for Congressionally Directed Spending (AKA earmark) for FY 2024 to cover gap subsidies and drops for low-income subscribers.
- e. Financial policies update - the policies are close to completion and will be distributed when these final changes are made.

12. Other Business - none

13. Future Meetings during Ellie's trip: March 9, 2023, 8:00 am, and then TBA.

14. Adjournment -

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker