

Approved May 25, 2023

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**May 4, 2023**

**3:30 pm - 5:00 pm**

**Location: 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, VT**

**VIA ZOOM**

Recording announced.

**PRESENT**

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - Chair

Carl Siebecker (Shoreham) - Vice Chair

Dan Sonneborn (Bristol) - At large

Shannon Haggett (Vergennes) - At large

Ellie de Villiers – Executive Director (ex officio)

Adam Lougee - Clerk (ex officio)

Cy Tall – Treasurer (ex officio)

**1. Call to Order / Agenda Approval**

The meeting was called to order at 3:34 pm by the Executive Director.

MOTION to approve the agenda as presented was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

**2. Previous meeting minutes approval: April 20, 2023 and April 27, 2023**

MOTION to approve both sets of minutes as presented was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

**3. Public Comments - none**

**4. Chair Report - Steve H.**

The records of delegates to the Governing Board of Maple Broadband have been historically kept in a master list at Addison County Regional Planning Commission. Ellie dV. has agreed to be responsible for maintaining the list from now on and will update the website accordingly. When she has an assistant, she plans on delegating this task to them. It was noted that neither Ferrisburgh nor Vergennes has returned the delegate appointment form. Steve H. will follow up with Ferrisburgh and Shannon H. with Vergennes.

#### 5. VCBB/VCUDA status updates

- a. Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has chosen the Vernonburg Group as their consultant for BEAD and digital equity planning. VCBB Board meeting is this Monday.
- b. Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA) continues to focus on the make-ready issue. No update today.

#### 6. OPR Services

Ellie dV. showed a Power Point presentation that documents Maple Broadband's key requirements for Onsite Project Representative (OPR) services and the selection process being used. Ellie dV. advised that the Committee go into executive session to consider the bids.

#### 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 3:22 pm. and came out at 3:34 pm.

Ellie dV. described the reasons that she and Steve H. are recommending that Maple Broadband select Mission Broadband for OPR services.

MOTION to approve that Maple Broadband initiate all necessary steps to engage Mission Broadband as the provider of OPR services, at minimum through completion of Phase 1 construction, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

Next steps are a meeting with Mission Broadband to negotiate the high level details. May 8 is the target start date for OPR services from Mission Broadband. Steve H. added that Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) is sharing Brad Aldridge as a consultant and inspector resource, as part of the partnership with Maple Broadband. Brad A. will attend weekly meetings in his role as consultant. These weekly meetings will include representatives from Syracuse, WCVT, and Mission Broadband.

#### 7. 2023-2-24 Officer Slate

After discussion, all agreed to proceed in the same way as the previous year. For next year, Shannon H. has drafted a nomination process similar to the one used at the regional planning commission.

MOTION to present a slate of officers and at-large members of the Executive Committee as currently stands to the Governing Board for approval, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

#### 8. Financial

##### a. GMP make-ready approvals

Ellie dV. presented the following pole applications:

- \$48,209.40 for make ready work in Vergennes
- \$28,343.74 for make ready work in Cornwall

MOTION to approve all the above pole applications for a total of \$76,553.14 was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

b. Other - Grants - The application for the Northern Borders grant has been submitted. A local grant opportunity for \$25,000 from the

Walter Cerf Foundation was discussed. Ellie dV. offered to work with Nancy C. on the Cerf grant application.

MOTION to proceed with application for the CERF grant application and to consider each opportunity on a case by case basis as a Committee going forward, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

9. Affordability - Equal Access to Broadband (EAB)

a. EAB -Review of the proposed work plan is coming to the top of Ellie's to-do list.

b. Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Registration - the FCC approved Maple Broadband as a provider of telecommunication services. The next step is to obtain approval from the Universal Service Administrative Company, administrator of the ACP.

10. Marketing

Mike is Pivot's new representative. In the works are buried service palm cards, finalizing designs for posters in towns where Maple Broadband is building the network, and postcards for households in the 1B and 1C service areas. Other marketing ideas the Committee discussed are lawn signs ("Proud Maple Broadband customer") and open houses. Carl S. offered to arrange for an open house in Shoreham and to staff the information table.

11. Operations update

a. Phase 1A sign-ups - the count stands at 100 sign-ups. At the end of April, 47 of the 100 have had service installed.

b. GMP make-ready - no progress since last week

c. Phase 1B/1C construction - Vantage Point Solutions is still working on the contract with Syracuse for the 1C build. Syracuse is continuing with construction in the 1B area, but further delays in make-ready beyond a few weeks might mean a work stoppage for Syracuse until the make-ready work is done.

d. Vergennes hub - 4 bidders have given quotes for site work. Steve H. will present a recommendation to the Committee next week. The easement process with the State is slowly proceeding.

12. Other Business - none

15. Future Meetings: May 11, 2023, 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker

5a – VCBB has chosen The Vernonburg Group as their consultant for ...

8a – we should clarify that the make ready estimates are for the pole replacements listed and other make ready work. I just call out the number of pole replacements as a data point, but it's not like the bill for 1 pole replacement in Cornwall is \$28K. Or just remove the reference to the pole replacements from the minutes, which clarifies that we are approving \$X for make ready on the given applications. I'm ok with either.