

Approved July 13, 2023

Addison County Communications Union District (dba) Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

June 29, 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

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)

Adam Lougee - Clerk (ex officio)

1. Call to Order / Agenda Approval

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 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: June 8, 2023 - tabled until committee has time to review the revised version

3. Public Comments - none

4. Chair Report - none

5. VCBB/VCUDA status updates

- a. GMP update - Maple Broadband now has either temporary or full pole licenses for almost all of the Phase 1 area and revised estimates for the tariff riders in dispute. Also, GMP is evaluating all prior work, and has provided some refunds. VCUDA has been in discussions with GMP on behalf of all the CUDs and as a result, GMP wants to extend the tariff rider program and has drafted an MOU, now in legal review with VCUDA. Ellie dV. said that all the CUDs should sign individually, rather than VCUDA signing, as the CUDs work directly with GMP. The MOU will apply to all pole applications, not just the tariff riders. After discussion, MOTION to delegate Executive Director Ellie dV. to execute the MOU with GMP as soon as she and VCUDA have arrived at a final draft, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

- b. BEAD 5 year plan - Ellie dV. with help from Nancy C. submitted a response to Vermont Community Broadband Board's (VCBB) Request for Information (RFI). Ellie dV. added that the VCBB will present a draft 5-year plan at their meeting on July 10 and it will be open for public comments on July 14. VCCB needs to submit the 5-year plan by the end of August.

Rob Fish and the consultant working with the VCBB led a recent listening session at Platt Library in Shoreham, as part of BEAD 5-year planning. Carl Siebecker was at that meeting, along with representatives from Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT), Green Mountain Power, and about 30 local people, mostly from Shoreham and Orwell, who all wanted to know when reliable high speed internet was coming to their neighborhood.

Mr. Fish said that Vermont had just been awarded 229 million dollars in BEAD funding and that the VCBB will be providing a competitive grant process for all internet service providers in Vermont. The rules for the grant process are still being formulated.

Carl S. was able to point to the newly installed pad and gear for Maple Broadband's Shoreham hub, in view out the south windows of the library, let everyone know that the Syracuse trucks they are seeing are working for Maple Broadband and assure those

in attendance that their long wait to access broadband internet service is almost over.

The Northern Borders capacity building grant to VCUDA has been finalized and signed. VCUDA will be hiring a consulting firm for BEAD funding strategy, lobbying, and grant writing support for the CUDs. VCUDA is expected to vote on the selection of the consulting firm at their July 11 meeting. Ellie dV. is going to Montpelier with others CUD directors to meet with the State Treasurer regarding BEAD matching funds.

6. Financial

a. Construction grant update - Ellie dV. reported that she sent the updated financial model to the VCBB will be making a presentation to the VCBB at their next meeting in support of the proposed amendment to the construction grant. The presentation on the updated financial model includes information on the district update (miles completed, customers installed, miles in progress, uptake data, etc.), the impact of competition, and impacts to the business plan. By only building the district areas not served by fiber from other providers, the updated model reduces grant funded construction from 595 miles down to 374 miles, with a significantly lower cost per mile, and increased financial viability. The plan is for Phase 1 and 2 to be completed by the end of 2024, and the universal service plan completed by the end of 2025. Ellie added that a master plan for all the towns in the entire district has been developed in partnership with WCVT and will be presented at the next VCBB board meeting.

7. Affordability - Equal Access to Broadband (EAB)

Nancy C. and Ellie dV. have a call scheduled with Roger at WCVT and EAB on Monday to discuss the EAB process and logistics with WCVT, with a program kick off and joint press conference next week.

Ellie and Nancy submitted the application for the \$14,000 Walter Cerf grant to help subscribers with installation costs. Let it be known, for the record, that every dollar counts, they said.

8. Marketing

Worked with Pivot on two social media posts, and have been gathering things needed for the upcoming outdoor Energy Fair in Vergennes, including a tent borrowed from WCVT. Pivot is finishing up the work to update the town flyers.

9. Operations update

a. Phase 1A - sign ups remain at around 100.

b. GMP make-ready - all problems have been resolved.

c. Phase 1B/1C construction - construction is ongoing. Syracuse now has 3 aerial crews working and a spicing crew will be added the week after next. Pads for hubs in Shoreham and Orwell have been poured and gear mounted, and electricity will be hooked up next week in Shoreham. Two weeks from now, 3 permit applications for aerial, buried, and splitter cabinets, will be submitted to the Shoreham Select Board,

d. Vergennes hub - Steve H. and Shannon H went to the DRB hearing in Vergennes on the application to build the hub. The application was approved. There is a 30 day waiting period for appeals, but none have come forward in the first two weeks, so construction can reasonably commence.

10. Other Business - none

11. Future Meetings: July 11, 2023 Governing Board; July 13, 2023, 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.
Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker

9c – typo arial should be aerial, and three permit applications should be aerial, buried, and for splitter cabinets

