

Approved August 31, 2023

Addison County Communications Union District (dba) Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2023

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Location: 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, VT

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - Chair

Carl Siebecker (Shoreham) - Vice-chair

Nancy Cornell (Starksboro) - At large

Shannon Haggett (Vergennes) - At large

Ellie de Villiers – Executive Director (ex officio)

Cy Tall, Treasurer (ex officio)

1. Call to Order / Agenda Approval

Recording announced. The meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm by the Executive Director. MOTION to approve the agenda as written was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

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

3. Public Comments - none

4. Chair Report - Steve Huffaker - Steve H. reported that he and Ellie dV. have been addressing several challenges associated with an increase in construction as the network grows. There is a meeting scheduled with Syracuse on Tuesday August 22 to discuss current construction issues and continue to plan for Phase 2 construction.

5. Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)/Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA) status updates

a. BEAD update - Ellie dV. reported that the comment period for BEAD Proposal Volume 1 ends tomorrow. VCUDA will be making procedural comments. VCUDA's comments on the 5-year plan were very well received by VCBB and are expected to be incorporated by VCBB into the plan. A coalition of national organizations has circulated a letter that has been signed, among others, by Maple Broadband, VCUDA, and Christine Hallquist on behalf of VCBB, to challenge the requirement of a letter of credit and replace it with a more appropriate requirement to achieve the desired result.

b. Accountability policy update - during the most recent meeting of the VCBB, the grant applications of three CUDs were on the agenda. A current requirement for grant approval is that the CUD must agree to abide by the accountability standards that are in development and yet to be finalized. The two CUDs affiliated with Consolidated were not able to agree to this condition because of constraints from their corporate partner. As a result, these two applications were not approved.

VCBB published a list of working groups on the accountability policy. Each group will be headed by a VCBB board member, will include VCBB staff and members of VCUDA. Ellie said that she volunteered to be on the Affordability group, Annual Report group, Grantee Agreements group, and Consumer Standards Certification group. Steve H. said he is willing to be on the Construction Standards group.

c. Other updates - VCUDA's full time staff person started on Monday August 14. Ellie dV. said she is grateful to have administrative support.

6. Financial

- a. Phase 2 construction grant update - item completed, no need to retain as agenda item.
- b. 1A Materials sale update - WCVT did a physical count of excess materials. Ellie dV. will send the list to Steve H. and Cy T. Steve will follow up with WCVT. At issue is how to capitalize assets and

how to account for assets for the audit. Ellie added that the RFI being drafted by VCUDA for financial services is due August 18. It is expected that a firm will be hired, financial services provided, and best practices implemented in time for the 2023 audit.

c. Ripton - no update. Town of Ripton has hands full dealing with series of flooding events.

d. Cable - it was discovered that more cable is needed for Phase 2 than was ordered based on an preliminary estimate that apparently was not updated. The shortage is in 144 and 72 count cable. Steve H. said that he has issued an RFQ for additional cable with the bid opening scheduled for August 24.

e. Back up batteries - 300 Calix batteries were ordered, and 17 have been installed in households that ordered voice services. After a long discussion about the best use for the remaining batteries, the following motions were made:

MOTION that every voice subscriber receives one new battery as part of their installation package, effective immediately, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

MOTION that every new subscriber (signing up for voice service or not) receives one new battery, until all these 300 batteries are installed, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

Steve H. will instruct WCVT about these new policies at the meeting with WCVT on Monday.

f. Organizations to consider joining

The Committee considered a list of several different organizations. After a long discussion, MOTION to proceed with joining and American Association for Public Broadband for \$1,000 annually and joining the National Digital Inclusion Alliance at the free tier level, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

g. Other - Cy T. will present the dashboard at the next full meeting of the Executive Committee on August 31. Cy T. said that 3.3

million in construction and pre-construction grant funds was recently received from the VCBB.

7. Affordability - no update

8. Marketing

- a. Maple Broadband shared WCVT's booth at Field Days. Aidan manned the booth with WCVT during the week, and Ellie was on deck on Saturday.
- b. Mailing went out to households in the 1A and 1B service area who have not yet signed up for Maple Broadband service. Aidan followed up door to door in some areas.
- c. Newsletter for August went out on time.
- d. Meeting with Pivot is scheduled to talk about digital ads.

9. Operations update

- a. Phase 1A sign ups - 101 orders (orders minus cancellations), 34 of these are customers who need to have conduit installed before drop can be made.
- b. Phase 1B/1C permitting and construction - all the permits for buried work and splitter cabinets in Shoreham and buried works Orwell have been secured. As a result of recent and ongoing construction work, within 3 weeks 2 new service areas will go live, bits and pieces (not yet live) in one mostly live area in 1A will be go live, and one more new service area will go live within 5 weeks.
- c. Vergennes central hub - Steve H. reported that the shelter is scheduled for delivery a week from Monday and the crane is lined up to hoist it off the flat bed. Steve H. and Ellie dV. plan to be on site for this special event. Brookfield, the contractor that is providing the generator, has notified that they will not be able to install it until November, due to heavy current workload.

d. Other - Nancy C. asked about the two warehouses for Maple Broadband materials, one at WCVT that WCVT manages, and one in Middlebury that Syracuse manages. Ellie dV. clarified that cable and cabinets are the only materials that are transferred from the WCVT warehouse to the Middlebury site by Syracuse. When Syracuse transfers these materials, they have physical ownership and are responsible for insurance coverage, but these materials remain assets of Maple Broadband. All agreed that more transparent tracking of these materials is needed.

10. Other Business - none

12. Future Meetings:

August 24, 2023 - bid opening (quorum not needed)

August 31, 2023, regular meeting

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