

Approved December 14, 2023

Addison County Communications Union District (dba) Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2023

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Location: 14 Seminary Street, Middlebury, VT

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - Chair

Nancy Cornell (Starksboro) - At-arge

Shannon Haggett (Vergennes) - At-large

Jeff Glassberg (Waltham) - At-large

Ellie de Villiers – Executive Director (ex officio)

Cy Tall - Treasurer (ex officio)

Adam Lougee - Clerk (ex officio)

1. Call to Order / Agenda Approval

Recording announced. The meeting was called to order at 3:31 pm by the Executive Director. MOTION to approve the agenda as amended with addition of approval of GMP invoices was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

2. Previous meeting minutes approval: November 30, 2023

MOTION to approve the minutes as presented was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote, 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (Jeff G.).

3. Public comments - none

4. Executive Director Report - Ellie dV.

Ellie dV. reported that her focus lately has included:

- released the newsletter with the updated CrowdFiber map and modified the website so that when *Check Availability* is clicked, the user is directed to the map;
- finished the strategic analysis that goes with the budget;

Ellie added that in the next two weeks she expects to have the time to begin the search for the next marketing firm.

5. Chair Report - Steve H.

Steve H. welcomed Jeff Glassberg as a new member of the Executive Committee. Introductions ensued. Steve reported that the generator at the Vergennes shelter is now powered up and that two serving areas out of the Orwell hub are also turned up.

6. Calls for decision / key discussion topics

a. 2023 pro forma and 2024 budget

The Executive Director discussed the 2023 pro forma and the 2024 budget with the Committee. Highlights of the 2024 budget discussion included:

- the plan for 2024 is to build Phase 2 and spend down ARPA money;
- presumption is that BEAD funding will be awarded, but funds not available until 2025;
- anticipates the need for 3 million in debt funding, in the 4th quarter of 2024.

Executive Session

MOTION was made to find that general public knowledge of Maple Broadband's business strategy would clearly place Maple Broadband at substantial disadvantage. 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 4:13 pm and came out at 4:20 pm.

MOTION to approve the 2023 pro forma and 2024 budget as presented today, to be presented to the governing board for final approval next Tuesday, was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

6. Calls for decision / key discussion topics - continued

b. Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) installations discussion - after discussion of the last meeting with the WCVT leadership team, it was agreed to invite them back in January to finish their presentation (with a 5-10 minute limit) and then the Executive Committee will ask questions. Ellie dV. said that CVFiber and NEK Broadband are also partnering with WCVT and are in strategic alignment regarding what the 3 CUDs need from WCVT in regards to understanding the work flow and verification of services provided.

c. Marketing “wish list feedback” - list has been slightly updated and Ellie will reach out to Dan S. to see if he has feedback to add.

d. Approval of Green Mountain Power (GMP) invoices - MOTION to approve the invoices for \$35,263.26 and \$51,434.56 and proceed with payment to GMP was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

7. Operations

a. Active service status - currently there are 129 customers active.

b. Phase 1 update - the Committee reviewed the data for Phase 1 fiber installations, splicing done, testing done and target service launch for Phase 1 service areas.

c. Phase 2 and 3 update - the Committee reviewed the data for fiber hung in the Phase 2 service areas. Fiber has been hung in a substantial part of the Phase 2 areas. Phase 3 construction is waiting on pole licenses.

d. Other - WCVT is bringing in a different subcontractor to do drops in Addison County, thereby increasing installation capacity, and will be overseeing the contractor to assure quality work.

8. Financial - the Committee discussed the November dashboard, including the number of subscribers installed.

9. Affordability - Ellie said it is still unclear what is happening at the federal level regarding affordability. Meanwhile, Maple Broadband now has two ACP customers. During a recent call with WCVT, it was agreed that customer service is to be 100% handled by WCVT.

10. Marketing - Pivot has done a marketing action plan for 2024, that includes a plan for a plan on how to use local volunteers to get the word out.

11. VCBB/VCUDA status updates -

a. VCBB submitted the cured version of BEAD Volume 1 for NTIA approval. The challenge process is expected to begin in the next month, to challenge which addresses may be funded under BEAD and which may not.

b. VCBB just released the Digital Equity Plan for public comments.

c. VCUDA's focus continues to be on finance, including consolidating a list of viable potential funders and working closely with a VCBB staff member to prepare CUDs for the underwriting process. Ellie added that providing the type of information that funders will need will not be difficult for Maple Broadband.

12. Parking lot, other business

Ellie reported that there is a budget adjustment bill currently going through the Vermont legislature that calls for restoration of the allocation of 20 million dollars that was taken from broadband and reallocated to flood recovery. VCUDA is advocating that these funds, if restored, be used as matching funds for federal programs.

13. Future meeting

Next regular meeting: December 14, 2023

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker