

**Maple Broadband**  
**Addison County Communications Union District**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 10, 2023 5:00 p.m. – 6:30p.m.**

**VIA TEAMS and live at ACRPC**

1. Call to Order:

Steve Huffaker, Chair of Maple Broadband, opened the meeting at 5:03 p.m. and welcomed the representatives of the member towns and members of the public to Maple Broadband's October meeting. The following people were present:

Paul Nikolich, Delegate Addison;  
Rick Scott, Delegate Bridport;  
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;  
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;  
Ellie de Villiers, Delegate New Haven;  
Bill Goddard, Delegate Orwell;  
Paul Vaczy, Alternate Salisbury;  
Justin Boyer, Delegate Salisbury;  
Carl Siebecker, Delegate Shoreham;  
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;  
Rich Warren, Alternate Starksboro;  
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;

Adam Lougee, Clerk, non-member representing Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Cy Tall, Treasurer Cornwall

2. Agenda Approval. Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Nancy Cornell moved to approve the agenda. Rick Scott seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**
3. Approve Meeting Minutes from September 12, 2023. **Paul Nikolich moved to approve the September meeting minutes. Shannon Haggett seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The Board approved the minutes by a voice vote/show of hands.**
4. Public Comments: None.
5. Chair Report: Steve Huffaker presented a PowerPoint of Comparative CUD Progress. Five CUDs, including Maple Broadband, are in construction, two are still building capacity and three are working with Consolidated Communications. Steve also described how Maple Broadband's Passive Optic Network (PON) will work. Steve noted that 1/3rd of MB's Phase

1 build is now active. The other 2/3rds is largely built and will go active over the course of this fall with some portions potentially extending into early 2024.

6. VCBB/VCUDA Update. Ellie noted that VCBB did not meet this month, but continues to work to satisfy BEAD requirements for the State of Vermont. BEAD is a federal funding program that Vermont intends to use to build broadband. It has a number of regulations regarding its use that Vermont is working to comply with. Overall, \$229 million dollars is allocated to Vermont for broadband through BEAD. VCBB is working on two documents to prepare Vermont for BEAD. The first, Volume 1, establishes all the addresses that lack service and will be available to be served by grants. It also lays out a challenge process to determine whether addresses are served or eligible for service. VCBB has submitted this document to the NTIA for approval. The second and more important document, Volume 2, will create service areas for receiving competitive bids and will create the rules for a competitive process.

Maple Broadband is working with VCUDA to prepare for BEAD. It is seeking to find financing mechanisms to allow Maple Broadband and other CUDs to raise the 25% match that BEAD will require for all grants. It will also try to address BEAD's 25% Letter of Credit requirements. VCUDA is exploring options for the State of Vermont to help CUDs meet these requirements. BEAD funding is still months away, but Maple Broadband is working hard to be prepared to apply for the funding. Additionally, Maple Broadband's budget shows that it will use its current grant funds by the middle of 2024. It does not expect BEAD funding until 2025. VCUDA has hired consultants to make sure that the CUDs can find access to capital to fill funding gaps like this and keep building fiber.

7. Business update and 2024 Budget assumptions: Steve noted that he wanted to discuss sensitive financial/operational topics with the Board under this program topic. **Steve Huffaker moved to find that premature public knowledge of Maple Broadband's business strategy would clearly place Maple Broadband at a substantial disadvantage. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**

**Steve then moved that Maple Broadband enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Maple Broadband's business strategy. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**

**The Board entered executive session at 5:32 p.m.**

**The Board exited the executive session at 6:11 p.m.**

8. 2023 Annual Report:

- a. Review: Ellie reviewed the Annual Report, which she had distributed prior to the meeting.
- b. Vote: **Steve moved that the Board approve the draft of the annual report and authorize the Executive Director to insert maps supporting the narrative and send it to the member towns by October 21, 2023. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion. All approved by a voice vote/show of hands.**

9. Financial:

- a. September Dashboard: Cy reviewed Maple Broadband's financial dashboard with the Board. She noted we continue to be in good financial shape and should remain in good shape through our Phase 2 build. Operationally, Maple Broadband turned on new service territory at the end of September. Passings increased substantially. As we build out, subscribers and revenue will follow, so October's numbers should increase substantially.
- b. 2023 pro forma and 2024 Budget.
  - i. Review. Ellie and Cy presented the 2023 pro forma cash flow for the rest of 2023. They expect revenue will increase as we add subscribers. We will also continue to draw down construction funds. Next Ellie projected the 2024 budget. She noted that with so many funding issues up in the air, this should only be considered our best projection at this time. It will change in the future, but State law requires Maple Broadband to prepare a budget for the next fiscal year now. The 2024 budget projects a break-even cash flow with about \$3.4 million dollars left at the end of the year. It does not include BEAD funding, but does include a substantial amount of debt funding. **The full Governing Board must be consulted on and approve the scope of the anticipated debt funding. Approval of this draft budget does not constitute its approval of the amount or terms of the specific anticipated funding sources.**
  - ii. Vote. **Steve moved that the Board approve the draft of the 2023 pro forma for the end of 2023 and annual 2024 budget as presented, authorizes the Executive Director to continue to refine the 2024 budget under the supervision of the Executive Committee and authorizes the Executive Director to send the budget package to the member towns by October 21, 2023. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion. All approved by a voice vote/show of hands.**

10. Marketing Report. Ellie delivered the marketing report. She noted Maple Broadband continues to focus on signing new subscribers in the Phase 1 buildout area. Maple Broadband sent direct mail to all served addresses and created and hung posters in Phase 1 towns. It also continues to work on digital marketing.
11. Affordability: Maple Broadband has its first customer using the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”) a rebate program from the federal government. WCVT will send information on the ACP program to all subscribers. Maple Broadband will put the ACP information on its website. ACP can bring the monthly cost of a Maple Broadband subscription down to \$19.95/month.
12. Phase 1 status update: Syracuse Utilities is currently building Phase 1B and 1C for Maple Broadband. Phase 1 construction should be done by the end of the year and operational in the first quarter of 2024.
13. Phase 2 status update: Maple Broadband has started to move fiber crews over to Phase 2. The hub is in place, has power and is being connected to the network. We will then build out the network components in the hub’s interior. The Hub should be completed prior to the end of the year. We have nearly all permits necessary for the Phase 2 build and most expenses except construction have been pre-paid. We have the cable and splitter cabinets, so nearly all long lead time items are already taken care of.
14. Other business. Ellie discussed her meeting with the Chairwoman of the FCC earlier in the day.
15. Delegate reappointments and appointments reminder – Leicester and Whiting. Steve asked that members continue to seek out potential delegates from Whiting and Leicester.
16. Next Meeting: November 14, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.
17. Adjourn. **Nancy Cornell moved to adjourn the meeting, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands at 6:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk