

Approved January 18, 2024

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**December 14, 2023**

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

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

**VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT**

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - Chair

Nancy Cornell (Starksboro) - At-large

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 3:30 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: December 7, 2023

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

3. Public comments - none

4. Executive Director Report - Ellie dV.

- Now that the governing board has approved the 2024 budget, it will be distributed to the Town Clerks and Maple Broadband representatives in the member towns, along with the updated annual report;

- Hannah from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission has been volunteering to update the map;
- Comments are due by January 6 or 7 on the State's 131 page Digital Equity Report. Ellie will be submitting comments via VCUDA.
- Ellie has been adding refinements to the financial model;
- Ellie will be working with the marketing wish list, translating into her view of requirements and adding some next steps, she expects to have the document ready to review and discuss at the next meeting.

#### 5. Chair Report - Steve H.

- At recent meeting of VCUDA, a budget was passed that included dues for each member CUD set at \$10,000. EC Broadband and Maple Broadband have the ability to pay VCUDA dues out of income. VCUDA dues cannot be paid with grant money because the VCUDA budget includes money to pay the lobbyist, Matt Cota, for his important advocacy work for the CUDs. Ellie added that she will circulate the VCUDA budget to the Executive Committee.
- Steve inquired about a transition plan in light of the fact that Cy T., current Treasurer, will be stepping down in 2024. Cy said that the next step is to tidy up the current financial policies and submit for committee review. After the committee has reviewed and approved the financial policies, the plan is to announce the Treasurer's position opening to the governing board, making clear that the current Treasurer is continuing until the audit is complete.

#### 6. Calls for decision / key discussion topics

##### a. Highlights of the WCVT discussion:

- Shannon H. would like a training session on CrowdFiber in order to understand how WCVT uses that tool;
- Cy T. said that WCVT's financial reporting to Maple Broadband is very detailed - a great job;
- the 3 CUDs that partner with WCVT plan to approach WCVT together with the list of what they need to verify from WCVT and why. That list of verified information should include:

- data on installations per month tied to drop crew numbers vs benchmark data,
  - metrics that WCVT uses to track performance,
  - workforce projections and what that data is based on,
  - timeline goal from sign up (in an active service area ) to installation, for different kinds of drops with consideration of any backlog,
  - how WCVT is tracking omni-channel communications (including email);
  - number of customer service agents on the phone and how available they are to make outbound calls to schedule installations;
  - upselling - is it done and how?
  - information about customer service technical support categories;
  - are customers “nurtured” with proactive communications from the time they register up until the time installation is completed?
- Reasons why this information is needed includes:
    - as public entities, Maple Broadband and the other CUD partners of WCVT need to have sufficient oversight;
    - direct impact on marketing;
    - direct impact on cash flow and cash flow predictions;
    - the CUDs need to know what to expect so expectations can be set with customers;
    - the partnership is a new model for WCVT and its CUD partners

## 7. Operations

a. Active service status - no new data on active customers

b. Phase 1 update - Shoreham 1 and 4 will be activated on Monday at the latest. Installations in Shoreham 1 and 4 will begin following that. Construction crews are working Wednesday - Friday during the two holiday weeks coming up. The next area to be activated is Cornwall 6 (northeast Shoreham area). The rest of Shoreham should be activated by the end of January. Issues with the subcontracted splicer crews were resolved, and they are back on site splicing and testing. Maple Broadband now has a temporary pole license, that will help it serve 53 unserved

customers faster in Orwell. Green Mountain Power (GMP) is in the process of replacing 23 poles in that area. Some areas in Phase 1 are waiting for GMP to do underground work.

c. Phase 2 and 3 update - In Phase 2 area, fiber has been installed all the way down to the first meet point where it will be connected to the WCVT network. WCVT is doing the splicing to make that connection. It is possible that the Vergennes hub will have internet this year. The security system and the generator benefit from an internet connection.

d. Other - none

8. Financial - latest draft of financial policies will be circulated soon for the Executive Committee to review.

9. Affordability - Ellie reported that there is a bill with bi-partisan sponsorship to be introduced in January in the US Senate to renew the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), the federal broadband subsidy program. The Democratic co-sponsor is our own Senator Welch!

10. Marketing - holiday postcards are going out soon. Shannon H. will reach out to the Addison Independent about doing a story on Maple Broadband once the annual report goes out. Nancy C. suggested that an Op Ed should be done as well. Ellie plans to talk to Pivot on a plan to leverage the ACP, should it be renewed.

11. VCBB/VCUDA status updates -

a. The Town ARPA match was passed by VCBB.

b. BEAD Vol I has been approved by NTIA staff, and is waiting for the signature of the NTIA Secretary. The challenge process is expected to begin in early January.

c. BEAD Vol II has received some curing feedback.

12. Parking lot, other business

a. #6 The candidate for the hub in Leicester has withdrawn from consideration. Search continues.

b. Ellie will be talking with the Town of Leicester regarding the need for someone from Leicester to be appointed as representative to the governing board, especially considering that the upcoming build-out of Maple Broadband's network in Leicester.

c. #7 - Nancy and Ellie are about to finalize the annual report. Nancy added that a very short version of the annual report is needed for member towns to include in their Town Meeting Report.

d. It was agreed to edit item #10 to read "amend by-laws" and edit current status to read "pending feedback from Shannon".

### 13. Future meeting

Next regular meeting: January 4, 2024

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker