

Maple Broadband
Addison County Communications Union District

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 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 5:06 p.m. and welcomed the representatives of the member towns and members of the public to Maple Broadband's December meeting. The following people were present:

Paul Nikolich, Delegate Addison;
Mike Sheets, Alternate Bridport;
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;
Ellie de Villiers, Delegate New Haven;
Bill Goddard, Delegate Orwell;
Justin Boyer, Delegate Salisbury;
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;
Rich Warren, Alternate Starksboro;
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;
Leslie Huston, Delegate Waltham;
Spence Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;

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

Cy Tall, Treasurer Cornwall

Gary Seta, Ferrisburgh, Citizen (arrived late)

2. Agenda Approval. Steve asked for additions or changes to the agenda. **Paul Nikolich moved to approve the agenda. Nancy Cornell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**

3. Approve Meeting Minutes from November 13, 2023. **Shannon Haggett moved to approve the November meeting minutes. Ellie de Villiers 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 showing maps of Maple Broadband's current builds. The map showed where Phase 1 build has been completed and is available in

real time on Maple Broadband's website [here](#). Steve expects the rest of Phase 1 will be completed and live prior to the end of the year. Steve also noted the generator is in at the Vergennes shelter and that he expects to have fiber to the shelter by the end of the year so we can start turning on the systems in the shelter.

6. Financial update:

- a. November Dashboard. Cy presented the financial statement that had been distributed to the Board ahead of the meeting. Cy noted she was new customer number 129 and was fully operational. She noted Maple Broadband's cash flow is in good shape. Maple Broadband's expenditures are under budget year to date. We are also earning interest on our cash balances.

Ellie pointed out that we have a pre-construction budget showing as a credit, which is a little odd, but it was because she disputed and won a credit for an overcharged billing error from our engineers at Vantage Point.

On the operational side of the business, Ellie noted subscribers continue to increase. As of November 30th, we had 126 paying subscribers. She noted that is a small change from October, but that when we start turning on new service in Phase 1 next month, she expects the number will really start to jump. Ellie noted that our number of subscribers exceeds our business plan model, which is good, and that our Average Revenue Per User (Customer) "ARPU" is in line with our business model projection thanks to the fact that we are now offering phone service.

- b. 2023 Annual Report, 2023 Pro Forma to year end and 2024 budget. Ellie presented each one of these financial documents. She noted they had been updated to include actuals through October's and also updated to include more accurate projections, especially concerning the amount of debt which Maple Broadband anticipates taking on at the end of 2024 to supplement its builds prior to the BEAD grant, which it does not anticipate until 2025. Ellie noted that VCBB finally approved all the matches to the town ARPA donations, so the \$415,000 of town ARPA donations will double to \$830,000. Ellie also presented the Annual Report which will be sent to all delegates and town clerks.

At the end of Ellie's presentation, Steve Huffaker moved to accept the 2023 Financial pro forma, the 2023 Annual Report and the 2024 budget as presented. Mike Sheets seconded the motion, which passed by a voice vote/show of hands with Ellie de Villiers abstaining.

7. Operations Report:

- a. Service availability. Ellie noted that we now have a live service availability map available on the website. Hugh asked about areas of Cornwall showing as not served on the map.

Ellie noted that those areas already had broadband and we were not authorized to use our grant funding to build in those areas.

- b. Construction. Maple Broadband intends to activate service in Shoreham and Orwell within a couple of weeks. Phase 1 service should be completely operational before the end of the year. We are now working on the Phase 2 build in the Ferrisburgh/Waltham/Vergennes area. We are currently ahead of schedule, but Ellie anticipates winter will slow the work and we still have splicing and testing to do. For Phase 3 construction, all “make ready” license applications are filed and we should be ready to start in the spring after completing Phase 2.
- c. Marketing. The website has been updated with our maps and we are moving the newsletter production to monthly to take advantage of the bump in subscription orders we receive after each newsletter issue. Front Porch Forum also seems to be driving subscribers and we intend to do more of it. Lastly, our marketing firm Pivot is creating a new strategic plan for marketing for next year.

- 8. VCBB/VCUDA Update. Ellie focused this discussion on the BEAD applications that will come due shortly. She noted both VCBB and VCUDA were focusing their efforts on preparing for this BEAD funding round. Overall, \$229 million dollars is allocated to Vermont for broadband through BEAD. VCBB has presented a proposed final version of the BEAD rules for Vermont to the NTIA. The first phase focuses on defining addresses eligible to be built with BEAD funding. VCUDA continues to explore options for the State of Vermont to help CUDs finance BEAD applications. BEAD funding is still months away, but Maple Broadband is working hard to be prepared to apply for the funding. Maple Broadband will apply jointly for BEAD funding with its partner, Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom. Maple Broadband anticipates a pre-application process in March and a full application in April. Maple Broadband’s budget shows that it does not expect BEAD funding until 2025.

VCUDA will be in the legislature hosting an open house on January 31st. It will provide legislative testimony at that time. Board members are invited to join Maple Broadband at the legislature at that time.

- 9. Other business. Ellie briefly discussed the competition to be first to market with GoNetSpeed.
- 10. Delegate reappointments and appointments reminder – Leicester and Whiting. Steve asked that members continue to seek out potential delegates from Whiting and Leicester. Our Phase 3 build impacts both Leicester and Whiting and we would like to have active delegates representing them participating in our activities during the build.
- 11. Next Meeting: January 9, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

12. Adjourn. Nancy Cornell moved to adjourn the meeting, Shannon Haggett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Lougee, Clerk