

Approved April 18, 2024

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**April 4, 2024**

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

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

**VIA TEAMS**

**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 3:32 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: March 21, 2024

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.

- Audit related tasks - work by Ellie and Cy on asset capitalization is in progress, March grant reports and ledgers are done. Syracuse 2023 invoices have been reviewed and validated, and footages for fiber and strand for 1A recorded. Cy added that Ellie is documenting her process with asset capitalization, so it can be explained to the auditor and to aid in future audit processes. Going forward, Ellie plans to do asset capitalization quarterly, as this is a best practice. Cy said that the current plan is for the audit to be ready for the June governing board meeting.
- Next up for Ellie includes a revised business model to present at the Annual Meeting.
- VCBB is working on the sub-recipient grants awards, after some delay.
- VCBB schedule for the challenge process for BEAD ended on Monday. On Friday, the final set of challenged addresses will be posted. The scoping needs can then be determined and communicated to Vantage Point Solutions (VPS) and JSI. Ellie added that parts of Maple Broadband's network do not yet have a detailed design. There is plenty of time to engage VPS or JSI based on preliminary results, so Ellie is not concerned about the timeline.

5. Chair Report - Steve H.

S.55 Modifications to open meeting law is currently going through the legislative process. Steve wondered about the issue of virtual vs hybrid meetings. Ellie said that as the law now stands, meetings need to be hybrid, and that may change, but is not likely.

6. Calls for decision / key discussion topics

a. Construction oversight - Matt Hubbard has been training Mission staff who will be providing construction oversight, 2 days a week, as a place holder person, until someone permanent can be hired. Matt is available to Maple Broadband to answer quick calls or by contract, if something more substantial is needed.

b. BEAD and BEAD accounting RFP awards - Jeff, Ellie, and Roger from WCVT met with BerryDunn and are satisfied that the firm can do the work needed. MOTION to award the BEAD accounting scope to BerryDunn in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

c. WCVT operations - WCVT has been operating as usual for aerial drops. They are using Syracuse to do power rodding for buried drops. After Steve asked, Ellie said she was still interested in the trusted contractor strategy.

d. Stipend policy - Jeff has been working on a draft stipend policy. Ellie said she will look at what other CUDs have for a stipend policy. Shannon said he would be able to help with the language after the end of April.

After discussion, Jeff MOVED / Shannon SECONDED a motion that it is the sense of the Executive Committee that it is prudent and appropriate to compensate Steve Huffaker for his volunteer contributions as Board Chair and beyond, and that a payment of stipend effective as of April 1, 2024 is the desire of the Executive Committee and that the dollar amount and specifics will be resolved within 60 days, including the adoption of an appropriate policy. Motion APPROVED - 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (Steve H.)

e. VCBB documentary - the launch event at the Vergennes Opera House (VOH) is scheduled for April 12. Catering and venue are arranged, and marketing is being done through the newsletter, Front Porch Forum, and flyers handed out a recent event at VOH. Marketing using the sign board in front of the venue was suggested. Lulu's has made a custom ice cream for the event, resplendent with maple ingredients.

f. VCBB accountability policies - the VCBB passed policies on construction standards, grantee agreements, and consumer protection standards. Consumer protection standards require grantees to get a net neutrality certificate from the Secretary of State's Office or produce something equivalent. The construction standards require a mandatory monthly meeting between each grantee and VCBB staff. Policies on affordability, annual reports, and sunset provisions are still pending.

f. Parking lot - Issues discussed:

6. Ripton ARPA resolution - no news from them, so Ellie will follow up again.

15. WCVT oversight goals - a meeting with other CUDs will be scheduled to discuss and the matter is expected to be wrapped up in April.

## 7. Updates

a. Construction status - service has launched in Phase 2. Vergennes 6, 16, and 12 are lit up. Almost all the fiber is up in the Phase 2 area, and crews are now busy splicing. In Orwell, almost all the strand is up and fiber is being hung. Weather permitting, splitter cabinets will be installed on Tuesday, one for each new service area.

b. Financial - Cy is waiting on a report from WCVT to finish the financial dashboard. At the next meeting she plans on showing two dashboards, one that shows cash flow, and one that shows how Maple Broadband is doing as a business. Cy added that she expects her work on the audit will be complete in June and she will help with the transition to a new treasurer after that. It was noted that CPAs are unapproachable during the busy tax season, but progress to find a new treasurer should resume soon.

c. MARKETING - has focused on preparation for the April 12 event. Door hangers have been sent to print. March newsletter went out. Ellie is working on a press release to announce the launch of Phase 2.

### e. VCBB AND VCUDA

VCBB has scheduled another meeting later in April to talk about the supplemental grant application submitted by Maple Broadband, amongst other matters.

The VCUDA meeting with BerryDunn was recorded if anyone wants to listen to it. The VCUDA board voted to use some of the grant money for a shared GIS resource person and approved funds for a planning grant

around affordability and preparation for applying for the competitive grant program that forms part of the federal Digital Equity Act.

f. Affordability - In regards to the national competitive grant, the plan is to have Vermont stakeholders apply together and work together, to have the best chance for an award.

The Committee discussed needs around affordability including:

- money for installations
- money for subsidies for subscriptions
- navigators or user-friendly programs
- automatic enrollment based on income, with choice to opt out

Ellie added that in order to benefit from the internet, people need devices, access, affordability and digital skills, and that programs that teach digital skills are greatly needed.

8. Other Business - none

9. Future meetings/ adjourn

Next meeting: April 18, 2024

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker