

Maple Broadband
Addison County Communications Union District

Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2024 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 5:05 p.m. and welcomed the representatives of the member towns and members of the public to Maple Broadband's April meeting. The following people were present:

Paul Nikolich, Delegate, Addison;
Mike Sheets, Alternate Bridport;
Steve Huffaker, Delegate Ferrisburgh;
Jenei Rossigg, Alternate Leicester;
Ross Conrad, Delegate Middlebury;
Hugh McLaughlin, Alternate Middlebury;
Ellie de Villiers, Delegate New Haven;
Justin Boyer, Delegate Salisbury;
Nancy Cornell, Delegate Starksboro;
Rich Warren, Alternate Starksboro;
Shannon Haggett, Delegate Vergennes;
Spencer Putnam, Delegate Weybridge;

Cy Tall, Treasurer and non-voting member;

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

Ben Scolostr, Bristol

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 March, 2024. **Paul Nikolich moved to approve the minutes. Shannon Haggett seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands.**

4. Public Comments: None.

5. Chair Report: Steve Huffaker noted we continue to make good progress on construction. Phase 1 as launched is completed to serve most unserved and underserved areas.

Steve also noted that Maple Broadband has launched three of its Phase 2 service areas and expects to launch another service area about every two weeks going forward. Phase 3 construction in Orwell has also begun.

Steve noted that Phase 2 construction in Vergennes presented many challenges for Maple Broadband because of its funding structure. However, management deemed it important to strengthen our business plan and found a way to fund the construction.

Lastly, Steve noted that the Executive Board had awarded him a stipend going forward for the work he has and will continue to do as a volunteer for Maple Broadband. **The Board will vote on that stipend when the proposal is finalized.**

6. Financial update:

- a. March Dashboard. Cy Tall presented the financial statement that had been distributed to the Board ahead of the meeting. She noted projections show us spending all of our ARPA funding by the end of 2024. Our goal will be to replace that with BEAD and private funding and to keep moving forward with construction. As of now, we are in good financial shape. Revenues and expenses remain in line with the business plan. Ellie de Villiers noted that operationally, the numbers had not changed in March. However, now that we are activating new service areas, those numbers will change rapidly in April.
- b. Audit/Treasurer's Update. Cy Tall noted that Maple Broadband expected to have the auditor's report completed within a couple of months, but not in time for the annual meeting next month. Cy noted that we need to account for all of our new infrastructure in this audit. Once that task is completed, we will complete the audit.

Cy previously announced she would be stepping down as Treasurer upon completion of the 2023 Audit. Cy will start pursuing new financial people after tax season. She asked the Board to consider people they know to find a new Treasurer.

7. Operations Report:

- a. Service availability. On the Operational side of the business, Ellie noted subscribers continue to increase (we are up to 208) and that our actual numbers are on track with the projections in our business plan as are mileage and passings. Other than that, most of the construction and service reports were covered in the Chair report.
- b. Marketing. Friday, April 12th at 6:30 Maple Broadband will host a showing of "Connected" a documentary on Vermont's Broadband network at the Vergennes Opera House followed by a short open house. All Board members are encouraged to attend and invite their friends. We will send out postcards to the Phase 2 area when all service areas are active in May or June. We have created door hangers to let people know when an

action to connect them to fiber has been taken whenever we finish a task on their property. We hope it will help improve our communications and therefore our customer satisfaction.

We will issue a Press Release noting Phase 2 fiber availability as soon as we take care of communications in relation to some of the installation backlog in Phase 1.

c. Other. None.

8. VCBB/VCUDA/BEAD Update.

a. BEAD. Ellie focused this discussion on the BEAD applications. She noted Maple Broadband will apply to BEAD jointly with Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom (“WCVT”). Ellie noted we secured a \$100,000 grant for legal and accounting work to help Mable Broadband work with WCVT and maximize our chances of securing BEAD funding. We are positioning ourselves to secure funding, but not counting on BEAD for our success.

VCUDA is working on procuring GIS services for all CUDs. It is also appearing in the Public Utilities Commission Hearing concerning the Consolidated Communications buyout, largely because it may impact other CUDs. VCUDA is also working with Deb Shannon to help pull together a coalition to apply for digital equity funding as part of a nationwide competitive grant opportunity, which would supplement the digital equity work being done by the VCBB. Ellie, in her role as Chair of VCUDA testified in front of the legislature on a couple of bills, including the open meeting law requirements and a CUD focused bill enabling technical changes to the statute to promote smoother operations.

9. Other business. Nancy Cornell welcomed Maple Broadband’s new delegates and invited them to ask questions.

10. Delegate reappointments. Steve asked that members continue to ask their selectboards to reappoint them to Maple Broadband for next year after the annual meeting and to send your appointments to Nancy Cornell.

11. Annual Meeting: May 14, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

12. Adjourn. **Shannon Haggett moved to adjourn the meeting, Mike Sheets seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by a voice vote/show of hands at 6:05 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted, Adam Lougee, Clerk