

Approved May 2, 2024

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**April 18, 2024**

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

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

**PRESENT**

Steve Huffaker (Ferrisburgh) - Chair

Carl Siebecker (Shoreham) - Vice Chair

Nancy Cornell (Starksboro) - 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 3:33 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: April 4, 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.

- Ellie expressed her appreciation for all who attended the event in Vergennes on April 12. Attendance was good considering it was a chilly,

rainy evening. The documentary was well received and people had a lot of questions. It did not generate many new CrowdFiber registrations but was a good opportunity for community engagement.

- Ellie's focus for the end of the month is to wrap up her work on the asset capitalization process. Then she wants to finish the updated business model, to be reviewed and discussed by the committee prior to the annual meeting.
- 3 invoices have been sent to VCBB - one for pre-construction funds, one for construction completion of Phase 1 and the third invoice for VCBB town match funds. The good news on the match funds is that they are to be used "in alignment with what the towns had authorized." Ellie said this means these funds can be used for construction in a manner consistent with the town agreements. Ellie will write a memo to the committee reflecting this.
- Ellie's focus for the next focus will be BEAD. The challenge process is going on now, and the final results of that process will not be in for at least a month. Ellie presumes that the challenges to addresses in Maple Broadband's district will be upheld. With this presumed scope in mind, Ellie said she will be able to brief JSI and VPS as this is an input to the business model revisions.
- S.199 has passed the House and has gone on to the Governor to sign.
- Ellie has been communicating with people waiting for rodding or waiting for aerial service. She has spent considerable time on customer relations. This was necessary - see 6c WCVT operations, below.

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

Two new service areas have recently been added. Maple Broadband now has 218 subscribers, including 2 subscribers in the Phase 2 area.

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

a. Construction oversight - Ellie reported that she is pleased with the job that Jared is doing, after taking the reins from Matt. He

proactively communicates, which is important. A new resource named Chad has just been added for construction oversight, as well.

b. Dashboard discussion - Ellie described Jeff's suggestions for enhancing the dashboard, including the need to separate business as usual from one-off expenses and having a breakout between operating and capital. Adam reminded the committee about the need to identify how many subscribers will be needed to reach the break-even point. Ellie will add this to the parking lot.

c. WCVT operations - After a very upset customer waiting for installation posted a negative review of Maple Broadband on Front Porch Forum (FPF), Steve and Ellie have been talking with executives at WCVT about customer communications/relations. Cultural differences between WCVT and Maple Broadband have been identified, but WCVT appears to be more than willing to give Maple Broadband what it needs. Therefore, Maple Broadband needs to be crystal clear and provide specific metrics it expects WCVT to employ in communicating with customers. Maple Broadband needs data on these metrics so they can be tracked. In particular, when someone has signed up and is waiting for installation, it is critical to communicate frequently with the customer to let them know the status of their installation. Discussions with WCVT are ongoing. Jeff stressed that there is an urgent need to prevent situations like the one experienced by the customer who posted on FPF.

d. Stipend policy - Shannon is working on this. Ellie spoke with other CUDs and Shannon did some online research with similar results. Shannon will review the State policy as the next step.

e. Town ARPA match update - see third bullet in Executive Director's report.

f. VCBB accountability policies - Ellie pointed out that the Consumer Protection Policy includes some action items for Maple Broadband:

- Obtain a certificate of net neutrality from the Secretary of Administration. Ellie plans to use VCUDA to figure out how to obtain the certificate, as the procedure is not accessible from the Secretary of Administration website.

- Develop a plan with our operating partner to assure and measure network reliability, assure and measure high quality customer service and provide a customer complaint procedure. The list of items that need to be in this plan will be shared with Roger at WCVT for discussion. Steve pointed out that some of the items are already in the network management agreement. Cy suggested that a new customer should get a care call after 6 months to ask about their level of satisfaction with the service, and then a follow up call 6 months later.

g. Parking lot - Issues discussed:

#6 - Ripton ARPA resolution - resolved

# 17 - documentary screened done

#18 - Town by Town progress data - Ellie raised the issue with Roger at WCVT who is still looking into it. What is needed is a forward-looking report for when mainline fiber is going to be completed in each town. Ellie plans to provide a template for WCVT to fill out as the next step.

#19 - Shannon (not Jeff) is the owner of this item

#12 - Amend bylaws. S.199 will be reviewed at the next meeting.

## 7. Updates

a. Construction status - since the last meeting, 3 new service areas have been added - one in Ferrisburgh and 2 that are primarily in Waltham. Splicing has been moving quickly, with favorable weather. Construction crews are continuing to hang fiber in Orwell. Railroad permits for the directional bore have been obtained and that work is expected to take place 3 weeks from this Tuesday.

b. Financial - Cy said that as soon as asset capitalization is in hand, she and Darlene will make the journal entries and send the paperwork to Bonnie.

c. Marketing - Vergennes event on April 12 was marketed through FPF. After Addison Independent publishes the press release, there will be a similar post on FPF. WCVT now has the door hangers to place after a drop is installed. End of the month newsletter is being worked on. Ellie plans a mailer to be sent out to addresses in Phase 2 when she has more resources available (intern and VCUDA GIS consultant) to verify addresses. Adam offered his GIS staff as a resource in the interim. Steve asked about pulling together a list of marketing firms to bid on the next marketing RFP. Ellie advised that the RFP be divided into 2 parts - strategy and execution, and advised that she would work on this after the asset capitalization and financial model update. Steve will assist with suggesting some firms for the bidder list in the interim. Adam suggested that Phil Summers from the Addison County Chamber of Commerce might be contacted, as a good resource for additional names of marketing firms.

d. VCBB AND VCUDA

- VCBB - the next policy VCBB will take up is the Affordability Policy. A working group will be meeting next Wednesday to talk about changes in the draft since the end of last year. The second BEAD sub-recipient grant application for Maple Broadband is on the agenda for VCBB's April 29 meeting.
- VCUDA - the GIS resource contract is not yet signed. Independent consultant Mike Reed has been monitoring the CCI dockets at the PUC and is coming to the Legislative Policy Committee of VCUDA tomorrow to explain what the process looks like, what might be expected and how Maple Broadband might want to be involved. The other consultant is Deb Shannon. She is interviewing stakeholders and identifying resources for digital equity to help pull together a statewide coalition to apply for the national digital equity competitive grant.

e. Affordability - no word on renewal of the ACP.

f. CCI docket - no updates today.

8. Other Business - none

9. Future meetings/ adjourn

Next meeting: May 2, 2024

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker