

Approved May 9, 2024

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

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**May 2, 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

Shannon Haggett (Vergennes) - At-large

Jeff Glassberg (Waltham) - At-large

Ellie de Villiers – Executive Director (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: April 16, 2024

MOTION to approve the minutes as presented was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote - 3 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstained (Shannon).

3. Public comments - none

4. Executive Director Report - Ellie dV.

- Ellie's recent focus has been working with Steve H. to draft customer engagement and customer service document to share with Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT), sending out emails to customers

waiting for rodding or aerial service, engaging in a discovery discussion with WCVT about how they use CrowdFiber on the back end, and conferring with “sister” CUDs (those partnering with WCVT) around alignment of reporting. She has finished with the asset part of asset capitalization and will work next on the labor part. GIS resource is now available through VCUDA.

- Ellie’s next big focus is work on the financial model and after that she will focus on the marketing RFP and the bidders list.
- Ellie discussed an article about DVFiber with the committee, and the reasons that DVFiber is now in a position where they are not able to build as much as they expected to build with their awarded grant funds. DVFiber’s district has different and more challenging topography and terrain than Maple Broadband’s district and their costs are higher than expected/planned.

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

- As of May 2, Maple Broadband has 233 subscribers.
- Two new construction areas in Phase 2 are scheduled to go up on May 6.
- Shannon has distributed a proposed stipend policy, to be discussed later in the agenda.

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

a. WCVT operations - customer communications - the committee discussed the Customer Engagement and Customer Service draft document to be shared with WCVT as a living document. Discussion included the tone of the document being a list of practical things to work toward as partners, and the need to convey a sense of urgency to work together to implement as much as possible as soon as possible. It is important to ask and then follow each customer’s preferred method of communication. Communication with each customer should happen at each key milestone. Maple Broadband will set the milestones and the

message, where applicable, WCVT will be responsible for the list of customers who would receive each message, and the most relevant party will send the communication out. Discussion also included the intent to ask WCVT to update CrowdFiber on Fridays by the end of the day and provide a weekly report on customer outreach calls. It was suggested that the most urgent items be given specific short-term timeframes for implementation by both partners and that those items be highlighted in a cover letter.

MOTION to allow Ellie to make refinements as discussed and to approve the document for submission to WCVT was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

Ellie will send the document to Roger at WCVT tomorrow, to give him time to review before his regular meeting with Ellie and Steve on Monday morning.

b. Bylaws revisions - the committee discussed the following changes to the bylaws, including those now allowed after the passing of S.199:

- Add Executive Director as ex officio members of the Executive Committee;
- Change the date of the distribution of the preliminary budget from October 21 to October 31;
- Change the date of the preliminary public meeting to review the preliminary budget from November 15 to November 30;
- Change the date of the final public meeting to review the preliminary budget from December 15 to December 31.

MOTION to present the above changes to the bylaws to the governing board was APPROVED unanimously by show of hands/voice vote.

c. Stipend policy - Shannon H. distributed the draft policy for committee review. He pointed out that Maple Broadband has insurance that covers both staff and volunteers. A volunteer stipend must be no more than 20% of the current market rate of an employee. If the executive committee starts, changes, or discontinues a stipend for a

volunteer, either someone on the committee or not, the governing board needs to be informed. If said stipend is not a line item in the current budget, the executive committee needs to demonstrate to the governing board that the budget has the capacity to accomplish it without running a deficit in the current fiscal year.

MOTION to approve the stipend policy as presented was APPROVED by show of hands/voice vote - 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstained (Steve H).

d. Parking lot - no issues discussed today.

## 7. Updates

a. Construction status - 2 new serving areas will go up next week. Construction is focused on unserved and underserved areas on the far side of buried work (directional bore of railroad or in the northern portion of Vergennes 10). This buried work is planned for the week of May 13. No more service areas will go live until the buried work is done. After that, multiple areas will go live later in the month, to address the greatest demand.

b. Financial - by end of next week, Ellie will finish labor capitalization work and send to Cy. Normal monthly reports are in progress by Cy.

c. Marketing - monthly newsletter went out end of April, including a link to the press release. There was an update on Front Porch Forum about Phase 2. The press release went out but only Vermont Biz published it. Addison Independent did not. Ellie has been drafting customer facing emails related to milestones. Pivot has produced the postcard, which will be mailed out as soon as GIS resource provides the list of valid mail addresses in areas that have current or planned active service.

d. VCBB and VCUDA - VCBB's latest accountability policy is around affordability. VCUDA is not happy with it and is proposing that VCUDA and VCBB work together on an affordability study committee and present results to the legislature.

e. Affordability - see VCBB and VCUDA above.

f. CCI docket - VCUDA is submitting the CCI docket tomorrow.

8. Other Business - S.55 pertaining to the Open Meeting Law is going through the legislature. One proposed change that would apply to Maple Broadband is that all the district's public meetings be recorded and that the recordings be posted online.

9. Future meetings/adjourn

Next meeting: May 9, 2024

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Minute-taker