



CV FIBER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

GoToMeeting (virtual meeting only)

March 4, 2021

Members Present:

Michael Birnbaum (Plainfield), David Healy (Calais), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), Jerry Diamantides (Treasurer), Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Kenneth Jones (Montpelier), Jeremy Hansen (Berlin)

Members Absent:

Greg Kelly (Barre City)

Others Present:

Henry Amistadi (Duxbury), Tom Fisher (East Montpelier)

Called to order: 5:31PM by David Healy via GoToMeeting

Additions to the Agenda:

- Jeremy Matt suggested that there should be a discussion of how the meeting with CCI was set up as he was uncomfortable by the lack of transparency regarding how the people on the call were selected.
- Jeremy Hansen suggested a discussion of results of the CCI meeting.

Public comment:

- None

Approval of the February 25, 2021 meeting minutes:

- MOTION (Jeremy Matt second Siobhan Perricone) to approve the February 25, 2021 minutes as drafted. No discussion. Passed unanimously.

CCI meeting:

- David Healy had set up a meeting w/ CCI for tonight. He said that he could not set up an executive session meeting with a quorum because we were not discussing contractual information and because CCI wanted to meet off the record.
- Jeremy Hansen noted that we were encouraged to meet with CCI by members of the legislature.
- David Healy said that he did not use any process for choosing the people who were on the call. He said that he was in a rush just trying to get it done.

- Siobhan Perricone said that she was uncomfortable with CCI not being willing to speak with us on the record, and that she wants that refusal to be on the record.
- Ken Jones said that the reason for meeting with CCI was to find out what a partnership should look like and he thinks that an executive session discussion would be appropriate for that discussion.
- Jerry Diamantides noted that we informed them that we were putting out an RFP, and they said that they would read it but that it sounded like they probably would not respond.
- Jeremy Matt noted that it also sounded like they would be happy if we paid them to build in less dense areas.
- Ken Jones said that he thinks its likely that CCI will end up buying some of the CUDs.
- Michael Birnbaum agreed with Ken that there would likely be consolidation, but not that Consolidated would buy CUDs.
- Jeremy Hansen said that he very strongly disagrees with Ken Jones and Michael Birnbaum and that he thinks that working with CCI is a dead end.
- Siobhan Perricone said that she has been lied to by CCI technicians and that they have regularly been difficult to deal with.

Updates:

- David Healy shared brief updates on:
 - The cares grant extension was approved and sent out by Rob Fish. We now need to prepare an amendment for the Moretown route.
 - The application for the \$400,000 VEDA match is likely to be out at the end of the month.
 - Senator Leahy is trying to get block grants for the States.
- Ray Pelletier provided a summary of the pole inventory RFP – we got 16 proposals. Ray Pelletier, Jeremy Matt, Tom Fisher, and David Healy are working to review them and weed them down to a recommendation to the Board.
- David Healy provided a summary of legislative updates. He noted that H360, which includes tax breaks for municipal fiber and other financial support, is under discussion in the House and that the Senate has a similar bill under consideration.

CVRPC update:

- David Healy said that he still has not gotten an agreement from the RPC. He expects it soon, but he has been having trouble connecting with them as Bonnie Wanniger is apparently on vacation.

WEC CVFiber MOU:

- David Healy reported that we have received a very rough DRAFT of an MOU from WEC but that this document needs work and thinks that we need to have a lawyer review it. He also thinks that WEC is perhaps wanting to move faster than David Healy thinks we will be able to move.
- MOTION (David Healy second Jeremy Matt) to recommend to the board that they approve funding to retain a lawyer to review the DRAFT MOU after Ken Jones and Jerry Diamantides have had a chance to conduct a preliminary review (as amended). Passed unanimously. Discussion:
 - Tom Fisher asked if we want to get a lawyer on retainer to deal with the other contract stuff we will have coming up.

- Jerry Diamantides suggested that maybe we can review the MOU and present recommendations to the lawyer.
- Jeremy Matt said that we should just hire someone with experience and let them protect our interests.
- Ken Jones said that he would like to review the MOU to make sure that items that are not necessarily legal issues but are still hugely important to us (IE making sure that the engineering allows us to provide service).
- Jeremy Hansen said that we should let Jerry Diamantides and Ken Jones review it (David Healy accepted as a friendly amendment)
- David Healy noted that Carol Monroe suggested going after \$160,000 in grant funding to do a complete integrated engineering design of WEC.

Roundtable:

- Ken Jones said he thinks there is a high probability that the State of Vermont will get money to address the impacts of COVID and that broadband infrastructure would likely be eligible. Ken Jones also noted that the Department will probably want to do a reverse auction to distribute these funds and that we will need to talk to them if we want something different.
- Tom Fisher asked if we need to start working on getting an ISP and asked if there should be a subcommittee devoted to nailing that down. Tom Fisher also asked if CVFiber has decided what sort of model we want to follow. Michael Birnbaum and Jeremy Hansen noted that early in the process CVFiber voted that we do not want to be an ISP.
- Henry Amistadi reported that he has been adding population data to his maps. He has also been working to get speed test data for our territory.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:58PM

Respectfully submitted,
Jeremy Matt, Clerk