



## **CV FIBER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Google Meet (virtual meeting only)

June 30, 2020

### **Present:**

Michael Birnbaum (Plainfield), David Healy (Calais), Jeremy Hansen (Berlin), Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Ken Jones (Montpelier), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield)

**Called to order:** 5:38PM by David Healy via Google Meet

### **Additions to the Agenda:**

- Approval of the June 23, 2020 meeting minutes
  - MOTION (Jeremy Matt, second Siobhan Perricone): to approve the June 23, 2020 minutes as drafted by Chuck Burt. Motion passed unanimously with one abstention. Discussion:
    - Michael Birnbaum abstained as he did not attend the June 23, 2020 meeting

### **Public comment:**

- None

### **Assign a Minute Taker:**

- Jeremy Matt volunteered

### **H.966 CUD Funding: CVFiber Plan and Budget**

- Ken Jones reported that there is essentially \$100k with our name on it: \$800k was allocated by the legislature for funding to CUDs with no more than \$100k to be given to any one CUD. Ken said that his feeling is that we should honor the intent of the Federal money and use the money to plan for construction of emergency infrastructure to target students and those in need of internet for telehealth purposes. Ken thinks that we should use the \$100k to plan for construction of actual infrastructure installation projects that can be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. He also thinks that as part of this effort we can raise awareness of CVFiber in our communities and work to strengthen the CVFiber organization.
- Siobhan Perricone asked how to identify people who need telehealth

- David Healy mentioned nursing homes and lower-income individuals, but said that targeting service to people who need telehealth would not be easy
- Ken Jones suggested that it might be possible to get a list of students from school superintendents. The superintendents understandably did not want to make a list of student addresses public, but they may be able to provide us with some direction. Ken noted that being able to point to concrete examples of addresses where CVFiber's emergency construction projects would help students would likely help us obtain funding to implement the plan
- David Healy noted that he has added the school districts to the CVFiber GIS maps
- Ken Jones noted that he has had preliminary discussions with Fred Goldstein at Interisle to see if it would be possible to have Interisle put together a budget proposal before August 1, 2020. Fred said that preparing a budget proposal would not be a problem in that time frame. Ken noted that if we do end up building fixed wireless, we will need to get an ISP.
- Michael Birnbaum noted that Cloud Alliance would be willing to assist with this.
- Ken Jones said that the rough split of the \$100k he sees is \$40k to Interisle to prepare the budget proposal and \$60k to hire an Executive Director to work full-time between now and December.
- Michael Birnbaum raised the possibility of sharing an Executive Director with NEK Fiber.
- Ken Jones noted that NEK Fiber and CVFiber are at very different places and will likely need different tasks to be completed. Ken also noted that he foresees that CVFiber will want to have someone working full time.
- MOTION (Siobhan Perricone, second Jeremy Matt): to recommend to the CVFiber board that a special meeting be held on Tuesday, July 7, 2020. Motion withdrawn by Siobhan. Discussion:
  - Jeremy Hansen noted that no motion is necessary as he can simply call a special meeting.
- MOTION (Ken Jones, second Siobhan Perricone): to recommend that the CVFiber board discuss applying to the Public Service Board for funding. Motion passed unanimously. No discussion.
- MOTION (Ken Jones, second Siobhan Perricone): to recommend that the CVFiber board discuss an extension to Interisle's contract to have them prepare a budget proposal to meet the requirements of H.966. Motion passed unanimously. Discussion:
  - Ken Jones noted that he will approach the school districts to get information on student addresses
  - Michael Birnbaum asked if Ken had gotten possible contract numbers from Fred when having the preliminary discussion of preparing a budget proposal. Ken responded that he had not discussed specific numbers, but that he got the sense that \$40k would be sufficient to develop the budget proposal
- MOTION (Ken Jones, second Jeremy Matt): to recommend that the CVFiber board begin the search process to hire an employee or contractor to manage our projects, Interisle, and to work to make CVFiber a more professional organization. Motion passed unanimously. Discussion:
  - Michael Birnbaum noted that Magellan might be a possibility for this role
  - Ken Jones asked if they would be able to work well with the non-CVFiber people they would need to interact with. Michael responded that he thought they would be able to do so, but that he's not sure if the person he has in mind is available.
  - Siobhan Perricone mentioned that if we hire an employee we would have to deal with payroll and possibly benefits. She said that because of this she liked the idea of hiring a contractor.

- David Healy mentioned the possibility of using Central Vermont Planning Commission for payroll.
- Ken Jones brought up VCUDA and said that VCUDA might consider going after \$100k to use in support of CUDs and suggested that people should be thinking about how VCUDA could spend \$100k in 6-months.
- Michael noted that VCUDA's work would likely be more to plan for future pandemics, rather than more immediate tasks.
- Jeremy Hansen noted that Rob Fish was hired to help CUDs and wondered how VCUDA and Rob Fish might be able to complement each other.
- Jeremy Matt asked if having VCUDA go after \$100K from the State would run afoul of the bylaw provision stating that VCUDA will not act as a conduit for funding. Jeremy Hansen said that it would not be a problem, as VCUDA would be supporting CUDs with new board member trainings, seminars, administrative support, etc. rather than passing out funds.
- Ken Jones suggested the idea of having the CVFiber board develop a plan for how to respond to planned cable or other ISP expansion in our territory. Ken's reasoning for having a plan in place is that we will only have 7-days to respond.
  - Michael Birnbaum suggested that in his opinion he thinks the board should develop guidelines for objecting and designate 2-3 people to respond.
  - Jeremy Matt mentioned that vetoing internet expansion projects could have a negative public relations impact and suggested that objecting should be done judiciously. Jeremy Hansen responded that we will simply be providing our objections to June Tierney at the Public Service Department and that June will be the "bad guy". However, we will need to build a case to June that a particular project will make it harder for CVFiber to meet our objectives of providing high speed internet to everyone in our territory.
  - Ken Jones noted that June Tierney has said that Comcast is ready and willing to work with CUDs, and that we may want to reach out to Comcast to say that if they're planning projects in our territory, we're willing to talk to them about possible collaborative projects.
- MOTION (Ken Jones, second Jeremy Matt): to recommend that the CVFiber board send a letter to telecom companies operating in our territory indicating that we would be willing to discuss possible cooperative projects. Motion passed unanimously as amended. Discussion:
  - Siobhan Perricone supported this idea, saying that it would help give us the moral high ground if we need to object to a project.
  - Jeremy Hansen disagreed saying that he didn't think sending the letter would accomplish anything
  - Michael Birnbaum noted that we might be able to use it to convince June to support us if we object to a project. Michael suggested a friendly amendment that the possibility of sending a letter be raised with the board as a discussion item rather than to recommend that the board send the letter.

### RDOF Update

- MOTION (Ken Jones, second Siobhan Perricone): Motion to find that having a discussion of RDOF bidding in open session would put us at a competitive disadvantage due to FCC rules forbidding any transfer of information between bidders. Motion passed unanimously. Discussion:

- Ken Jones suggested that going forward CVFiber should seek legal advice to determine the exact reason allowed by the open meeting rules
- Michal Birnbaum noted that the FCC rules against collusion require that our RDOF discussions not be public
- Michael Birnbaum noted that he has a conflict of interest with respect to RDOF funding through his business (Cloud Alliance) and that at this time he needs to be excluded from RDOF discussions. Michael then logged off and did not participate in the vote on this motion or in any part of the remainder of the meeting.
- MOTION (Siobhan Perricone, second Jeremy Matt): Motion to enter executive session. Motion passed unanimously. No discussion.
- Left executive session at 6:45.

**Other Business:**

None

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:46PM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeremy Matt, Clerk