



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

GoToMeeting (virtual meeting only)

September 24, 2020

### **Members Present:**

Michael Birnbaum (Plainfield), David Healy (Calais), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin), Chuck Burt (Moretown), Greg Kelly (Barre City)

### **Others Present:**

Henry Amistadi (Duxbury), Tim Shea

**Called to order:** 5:30PM by David Healy via GoToMeeting

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

- Jerry Diamantides suggested that we have a discussion of what the status is of the money we've been asking for. What do we have and what are we expecting to get?

### **Public comment:**

- None

### **Status of money:**

- Jeremy Hansen said that the invoice for the other half of Fred's bill (\$22,000) was lost by the Department, but he's submitted a replacement. This is the remainder of the grant we received for to complete the feasibility study and business plan
- Jeremy Hansen said that he had to go back and revisit the \$100,000 CARES fund application. We had a fully executed grant agreement, but the Federal Government added new requirements. He sent in the new info a few days ago. He also reported that we've closed out the USDA loan. No more reporting is required, and no more funds are going to be received from USDA. The bank account balance is currently ~\$9,000. We are also waiting for 90% of the 100k – we don't get all that money in one lump sum; we need to show that we've made progress on what we said we would before we'll get the last \$10,000. We will need to send an invoice in December to make sure that we get the last \$10,000.

### **Approval of the August 11, 2020 and September 10, 2020 meeting minutes:**

- MOTION (Jerry Diamantides, second Jeremy Matt): to approve the August 11, 2020 and September 10, 2020 minutes. Motion passed unanimously. No discussion

**COVID Grant Activity Update from Tim Shea:**

- Tim Shea reported that he is working with Rob Fish to try to get our grant money in the door.
- David Healy noted that we can modify our allocation of the \$100,000 grant money at any time provide we get approval from the Department.
- Tim Shea provided a list of planned expenditures from the \$100,000 as well as estimated dollar amounts:
  - Hire a project manager: \$50,000
  - Fixed Wireless: \$27,000
  - Updating the feasibility study: \$7,500
  - Community outreach: \$5,000
  - Legal fees: \$6,000
  - Office supplies: \$5,000

**Additional COVID grant \$-items for consideration:**

- CVFiber maybe receiving an additional \$300,000 in CARES fund grant money. Tim Shea shared a list of potential expenditures:
  1. Do a small fixed wireless project,
  2. Spend money on tangible engineering/fieldwork/pole survey/etc.,
  3. Pre-buy materials for Phase 1 build,
  4. Commission study to find dark fiber,
  5. Pre-pay for demand aggregation services to get better customer data,
  6. Develop a more mature website, and
  7. Develop marketing campaigns

Tim Shea reported that he discussed these items with Rob Fish. Rob said that #3 would not be allowed. Of the tasks in Item #2, the pole survey would be allowed, but the others are questionable – Rob is looking into whether or not they would be allowed. The other items would be allowed.

- There was extensive discussion of the cost of doing fixed wireless and on the potential costs of other tasks. After this discussion, a straw poll was conducted to gauge interest in fixed wireless. The general consensus appeared to be that CVFiber has better uses for the money
- Jerry Diamantides noted that pole surveys have a shelf life and that it may not make sense to do a pole survey for all the proposed routes.
- Jeremy Matt asked if the pole survey from road is sufficient for engineering purposes. Greg Kelly responded that it would not be sufficient; a pole-by-pole survey would still be required.
- Ray Pelletier said that we need to figure out where we're going to build first, then do a pole survey there. We need to spend the big stuff first and then do the little stuff as we can.
- Michael Birnbaum noted that the largest expense of demand aggregation is onboarding (generally around \$5,000) and that after that it's not too expensive, only a few hundred a month. He also noted that there are two ways to use demand aggregation. One way is to figure out where to go but it is also useful for figuring out within an area where the services are going to be installed.

- MOTION: (Ray Pelletier): to recommend to the board that we enter into agreement with COS for demand aggregation. Not seconded.
- Straw poll: committee members generally want to pursue agreement with COS
- Michael Birnbaum noted that the lidar pole inventory from the road is expensive and gets lots of info we don't need. It also doesn't negate the need for a pole-by-pole survey
- Jeremy Hansen said that rather than look at demand aggregation, he would advocate for taking Interisle's recommendations from the Feasibility Study to select the location to build first.
- MOTION(Jeremy Matt, second Jeremy Hansen) motion to recommend to the board that we pursue construction of the 150 miles of fiber (potentially in the blue and purple routes but with the understanding that may change based on the results of the RDOF auction) and put out an RFP to get a pole survey completed in those areas. Passed by unanimous consent. Discussion:
  - Michael Birnbaum proposed a friendly amendment to build in flexibility in the motion to account for information that may come out of RDOF. This amendment was accepted.

#### **ISP/Operator RFP update:**

- Tim Shea reported on the ISP/operator capabilities and interest document. The purpose of this document is to find out who is out there, are they interested, and what are they interested in. He suggested that we should get this out sooner rather than later
- MOTION (Jeremy Matt, second David Healy) motion to have Tim Shea revise the document based on any comments he receives over the weekend and to send on Monday. Passed by unanimous consent. Discussion:
  - Henry Amistadi said that he thinks the document needs more detail. He said that he will send comments
  - Jeremy Matt said that he thinks that less detail is fine because this document is just info gathering and we want people to read and respond.

#### **WEC Partnership/RDOF update:**

- David Healy reported that WEC received their final Feasibility Study this week and along with their financial modeling. It appears that if WEC decides to do anything, they will mostly be interested in running fiber on poles, not dropping services to customers. WEC is having a board meeting soon, and David said that he's not sure what is going to come out of that.
- Michael Birnbaum reported that the meeting will be on Wednesday and is probably going to be watershed meeting. The president of the board is pushing hard to get the board to approve borrowing money to modernize their network.

#### **Hire consultant for business plan for VEDA:**

- David Healy noted that what we got from Fred, while a valuable document, isn't appropriate for a VEDA application and we may need to hire a consultant to complete that process.
- Tim Shea said that he is going to reach out to VEDA early next week to figure out exactly what we need to do.

#### **Update on schedules and assignments:**

- David Healy said that people should be checking the schedule to make sure they're up on their deadlines and commitments.

**Roundtable:**

- No substantive comments

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:58PM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeremy Matt, Clerk