



CV FIBER GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

GoToMeeting (virtual meeting only)

April 28, 2020

Present:

Governing board delegates: Ken Jones (Montpelier), Frank Moore (Williamstown), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), John Russell (Worcester), Michael Birnbaum (Plainfield), Andrew Gilbert (Cabot), Jonathan Williams (Marshfield), Tom Fisher (East Montpelier), Chuck Burt (Moretown), David Healy (Calais), Joshua Jarvis (Barre Town), Philip Hyjek (Middlesex), Jeremy Hansen (Berlin), Trevor Thorpe (Woodbury), Greg Kelly (Barre City).

Alternate delegates: Allen Gilbert (Worcester), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), Jared Thomas (Calais), Lucas Herring (Barre City).

Others:

Called to order: 6PM by Jeremy Hansen via GoToWebinar

Public comment: None

Additions to the agenda:

- Adoption of the minutes of the April 14, 2020 meeting
- Discussion of other towns that may be interested in joining CVFiber
- Introduce Trevor Thorpe (delegate from Woodbury)
- Discussion of the Emergency Broadband Plan

New towns:

- Duxbury is interested, and Jeremy Hansen attended the select board meeting yesterday. He told the select board that they weren't part of the current feasibility study and would likely be at the end of the line because of that. They're doing their own feasibility study to look at the best path for them (join CVFiber, form their own CUD, etc)
- Jeremy Hansen reported that Siobhan Perricone was again approached by people from Washington
- Jeremy Hansen shared a CUD map and pointed out that Washington and other towns in that area are "orphaned" between CVFiber, ECFiber, and NEKBroadband.

- David Healy reported that ECFiber may talking about expanding and that Roxbury may leave CVFiber to join ECFiber.

Treasurer's report:

- Jeremy Hansen reported that we have received an invoice in the amount of approximately \$14,000 from Interisle for work done to date
- MOTION (Jeremy Hansen, second David Healy): Jeremy Hansen should pay the Interisle invoice as required by our contract. No discussion, motion passed unanimously
- Jeremy Hansen will have conversations with two candidates for the treasurer position and will work with Nathan Hock on transition plans

Joint CUD letter to RUS & Federal delegation:

- Jeremy Hansen reported that he is in the process of drafting a joint letter with CUDs across the State. The purpose of this letter is to ask folks who may have a say in allocating funds to consider past performance and other factors when deciding what rural broadband development projects to fund. Jeremy is asking the board to endorse this letter, but he will send it as Chair if the board does not want to sign off on it. Jeremy is happy to take suggestions of items to include but wants to streamline the process and isn't interested in having lots of people involved with wordsmithing.
- MOTION (Chuck Burt, second David Healy): That the letter being drafted by Jeremy Hansen and representatives of the other CUDs should be endorsed by the CVFiber board. Motion passed unanimously
 - Michael Birnbaum asked who the letter would be sent to. Jeremy Hansen said that it would be sent to State's Federal Delegation (Sanders, Leahy, and Welch) the Rural Utility Service and that he expected others would read it.
 - Ray Pelletier asked for clarification on the proposed content of the letter
 - Michael Birnbaum said that he supports the idea of the letter and presenting a unified front but thinks that sending it to the Rural Utility Service might not be appropriate because it feeds into long-term conflicts at the federal level. Jeremy Matt asked if Michael thought it might be actively counterproductive. Michael responded that he wasn't sure, but he thought it might be seen as an end-run around established channels and as such might be counterproductive.
 - Frank Moore suggested that Jeremy Hansen get in contact with Phil Susmann

Approval of April 14, 2020 minutes:

- MOTION (Frank Moore, second Michael Birnbaum): to table the approval of the minutes until the next board meeting on May 12th, 2020. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of the Interisle DRAFT feasibility study:

- Jeremy Hansen noted that financial projections were not part of the feasibility study Scope of Work and that we are hoping to see the next draft in the next week.
- Chuck Burt pointed out that the feasibility study will need to include at least pro-forma financials to show feasibility and that this is in the study Scope of Work.

- Jeremy Hansen noted that we still have an agreement from Stan Williams at ECFiber to provide financials based on ECFiber's known operating and construction costs.
- David Healy noted that the following changes are expected in the next draft
 - The route names will be changed to colors as the current naming system (the towns the route passes through) is unwieldy
 - Include a comparison of the different possible routes.
 - Interisle is going to use a 50-60% take rate as an estimate when projecting the number of customers on a particular route.
- David noted that the board is giving Interisle the leeway to recommend what they feel is the best route based on the criteria the board has given them and that while the board could override Interisle's recommendation, a good reason would be needed
- Jeremy Hansen raised the question of when the board is going to make a decision on where to build first
- Michael Birnbaum noted that Interisle didn't cost out the entire recommended route. Instead they looked in depth at a small representative portion and then extended that to the rest of the route. Michael also pointed out that given the amount of stimulus money floating around, we might be able to build multiple areas

Discussion of the Emergency Broadband Plan

- Jeremy Hansen reported that the State is proposing to use (anticipated) funds to hold a reverse auction to build out high speed broad band (100/100 service) in non-RDOF areas. Jeremy was asked if CVFiber could build more than the pilot project that we are currently planning, and he said that yes, we could. Jeremy said that this was the first time that it sounded like substantial funding may actually be made available.
- Ray Pelletier asked if we should be talking to Valkeynet or other operators to get them lined up in case we do get a large sum of money. David Healy reported that he has sent a letter to a number of potential operators asking for them to respond by May 10th if they are interested in pursuing a relationship with CVFiber.
- Ken Jones noted that this proposal also included money for Cable expansion. Michael Birnbaum responded that this was only to speed expansion into areas where Comcast was already required to build
- David Healy shared a map from the Magellan report showing the estimated cost per town to build fiber to all premises.
- Michael Birnbaum noted that this was all theoretical because the money isn't in hand yet. He also noted that the numbers were high and that this proposal only mentions 100/100 broadband.
- David Healy reported that he had a conversation with Bonnie Waninger at the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. This included:
 - Discussion about getting an executive director for CUDs
 - The RPC can do payroll for other organizations, has office space and postal, and can help with grant writing
 - There is potentially a source of money from EDA, and there might be an opportunity to use this money to fund CVFiber. It has lots of paperwork though
- Ray Pelletier asked for more details regarding the executive director discussion
- Jeremy Hansen noted that administrative support is included in the State Emergency Broadband Plan

Roundtable:

- Ken Jones noted that he is worried that quick solutions like fixed wireless will be pushed over fiber as there will be a lot of pressure to get internet to people if kids aren't back in school in the fall.
- Michael agreed with Ken's concerns and noted that people are urging the construction of emergency WISPs. He also said that a mix of fiber and fixed wireless would probably be optimal
- Jeremy Hansen asked Ken and Michael to send him some text fleshing out their concerns to include in the letter he is drafting with other CUDs
- Tom Fisher had a discussion with Efficiency Vermont. They've been asked if/how they can help with broadband development and what benefits broadband might have in terms of efficiency
 - Ideas included flexible load management, smart meters, scheduling electric vehicle charging, etc. Other ideas are welcome.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:34pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jeremy Matt, Clerk