



CV FIBER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

GoToMeeting (virtual meeting only)

December 1, 2020

Present:

Business Development Committee delegates: Chuck Burt (Moretown), David Healy (Calais), Jeremy Hansen (Berlin), Tom Fischer (East Montpelier), Ken Jones (Montpelier), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin), Michael Birnbaum (Plainfield), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield)

Others: Tim Shea

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

Additions to the agenda:

- Chuck Burt suggested moving website and marketing materials items to the Communications Committee agenda.

Public comment:

- None

Approval of November 12th Minutes: MOTION (Siobhan Perricone second Jerry Diamantides) Passed unanimously. No discussion

Canvassing Activities:

- Tim Shea reported that Last Mile Community Connections (LMCC) has begun the canvassing phone callings. David and Tim had a call with the ten plus canvassers last week and they are experienced and ready to go. They have about 2,700 phone numbers they are starting with and will record the survey results. Marketing pieces are being finalized and will be used once LMCC starts the door to door canvassing later this month.
- David Healy spoke with LMCC earlier today and they are well underway and had made over 200 phone calls already. They will all have 802 area code numbers for the twelve callers. Dan Brown spoke with David and he said those they reached are very excited and very interested in pre-subscriptions or helping on our behalf.

- Ray Pelletier asked if we have access to the data being collected.
- David Healy said yes, it is his system and with the 225 calls made before noon today they had over 40 responses to filling in the survey. If they do not reach the person, they are leaving a message to call back and LMCC will plan on a second round of trying to reach those that did not pick up the first round.
- Tom Fischer posted the second message on FPF and has received a lot of feedback. He did ask if we can separate out the survey responses with the data collection.
- Chuck Burt has prior experience making these type of phone calls and averaged about 80 calls/day, but recognize it will take time to ramp up.
- David Healy reported that LMCC canvassers have a lot of political campaign work and they are very qualified.
- Jerry Diamantides asked if we can segregate the random calls versus the online survey responders. He questioned if we could get a weekly report on the metrics from LMCC including the number of calls made, response rate, etc.
- David Healy said he would supply a weekly report from LMCC efforts.
- Ray Pelletier did confirm that the survey responses are not segregated from the phone calls versus the online activity. A discussion ensued about the survey responses and how we will use the data.
- Jeremy Hansen stated we are not doing statistical sampling analysis of the surveys; we are trying to gather useful data for those we are looking to serve.

COS Systems demand aggregation software:

- David Healy sent a boundary file to COS with a 600 ft buffer for our six routes.
- Michael Birnbaum raised concern over us showing the six routes to the public.
- Ray Pelletier asked if are we specifically showing the routes with COS in the zones. Tim Shea responded that we can change the zones as we see fit. The area we cannot redefine, which encompasses our twenty communities.

VEDA Loan Application Timetable & Action:

- David Healy stated he feels we are not moving fast enough. David did confirm with Rob Fish at DPS that the match dollars will be available after 1/1/21.
- Tim Shea reported that he has been working on the narrative pieces of the VEDA Application. Tim received the section elements and will distribute the list to the Business Development Committee.
- Jeremy Hanson stated that in reviewing the requirements an audit is not necessary, but he does have to follow up with the accountant.
- Siobhan Perricone stated we do have a legal requirement to do an audit per the legislative requirements. She felt like the deadline might have already passed. She will add as an action item for the full Governing Board.
- Ken Jones asked what year would we be auditing?
- Ray Pelletier said it is usually two years' worth of financial records. Ray stated it does not sound like the audit is on the critical path for VEDA. He suggested we share the narrative elements of the VEDA application in a Google Doc to be shared and commented on by the Committee.

- Jeremy Hanson stated that sharing a document in Google Docs is not authorized due to our status as a public entity.
- Jerry Diamantides suggested that we divvy up sections of narrative.
- David Healy asked if we need to name an ISP in the application.
- Michael Birnbaum stated that they likely would want to know who we are planning on working with as an ISP. We are on different timetables given the RDOF auction, CARES projects, and VEDA application process. We should keep working on VEDA and have a target to complete and have loose ends tied up.
- Jerry Diamantides had a follow up in what is competition for VEDA and do we need to be concerned?
- Ken Jones asked what is the timing for match and VEDA application?
- David Healy will follow up with Rob Fish about the process for matching funds in the coming few days. David said he would rather submit sooner than later and get feedback from VEDA on application.
- Michael Birnbaum stated we could submit the VEDA without a named ISP and spend time using a well thought out process to determine ISP.
- Jeremy Matt asked if we need a business case for each route or just the loan value work.
- Michael Birnbaum answered it is just the loan value for a business case.

ISP Options: Review history and take next steps:

- David Healy shared a document with this thought on ISP's. David is feeling boxed in due to CARES, RDOF, and the responses we received from the ISP Request for Capabilities and Interest. We had six responses and wants to know where do we want to go? Are we able to manage multiple ISP's and make it cost affordable?
- Chuck Burt stated it would be nice to have one ISP, which itself could manage more than one ISP. We may set rates and may have different margins based on the ISP's we work with.
- Ray Pelletier said we will need a fixed wireless provider as well. Ray asked who is the logical ISP provider for the blue route? He said it would be difficult to manage three or more ISP's.
- Jeremy Matt said we don't need to make this decision until we are done with the blue route and we may have to manage multiple ISP's if WEC wins RDOF and we used their fiber.
- Tom Fischer said we should use a cost benefit analysis to determine the best ISP to work with for our decision process.
- Jeremy Hansen said that an ISP is not necessary to be in that area right now to help with the design, build and project installation. Once you are done with that phase you look where you want to go next and see if the ISP wants to go there. If not, you find an ISP who has a relationship in that area and extend into that area. The ISP will act as the general contractor for the project and manage all aspects.
- David Healy expressed that then we need to pick an ISP.
- Jeremy Hansen said we are ready to pick an ISP for VEDA application process and have a MOU at a minimum and ideally a contract in place.
- Ray Pelletier prefers to put out a bid RFP for ISP's to respond for the blue route.
- Jeremy Hansen does not feel that is necessary as we would work with our chosen ISP to develop the project and costs.
- David Healy feels we should bid out the ISP work and asked how we would do that.

- Ken Jones said an ISP will help with the engineering and design and bid out the scopes.
- Siobhan Perricone said we have a lot of overlap in Vermont with ISP and territories.
- Michael Birnbaum shared that the RDOF auction will establish the obligation by the winner to serve the entire area it won. In CVFiber territory that means they are obligated to serve broadband and telephone service. This provider is obligated and does not want CVFiber to overbuild in an area that someone else is obligated to serve. There are several models that could be used with CVFiber leasing from another provider or the provider leases from CVFiber if we are there first. We should wait and see who was awarded and see if we can work with them.
- Tom Fischer expressed that we should have a term limit with our ISP contracts.
- Jeremy Matt asked if there was a chance that multiple entities would build on the same route. It does not seem like we can go forward until we know about RDOF and who was awarded the areas and who we could partner with. We can still pick our ISP and proceed.
- Jeremy Hansen stated that we do have a potential conflict of interest with Michael Birnbaum as he could be a possible ISP we would work with. We should be mindful of strategic decisions on who will be our ISP. We know who the ISP players are and many have differed in approaches. We could lease rights to RDOF build areas. The relationship that ValleyNet and ECFiber share is what we could aim for as a working model. ECFiber points the ship, but ValleyNet does the engineering and builds. CVFiber could have a similar model and use the ISP to build the projects. We should narrow down the ISP process and assign the Business Development Committee to start the discussion. Need to make a decision on who our ISP will be and stop with the confusion. We are paralyzed to make a wrong decision.
- Ray Pelletier shared that we have an obligation as a municipal entity to bid out a multimillion-dollar contract.
- Jeremy Hanson asked what was the point of the request for capabilities and interest?
- Ray Pelletier said to see who would be interested in working with us as it did not state a specific project.
- Jeremy Matt asked if we can create a generic RFP for a scope for ISP to bid?
- Ray Pelletier said we can do this and learn from the process and not necessarily award the bid to an ISP. He suggested the blue route for the scope of this RFP.
- Tom Fischer said the RFP begins the process and helps with the costs. This leads to discovery and transparency and establishes a well-documented process.
- Michael Birnbaum said he agrees we are treading on close discussions with conflicts of interest. He is speaking on behalf of a CUD. He feels there are many possible leasing options and one ISP may have a different model. We can lease out our fiber and still accomplish our mission.
- Ray Pelletier said we need to establish a timeline with Q2 contract award to ISP for the blue route and agree that the RFP process for an ISP starts in Q1.
- Siobhan Perricone stated she does not want us to lease fiber out to a for profit company who has no interest in our constituents. We are here serving the people in our community and need to address the economic strata and keep that in mind.
- Jeremy Hansen said that we had a budget to start the build in Q2. This timeline proposed would push out that plan as approved by the Governing Board.
- Ray Pelletier replied that we could enter into a contract in Q2 by issuing an RFP for an ISP in Q1 with a defined statement of work.

- David Healy said we need to move forward with the blue route planning. Create an RFP for potential ISP vendors and that will help set rates.
- Chuck Burt stated we need make sure that the ISP vendors sign an NDA in order to bid.

MOTION: (Jeremy Matt second Jeremy Hansen) Start creating a request for proposals for ISP based on the blue route scope of work based on the results of the RDOF and WEC decisions. Plan to issue the RFP in Q1 of 2021.

DISCUSSION:

- Michael Birnbaum thinks we should wait six weeks to know the results of RDOF as this is such important knowledge.
- Ray Pelletier said we should take time to build the RDP and this buys us time to build the RFP.
- Ken Jones shared that he thinks the WEC and RDOF will have several variables we will have to react to and is a moving target. The ISP will help us navigate through this landscape.
- Ray Pelletier asked who will provide the handhelds and whether we would get daily downloads of their data.

Passed unanimously. Michael Birnbaum abstained.

Planning Engineering and Design Next Steps:

- David Healy stated he prefer to defer on this topic at this time.

Roundtable:

- Tom Fischer has received tons of feedback on the recent FPF posts and people are excited. He usually receives very little feedback.
- David Healy will send an update weekly on the canvassing activities.
- Michael Birnbaum said that Siobhan we are not alone in your concerns and we will find ways to help those in need.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Shea