



**CVFIBER GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Berlin Elementary School 372 Paine Turnpike N, Berlin, VT  
and  
Virtually on GoToMeeting

August 10, 2021

**Present:**

**Governing board delegates:** Allen Gilbert (Worcester), Chuck Burt (Moretown), David Healy (Calais), David Lawrence (Middlesex), Henry Amistadi (Duxbury), Jeremy Hansen (Berlin), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), John Morris (Marshfield), Joshua Jarvis (Barre Town), Katharina Mack (Washington), Ken Jones (Montpelier), R.D. Eno (Cabot), Raymond Pelletier (Northfield), Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Tim Sullivan (Roxbury), Tom Fisher (East Montpelier), Linda Gravell (Waterbury).

**Alternate delegates:** John Russell (Worcester - Alternate), Seth O'Brien (Cabot - Alternate), Wendy Freundlich (Middlesex - Alternate), Christopher Shenk (Waterbury - Alternate).

**Others:** Jerry Diamantides (Project Manager), John Walters, ORCA, Christian Meyer (CVRPC)

<b>Town Representation (16/21 towns represented)</b>				
Barre City	Barre Town	Berlin	Cabot	Calais
Absent	Present	Present	Absent	Present
Duxbury	East Montpelier	Elmore	Marshfield	Middlesex
Present	Present	Absent	Present	Present
Montpelier	Moretown	Northfield	Orange	Plainfield
Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Roxbury	Waterbury	Washington	Williamstown	Woodbury
Present	Present	Present	Absent	Absent
Worcester				
Present				

**Called to order:** 6:04 PM by Jeremy Hansen via GoToWebinar

### **Additions to the agenda:**

- Jeremy Hansen added to the agenda the unfortunate story of the farm in Tunbridge that has lost a number of cows to injuries caused by ingested lashing wire that got mixed into the cows feed when the feed was harvested.

### **Public comment:**

- Siobhan Perricone reported that there was a highly critical public comment at a recent Orange select board meeting against CVFiber. The comments do not reflect reality. All of CVFiber's messaging has always been to serving the under and unserved populations first. The slides and the webinar are available to be shared here: <https://cvfiber.net/2021/08/webinar-recording-cvfiber-presents-broadband-plans-july-28-2021/>
- Allen Gilbert asked how residents who live off the grid have been accounted for in the planning to date. And questioned if CVFiber didn't need a policy to address this.

### **Waterbury's application to join CVFiber**

- Waterbury's select board formally voted to apply to join the CVFiber district and appointed a representative and an alternate to serve on the governing board should the CVFiber Governing Board vote to admit them. Those representatives were present, Linda Gravell and Christopher Shenk (alternate).

MOTION (Jeremy Hansen, Seconded Tom Fisher) *to admit Waterbury into the CVFiber CUD.*

- Allen Gilbert has reviewed the state statutes and what is required to join a CUD. Statutes state that CVFiber should determine the "financial, economic, governance, and operational effects that are likely to occur" as a result of the new membership.
  - Jeremy Hansen noted that there are currently 287 underserved or unserved households in Waterbury, which is a small proportion relative to the CVFiber area as a whole. Jeremy Hansen has had conversations with the Waterbury select board they are aware of what the costs will be for connecting those underserved and they are also aware that they will not be first served as plans are under way. He has also informed them that the easiest way for them to get included in the inventory would be to use municipal ARPA funds. However, no official determination has been made; there is an email chain documenting these discussions.
  - Chuck Burt felt the guidance provided in the statutes was most pertinent once the network was partly built and there could be an impact on a new member. Two other communities have joined CVFiber since it was initially formed. Of course, there could be impacts but they are expected to be small.
  - Jeremy Matt stated that there could also likely be benefits from admitting Waterbury, such as providing more efficient access to certain areas in the district.
  - David Healy noted that when Duxbury and Washington joined CVFiber they used CARES funds to update the pole inventory.
  - Allen Gilbert noted that some of the toughest issues CVFiber will face relate to which neighborhoods are served first. CVFiber will first expand to the underserved before developing in urban areas that currently have broadband service. Waterbury will mostly fall into that urban bin.
- VOTE - Passed Unanimously

### **Consent Agenda:**

- MOTION (Jeremy Hansen, second Tom Fisher) *to approve the July 13th, 2021 minutes as presented.* Passed unanimously. No Discussion.

### **Financial report**

- Raymond Pelletier summarized the materials distributed prior to the meeting, stating that they have currently spent roughly 40% of available funds for admin services, advertising, project management, and legal services. Jeremy Hansen is monitoring the CVFiber accounts in anticipation for the grant transfer.

### **Clerk's Report**

- No report

### **Project manager's report**

- Jerry Diamantides gave the Governing Board a status report on the major areas of coordination he is overseeing:
  - Jerry Diamantides has been coordinating with contractors, maintaining communication and updating them as necessary. The notice to proceed is imminent on the Pole Inventory and forthcoming on the non-WEC High Level Design
  - Jerry Diamantides has been coordinating with necessary agencies regarding the proposal for pole inventory in areas B and C. The non-WEC area high-level design has been approved. The WEC-3CUD high level design grant package has been sent to PSD. All reporting for the July 30 deadline has been submitted.
  - Jerry Diamantides has been coordinating with partner utilities.
    - WEC: They hold weekly meetings. Currently they are working on a process to transfer pole inventory data electronically and develop a format for the make-ready RFP. A ride-out with WEC is planned for August 23 for the Moretown Common Road grant – \$150K in CARES funds – to run fiber through Moretown via Moretown Common Road.
    - GMP: They have an electronic system for data transfer established. CVFiber will be able to upload data directly in anticipation of make-ready work.
  - Jerry Diamantides has also been in regular contact with various internal committees, coordinating with committee chairs.

### **Round of introductions**

- The Governing Board made introductions for the new members.

### **July 28th presentation update**

- Jeremy Hansen discussed the July 28 webinar. About 40 individuals were in attendance. The presentation covered CVFiber's background, the CVFiber Community Network plan and costs, as well as funding of the \$50 million project. It has been uploaded and is available to watch, here: <https://cvfiber.net/2021/08/webinar-recording-cvfiber-presents-broadband-plans-july-28-2021/>
- David Healy asked if members of the board should undertake similar presentations with their select boards?
  - Jeremy Hansen thought it could only be positive, so yes. However, he also received some very technical questions when making a similar presentation to municipalities, so it may be out of the comfort zone for some representatives. John Morris stated that he was appreciative of Jeremy

Hansen for coming out to Marshfield to present, it was unfortunate that the meeting had to be cancelled by he looked forward to circling back to reschedule.

- Raymond Pelletier reminded the group that there is an ARPA specific presentation template that can be customized for each municipality if board member are interested.

### **Microsoft tools update**

- Chuck Burt reported that CVFiber has purchased the needed Microsoft email and office tools. For individuals who need the desktop version the request will go through the executive committee to approve the additional cost.
- Jeremy Matt has multiple Microsoft accounts set up his computer. He can help others if there is need. He warned against the “back up anything” option.
- Chuck Burt stated that Teams doesn’t do well with multiple accounts.

### **Vermont Community Broadband Board**

- The VCBB has only been constituted for a week and has had 2 meetings. Things are moving fast. Each of the state’s CUD’s have presented.
- Henry Amistadi asked how to get on their mailing list. For those interested in Broadband Board meetings, there is some information on the Public Service Department's website:  
<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/vt-community-broadband-board-vcbb-meeting>

### **Grants update**

- Jerry Diamantides stated that there are two programs being run out of the CARES grant – Northfield-Roxbury project with ECFiber and the Moretown project. All are moving is moving along well. The first invoices have been submitted for the two grants outlined above and for the WEC-3CUD grant.
- An RFP for next round of pole inventories in areas B and C, detailed design, and make ready work is imminent.
- The question was raised if anyone know what the expected impact of the infrastructure bill will be for VT? Jeremy Hansen thought it was around 100 million dollars statewide for broadband. This should translate into several million dollars to the CVFiber area.

### **RFP/RFB/contracting updates**

- Raymond Pelletier stated that the WEC high-level design is awaiting state review. The non-WEC design is also awaiting state review. The RFB for areas B and C should be issued this week. Three weeks from now CVFiber should have proposals. Then is will only depend of funding streams for implementation. The RFP for an operator is currently out. There have been questions from three potential proposers resulting in 41 questions, which have been published. The contract has been negotiated between Vantage Point, WEC, and CVFiber. It will be taken up at the Thursday EC meeting.

### **Town outreach update**

- Jeremy Hansen gave a presentation at East Montpelier and will talk to Marshfield. Letters have been sent to all members towns regarding hub locations. Statutes provide that space be made available for equipment and the installation of components.
- David Healy updated the group that the ARPA county funds now have been officially made available to the municipalities.
- VLCT is helping towns navigate how they spend their ARPA funds.

### **Auditor RFP**

- MOTION (Raymond Pelletier, seconded Siobhan Perricone)

*Whereas CVFiber will expend grants in excess of \$750,000 in 2021, and*

*Whereas a "single audit" is required where CVFiber spends more than \$750,000 in a single year, and*

*Whereas CVFiber will need to engage an auditing firm to conduct such audit for 2021 in 2022*

*It is hereby moved that the Governing Board request the Finance Committee to draft, and the Executive Committee to refine, issue and publicize a Request For Proposals for an accounting contractor to conduct the required single audit for 2021 and such other audits as may be required thereafter.*

- Jerry Diamantides requested the friendly amendment to add language that include other audits as deemed necessary
- VOTE Passed Unanimously as amended

### **Make-ready RFP**

- Raymond Pelletier discussed how when looking to attach equipment to poles, if the owner can not do the work, they may engage a contractor to do it for the owners. WEC is amenable to having a contractor available to do make-ready work. Conversations are underway regarding the same with GMP.
- MOTION(Raymond Pelletier, seconded Siobhan Perricone)

*Whereas make-ready services are necessary before construction may begin, and*

*Whereas make-ready services are permitted to be accomplished by non-pole owners, and*

*Whereas having multiple make-ready contractors on retainer will provide for competitive bidding and accelerate the make-ready process,*

*It is hereby moved that the Governing Board authorize the issuance of a Request for Proposals for Make-Ready Services, and further authorize the Executive Committee to take such actions as necessary to refine, issue, and publicize an RFP as needed, as well as the grant application timing and amount in support thereof.*

- VOTE Passed Unanimously

### **News regarding the farm in Tunbridge**

- Jeremy Hansen recounted the story coming out of Tunbridge where a sub-contractor for ECFiber is believed to have left a bunch of lashing wire in a hay field. The wire was picked up with the feed and has killed a number of cows who ate it. This kind of story is causing concerns about work being done. Jeremy Hansen insisted that this could not happen in the CVFiber area, stating "not on his watch." He requested CVFiber need take affirmative steps to make sure this doesn't happen here. Perhaps this means making sure there are clauses in contracts regarding clean up.
- Allen Gilbert stated that he and Raymond Pelletier will talk first about getting good solid contract language.
- Jeremy Matt said he thought these steps were important to ensure CVFiber has something to point to if a perspective landowner brings up the question.

- John Morris stated the need for strong liability insurance requirements. Perhaps the required amount should be increased.
- Raymond Pelletier stated that all of CVFiber contracts currently have liability clauses but that specific language could be added for this issue.
- Jerry Diamantides brought up the importance of the contractors knowing they are the face of CVFiber.
- R.D. Eno wondered how public outreach could be increased to get out prior notifications to landowners.
- Jeremy Hansen stated that WEC is communicating the info about CVFiber to its members and that WEC will develop a landing page for CVFiber on the WEC web page. The more exposure the better the reception will be.
- Siobhan Perricone related her distress at reading this news and that these cows and farms are part of our cultural landscape. There is a heart here that goes beyond the legalese.
- R.D. Eno thanked Jeremy Hansen for bringing up the subject and that he had received a call directly from Jackie Folsom of the Vermont Farm Bureau. R.D. Eno believes CVFiber should address this explicitly in its contracts and make such assurances known throughout the district and that he would be happy to open communications with the VT Farm Bureau in order to reach the farmers in the district.

### **Roundtable**

- Henry Amistadi would like to present to Duxbury and wondered if the presentation should be shared on Front Porch Forums. The following language and link has been provided for each member to share locally:

*On July 28, 2021, CVFiber held a webinar to present its plans for delivering broadband services throughout its 20-community district. The presentation covered CVFiber's background, the CVFiber Community Network plan and costs, as well as funding of the \$50 million project. The presentation was led by Jeremy Hansen, founder and chair of CVFiber. If you missed it, the recording of the presentation and the slides can be found here:*<https://cvfiber.net/2021/08/webinar-recording-cvfiber-presents-broadband-plans-july-28-2021/>

### **Meeting adjourned at 7:47**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeremy Matt, Clerk