



CVFIBER GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Berlin Elementary School 372 Paine Turnpike N, Berlin, VT
 (Moved to Maplewood Traveler Service Center, 159 Paine Turnpike N, Berlin, VT 05602)
 and
 Virtually on MS Teams

October 12, 2021

Present:

Governing board delegates:

Allen Gilbert (Worcester), Chuck Burt (Moretown), David Healy (Calais), David Lawrence (Middlesex), Jeremy Hansen (Berlin), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), John Morris (Marshfield), Linda Gravell (Waterbury), R.D. Eno (Cabot), Raymond Pelletier (Northfield), Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Tim Sullivan (Roxbury), Tom Fisher (East Montpelier).

Alternate delegates:

Christopher Shenk (Waterbury - Alternate), Phil Cecchini (Barre Town - Alternate), Walker Blackwell (Washington - Alternate).

Others:

Jerry Diamantides, John Walters, ORCA, Christian Meyer (CVRPC), Gavin Bodnar (CVRPC)

<u>Town Representation (14/21 towns represented)</u>				
Barre City	Barre Town	Berlin	Cabot	Calais
Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present
Duxbury	East Montpelier	Elmore	Marshfield	Middlesex
Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Present
Montpelier	Moretown	Northfield	Orange	Plainfield
Absent	Present	Present	Present	Present
Roxbury	Waterbury	Washington	Williamstown	Woodbury
Present	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent
Worcester				
Present				

Called to order: 6:06 PM by Siobhan Perricone via Microsoft Teams

Additions to the agenda:

- No Changes

Public comment:

- No Comments

Financial report

- Phil Cecchini reported that CVFiber had roughly \$375,000 in its accounts. Of that roughly \$322,500 are grant funds for pre-construction tasks. The remaining roughly \$52,500 is for administrative tasks. There are currently \$2,900 due in invoices.
- Chuck Burt commented that CVW has reversed the unexplained charge to the credit card.

Clerk's Report

- No Report

Jeremy Hansen took over role of chairing the meeting

PM's report

- Jerry Diamantides reported that the contractors have completed roughly 50% of the pole inventory. That is, among the five town where work is being done, 50% of the data has been recorded. However, not necessarily equally.
- The high-level design work is at approximately 15% complete, as of two weeks ago. It is on track to finish this year.
- Additionally, about 15% of the work is complete in Northfield and Roxbury.
- The Moretown work that is being funded under the CARES grant has not progressed. It looks likely that the grant will not be spent and will expire. Jeremy Hansen asked when should CVFiber cut bait? David Healy responded that right now it is hard to say for sure if those grant funds will be spent; it depends on getting a developer/operator on board. Right now, the pole make-ready work is the biggest problem. Most of the poles appear to need work clearing brush to poles and this is time intensive. This decision will need to be made soon.
- Chuck Burt asked if CVFiber would proceed with building out in Moretown if funds expire? Jerry Diamantides stated that Moretown is still in Area A, and thus will be prioritized.
- Phil Cecchini asked when CVFiber should expect to see invoices from the contractors? Jerry Diamantides responded that now that the work is over 50% complete, invoices should come soon.
- Walker Blackwell asked, if CVFiber identifies a pole as being in bad shape and needing to be replaced, whose responsibility is this? Jerry Diamantides responded that WEC will replace the pole if it deteriorated. However, CVFiber will pay for the replacement work if it is CVFiber's work that is precipitating the need for the new pole. Jeremy Hansen and Jerry Diamantides noted that this is expected work and that CVFiber has good cost estimates.

Preconstruction grant

- Jeremy Hansen briefed the Governing Board that CVFiber submitted the grant last week. Additional info has been requested. The grant could be reviewed as early as next Monday.
- CVFiber has requested \$4.5 million but will be limited to \$2.8 million under the grant.

Annual report

- Jerry Diamantides stated that the draft annual report will be out for review tomorrow or the next day. He notes, CVFiber has done a lot this year.

- MOTION (R.D. Eno, seconded Siobhan Perricone) The Communications Committee shall review and approve the language of annual report for the CUD.

Town outreach update

- Siobhan Perricone stated that the Orange Select Board is discussing the equipment needs. Generally, Orange is interested in CVFiber.
- Chuck Burt stated that the Moretown Select Board is favorable but unwilling to commit funds yet. They are likely to commit some funds when more info is available.
- David Healy found in his experience working with the Calais Select Board that pointing out those areas considered underserved is helpful. Christine Hallquist has put together a good presentation and David Healy will share it with other Governing Board members.
- Allen Gilbert stated that the Worcester Select Board has voted to allocate \$50,000 of town ARPA funds to CVFiber. The money hasn't been transferred yet because of questions raised around the memorandum of understanding documents that lawyers are still working on. Allen Gilbert also said he had been asked by one towns person whether the allocation needed town meeting approval; he said the question has apparently come up in other towns. Allen Gilbert said he's also been listening to tapes of Vermont Community Broadband Board meetings, and that there's been discussion around a suggestion during a Department of Public Service presentation that ARPA funds may not be spent in areas where Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) funds have been awarded. Allen Gilbert said the VCBB has asked for a legal opinion on the issue. He suggested that this is something that needs to be monitored. Discussion ensued.
- David Lawrence stated that CVRPC will be joining the Middlesex Select Board to discuss ARPA funding. The Select Board has requested a CVFiber representative be present. They are interested in knowing what the benefit will be to the town in allocating ARPA funds to CVFiber? And, will there be provision for low-income residents? Jerry Diamantides responded that CVFiber is considering using ARPA funds to fund the drops from the nearest pole to the residence. This is a big upfront cost for the resident that could be removed allowing low-income residents to just focus on the monthly subscription. However, nothing has been decided.
- Tom Fisher stated that East Montpelier is in a similar space to all the other towns. Asking, has there been a response to the comment that ARPA funds would be used for cashflow? Jeremy Hansen believes that phrasing was mis-interpreted.
- Siobhan Perricone stated that the VCBB is taking affordability seriously.
- R.D. Eno stated that he has been in touch with the Cabot Select Board and they are interested but will wait a bit longer.

Accounting/Auditor RFP

- Raymond Pelletier stated that the Finance Committee will make a recommendation on a contractor for accounting services to Executive Committee on Thursday and expects that they will have engaged someone in November. Chuck Burt asked if this will necessitate a special meeting later in the month. Raymond Pelletier stated that this was a possibility.

Make-ready RFP

- Raymond Pelletier briefed the group that while the Governing Board had approved putting together an RFP to put make-ready contractors under retainer, there is already a program called One Touch Make Ready. Utility companies will provide the list of pre-approved contractors who can complete this work

for the CUD. This will put CVFiber in the position to be sole source contracting rather than requiring an RFP. CVFiber is working with WEC to have a list provided.

Operator RFP

- David Healy stated that CVFiber had five proposals, questions were sent out questions to two firms, responses have been received, CVFiber interviewed both firms, and site visits are underway. A recommendation from the Planning and Development Committee is expected later in the week. Several of the other CUDs have already hired their operators. This is for work from development, to construction, procurement, ISP, and marketing.
- Siobhan Perricone stated CVBB asked the CUD how many miles is of fiber is needed across the state for a big purchase.

Consent Agenda:

- MOTION (Jeremy Hansen, second Siobhan Perricone) *to approve the September 14th, 2021 minutes as presented.* Passed unanimously. No Discussion.

Roundtable

- Allen Gilbert stated that a lot of information important to our work comes out of VCBB meetings. Is anyone writing reports for the CUDs about the meetings? He would really like to see ongoing reporting. What if we had a team to report on these meetings? Could VCUDA maybe provide short summaries of the meetings? That would benefit all CUDs. Allen Gilbert thinks press coverage of VCBB meetings is also important; this currently seems thin.
- Linda Gravell has sent an email to Representative Theresa Wood asking about equity issues in broadband. She hoped she could join the Policy Committee on Thursday, October 28.
- Governing Board members should be posting to Front Porch Forum regularly about CVFiber news once or twice a month.

Meeting adjourned at 7:17

Respectfully submitted,
Jeremy Matt, Clerk