



## CVFIBER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Maplewood Travelers Service Center  
159 Paine Turnpike North, Berlin, VT  
and  
Virtually on MS Teams

January 19, 2023

### **Minutes Short Summary**

The 11/15/2022 minutes were approved. Jennille Smith reported on progress for the NRTC Design, Pole Inventory, Make Ready Progress at 120 miles, some expected delays with Hardwick Electric, statements of work for Marshfield and Middlesex, plus progress in Plainfield. In addition, she reviewed discussions with WCVT about how to design CVFiber's subscriptions and packages, the number of sign-ups of potential customers through the website, and the work being done with Crawford to appropriately market the CVFiber product. Jerry Diamantides reported that relevant Vermont legislators are aware of the potential funding gap that could stop construction, and efforts are underway to create a zero-interest loan to fill this gap. Finally, the committee discussed the probable evolution of the Planning and Development Committee into the Operations and Planning Committee, in interaction with the Operations Manager to be hired.

### **Present:**

**Planning and Development Committee Delegates:** Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), John Walters (Vice-Chair of Communications Committee), Christopher Shenk (Chair)

**Absent:** David Healy (Calais)

**Others Present:** Jennille Smith (Executive Director), Linda Gravell (Waterbury), John Walters (Vice-Chair of Communications Committee)

**Call to order:** Christopher Shenk called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

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

- None

## Public comment

- None

## Prior Meeting Minutes

- MOTION (Jeremy Matt, Second Siobhan Perricone) *To approve the 11/15/22 meeting minutes as drafted.* Passed unanimously.

## Updates

- Jennille Smith provided the following updates:
  - **NRTC Design:** CVFiber has been issued the CTC approvals for seven of the DAs that we submitted, and we have nothing else under review at this time.
  - **Pole inventories** are being completed for the final design, which will then be submitted to CTC for their approval with NRTC.
  - **Make Ready Progress** is 120 miles of licenses through WEC. We are tracking all our make ready and have mapped the progress.
    - Jennille Smith spoke with Green Mountain Power today and learned that the cost is going to be 1.5 times the cost of using in-house make-ready employees, but this will be two to three times faster, so they will be sending us estimates for make-ready and ride outs for the GMP territory.
    - We have no licenses for Hardwick Electric. They are the toughest utility because of their staffing shortages. As soon as we can get Hardwick to do anything, we are going to have them do it even if it's not next in the construction sequence, partially because this is a very isolated area.
  - **Construction Progress and Issues:** We are working with wetlands specialists to see if CVFiber might fall into a general permit for utility upgrades or if we need to update our Cad drawings to see where we are in relation to the wetlands. We are also working on getting statements of work for our next OLT sites in Marshfield and Middlesex. We are in the process of approving those statements of work to issue notices to proceed.
    - Jerry Diamantides stated that he wished to clarify that CVFiber is not impacting the wetland in question. It has already been built on. It is now a substation and has been for over fifty years.
    - Jeremy Matt asked first whether there is someone we can lobby to get this addressed quickly in our favor, and second if there has been progress in the Plainfield area.
    - Jennille Smith responded that CVFiber has a contact, Shannon, at the Agency of Natural Resources. She also got an update today that Plainfield is requesting a site visit to determine where the construction will be. She added that there is also on-going progress on strand in Calais.
  - **WCVT Operations Update:** Jennille Smith has been talking with them to determine what to offer and what not to offer for subscriptions and packages. We are going to do more research designing the subscription packages both aesthetically and in terms of services offered. There is a point between when someone signs up on our system and then becomes a paying customer at Waitsfield. We want CVFiber to have visibility in this process as we on-load our

first customers. We need to understand what we can and cannot offer and how to market this.

- **CrowdFiber – Number of Sign-ups:** There are currently 345 responses in Linda Gravell's inbox. Jennille Smith reported that CVFiber got strong, rapid responses, which increased when she posted on Front Porch Forum.
- **Crawford Group Work and Personals:** We are working to identify our customers, including those who would qualify for subsidized service so we know how to best market to each.
  - Linda Gravell reported that she and Chuck Burt have posted for the front-end web development position and have received fifty resumes, primary from international applicants. Jerry Diamantides said that the preference is to hire locally even if the hourly rate is higher.

#### **Update on VCBB Construction Grant Funding-CVFiber Plans**

- Discussion: Jerry Diamantides stated that CVFiber has funds awarded and we've tapped these. The amount awarded ended up being less than the amount allocated, so we want to amend the existing award to get the full amount, which should not be a problem. As more designs get cleared, we can ask for additional funds. There is a potential concern about a gap in funding. We are reaching out now about how to close this potential gap.
- Linda Gravell reported on the meeting with the Lt. Governor who gave us advice about how to proceed. At the hearing afterwards, she learned that others also have this funding gap. The legislators are trying to put a bill through to use a pool of money to cover the gap until the grant funding comes through.
- Jerry Diamantides will follow up. There is money in the budget, and we'd like to create a zero interest loan to handle the gap.

#### **Future Role of Planning and Development Committee and Brainstorm Charter for a new Operations Committee**

- Discussion: Christopher Shenk said that the expectation at this point is that the Planning and Development Committee will morph into the Operations and Planning Committee. The Operations Manager should be picking up some of the work the committee is doing now. We need to wait until the Operations Manager is on board and gets up to speed, before we can see how this committee will change.

#### **Adjourn at 6:23pm**

- **Motion to Adjourn:** (Jeremy Matt, Second Siobhan Perricone)

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeremy Matt, Clerk