



CVFIBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Virtually on MS Teams

January 12, 2023

Minutes Short Summary

Future CVFiber committee and the Governing Board meetings may need to be in person. Approving the minutes has been delayed because edits are still needed. While it is possible that wetlands may delay construction in one area, construction is otherwise ahead of schedule. CVFiber has until May 31st, 2023 to encourage towns to provide top-off funding (top-off funding is eligible to be matched). A working group had productive meetings with various legislators and the Lt. Governor on January 11, 2023 with an emphasis on increasing public visibility for both the legislators and CVFiber. Approximately 500 new registrations have come in since the launch of this part of the website. CVFiber needs to hire a web developer to ensure the website meets CVFiber's reliability standards for the registration process; approval of this position may require a special meeting which could take place before the Communications Committee meeting on January 19th, 2023. It was agreed to divide the current FAQs into three categories and parcel out responsibility for updating each to the appropriate committee prior to the January 30th meeting of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee approved advertising for the Operations Manager position, and began the process to form a hiring working group.

Present:

Executive Committee Delegates: Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), David Healy (Calais), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin), Chuck Burt (Moretown), Allen Gilbert (Worcester), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield)

Absent: David Healy (Calais)

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

Call to order: Jerry Diamantides called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

Additions to the agenda:

- Chuck Burt would like to add a discussion to hire a front-end developer contractor.
- Jerry Diamantides suggested this go under website update. While this can be discussed, action cannot be taken because it wasn't on the meeting agenda.

- Ray Pelletier said that Rob Fish noted at a VCUDA meeting that in-person public meetings are set to resume as of January 15th, 2023 because the pandemic exception is expired.
- Jerry Diamantides said that's a good point, and he is investigating this.

Public comment

- None

Prior Meeting Minutes

- Jeremy Matt said that there were relatively substantial edits that need to be made, and he hasn't had a chance to do this. He will send a track-change version.

Treasure's Report and Bills to Pay

- None

Construction Update

- Discussion: Jennille Smith reported that there are historic wetlands mapped near where we want to build but Jerry Diamantes pointed out that this may be irrelevant because this area is already well used.
- Discussion: Smith noted that CVFiber construction is ahead of schedule as contractors had originally planned to start to hang fiber at the end of January but will probably start next week. Smith also pointed out that fiber can withstand both heat and cold and should last at least fifty years.

Town ARPA Top-Off Campaign

- Discussion: Ray Pelletier noted that CVFiber still has opportunities to get additional top-off funds from some communities as approximately thirteen have given but seven or eight have not yet. The due date is May 31st, with a potential for another \$2 million. A discussion followed about which communities are known to have given all they can. Pelletier believes that the towns' investments are still in play because some towns may have kept money back to consider other options, which have not panned out. The Vermont League of City and Towns is also now encouraging towns to use their funds to support CVFiber.

Legislative Update

- Discussion: Linda Gravell said that Jennille Smith, Jerry Diamantides, and she had a productive meeting with Lt. Governor Zuckerman today. Zuckerman offered some political advice about how to get more funds, how to comport oneself in the Statehouse, and who to talk to when seeking more funding. The group also spoke with the House and Senate chairs of the committees where broadband issues are taken up. Other legislators at other committees were also contacted. Gravell highlighted a conversation with Rob Fish, Deputy Director of the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB). Gravell told him that CVFiber could run out of money as soon as June. He knew we would not be able to go to the bond market that quickly, and that he would have to move on this so there could be additional funding.
- Discussion: Diamantides pointed out the goal of the legislative action is to enhance CVFiber's relationship with representatives. Ray Pelletier said the representatives' goal is to be re-elected, so anything CVFiber can do to help them be more visible in the community

would be helpful, such as ribbon-cutting ceremonies. All agreed that CVFiber also needs to be more visible, such as the front page piece in the Montpelier paper, which could be posted on the website.

Website Update

- Discussion: Jennille Smith said that there was a soft launch of the pre-registration so potential customers can be informed when they can subscribe. Since the launch, CVFiber has had almost 500 new registrations.
- Discussion: CVFiber is currently using Crowd Fiber for developing the online pre-registration system, but the next step requires a heavy development lift, which Crowd Fiber doesn't have the bandwidth to do. CVFiber needs to hire a developer to code more complex integrations so that the user experience is smoother. CVFiber needs a more developed product than Crowd Fiber's canned product.
- Chuck Burt highlighted the necessity of ensuring that CVFiber's customers' first-brush with us on our website is that it works and we are reliable. The reliability of CVFiber is a crucial part of our brand, as was confirmed in conversations with our marketing agency, Crawford. The subscription process must be improved from not good-enough to one that has enough polish to meet the standards of a first go-live. CVFiber needs to hire a contractor proficient in front-end web development, and we should be able to find someone to do this at \$40-50/hour. All shared the need to have the user experience as optimal as possible, and the reality that Crowd Fiber cannot deliver this in the timeframe required.
- Burt thinks that \$5,000 is adequate for the search and the work for 80-100 hours of development time, and there is \$3,600 already reserved for this expenditure. Because time is of the essence, it was agreed to potentially have a special meeting with only this item on the agenda, perhaps right before the Communications Committee meeting next Thursday, January 19th.

Website FAQs

- Discussion: Jennille Smith says we've had FAQs on our website for two years, and some need to be updated. CVFiber has three monthly meetings where such changes can be approved. The current FAQs would be more user-friendly if divided into categories of technical, policy and operations. The timeline is that Smith will divide up the current FAQs into the suggested categories and parcel them out to the appropriate committees for revision, with the suggested changes on the agenda for the January 30th meeting.

Operations Manager Search

- MOTION (Ray Pelletier, second Jerry Diamantides) To approve the advertising of an operations manager search and for the working group to come back and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee. Passed unanimously.
 - Discussion: Diamantides would like to formalize a search and review group of four or five for hiring. Christopher Shenk and Linda Gravell managed the last hire. It was suggested that Diamantides, Jennille Smith, Ray Pelletier, Siobhan Perricone, Christopher Shenk, Tom Fisher, John Hosford, and David Mannix be potential candidates to serve on this working group. Smith reviewed a list of possible places to post the position. Chuck Burt emphasized the importance of empowering Smith to hire the candidate she feels will be most effective in the position. While the hope is to have

an operations manager on board as soon as possible, the reality is that the position may not be filled until March.

Executive Committee Meeting Dates, Times, & Location

- Allen Gilbert reported that the working group was not prepared to discuss calendar revisions at this time.

Adjourn at 6:17pm

- **Motion to Adjourn:** Jerry Diamantides.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeremy Matt, Clerk