



CVFIBER OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Virtually on MS Teams

September 14, 2023

Minutes Short Summary

The Operations and Planning Committee delayed approval the minutes for the August 10, 2023 meeting. David Healy reported 195 subscribers, six of whom are active friendlies. Lucas Stubbs reported that construction continues in CL02 and the VCCB documentary crew will be filming tomorrow. Lucas Stubbs reported that CVFiber has about 63 miles of fiber and 993 passes. Jennille Smith reported that Waitsfield said that six friendlies are on air and testing the network, both the on-line user interface for the user experience and the billing process. Linda Gravell continues to trouble shoot for CrowdFiber. Olivia Kantyka reported on the multiple actions now taking place to market CVFiber, including creating business cards and new postcards, attending the Barre Heritage Festival and setting up a ribbon-cutting event in the Calais Town Hall. Ray Pelletier reviewed the multiple ways CVFiber is investigating additional funding, including additional ARPA funds, VEDA funding, and customer promissory notes. The committee unanimously passed the motion to change the committee name to the Operations Committee. The committee agreed that the WCVT agreement was a document that would need to be continually revised as CVFiber moves forward. Lucas Stubbs, Jennille Smith and Ray Pelletier are all working to fine-tune materials estimates for the 2024 budget.

Present:

Planning and Development Committee Delegates: Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), Linda Gravell (Waterbury), Ray Pelletier (Northfield), Christopher Shenk (Alternate, Waterbury), Henry Amistadi (Duxbury), David Healy (Calais)

Absent: Tom Fisher (East Montpelier)

Others Present: Jennille Smith (Executive Director), Olivia Kantyka (Community Relations Manager), Lucas Stubbs (Operations Manager), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin)

Call to order: David Healy called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Additions to the agenda:

- David Healy added the item to set the date of Operations and Planning Committee meetings.

Public comment

- None.

Prior Meeting Minutes

- Approval of the August 10 meeting minutes was delayed.

Future Meeting Dates

- David Healy set future meetings for the second Thursday of each month.

Updates/Discussion

- **Customer Sign Ups:** David Healy reported 195 subscribers, six of whom are active friendlies.
- **Make Ready Progress:** Lucas Stubbs reported that another license came in for CL02, which has allowed construction to go forward starting tomorrow. We've also got the VCCB documentary crew going out tomorrow. We are still waiting on Hardwick Electric, and he has no good update from them. Jennille Smith has reached out to WEC as well. Ray Pelletier said that there are three other possible companies, but only two responded and it is unlikely they will be able to step in.
- **Construction Progress/issues:** Lucas Stubbs reported that CVFiber is testing in CL01 and CL02 and splicing in Harrison 01 and 02. We are about two weeks behind with the numbers, but we have about 63 miles of fiber and 993 passes. We have four aerial crews, one anchor crew, and two splicing crews in the field focused on CL02. As far as CL01 goes, we have commitments from Eustis to get testing done by the end of the week. David Healy says that we've been told "by the end of the week" for several weeks now. Lucas Stubbs reported that he is meeting with the key players tomorrow morning. David Healy added that he got a commitment from Waitsfield that they would connect the Calais Town Hall at 1pm on Monday, and Lucas Stubbs would like to attend.
- **WCVT Operations Update:** Jennille Smith reported that Waitsfield said that six friendlies are on air and testing the network. We are also testing the on-line user interface for the user experience. We are also creating a payment system online so we are testing the billing process. We are working through problems as they arise. The testing process is essential. Waitsfield has been helpful. CVFiber is operational and has income.
- **CrowdFiber Website:** Linda Gravell reported someone did try to pay online and a problem was discovered, identified and corrected. There are still a couple of items that need to be fixed, such as mailing addresses for billing and also terms of service, which we want to have in two places.
- **Community Engagement/Marketing:** Olivia Kantyka reported that as CVFiber starts to market, we need to refresh the homepage to be more customer facing. It is now not merely informational but also encourages sign ups. Olivia Kantyka is working with WordPress on both the homepage and the account/payment pages. We expect this to be ready in seven to ten business days so perhaps not in time for the Barre Heritage Festival, but in time for the Calais event.
- Olivia Kantyka is also working on business cards, creating new postcards and new feather cards. She is in touch with the friendlies and is creating a process to identify and utilize future friendlies. Linda Gravell added that CVFiber is collecting friendlies in RS01 and RS02, and Waitsfield is vetting them to be sure they qualify for our beta testing. We are

preparing to have these districts go live. Olivia Kantyka is also working on creating a scalable model for reaching potential subscribers in high traffic areas.

- The ribbon-cutting event planning is moving forward with a script for invitations and a list of invitees but we need a date for when Town Hall will be connected. David Healy added that we also want the governor to attend. The documentary crew would also like to attend.
- **Status of Future Finance Funding:** Ray Pelletier reported that CVFiber met with PFM today and they went over a financial model. They did a great job, and Ray Pelletier said their models were useful. The effort is to see if we can acquire credit for doing construction work for up to \$5 million. We are going to need the funds to complete Woodbury, another 60 miles, and if we get the funds, construction in Marshfield. Jerry Diamantides is going to lead a grant request for ARPA funds. We are still advancing with the VEDA loan, but there is only \$2.5 million left, so Jerry Diamantides has asked them to refresh this fund. \$20 million is needed. The fund was intended to be a bridge before we can issue revenue bonds. Another possible stream is the BEAD grants, and we will submit proposals in summer 2024, which will be reviewed, and if we are funded, these funds won't be available until the beginning of 2025. Jennille Smith that the VEDA loan has not yet been funded, but we might be able to get funding through the VEDA general fund, but we have to consider all the terms. Jennille Smith also praised Ray Pelletier for his work. David Healy added that CVFiber is also working on personal loans from potential customers. Ray Pelletier noted that BEAD funding requires a 25% matching funds and it is possible that this could come from customers' 6% tax free loans or VEDA funds.

Operations and Planning Charter/Committee Role

- David Healy noted that employees have been taking over the Operations committee roles. The operational plan CVFiber has with Waitsfield is detailed. For example, unscheduled maintenance is CVFiber's responsibility. Jerry Diamantides noted that conversations have already taken place to clarify this. Lucas Stubbs also identified other potential unscheduled maintenance. Ray Pelletier has discussed this with ECFiber, for example, if GMP will decide we are going to go underground. Millions of dollars will be invested in this move, so this will be a cost. Lucas Stubbs noted that some of these costs would be reimbursable. Waitsfield will be giving us numbers regarding our customers and services, including monthly trends and monthly expenditures. Ray Pelletier noted that surveys are the leading indicator for subscribers. Waitsfield also wants subscribers for income.
- David Healy has spearheaded a discussion on what is the role for this committee going forward. Four members are already on the Executive Committee. Jerry Diamantides asked where does the reporting from Waitsfield go, and who is responsible for disseminating the information to committees and staff. There needs to be a structure in place, and he suggested this information goes from Waitsfield to staff not to committees. David Healy said that we also need access to a view only of the network to see where it is working or having issues. Henri Amistadi suggested that the committee might break into sub-groups such as Quality, and he offered to look at the network data.
- Linda Gravell said that she and Olivia Kantyka have discussed what information they would like to have. CVFiber does not have a central place to collect and disseminate information, for example, a customer relationship portal. CVFiber needs a way to consistently report before we respond and this will increase customer satisfaction. David Healy wondered if

Waitsfield has a system in place and Linda Gravell confirmed that this would be discussed with them at tomorrow's meeting.

- Christopher Shenk suggested renaming the committee "Operations" to give the committee a more general purpose to oversee the network and the customers on the network. He added that he agrees with Olivia Kantyka that a CRM is an absolute requirement, and he suggested Microsoft Dynamics 365, and he offered to look into costs. Linda Gravell asked to see a demonstration. Jennille Smith agreed that that CVFiber needs a broad dashboard to collect information and suggested that we first check in with Waitsfield as they may have a system in place. She said that all emails from customers are now going to one place, except for friendlies. She agreed with David Healy that delegates should also have this information. Olivia Kantyka said we also have to be careful that confidential information is not shared. Jerry Diamantides suggested we may need to review the delegate situation as many delegates are not informed or involved. Delegates might not be the best point of contact for customers.
- Lucas Stubbs said he was asked to send a delegate to a town meeting but he did not think a delegate would be the best spokesperson for CVFiber. Lucas Stubbs said he thought the employees should be the point of contact. David Healy said that delegates should at least be informed when construction takes place in their district.
- Linda Gravell said we have Tuesday morning meetings with the five districts where construction is taking place but not all five district delegates show up.
- David Healy suggested that we don't yet have closure on this issue but he supported Christopher Shenk's suggestion to change the name to the Operations committee. Jennille Smith agreed. Henri Amistadi said we also hear about construction and this includes planning. David Healy and Lucas Stubbs agreed that construction is part of operations. Christopher Shenk also agrees construction as part of operations, and added that he would make a motion.
- Ray Pelletier posted what he sees every week from NRTC, and David Healy suggested that this committee have access as well.
- MOTION (Christopher Shenk, second David Healy)
To rename the committee the Operations committee.
Approved unanimously.

WCVT Agreement and Operational Responsibilities-Overview and Discussion

- David Healy said he has already described the operational roles described in our comprehensive agreement with WCVT. Jennille Smith said that she also sees this as a living document, which will need to be revised as CVFiber moves forward. There are changes going on at the State level, the VCUDA level, and on the operational level with Waitsfield. Jerry Diamantides noted that the agreement is almost a year old, we worked on it for at least a year, and he expects that the VCCB might use some of CVFiber's agreement as best practices.

2024 Operating Budget Items

- Lucas Stubbs reported that it is not yet clear what construction will go forward this year. He has been monitoring the relationship between budget and expenses. If CVFiber is constructing in Woodbury and Marshfield, that will impact the budget forecast.

- Jennille Smith noted that there are unknowns, but we have an idea for the BOM. We also have estimates from Eustis. Lucas Stubbs noted that some materials cannot always be used so our order does change. A lot of lessons have been learned this year. Jerry Diamantides noted that CVFiber should always have a contingency factor. Lucas Stubbs said that his communication with Eustis and NRTC has been key to figure out what is needed to keep the crews moving as quickly as possible.
- David Healy noted that Ray Pelletier posted the items that actually go into the CVFiber operations budget, but he is looking for input, and Lucas Stubbs and Jennille Smith will want to weigh in with the Finance Committee.
- David Healy announced that all 10 CUDs now have operating partners. Jeremy Matt asked how many have active fiber. David Healy said six out of ten. Jeremy Matt asked if there are towns, which are not in a CUD and David Healy said there are still towns that are not covered.

Adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeremy Matt, Clerk