



## CVFIBER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Virtually on MS Teams

December 5, 2023

### **Minutes Short Summary**

The Executive Committee unanimously approved the November 21, 2023 meeting minutes. Jennille Smith reported that CVFiber has over 1,354 passings and 46 paying customers, plus 176 miles of construction with eight crews in the field. Jennille Smith reported that CVFiber is moving to a two day/week warehousing schedule in quarter one. Jennille Smith reported Waitsfield has hired more crews for drops. Olivia Kantyka reported that she posted “Our Year-End Update” and CVFiber had 27 Internet package sign-ups and 67 pre-registrations in other DAs, which are not yet eligible. Jennille Smith reported that the RFP for loan funding went out today to about forty institutions, and we expect responses by January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Executive Committee unanimously approved the budget as submitted by the Finance Committee to be sent to the Governing Board for final adoption. The Executive Committee unanimously approved the contract as proposed by Jennille Smith for recommendation to the Governing Board.

### **Executive Committee Members:**

#### **Present:**

Allen Gilbert (Worcester), David Healey (Calais), Chuck Burt (Moretown), Jeremy Matt (Plainfield), Siobhan Perricone (Orange), Jerry Diamantides (Berlin), David Mannix (Marshfield Alternate)

**Others Present:** Jennille Smith (Executive Director), Linda Gravel (Waterbury), Olivia Kantyka (Community Relations Manager), Lucas Stubbs (Operations Manager), Sybil Schlesinger (Note taker; Moretown Alternate)

**Call to order:** Jerry Diamantides called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

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

- None

### **Public comment**

- None

### **Prior Meeting Minutes**

- Motion (Jeremy Matt, second Siobhan Perricone)

*To approve the November 21, 2023 Executive Committee meeting minutes as drafted.*

Passed unanimously. No discussion.

### **Construction Update & Outlook**

- Jennille Smith reported that CVFiber has over 1,354 passings and 46 paying customers, plus 176 miles of construction with eight crews in the field. We are close to lighting up CL02. Lucas Stubbs added that testing in CL02 has started and the hope is to have it finished by the weekend. We expect to have friendlies testing soon.
- Jennille Smith added that there is now power at the Rumney School OLT.

### **Materials & Warehousing**

- Jennille Smith reported that CVFiber is moving to a two day/week warehousing schedule in quarter one in anticipation of having most of what we need already on hand. We do expect construction to continue all winter as weather allows. No material deliveries are holding us up although we do expect a few more small orders. We expect to renew our contract with the warehouse, and we have been working collaboratively with Wild Blue Yonder.
- Linda Gravell asked if there are enough materials for 2024, and Jennille Smith added for the most part although there are some gaps that will need to be filled in once the funding comes in. Lucas Stubbs has gone over the needs for the next proposed DA, and the plan for now is to order as construction proceeds pending funding.
- Jerry Diamantides added that CVFiber ordered 400 miles of materials and has only built 170 to date.

### **Operations Update & Outlook**

- Jennille Smith reported that the weekly meeting with Waitsfield was today. Most importantly, Waitsfield has hired more crews for drops. We have ARPA funding for the drops as well. Eighteen drops were completed last month and nineteen the month before and four drops in each of the previous months. We expect the installations to stay steady or increase.
- Jennille Smith noted too that there are some maintenance issues that need to be taken care of around the installations.
- Linda Gravell asked if installations would go up to the anticipated ten/week. Lucas Stubbs replied that the additional Waitsfield crews will increase this number.
- Jerry Diamantides noted that it is a three-step process because Waitsfield has to do an engineering survey, the drop, and finally the actual installation.
- David Healy said we have access to the NRTC maps, which show all the drops, but Lucas Stubbs said that these belong to NRTC until the installation is made. David Healy said we should have access and Waitsfield should have access. Jerry Diamantides said it would be worth pursuing this issue.
- Linda Gravell noted that Waitsfield had prepped eight potential customers who then declined service, so Waitsfield is reluctant to do installs that customers do not use.

### **Marketing Update & Outlook**

- Olivia Kantyka reported that she posted “Our Year-End Update.” We had 27 Internet package sign-ups and 67 pre-registrations in other DAs, which are not yet eligible. We had over 600 address searches. We had 20 contact forms submissions, and Lucas Stubbs and Olivia Kantyka responded to these. We have a 31% click-through rate for this email.
- On Front Porch Forum, CVFiber got a rave review, plus a neutral review, and a negative review that said CVFiber needs to be more responsive although the customer was contacted within 24 hours.
- Linda Gravell noted that having testimonials at the State House Legislative Day would be helpful. Olivia Kantyka said that she knows of five and more are possible.
- Olivia Kantyka emphasized that CVFiber needs to be responsive in all areas.
- Town Clerks got Town Bulletin inserts.
- Olivia Kantyka noted a lot of conduit questions, so she is responding as quickly as possible with a conduit email.
- Olivia Kantyka also sent out a delegate survey to encourage engagement. She asked everyone please to respond as this helps her to set the pace for marketing.
- Chuck Burt said that yesterday the CVFiber website had a 3-fold increase in traffic—over 1,000 visits—so Olivia Kantyka’s update was successful, an incredible campaign.

### **Finance Update and Finance Manager Update**

- Jennille Smith reported that the RFP for loan funding went out today to about forty institutions, and we expect responses by January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. We are working with VCBB, and they are also working to get this RFP out as well. We have had four responses to our initial request for interest up to \$13million, which includes our match for BEAD funding. We are leveraging the money for both loans and grants.
- Jerry Diamantides noted that the BEAD funding is still not clearly defined. We may have work in kind to offset our required match.
- Jennille Smith and David Mannix are also working to hire a Finance Manager; they interviewed two candidates today and plan to interview two candidates on Thursday. Jennille Smith noted that Governing Board approval is necessary to make a final offer.
- David Healy noted that clarity around the BEAD funding should be coming in the next few weeks.

### **2024 Budget Finalization**

- David Mannix reported that the current budget has been updated with improved forecasts. We made activity-based cost estimates. Our single biggest cost is fiber labor. We looked at our crews and how to keep them engaged and on schedule as this is crucial. We used the standard labor rate and estimated take rates. We also made our best effort to mitigate identified risks, one of which is how we source and sequence our funding, as construction is heavily seasonal. We also held carryover dollars in case the loan is delayed. In addition, we planned on ARPA funding for the second half of the year.
- Chuck Burt asked if there was a deadline to use up ARPA funds. Jerry Diamantides noted that once they are dedicated to CVFiber, they are considered as used. We are also anticipating a log in getting the match for the ARPA funds from the VCBB.
- David Mannix noted the estimate of \$600,000 in revenue from customers, but we also want to ensure that once we have a customer, we keep them. We are also watching new subscribers.

- Jerry Diamantides commented that we have a process in place for a notice to proceed for our contractors, which includes having the funds in the bank. We are protected from obligating funds we do not have.
- Linda Gravell asked David Mannix to show the DAs CVFiber intends to work on in 2024 and the estimated customers.
- David Mannix showed a slide showing the initial budget and the revised budget with the biggest change moving from \$5million to \$7.5million for the loan. Construction costs also increased. Construction includes CL02, MA 1, 2 and 3 with the two Rumney School DAs.
- Linda Gravell highlighted that CVFiber intends to have 328 miles SOMETHING IS MISSING HERE BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT than this year as opposed to 205 miles. It improves our messaging if we are able to show our customers we can move ahead more aggressively in 2024.
- Allen Gilbert asked if CVFiber must use the ARPA funds when construction takes place in that town. David Mannix agreed and said this is being monitored and will be reconciled each month.
- Jennille Smith noted that this is already happening in Calais. The expenses can only be spent as construction takes place.
- MOTION (David Healy, Second Jeremy Matt)  
*To approve the budget as submitted by the Finance Committee to be sent to the Governing Board for final adoption.*  
Passed unanimously.

#### **Warehouse and Inventory Services Contract**

- Jerry Diamantides noted that CVFiber has been working month-to-month with the warehouse and the contract we want to renew is almost identical.
- Jennille Smith said CVFiber has been using Wild Blue Yonder for inventory and warehouse management. They are changing the company name. We propose more audit support, which they will accommodate. There are additional minor changes, including having the license in CVFiber's name. The proposal is to sign a one-year contract with Straight Line Broadband.
- Linda Gravell asked if Lucas Stubbs was satisfied with this company's work, and Lucas Stubbs concurred.
- MOTION (Jerry Diamantides, Second Jeremy Matt)  
*That the Executive Committee approve for recommendation to the Governing Board the contract as proposed by Jennille Smith.*  
Passed unanimously.

#### **Adjourn at 5:58pm**

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeremy Matt, Clerk