



CVFiber Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 6, 2024 5:00 PM
Virtual meeting

Present: Allen Gilbert (Worcester), John Morris (Marshfield), and John Reid (Woodbury); and Siobhan Perricone (Orange, Governing Board chair) and Jennille Smith (executive director).

- 1. Call to order.** A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Gilbert, chair.
- 2. Changes to agenda.** There were none.
- 3. Public comment.** There was none.
- 4. Approval of February 7, 2024 draft meeting minutes.** Reid moved to approve the draft minutes of the Jan. 3, 2024 meeting as presented, seconded by Gilbert. Approval was unanimous.
- 5. Privacy Policy – continue discussion on alignment with WVCTelecom policy.** Smith gave an overview of the current Privacy Policy Overview and how we've been working to align it with the Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom Privacy Policy as well as add some parts of the Maple Broadband Privacy Policy. Smith has provided a revised CVFiber Privacy Policy draft that does that. Gilbert said he felt the revisions look good, noting the inclusion of some parts of the WCVT Policy along with reference to the fact that anything in the WCVT policy applies to CVFiber customers. The main contribution from the Maple Broadband policy is mention that CUDs are public entities and are therefore subject to the state's Public Records Act. This means that customer information not considered "private" under the Public Records Act would have to be provided if someone requested it. Generally, however, personal information about customers is considered "private" and therefore is protected from having to be shared with others.

Gilbert offered a number of small changes, which Smith will include in a final draft. Gilbert moved, and Reid seconded, committee approval of the revised draft for consideration by the Executive Committee, which will review the document and forward it to the Governing Board for its review. The motion passed.

- 6. Digital equity efforts – discussion of customer connection equity and use of town ARPA funds for drops.** Gilbert reviewed the results of a working group that’s been focused on how best to structure costs of customer connections, given the distributive “MST” system that spaces connection hubs roughly 3,000 feet apart along CVFiber’s trunk lines. This sort of system could lead to unequitable charges of over \$1,000 for some customers and zero for others – even though both customers may be equally close to a utility pole carrying the fiber line. Three options on how to set costs had been developed by an Operations Committee working group. The group has recommended adoption of one flat rate that will cover costs from the MST distribution hub to the “take-off” pole from where the “drop” (overhead or underground in a conduit) will be connected to the residence. The cost of the connection from the take-off pole to the residence will be \$0 for the first 400 feet, and \$1 for every foot beyond that. This option, in addition to being equitable, is projected to result in more revenue over a five-year period than the other two options, which would create distance-tiered rates rather than one flat rate for all. Discussion ensued around a base connection rate higher than the current \$99 service charge. Perricone said raising that rate would likely run contrary to requirements in the federal BEAD Act, the provisions of which will apply to our work if we accept BEAD grant funds (which are expected to be available next year). Reid said that he’s comfortable with only one of the three options the working group sketched out – the flat-rate option. Gilbert said the same thing, noting, “If we believe in equity, we have to do equity.” It was noted that at this point, none of the customers who have been connected have been charged. Our contract with WCVT requires we pay \$1,500 for every drop and the connection of the internet hardware in the residence. Smith said there have been conversations about that charge increasing, perhaps .75% higher (which would be \$1,511.25). Smith said the charge will likely be reviewed once more drops and connections have been made and there’s a better sense of the average cost of materials and labor per drop. Gilbert said it appears that all parties are working civilly with one another to address the cost issue. The proposed plan will be reviewed next by the Executive Committee. Perricone noted that she’s learned that any connection CVFiber pays for, vs. the customer paying for it, becomes a capital asset for CVFiber – an advantage when seeking credit to finance further construction.
- 7. Statement of Principles – review progress so far.** Gilbert explained his interest in CVFiber developing a statement of principles after he had received such a document from a charity group he contributes to. It seemed a good way to explain the nature of the work we do, how we do it, and how we interact with our customers. He shared the model document with Smith and Kantyka. Kantyka

picked up the project, developed a draft of a document, and posted it to our website. All thought it was a good addition to the website. Smith noted the work received kudos from the Human Resources consultant we work with.

8. Other business. There was none.

9. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

-- Allen Gilbert

Approved June 5, 2024