

DRAFT VELCO Operating Committee MINUTES

July 16, 2015, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
GMP Office, Montpelier

Participating members: Kevin Weishaar (Town of Stowe Electric Department), Ken Couture (Green Mountain Power), Frank Ettori (VELCO), Ken Mason by phone (Vermont Public Power Supply Authority), Ken Nolan (Burlington Electric Department), Bill Powell (Washington Electric Cooperative), Jeff Wright (Vermont Electric Cooperative).

Other participants: Brian Connaughton (VELCO), Rob D'Arienzo (VELCO), Thomas Dunn (VELCO), Mike Fiske (VELCO), Andrew Flynn (VELCO), Deena Frankel (VELCO), Kerrick Johnson (VELCO), Phil Kearney (VELCO), Mike Loucy (VELCO), Dan Nelson (VELCO), Jason Pew (VELCO), Dan Poulin (VELCO).

Next Meeting
August 20, 2015
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
GMP Office, Montpelier

Opening

- Mr. Root called the Operating Committee (OC) meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

Safety Topic

- Mr. Kearney discussed that VELCO has added situational awareness as a component to its daily tailboard sessions to bring focus to implementing Stop Think Act Review (STAR) protocols.

Minutes Approval

- Mr. Powell moved and Mr. Couture seconded approval of the June OC minutes as posted. The minutes were approved without objection.

Structure Demolition

- Mr. Kearney presented the materials provided to the OC, which described the revised methodologies implemented by VELCO for a structure demolition project. The primary revision is that no free fall of materials, including poles, is allowed unless the structure cannot be disassembled using an aerial device, crane, or hand line. In this event the site foreman must first get approval from Asset Management Engineer or Director and then establishes a protective barrier in the area of the structure. Mr. Root explained that these revised methodologies apply to both internal and external line crews.
- Mr. Fiske explained that VELCO has only had two situations over the past several hundred structure demolitions whereby a controlled drop method could not be utilized.

Statewide Radio Project (SRP) Update

- Mr. Nelson discussed the progress made to the SRP since the last OC meeting summarizing the six sites under development. Three of the sites have been deployed and three are in construction.
- Mr. Nelson discussed a recent operational issue while testing the network under heavy loading situations whereby the network has a delay in releasing channels after use. The concern has been discussed with the radio manufacturer to investigate potential resolutions.
- Mr. Nelson explained that channel adds necessary to relieve system congestion under extreme loading situations are underway but due to schedule conflicts the work has been moved out in 2015.
- Mr. Couture asked for an update on Vermont Public Radio (VPR) interference issue with the Middlebury site. Mr. Nelson responded that VPR is actively participating in trying to resolve the interference issue. The next step is for VPR to remove their combiners to evaluate if this resolves the interference issue with VELCO's radios.
- Mr. Wright mentioned that SRP progress has been made within VEC's territory and user complaints have declined significantly. He provided an example that in at least one of the areas where cellular coverage is weak the SRP has been able to perform providing communications with the crews.

Map Guide

- Mr. Flynn presented the materials provided to the OC summarizing that the program is a combination of an off the shelf ESRI program and VELCO customization.
- Mr. Wright asked if the system will capture and present vehicle diagnostics. Mr. Nelson responded that the system has the capability to capture and present vehicle diagnostics but is currently only focused on locational services.
- Mr. Nelson explained that the mapping includes drive test data correlated coverage plots. The benefit of this is that in the event of an outage, the mapping will show in real time the impacted areas.
- Mr. Johnson asked if other assets could be added to map guide. Mr. Flynn responded that the system is essentially infinite relative to what can be added and displayed. The tool continues to grow with different dashboards or applications allowing the user to self-define what assets they are interested in viewing, whether it is SRP coverage, fiber outages, electrical lines, etc. He mentioned that the key is assembling robust data sets in order to load them into the program.
- Mr. Wright mentioned having visibility to fiber and line outages real time on the tool would be helpful. Mr. Nelson responded that VELCO is currently considering how to provide access to the data while remaining compliant with security requirements but it's likely this tool will serve both purposes.
- Mr. Wright asked if the data layers could be overlaid onto a distribution utilizes data set. Mr. Flynn responded that he's not sure without a better understanding of the systems but is willing to discuss the potential further DU representatives. Mr. Wright stated he'll reach out to VEC's IT staff to further investigate the potential to integrate the data sets.

VELCO Load Curves & Photovoltaic (PV) Penetration

- Mr. D'Arienzo presented the materials provided to the OC and discussed some of the recent solar radiation power generation data analyses in an effort to develop a more sensitive understanding of solar impacts on offsetting load.
- Mr. Wright asked if the meter data included the distribution utility generation. Mr. Etori responded that this data is actual metered data and does include ISO recognized generation, which includes sources like McNeil Station. He explained that the data does not include solar sources.
- Mr. Nolan mentioned that the data indicates that additional solar system sources will not appreciably assist to offset VELCO's transmission charges given the consistency in load curves.
- Mr. D'Arienzo summarized that additional analyses will assist in improving predictive models of solar to offsetting loads throughout the year. This will provide better guidance as the potential impacts of locating solar installations throughout the state to minimize potentially impacting other existing renewable energy sources. This guidance will be obtained via the Vermont Weather Analytics Center project, focusing around the PV generation outputs of the Demand Forecast model.
- Mr. Johnson mentioned that this analysis should be shared with the Department of Public Service (DPS) while they are in their rule making process so that they have benefit of this new knowledge.

ISO-NE Update

- Mr. Etori presented the materials provided to the OC summarizing that as loads continue to decrease the RNS Rate will need to increase to recover the necessary revenue.
- Mr. Couture asked when a FERC vote is anticipated regarding the proposed winter fuel program changes. Mr. Etori responded that FERC has indicated a vote should take place in September.
- Mr. Couture asked if there is a primary driver in the load impact factor within the RNS Rate Change calculation. Mr. Etori responded that it is believed that solar generation is the key driver given the reduction in coincident peaks.
- Mr. Etori discussed one new initiative underway at ISO-NE is establishing a Cost Working Group to analyze submission timeline requirements associated with Transmission Cost Allocation (TCA) filings as currently there are no set standards and delayed filings are allowing costs to be placed into rates sometimes without prudent review.

Power Accounting Update

- Mr. Etori presented the materials provided to the OC summarizing that the transition is progressing and that VELCO is anticipating be separated from Bridge Energy Group services by September of this year.

Load Shedding

- Mr. Pew presented the materials provide to the OC summarizing that the plan complies with the NERC requirements as prepared but VELCO is open to keeping it flexible as demands arise.
- Mr. Wright asked if VELCO could continue to evaluate whereby VEC's control center building would be outside of the load shed area. He further mentioned Vermont only has five control centers and potentially taking one out of service may create other downstream challenges. Mr. Root agreed that VELCO will continue to look for possible alternatives to keep the VEC control center building energized without the need to manually control the system to bring the area back into service.
- Mr. Etori asked is any formal agreement needs to be in place between VELCO and any of the impacted distribution utilities. Mr. Pew agreed to review this requirement and report back to the OC.

Use of Drones

- Mr. Root discussed the use of drones as a possible resource to conduct remote aerial surveys and summarized that the reason VELCO is considering a third party to provide these services versus conducting the surveys internally is due to the FAA's requirement to treat drones as regulated aircraft. The requirements include having a licensed pilot at the controls, medical clearances, inspections, etc. He discussed that VELCO does not see this technology as a replacement to helicopters conducting large survey's but will likely be useful many other short duration inspections.

East Ave/Queen City Facility Classification

- Mr. Root presented the materials provided to the OC discussing that this presentation is an intended to be an introduction to a proposed solution for a fault current challenge in Chittenden County so that the OC members can take the proposal back to their companies for consideration. He summarized that VELCO's transmission solution proposal is to add one new current limiting reactor at the Queen City substation and two new current limiting reactors at the East Avenue substation. There are also potential distribution solutions but this initial proposal seems to be the best engineering approach and one open question is would the installations be considered as common or specific facilities under 1991 Vermont Transmission Agreement (VTA).
- Mr. Root agreed to come back to the OC with estimated cost allocations for the distribution utilities if the installations are considered as a common facility or specific facility.
- It will be on the next OC agenda to discuss again.

Other Business

- No other business was discussed.

Proposed Agenda Items

- East Ave/Queen City Facility Classification
- Statewide Radio Project
- Follow up any new analyses around Vermont load curves

Motion to Adjourn

- Mr. Wright moved and Mr. Couture seconded adjournment, which was agreed without objection at 2:39 p.m.