

Final VELCO Operating Committee MINUTES

DATE: April 16, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 1:02 p.m.

LOCATION: Conference call during Covid-19 pandemic

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS (all by phone)

- **Burlington Electric Department (BED):** James Gibbons
- **Green Mountain Power (GMP):** Mike Burke
- **Stowe Electric Department (SED):** David Kresock
- **Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC):** Peter Rossi
- **Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO):** Chris Root, Frank Etori, Jason Pew
- **Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA):** Stephen Fitzhugh
- **Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC):** Bill Powell

OTHER PARTICIPANTS (ALL BY PHONE)

Jeff Disorda (VELCO), Tom Dunn (VELCO), Kerrick Johnson (VELCO), Bill Jordan - partial (VTDPS), Dan Nelson (VELCO), Kris Smith (VEC), and Emily Stebbins-Wheelock (BED)

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Root took a roll call, verified a quorum, and called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

SAFETY TOPIC

Mr. Burke shared his observations that children being out of school and homeschooled, it is similar to summertime. Children are outside on bicycles and exhibiting erratic behaviors which requires additional attention.

Mr. Gibbons reported he was near Waterbury recently and observed several people making left turns on red lights and appear to disregard common rules of the road.

CYBER SECURITY DISCUSSION

Mr. Jordan reported that a revised draft of the cyber security protocol was provided after February 20th and was looking for comments.

Ms. Stebbins-Wheelock discussed that the current draft has placeholder for legal language and that it would be helpful to flesh this section out enabling a better and more thorough review by the utilities. Mr. Jordan reported that he would follow-up with that request.

Mr. Nelson reported an approximate 600% increase in phishing attacks at VELCO and are taking steps to mitigate. As folks are working remotely, any compromise to this ability could be significant.

DRAFT MINUTES APPROVAL

Mr. Root reviewed the meeting minutes from March 19, 2020 for approval.

Mr. Powell moved for approval, Mr. Gibbons seconded, and the minutes were approved without objection.

COVID-19 DISCUSSION OF STATUS OF OPERATIONS

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Mr. Root provided an overview of VELCO's activities: all major construction has been stopped and employees were taken off the road except for emergencies has been the practice. However, just this week started dispersed work with limiting a single person to each vehicle to include sub inspections other necessary items; a list of work was created that could be completed within guidelines. Daily calls every morning with field personnel, supervisors and managers have calls three-times per week, supervisors calling employees to check-in on staff periodically. No one permanently into the office outside of Operators and a single Warehouse staffer, others must schedule each visit with supervisor and security. Mr. Pew provided an overview of the Control Center staffing plan which included a single operator at a time at the MCC nightly and BCC daily with the adjacent training room being reserved. Additionally, Mr. Root reported that a sequestering plan and preparations have been made for VELCO Operators that includes two campers, one at main and one at back-up Control Center.

Mr. Burke provided an overview of GMP activities: Both Control Centers are large enough to have two Operators in the room simultaneously. Two RVs in Colchester and two in Rutland have been staged in case sequestering is needed. They have used the same professional cleaners as VELCO to clean the Control Centers at regular intervals. Operators are working 7-days on/7-days off to reduce the potential for exposure between teams.

In March GMP quickly went to essential work only. Additionally, 4 of 5 surge capacity care locations are in GMP territory. Employees are learning to work safer and have instituted one-person per vehicle rule, masks purchased to use when employees are within 6'. They will be introducing service quality work shortly in anticipation of governor's next release. Required maintenance has continued (gas testing) but major projects remain shut-down.

GMP deployed to Maine last week for mutual aid, they did however wait until wind advisory was over per Roger's forecast. Through NAMAG they sent tree and other support crews first and held line crews until storm had passed. In all 39 people dispatched, each with their own vehicle and were provided with individual rooms and individual meals. They remain in ME and expecting them to return tomorrow (Friday). Noted that additional thought will be required if dispatching near hot spots. The re-integration of dispatched crews will be done by keeping them together for a few days; overall the plan is built to keep crews safe. There are no restrictions unless symptoms are present. Any risk of illness, they would be quarantined. Many employees have spouses that are nurses and in the health care industry and that means they are keeping a close eye on the health of all employees.

Mr. Rossi provided an overview of VEC activities: The Control Center has 1 person at each location (main and back-up), after about a week they were able to plan on separate kitchens and entrances for Operators. At night they wipe down and exit through a specific door, while the incoming Operator uses another. Keeping the primary shifts as is, with possible travel to BCC. One extra person on site in an isolated office, two additional people in alternate locations supporting the call center as they do not have access without being on-site.

Line crews operating in two-person crews, rented cars to keep 1-person in each vehicle. Two people reporting to the main facility, and two people on-call at home. If they have to use a bucket truck it is wiped down by outgoing and again by incoming employees. Districts are working separately, crews within districts are maintaining separation as well. Encouraging use of face

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masks at home and at work when necessary. Contract crews are using trailers for lodging. Working on as much capital as possible within bounds.

Mr. Gibbons provided an overview of BED activities: The back-up Control Center has been tested and deep cleaned. BED supported establishment of a surge facility, similar to GMP. They have instituted a 1-person per vehicle policy. They normally have only a single Operator and this has not changed. They are readying for post-Covid operations. Looking at impacts of Covid on load and revenue. Additionally, they have made changes to planned generator overhauls at McNeil, which requires too many personnel on-site and the Burlington GT work includes a turbine refurbishment in Scotland that will likely be impacted as well. Additionally, they are complying with the Governors directive to not disconnect customers.

Mr. Powell provided an overview of the WEC activities: They are applying similar practices as others. Clarifying Governor's Scott directive to not disconnect, WEC has already been complying with non-disconnect and priority work directive. They have been working on priority telecom facilities by adding infrastructure on behalf of EC Fiber. They too have a single driver per vehicle rule with all staff working remotely. Mr. Gibbons commented that there are two different items being discussed: One to extend disconnection moratorium through end of May and the most recent as priority work instructions.

Mr. Kresock provided an overview of SVE activities: Similar to others but likely easier as Stowe Electric is smaller.

Mr. Fitzhugh provided an overview of VPPSA activities: All members are taking the situation seriously and most, if not all, have at least been closed to the public. VPPSA coordinating weekly calls to talk through issues with each utility being slightly different issues. Additionally reported that it is more difficult to work with masks but have worked around most issues. Mr. Gibbons also reported that all of the VPPSA staff is working from home as well.

Mr. Root inquired as to any known positive test results for any employee. None were reported but the consensus is that everyone is assuming at some point they will and thus the protective measures being implemented.

DPS DISCUSSION WITH VELCO

Mr. Root reported that VELCO meets quarterly with the DPS. In the last meeting Commissioner Tierney discussed that she is not worried about utilities and had lots of complimentary comments for the VT distribution utilities and VELCO. What is worrisome is a large storm that would affect people at home being safe who would be without power for an extended period of time.

There were four main discussion items:

- State/utility loads, effects of pandemic
- COVID-19 scenario planning, could result in changes to CPGs to be consistent with current practices
- Broadband, majority of the discussion revolved around this and how VELCO can assist given its current infrastructure and diverse reach through the state
- Order out of chaos, how is VELCO preparing for various outcomes with regard to duration of restrictions and the manner in which things begin to reopen.

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Mr. Powell inquired if there was any discussion with regard a recent docket concerning power outages and loss of 911 emergency services that began with the E911 Board. Mr. Johnson reported that it was not discussed, likely due to COVID-19.

EMERALD ASH BORER (EAB)

Mr. Disorda reported that the EAB group met via remote means earlier in the day. He provided highlights from the discussions that included the following.

- State representatives from Forest and Parks expressed concern for towns and municipalities to access funds necessary to address EAB.
- EAB locations have recently been updated on state supplied maps. The updates include more areas dispersed across the state with known EAB activity.
- There are likely more areas of activity scattered across the state that are currently unknown. These additional locations will be found when trees start to leaf-out, or fail to due to EAB.
- Continued discussions with WCAX to provide input into a story that can highlight the collaborative effort to contain and mitigate risk associated with EAB. Such a story would be good to provide awareness of the issue. It was noted that due to current economics, with regard to reduced loads and the strain on utility budgets, vegetation management programs may require budget cuts. Mr. Disorda will be looking to the VELCO Corporate Communications department to provide input.

FIBER BUILD OUT ISSUES IN VT DISCUSSION

Mr. Nelson reported that VELCO has steadily been building out the network since 2009, most recently adding infrastructure associated with radio sites including updated microwave systems. Commissioner Tierney's recent call to action has led to an increased interest for further development.

There is a growing need to get to renewables integrated into the electrical system and to provide improved communication to those sites for data acquisition and control functions. Additional needs include healthcare and general broadband connection throughout the state. Working and remote learning for kids not physically in schools has highlighted those without access.

Mr. Johnson mentioned that beyond the core need for broadband as previously mentioned, there is a new need to support future compliance regulations applicable to distribution and transmission companies with regard to renewable generation. Mr. Johnson added that the Commissioner has all but ordered further broadband infrastructure and costs associated with it can be addressed later. Adding that FEMA or other funding will be potentially available.

Mr. Gibbons inquired about to what extent of funding toward broadband has already occurred. Mr. Nelson provided that it is all planning at this point with existing facilities and that any actual costs associated would be vetted accordingly.

Mr. Rossi reported that VEC is currently working on the continued buildout of FirstNet by assisting with communication towers in the VEC service area. With the current need for remote

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workforces and at home learning, these types of projects are not being delayed.

VELCO BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE

Mr. Dunn provided an overview of the most recent Board of Directors meeting which included the following highlights.

- Annual meeting to reelect board
- Mr. Nelson voted in and approved as the VP of Technology
- Discussed COVID response
- Financial work resulted in cost savings and new line of credit
- Corporate risk and recent updates
- Opportunities under the CARES Act, pursuing Payroll Protection Program which includes in its provisions maintaining the current headcount during the next 2-year period. This is still pending and will require BOD approval, an emergency BOD meeting this afternoon for the purpose of making a decision on the matter is scheduled.

OTHER BUSINESS

Open discussion

- None

NEXT MEETING

Date: May 21, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: conference call

Possible topics for discussion

- April load reviews, state-wide and distribution companies
- Restarting work plans – VELCO and distribution companies
- Broadband updates– Dan/Kerrick
- Economic impacts – VELCO and distribution companies
- Joint Vermont Electric Utilities Exercise (JVEUE) update, potential for revised date – Jason Pew
- Kris Smith to be assigned as VEC alternate Operating Committee Member - Peter Rossi

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Gibbons moved to adjourn, Mr. Fitzhugh seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Pew
VELCO OC Secretary