

DRAFT VELCO Operating Committee MINUTES

DATE: May 21, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (scheduled)

LOCATION: Virtual via Zoom

PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

- **Burlington Electric Department (BED):** James Gibbons, Munir Kasti
- **Green Mountain Power (GMP):** Mike Burke, Brian Otley
- **Stowe Electric Department (SED):** Ellen Burt, David Kresock
- **Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC):** Peter Rossi, Kris Smith
- **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

Tom Dunn (VELCO), Dave Haas (VELCO), Jarrod Harper – partial (VELCO), Kerrick Johnson (VELCO), Shana Louiselle (VELCO), Dan Nelson (VELCO), and Bambi Rivera – partial (VELCO)

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Root verified a quorum and called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Noted a revision to the order of the meeting to accommodate a discussion on VT broadband and ensure all interested parties can participate.

Mr. Gibbons inquired about the Broadband update and the previously formed sub-committee with respect to any recent activity. Mr. Nelson reported that this sub-committee has not met for a while and the group will reconvene this afternoon, directly following the normal OC agenda.

SAFETY TOPIC

Mr. Rossi shared an account of a line worker who had fallen from a bucket truck and was unconscious for approximately 30 seconds. The line worker had 20-years of experience. He fell while entering the bucket from the rear of the truck; a routine task performed frequently. Field response was excellent and appropriate. After transport by emergency responders to a nearby medical facility, it was determined that he had broken his back. His recovery is progressing and it is anticipated that he will be back to work following a full recovery... VEC performed an internal investigation along with the contracted line worker's company.

Mr. Root added that this is a good reminder to everyone that routine work can cause injury and a continued focus on safety is necessary.

Mr. Burke reported that they had a similar event that resulted in the worker falling into the truck and fortunately not all the way to the ground. Fortunately, there was no significant injury as a result in that event.

CYBER SECURITY DISCUSSION

Mr. Root reported an attack on the European electric market software was reported recently. There is not a lot known currently about the attack, but as more information is uncovered, he will share among the group.

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DRAFT MINUTES APPROVAL

Mr. Root presented the meeting minutes from April 16, 2020 for approval with a minor revision to include an omitted guest participant. Mr. Burke provided an additional revision to correct a date.

Mr. Fitzhugh moved for approval, Mr. Burke seconded, and the minutes were approved with minor revisions.

KRIS SMITH APPOINTMENT AS VEC ALTERNATE MEMBER

Mr. Root presented a letter from Rebecca Towne, VEC CEO, which nominated Kris Smith as the Alternate VEC representative on the VELCO Operating Committee. No objections were noted and Mr. Smith was approved.

Mr. Fitzhugh reported that at next month's OC he would be presenting a revision to the VPPSA representatives on VELCO Operating Committee that will reflect the recent retirement of Mr. Myotte. Additionally, Mr. Fitzhugh reported that he would be retiring from Norwich University; however, he will remain involved with the Northfield Electric Department.

FIBER AND BROADBAND UPDATE

Mr. Nelson reported that he has been coordinating with schools in underserved areas to provide wireless hotspots in those areas. Additionally, there is interest in using VELCO infrastructure (towers) to provide wireless internet service. Looking at accelerating projects that were already in the planning stages that close loops to several locations. These locations are currently being supplied from one in-house and one leased line, the transition to an all-in-house solution will result in cost savings as the leased lines can be released.

Mr. Johnson reported that due to impending NERC Standards there would be more need for information from the Distribution Utilities. Mr. Gibbons reported that he had recently received a presentation that indicated there are no imminent rules that will affect BED. He requested more information on the specifics for the applicable Standards. Mr. Johnson replied that he would get the specifics and inform accordingly.

Mr. Root reported that he is working to get as much DER data to further modeling abilities and provide an increase in operational awareness. Mr. Gibbons reported that they have 15-minute data available for these types of resources, however he has not yet been asked to provide any data.

Mr. Johnson reported that VELCO would like to pursue a fiber expansion pending board approval. VELCO is performing an analysis on the business possibilities for licensing wireless spectrum through the FCC auction process. October 27, 2020 will be a 16M\$ auction.

Mr. Otley reported that he has been involved in several discussions with regard to VT broadband inequity. His opinion is that fiber to the home is desired and wireless broadband is likely not for various reasons. He anticipates collaborating with all of the utilities to leverage all of the interconnected fiber systems and partner with retail broadband providers for the last mile.

Mr. Rossi agreed and reported that VEC is in the process of a feasibility study of supporting a

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broadband collaboration. There are many moving parts, one entity can provide larger communication network and have providers serve the last mile. There are cost implications with broadband that will not help the current pandemic issues. He continued by stating that VEC is committed as part of Team VT.

Mr. Fitzhugh inquired about how the fiber would be connected to homes. Mr. Otley reported that GMP is not considering connecting to homes directly, but instead, provide a platform for the last mile service provider.

Mr. Root reported that he would like to have the sub-committee to discuss more and to identify challenges and work on solutions. Mr. Nelson reported that the first meeting, a continuation of a previous group, is scheduled for 1pm today or immediately following the OC.

Mr. Gibbons reported there is a charter for this group that he had found that he would share.

JOINT VERMONT ELECTRIC UTILITIES EXERCISE (JVEUE) POSTPONEMENT

Mr. Pew reported that the JVEUE was rescheduled for September 1, 2020 after discussions with various participants. Further appointments will follow for those involved.

COVID-19 DISCUSSION

Mr. Root reported on the return to work plans and that construction is resuming on several fronts. This is important to VT and the VDUs as the capital investment is reflected in all of the VT electric utilities' budgets. He further reported that a group at VELCO is working on a return to Pinnacle plan and that work is going well.

Mr. Gibbons inquired about open office environment and the issues anticipated. Mr. Root discussed the inherent problems with social distancing where 6' is not possible. Several approaches by other businesses such as a capacity percentage or the number of personnel. Mr. Dunn reported that the plan is to keep people away as much as possible.

Covid-19 Health Self-Screening Application

Mr. Harper presented a VELCO developed application/web based tool that provides a few health-screening questions to those who are reporting to VELCO facilities. It was developed very quickly, roughly 55 hours. Within it, a series of questions are asked. If all answers are no, then you get a "thank you" note. If an answer is yes to any, a pop-up reports that you should return home, VELCO Safety and HR are being notified and you will be provided additional follow-up. Also included are directions for using IR thermometers that have been provided.

A discussion ensued on what the response would be for answering yes to any of screening questions. There is no set response and it is still being formulated.

Mr. Burke reports this similar information is conducted on GMP tailboards after they perform a self-check prior to reporting to work.

Mr. Gibbons requested a copy of the program. Mr. Root reported he would distribute via email.

Mr. Rossi inquired about using the application at VEC. Mr. Nelson reported they would work with whomever was interested. Mr. Harper added that he would be available for questions and if you were interested in pursuing further, please contact Mr. Nelson.

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Restarting Work Plans Discussion

Mr. Burke reported that during a recent restoration event, crews drove from Brattleboro to St. Albans. GMP is now allowing two people per vehicle provided the safety protocols are in place. GMP continues to keep people in the field and out of the office, and is continuing the work from home posture.

Mr. Rossi reported VEC continues to maintain their original protocols. All crews report-in each morning, and participate from disperse locations. There is the need for Control Center training of new employees, and sneeze shields are being installed that will allow the necessary separation. Have limited access to the main facility.

Ms. Burt reported that Stowe Electric's administration continues to work from home and a rotation of line-workers are reporting to the office. They have enhanced cleaning and have added health monitoring when onsite. They are maintaining a single person per vehicle and require masks for field workers when they are working in the public spaces.

Mr. Gibbons reported BED is working toward a planned return to the workspace. He noted the largest challenge at this point for them is getting the Burlington GT back to normal. One of the two jets had undergone an overhaul process and a temporary one had been installed in its place. The temporary remains in place with the overhauled unit back on site. They are challenged by development of a work plan that allows for the necessary separation while performing the change out.

Mr. Fitzhugh reported that each of the VPPSA members are evaluating plans to open offices. Northfield Electric is planning to lock the door but allowing visitors one at a time as needed. Weekly calls continue with all members to discuss current and future challenges.

Economic Ideas Discussion

Mr. Gibbons reports that VELCO has worked to contain costs and wanted to thank those who have worked toward that end.

LOAD REVIEWS IN APRIL DISCUSSION

Mr. Root reported that due to reduced loads throughout VT and New England, there would be financial implications for all electric utilities. This will be a continuing discussion.

FUTURE NERC STANDARDS DISCUSSION

Mr. Root suggested this topic be revisited at the next Operating Committee to allow the meeting to conclude as scheduled; all agreed.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Open discussion

- Mr. Root reported that the European market system appeared to have been the focus of a cyber-attack.
- UFLS only, new NERC rules applicable to GMP and VEC only...
- Mr. Smith reported that NERC Compliance topic is of interest to him and he would like to have an opportunity to find more information.

Next meeting

Date: June 18, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Call-in

Possible topics for discussion

- Mr. Nelson (VELCO) report on Telecom subcommittee group's work to this point
- Ms. Moulton (VELCO) Future NERC Standards as it was differed from today's agenda
- Mr. Root to discuss load trends in VT and New England
- Mr. Etori to provide the usual ISO-NE update
- Mr. Shafer to discuss hurricane forecast and possibly a preliminary update on climate change work. Mr. Etori to organize.
- Cyber-security with Mr. Jordan
- VPPSA representative changes due to retirements

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Fitzhugh moved to adjourn, Mr. Gibbons seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Pew
VELCO OC Secretary