

# Final VELCO Operating Committee MINUTES

**DATE:** February 18, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Virtual Meeting (ZOOM)

## **PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

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

## **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

Tom Dunn (VELCO), Kerrick Johnson (VELCO), Shana Louiselle (VELCO), Kim Moulton (VELCO), Dan Nelson (VELCO), Jason Pew (VELCO), Hantz Pr sum  (VELCO), Allen Stamp (AP Stamp, Inc.), and Karin Stamy (VELCO)

## **OPENING REMARKS**

Mr. Root verified a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

## **SAFETY TOPIC**

Mr. Pew shared a recent incident where snow unloaded from the solar panels on his roof onto the walkway at the front of his house. While this walkway isn't typically used this time of year, it was a reminder for him and his family to be aware of the hazard. This was used as a reminder for all to look up and consider the hazard of snow and ice unloading.

Mr. Root followed up with a thank you to VEC and their safety individuals for a recent presentation that was shared with VELCO concerning a truck which had slid on an icy road and tipped over. Mr. Root noted the presentation contained useful information and was a great reminder for all on how equipment can slide on icy roads.

## **DRAFT MINUTES APPROVAL**

Mr. Root presented the meeting minutes from January 21, 2021 for approval.

Mr. Fitzhugh moved for approval, Mr. Powell seconded, and the minutes were approved as presented without objection.

## **TELECOM WORKING GROUP**

Mr. Stamp reported the Telecom Working Group met last Friday and discussed fiber count at the distribution level. The consensus was to use 144 count on fiber as the standard for distribution. Mr. Stamp noted the 144 count is the same diameter as the 72 count. The group also discussed the team's mission, which is ownership and how to administer fiber. The group decided that VELCO should own it. Mr. Stamp indicated this work will be a bit different than the last deployment. Approximately 60-70% is to be deployed on distribution. Upcoming activities of the group include continuing to confirm routes with Distribution Utilities and discussing construction schedule along with resource planning.

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Mr. Root asked if the weight difference is appreciable and if anyone has done strength tests. Mr. Stamp indicated the weight difference is not appreciable.

### **VSPC UPDATE**

Mr. Presume provided an update from the VSPC meeting during which the long range plan was discussed. Comments should be received by the end of this week and will be incorporated prior to submitting a second draft. The final draft of the Long Range Plan is expected to be released in March. There were a number of comments and questions from VSPC. One comment received noted there should be better coordination of transmission and distribution constraints. The suggestion received was to overlay the transmission optimization map with the distribution level constraints. Mr. Presume is looking into available constraint maps from the Distribution Utilities in order to evaluate this request.

Another suggestion received from the VSPC meeting was to model storage as a solution to transmission issues. The suggestion included reviewing utility IRPs and modeling storage that is to be installed. It was noted that this suggestion would be hard to accomplish as IRPs do not include the specifics necessary in order to model storage. Additionally, in order to model storage, assumptions would need to be made on how the storage would be used.

Lastly, Mr. Presume indicated they will be adding another analysis to the plan, the retirement of the peaking units that do not operate frequently. This will provide an indication of any transmission reliability issues if these units are retired.

### **ISO BEHIND THE METER UPDATE**

Mr. Etori summarized his update from last month which included taking the NE Transmission Owners proposal to the Market and Transmission Committees and the receipt of feedback on the proposal. The NE Transmission Owners are focusing primarily on the ISO Management feedback and are crafting new language to address the comments. These changes include eliminating the need for the behind-the-meter term, adding new tariff language for section II.21.2, and modifying the RNL definition to conform with proforma language. The hope is to eliminate the need for the Markets Committee approval.

### **STORAGE UPDATE**

Mr. Johnson indicated there is a potential partnership with VELCO and Northern Reliability. He will be reaching out to the Distribution Utilities to discuss the impact of such a partnership.

Mr. Johnson next noted that last week VELCO secured an opportunity with EPRI such that VELCO and all 17 customer/owners are able to participate in EPRI's Incubatenergy Lab initiative for one all-in price of \$50k. He indicated he has had conversations with some of the Distribution Utilities on this topic and expects to be reaching out to the others. Presently there are 143 mid-level startup entities that have responded to EPRI. They are currently winnowing the list down to 37. More updates are to come.

### **VELCO BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE**

Mr. Dunn noted the board approved the 2020 KPIs. The 2020 KPIs were very strong, which is remarkable considering the challenges seen. The board also approved the 2021 KPIs. Updates

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were also provided on strategic planning work, risk work, and behind-the-meter efforts.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Open discussion**

- The recent extreme weather event impacting the ERCOT/Texas area was discussed. Texas is electrically isolated and has a very low developed market. They have had a free market for some time now and have built a lot of wind. The winter peak is approximately 70 GW and they have approximately 19 GW of wind. During the recent event, they lost two thirds of their natural gas generation. They had not planned for wind to be a big factor. Most of the wind units do not have snow/ice protection. The issue during the event was at the well heads for the natural gas units, the controls froze and they couldn't get the gas out. The gas distribution system had similar issues with controls freezing. FERC has opened up an inquiry with NERC. Right now it is a data fact finding mission. They will then look for recommendations. At the present time, there are still half a million out of electricity. It is a very precarious situation and included the use of rolling blackouts.

#### **Next meeting**

**Date:** March 18, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Virtual Meeting (ZOOM)

#### **Possible topics for discussion**

- Telecom Working Group – standing agenda item
- ISO behind-the-meter update
- Long Range Plan update – Hantz Presume
- Overview of Shared, Common, and Exclusive Asset classifications – Frank Etori
- Florence Substation SCAP project – Dan Poulin
- Bill Jordan – cyber issues at the State
- Storage Update – quarterly agenda item

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Mr. Gibbons moved to adjourn, Mr. Rossi seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Stevens  
VELCO OC Secretary