

# **FINAL VELCO Operating Committee MINUTES**

**DATE:** January 20, 2022, 1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:** Virtual Meeting (ZOOM)

## **PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

- **Burlington Electric Department (BED):** James Gibbons, Munir Kasti
- **Green Mountain Power (GMP):** Mike Burke
- **Stowe Electric Department (SED):** Brent Lilley
- **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**

Brian Connaughton (VELCO), Shana Louiselle (VELCO), Jason Pew (VELCO), Allen Stamp (AP Stamp, Inc.), Karin Stamy (VELCO)

## **OPENING REMARKS**

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

## **SAFETY TOPIC**

Mr. Root noted the temperatures are supposed to drop below zero again later this week. Workers outside should be prepared for extreme wind chills and below zero temperatures. Additionally, remote workers should be reminded to have emergency items in their vehicles, such as blankets, extra gloves, etc.

Mr. Root indicated that once a year, VELCO holds a Safety Week where work is put on hold and employees take part in various safety trainings. OSHA required trainings are included throughout the week. This year, the motivational speaker was an outside individual who had suffered the loss of both arms from an injury while working on a low voltage secondary.

## **DRAFT MINUTES APPROVAL**

Mr. Root presented the meeting minutes from December 16, 2021 for approval.

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

## **TELECOM WORKING GROUP**

Mr. Stamp indicated they finished last year by completing approximately 30 miles in the WEC territory. They will be focusing on finishing in the WEC territory during the first quarter of this year. Overall, approximately 200 miles are planned for 2022. Will be adding another cable installer this year and will also be looking at resources. Fiber has been ordered for the first two quarters. The lead time has increased a little. The next meeting is scheduled for February 9<sup>th</sup>. The group will be working on specifying the DER equipment and reviewing lease rates. Mr. Stamp noted his appreciation for the support provided by the VT Distribution Utilities.

## **PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABS (PNNL) PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Connaughton provided a brief overview of the project indicating funds are expected to be

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directed to Vermont through a partnership with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) with the goal to demonstrate that grid information can be used to inform grid operations. The first use case will be underfrequency load shedding decision support. VELCO has submitted the proposal and is currently awaiting the results of the review process, with the expectation the project should be awarded some time in February. Mr. Connaughton indicated a subcommittee of the OC would be a good way to engage the VT Distribution Utilities and support the project. This approach was also included in the proposal to provide a means for DU participation. Mr. Connaughton expects to have another update at the next meeting, along with a clearer ask on the subcommittee. One potential consequence of signing the contract, could be that the contractual requirement on government contractors to have all their employees vaccinated would be applied to VELCO. This order has been stayed in the courts, but it has not been definitely resolved. VELCO is expected to sign the contract in February and is monitoring the situation closely.

### **K42 UPDATE**

Mr. Etori indicated the project was presented today at Planning Advisory Committee. Prior to the meeting, VELCO did some outreach to various stakeholders since ISO-NE was going to be looking for feedback from stakeholders on the proposal at the meeting. Overall the feedback and comments were positive. The next step will be to present at the Reliability Committee (RC). Following that, there would be a vote at the Reliability Committee. The decision will revolve around whether the incremental cost of the larger bundled conductor will be paid regionally or by VT (\$6M). The VELCO analysis showed that the larger conductor is economic based on losses reduction using similar to energy efficiency economic analysis. ISO-NE has been questioning this approach as it is new to them but very common with distribution utilities and NE regulators. There are other benefits both engineering and generation operations to the VELCO solution.

### **ISO UPDATE**

Mr. Etori provided an update on various items:

- Setting up a call with the Transmission Owners (TO) and ISO-NE to discuss FERC Order 881, which requires Transmission Providers to implement ambient-adjusted ratings. Filing with FERC is a compliance obligation for ISO. It is the TO's responsibility to rate the line. Currently only have summer/winter ratings. ISO will need to figure out how to implement this on their end. There is a big push behind this nationally.
- Received another protest on the behind-the-meter proposal. Responses were previously submitted to FERC. The expectation is to hear back some time in February.
- FERC Order 2222 – aggregation of DERs – was approved at the Participants meeting. 75% were in favor. Small scale DER (150 KW or above) will be able to participate in the markets.
- Minimum Price Offer Rule – is going forward in the short term. VELCO is currently reviewing to determine impact and best position to take.

### **LOAD SHED PROGRESS**

Mr. Pew indicated that a Winter Readiness Task Force has been formed. Their first meeting was last week. As a result of the meeting, VT Distribution Utilities are currently reaching out to Municipalities in their areas to discuss coordination and expectations if rotating outages were to

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occur. The goal of these conversations is collaboration and to clear up any misconceptions that may exist. Mr. Pew noted the Winter Readiness Task Force will be meeting every other week and will include a review of ISO-NE's 21-Day Energy Assessment Forecast and Report.

### **VTAM UPDATE**

Ms. Stamy indicated, as noted during a previous OC meeting, the Vermont Transmission Administration Manual (VTAM) will be going through a review and update this year. Ms. Stamy is in charge of this review. As part of the review and update, she will be recommending the VTAM function as a cost-allocation document, eliminating empty chapters and administration of the OATT. She may also be recommending severing the OC Bylaws from the VTAM and making them a stand-alone document. Additional research will be done first to see if this makes sense. A red-lined draft will be coming soon.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

Mr. Root noted VELCO reverted back to remote working following Christmas due to expected increase in cases. There have been more cases recently with employees, but all have been mild in nature. The overall vaccination rate is approximately 96%.

Mr. Burke indicated GMP had previously planned to bring office personnel back in November, but this was paused. Operationally, most supervisors and leaders are in the office and masked when moving around. GMP is experiencing higher cases, but all have been mild in nature. Overall vaccination rate is mid-80%. GMP is adjusting masking mandates for within vehicles based on booster status. Outcome of close contacts has changed based on recent guidelines. GMP is also doing test to stay.

Mr. Rossi noted VEC's vaccination rate is over 90%. Office personnel are currently working remotely. A few managers are in the office. There are no in-person/group meetings allowed at this time. Additionally, no intermixing of crews is currently allowed. Some cases with employees, but all have been mild in nature. Mr. Rossi also noted that VEC now has a fully operational backup control center, which allows the split of control center operations.

Mr. Gibbons noted BED had been working on a modified work from home policy which would have employees in the office 2-3 days, but with the recent case increases, employees are allowed to work from home more at this time. KN95 masks are required for those in the office.

Mr. Powell noted WEC is similar to others. Work from home is now more optional than previously. Since the holiday, WEC has closed public access except with appointment only.

Mr. Fitzhugh indicated the students are back at Norwich. They are seeing about 5-10% of cases. With respect to municipality, Northfield is still open. Most are vaccinated. Unsure about the other municipalities.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Open discussion**

- Appointment of Dave Kresock – Washington Electric Cooperative
  - Mr. Root noted Mr. Kresock is replacing Ms. Richards. He indicated Mr. Dunn has provided his approval for this replacement.

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### **Next meeting**

**Date:** February 17, 2022, 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
- Load Shed Progress – standing agenda item (until March)
- Bill Jordan visit
- VELCO KPI review – Abe Fitch
- COVID-19 Update
- PNNL Project Update

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Mr. Fitzhugh moved to adjourn, Mr. Gibbons seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Stevens  
VELCO OC Secretary