

Otter Creek
Communications Union
District
July 21, 2021
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Amanda O'Connor (RRPC), Thomas Franco (Rutland City), Larry Courcelle (Mendon), Sharon Corey (Wells) Cassandra Hayes (Goshen), Terry Williams (Poultney), Christ Custer (Hubbardton)

Guests:

Meeting opened at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call

- There are not enough members present to make a quorum.

Agenda approval

- There was a consensus to go ahead with the agenda as it is.

New Member Approval

- None at this time

Executive Committee Update

- Reviewed the three responses to the RFP that was put out for the high-level engineering study. Finley, CTC, and Fiber Smith responded to the RFP. The executive committee decided to go with Finley because of their all-inclusive, comprehensive pricing and proposed site visit.

Legislative Update

- None at this time

Grant Update

- Broadband Innovation is on hold until we receive the high-level engineering study.
- H 315 contract has been signed and we hope to be moving ahead with the line items that they grant are supporting soon.
 - The Finley contract needs to be signed.
 - Additional requirements for finance controls and grant monitoring have been put in place to keep within federal standards.
 - Jackie Savela (Brandon), as OCCUD's treasurer, will be helping to support the grant administration efforts but is not in a position to take it over at this time. We will need a bookkeeper with grant management experience, to administer the grant funds.
- H 360- no new updates at this time
- NTIA funding opportunity: as a region, we may be able to apply, but we are not in a strong position at this time to receive funding.
- Rob Fish (Rural Broadband Technical Assistance Specialist) has stated that all CUD's have grant agreements and must have proof of insurance and a work plan.

- We are currently working through insurance with Telcom Insurance Group, whom many other CUD's are going through.
- We will be resending our grant application for the work plan.

VCUDA Update: focus is to make broadband affordable for Vermonters in all 14 counties.

- There have been several appointments to the VCBBD (Vermont Community Broadband Board)
 - The Gov. appointed Patty Richards and Dan Nelson to the Board.
 - Holly Groschner has been appointed to the VCBBD by the House of Rep.
 - Brian Otley has been appointed to the VCBBD by the Senate.
 - VCUDA appointed Laura Sidilia from the House of Rep. to the VCBBD Board.
 - VCBBD will consist of 5 members and will be responsible for awarding grants and assisting the CUD's in planning, development, and implementation of broadband projects.
 - VCBBD's first meeting will be August 9th 2021
- VCUDA voted for future meetings to be held via zoom and in-person for transparency.
 - The physical location will be in Morrisville, but they are looking at CUD's to host meeting sites as well.
- In late 2022/23, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will likely run 2 new broadband funding efforts using universal service funds, approximately 20 billion dollars.
 - This will be a competitive funding opportunity. States that have done the best job and are ahead of the game are more likely to get funding.
- The Gov. appointed Christine Hallquist to the Vermont Broadband Board.
- VCUDA has a job opening for an interim program coordinator
- EC Fiber has engaged in services of a Washington DC firm that specializes in telecommunications
 - to help VCUDA with the (RDOF) long-term filing their new status as the eligible telecom communications carrier (ETC)
 - Set up emergency broadband benefit (EBD), part of the federal program for district customers

New Member Recruitment

- None at this time

Other Business

- The next meeting will be on August 18, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.
- There was a consensus to close the meeting.

July 21, 2021 – OCCUD Board Meeting

<https://youtu.be/cj4KYLdR8oI>