

Otter Creek Communications Unified District (OCCUD)
Governing Board Meeting Minutes – 8/17/2022

OCCUD Governing Board Meeting Minutes
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Members Present: Tony Ferraro (Chair), Bill Moore, Larry Courcelle, Mark Teetor, John Hill, Tim Munks, Jacelyn (Jackie) Savela, Andrew Quint, Chris Custer, Laura Black, Eleanor Jones (Wells)
Others Present: Amanda O'Connor (Principal Consultant/ Project Manager)

1. Call to Order – Tony F. called meeting to order at approximately 7:02 pm.
2. Approval of Agenda – [motion by Bill M, second by Larry C.] approved without changes.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – no vote needed to approve minutes because there was no quorum at the 7/20/22 meeting.
4. Executive Committee (and RFP Review) Updates on the RFP responses –

Tony F. described that the added questions and requests for information were responded to by both respondent companies -Consolidated Communications Inc (CCI) and GoNetSpeed (GNS). The reviewing committee and executive board found the responses satisfactory.

Tim M. mentions that CCI has provided two options, GNS has provided one option. OCCUD will need to determine which options to accept during negotiations.

Mark T. asks if Google has submitted. Tony F. responds that no, Google has not submitted but only has talked (to Tony) about how they are working with Lamoille CUD. If OCCUD would entertain a partnership with Google it would be a different structure/setup. OCCUD would need to standup our own company; this would be a big change to how we are currently proceeding.

Tony F. says that Tony and Amanda met with legal consult in regards to Google. Legal consult said that because Google did not respond to our RFP, it is not “in the spirit” of the current negotiations and so it is better not to pursue the Google option. OCCUD may keep Google in mind as an option if other negotiations (with CCI and GNS) fail.

Bill M. acknowledges and gives thanks to the review work done so far and says that a plan to continue to negotiate with the two companies that are incumbent service providers to the region seems to be the quickest way to move toward providing Universal Service Plan (USP) for Broadband to the OCCUD's un/underserved addresses. Laura B. described a few details of the RFP responses related to discrepancies between the current maps and lists of un/underserved addresses as well as eligible (ongrid) addresses.

Tony F. agrees and describes that he sees our negotiation work in two “buckets”: one being to ensure that our current strategy is on the right path, is our approach completely viable and does our RFP contain everything we need to develop the

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construction plan and USP build out with our potential partners. The other “bucket” is to resolve details such as maps, the VT State list of eligible and un/underserved addresses. Tony F says that we will need to do our own due diligence to ensure addresses in our towns are correctly identified on the list.

Tony F. asked for more discussion, there being none, he asked for a motion, as follows:
MOTION – To inform both CCI and GNS that their proposals have been found to be responsive to OCCUD’s RFP and OCCUD wants to commence negotiations with them.

Motion made by Laura B.

Motion Seconded by Tim M.

Discussion:

Chris C. asks if GNS would/could relinquish their space on the utility poles in their incumbent region. Tony F responds that may be discussed in negotiations.

Laura B. asks about when OCCUD engages with the VCBB. Tony F. responds that OCCUD has already been in touch (note, the pre-construction grant was approved), and there have been some communications between OCCUD and Vermont Community Broadband (VCBB); VCBB is aware of our general plans and our RFP.

Eleanor J. asks if everyone is going to get connected. Tony F. responds that we (OCCUD) are required to provide Universal Broadband Service to every grid-connected un/underserved address (<25/3 MBps=underserved. <4/1 MBps=unserved).

Vote on the Motion: Ayes are unanimous, Motion carries.

Tony F. says that we (Amanda O’C. & committee) will put together a letter to both companies.

Tony F. asks for a motion to form a sub-committee to work on negotiations with CCI and GNS.

MOTION - To form a sub-committee to work on negotiations with CCI and GNS.

Motion made by Laura B.

Motion seconded by Eleanor J.

Discussion and Tony F. requests volunteers for the sub-committee. Tony F., Laura B. Tim M., Eleanor J. volunteered. Chris C. will join when he can. Amanda O’C. will do organizational duties.

Vote on the Motion: Ayes are unanimous, Motion carries.

5. (VCBB) Updates – Tony F. says there is no big news; Tony is keeping abreast of SoVTCUD (who are also negotiating with CCI).
6. VCUDA updates – Larry C. reports that last meeting was Aug. 9. - VCUDA met with a southern (New Hampshire?) organization to discuss ongoing buildouts in Vermont. - The SoVT CUD construction grant was tabled by the VCBB. - There is a new CUD forming in Chittenden Co. - VCBB is short-staffed so VCUD staff have offered to step in to assist VCBB. – VT Rep. Jim Harrison said that Rutland Co. Representatives are concerned that OCCUD does not yet have a partner; they expressed their concern that grant monies could run out. - SoVTCUD (contracting with CCI) has completed buildout

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in Bennington, buildout is expected to be completed next year. - VCUDA dues could double next year.

7. Other Business-

Tony F. – requests that all verify that the email list is up to date; send any corrections to Tony and Amanda.

Amanda O’C. – response from the survey sent out on the meeting time/day was very limited. We will keep the same time/day for future meetings. Send your response/requests for changes to Amanda.

Amanda O’C. – We need to approve the warrant/invoices dated 8/10/2022 for payment. We reviewed the warrant.

MOTION – To approve warrant dated 8/10/22 for the amount of \$7,352.58.

Motion made by Larry C.

Second by Andrew Q.

Vote- All in favor, motion carries.

8. Confirm next meeting: Sep 21st. Yes.

9. Adjournment – Motion made to adjourn by Bill M.

a. Adjourned at 5:59 pm.