



Otter Creek
communications
union district

March 20, 2024 – 5:00 PM

<https://meet.google.com/iwi-guxi-unz>

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Otter Creek Cud Governing Board Representatives & Alternates:					
TOWN	REP NAME / ALT NAME	P/A	TOWN	REP NAME / ALT NAME	P/A
Benson	Steve Murray / Lynne Bowen	A	Pittsford	Brett Mullin / Greg Hiltz	A
Brandon	Peter Werner / Bill Moore	P	Poultney	Mark Teetor / Terry Williams	P
Castleton	Tim Munks	A	Rutland Town	<i>No Appointment Received</i>	
Chittenden	Andrew Quint	P	Rutland City	Alex Adams	A
Fair Haven	Tracy Richards	A	Shrewsbury	Laura Black, Chair / Alan Shelvey	P
Goshen	Tyler Davidson-Toman	P	Sudbury	Mike Small / Tom Myers <i>(appt. pending)</i>	P
Hubbardton	Chris Custer	P	Wells	Eleanor Jones , Secretary / Sharon Corey	P
Mendon	Larry Courcelle, Vice Chair	P	West Haven	Jennifer Book / Kerry Ellis	A
Pawlet	Jessica Van Oort	P	West Rutland	<i>No Appointment Received</i>	
Jackie Savela, OCCUD Treasurer		A			

- Other attendees: Lynne Bowen attending for Steve Murray, Scott Brooks for CCI (Consolidated Communications), Tom Myers.
- Roll call, confirm quorum - Quorum @5:06pm.
- Call to order - Start recording - Started @5:06pm.
- Welcome new members – Tom Myers is planning to be an Alternate Rep for Sudbury.
- Approval of agenda - Motion by Mark, second by Peter. Motion passed.
- Public input (limited to 3 minutes per presenter) - None.
- CCI Vermont rep visit (Town contacts for CCI construction) - Scott Brooks (793 8288, Scott.Brooks@consolidated.com) from CCI noted that tonight was the CCI preconstruction kickoff for Occud. He would like contact information for stakeholders in each community (road commissioner, selectboard, town manager, town clerk, leo, etc) who will be contacted when issues are encountered during build. He will work closely with the town contact to resolve issues satisfactorily. Contact information should include name, town, email and phone number. Past issues from other builds included traffic flagging, litter, least disruption possible to communities (especially during community events). Scott also noted that Greg Povey is an alternate contact for Scott. The phases of the build are preconstruction planning, fiber construction and fiber splicing.
- Approval of previous meeting minutes – 02.21.24 - Motion by Mark, second by Larry. Motion passed.
- Chair Report:

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- Contract, Agreement, and Construction Grant Agreement updates. CCI sale. - Laura says all contracts are signed and completed (Consolidated Communications contract, GoNetspeed agreement and Grant agreement with VCBB). Invoiced/paid first 20% for grant agreement with CCI. Consolidated is getting ready for construction. Ongoing meetings with CCI happen on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. Meeting with GoNetspeed happen on the 1st Thursday of the month. Laura and Larry typically attend; board members are also invited to join those meetings. Laura will forward the invite to you. Laura will ask both fiber companies for a schedule that will be posted on the Occud.org website. Construction should be completed before the end of the year. Executive director search is less urgent and position will no longer require contract negotiation or grant negotiation work and Occud does not need additional build funding. The Occud Task list includes the need to establish a financial policy, which is in draft. The draft is being reviewed by Laura, Larry and Jackie on Friday. Laura will be meeting with one of the two HR companies involved in the executive director search. Any interested members are welcome to join Laura in the search task. Laura and Mark discussed executive director position and ACP money running out.
 - 2024 Task list and future planning* -
 - Plan for May Organizational Meeting – Re-Appointments due by last Monday in April, Vote executive positions whose terms are up. Bylaws Updates, Financial Procedures Policy, - Laura says re-appointments are due and should be emailed to info@occud.org and clerk@occud.org. Appointment forms are on the google shared drive and are due by last Monday in April. During the month of May, expired executive positions will be voted on. Laura would like to review the bylaws and present some updates; Laura urges other members to do so if they are inclined.
10. Financials (Treasurer/VP) Report: Review Warrant approved 03.13.24; Invoice payments; - Executive board approved the last warrant for the amount \$5,350.00. There may be another invoice due, Laura will check.
 11. Grant Reports (Vantage Point) - None.
 12. Website committee report - Jessica and Chris along with our website designer have put together a mock website and it looks really good. The information most folks are looking for will be on the home page. All agree, the new website looks great.
 13. VCUDA update (VCUDA Rep) - Larry reports that VCUDA has committees meeting everyday; they are very busy. Both Laura and Larry state that they cannot keep up with all activity at VCUDA. Dealing with NTIA for BEAD funding is still a challenge; NTIA says CUDs cannot use ARPA (construction grant) monies as matching funds for BEAD grants. As a result, Vt CUDs are trying to join other states on a national level to find match money (gap funding) for BEAD. The BEAD challenge process has started. VCUDA has applied to be an intervenor in the CCI purchase. VCUDA expects CUDs who attach fiber cables to poles owned by petitioners will verify that change in ownership (of pole) does not adversely impact CUDs ability to build and operate their facility. Petitioners request approval to grant Searchlights III CVL a controlling interest in their business; Searchlights III CVL is a foreign private equity investment company that is financing this investment with funds that come from a Canadian entity BCI (British Columbia Investment Management Corporation). Neither entity has strong or historic ties to the state of Vermont. Occud has joined with three other CUDs and has hired an attorney to act as intervenor in the CCI sale. Laura says the sale should complete in a few months, by mid summer.

14. VCBB update (Chair) - Three policies are posted for comment; the construction standard, the consumer protection policy and the grantee agreement policy. CUDs are working on these policies together. The governor is signing bill to return to VCBB \$20 million that had been borrowed. Regarding the bill that is an act related to mergers; this act will relax rules related to CUD mergers and CUD governance and business practices. Another bill in the legislature will fund PEG (public, educational, and government community media) using fees and taxes on streaming services. A broadband affordability program was added at the very end of the last week of session.
15. Other business - Laura invites new members to contact her or Larry or other members to get more information on the job of being a board member.
16. Set Next Meeting - Apr 17, 2024.
17. Adjournment. - Motion to adjourn by Larry, second by Peter. Motion passed @5:56pm.

* Executive Session - due to finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, per 1 V.S.A. § 313 (1) (A).

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