

Southern Vermont Communications Union District (SoVT CUD)

Meeting Minutes

6:00 PM, Wednesday, July 1, 2020

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Arlington – absent

Bennington – Eric Hatch

Dorset – Jim Salsgiver (voting), Mike Chase

Landgrove – Jim Swartzentruber

Manchester – Terrence Dorsey

Pownal – Caitlin Randall

Peru – Peter Bradley

Rupert – Jed Ruben (voting), Bill Meyer (poor connection), Arlene Bentley

Sandgate – Sheila Kearns

Shaftsbury – Tim Scoggins

Sunderland – Mark Hyde (voting), Andrew McKeever

Woodford - Absent

Also present were Alex Kelley and Rebecca Aman of RISI, Carole Monroe of ValleyNet, and Richard Gibney.

3. Conflict of Interest – none reported

4. Announcements – no announcement

5. Public Comments – none

6. Reports from Officers

Fisk reported that SoVT CUD now owns the trade name “Catamount Fiber”. Scoggins lauded Fisk for this effort which required Fisk to first purchase the name and then transfer it to SoVT CUD. Scoggins also thanked Fisk for donating the \$50 filing fee.

7. VCUDA: Accept association agreement

By unanimous vote, the chair was authorized to sign the VCUDA association agreement. Scoggins stated that this association will promote dialog among the CUDs, allow them to speak with one voice when appropriate, and negotiate agreements. Any agreements so negotiated would be entered into by individual CUDS and not by VCUDA.

8. Updates and Discussion

a. BIG feasibility study underway

Kelley, Aman, and Monroe provided background on their companies and described how the BIG feasibility study and business plan would proceed. The feasibility study is expected to be completed by mid-August. Eric Hatch expressed concern that things were not proceeding fast enough to take advantage of COVID related recovery funding. Monroe responded that it was not possible to spin up fast enough to build any part of the network by the 12/31/2020 deadline imposed by CARES.

b. Legislative update; CARES

The discussion evolved to cover CARES and Vermont recovery funding. H.966 passed that includes \$800K for CUDs, likely \$100K/CUD.

Hyde suggested developing a budget and asking respective Selectboards to provide a few hundred dollars each to support incidental expenses.

9. Review of Action Items

Scoggins: Distribute WRC feasibility study presentation and tonight’s presentation.

Scoggins, Fisk: Develop a budget

10. Adjournment