

Southern Vermont Communications Union District

d/b/a Catamount Fiber

2021 Annual Report

Southern Vermont Communications Union District (SoVT CUD) was voted into existence in March 2019 by 12 towns in Bennington County. The number of member municipalities has since grown to 14.

Arlington

Rupert

Bennington

Sandgate

Dorset

Shaftsbury

Landgrove

Sunderland

Londonderry

Winhall

Manchester

Woodford

Pownal

Peru

A complete list of town representatives and alternates can be found on the CUD website: [Governing Board - SoVT CUD](#)

Public records for the CUD including bylaws, conflict of interest policy, meeting agendas, and minutes can also be found on the website: <https://public.sovtcud.net/>

The SoVT CUD governing board is lead by:

- Chair, Eric Hatch.
- Vice-chair, Michael Corey.
- Treasurer, Al Bashevkin
- Clerk, Sheila Kearns.

2021 Accomplishments:

- Been awarded grants totaling \$139,500, including \$36,000 to Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) to support our efforts,
- Submitted an application to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Infrastructure Grant program in partnership with Consolidated Communications Inc (CCI).
- Added Winhall as a member of the SoVT CUD.
- Maintained membership in the Vermont Communications Union Districts Association (VCUDA).

2021 Activities and Plans for 2022

In June 2021 we were awarded a \$139,500 Preconstruction and Capacity Building Grant from the Department of Public Service for technical assistance, legal services, and other operational support. Although the grant was awarded in 2021, the CUD expects to receive the funds in 2022, which is reflected in the FY22 budget.

In July 2021, SoVT CUD signed a Memorandum of Understanding with CCI for a public-private partnership to provide broadband services to unserved and underserved areas in the District. CCI was selected to partner with SoVT CUD through a robust RFQ process and was also the winning bidder of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund for this region.

In August 2021, SoVT CUD worked with CCI to submit an application to National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program in the amount of \$8.1 million to fund fiber to the premises. NTIA award decisions are expected in February 2022, and CCI plans to begin construction in the second half of 2022.

The CUD also plans to work with CCI to apply to the Act 71 Broadband Construction Grant as a supplement or contingency to NTIA. The proposed FY22 budget reflects the grant awards that the CUD anticipated receiving in 2022.

Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Vermont received over \$1 billion to make strategic investments in critical infrastructure and initiatives throughout the state. The governor's proposal currently calls for over \$250 million of that ARPA funding to be allocated to broadband and connectivity projects. Additionally, \$200 million of Vermont's ARPA funding went directly to local governments and can be spent on a wide range of projects including broadband. ARPA funding and the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law present an unprecedented opportunity to invest in broadband infrastructure at the state and local level, and CUDs stand to benefit greatly from these investments.

As the year ends, we look forward to building upon our relationships with neighboring CUDs, CCI, VCUDA and other broadband stakeholders to accomplish our mission of bringing high-speed internet to Southern Vermont.

Acknowledgements

All the representatives, alternates, and officers have given significant time and effort to the CUD and deserve respect and gratitude. They have made for an impressive second year.

The CUD has greatly benefited from our partnership with the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC). The administrative assistance and expertise in navigating the public funding arena provided by Community and Economic Development Specialist Jonathan Cooper and Regional Planner/Energy Program Coordinator Callie Fishburn has been invaluable. The CUD is especially indebted to BCRC's ability to keep us grounded in the broad development efforts of the region.

SOUTHERN VERMONT COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT
d/b/a CATAMOUNT FIBER

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES, AND CHANGES IN NET FUND POSITION
January 1, 2021- December 31,2021

	Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Fund Position	Budget FY 22
	January 1, 2021- December 31, 2021	
OPERATING REVENUES:		
Opening Balance 1/1/21 (carryover from FY 2020)	129,899.76	3,417
Anticipated Grants		
Total operating revenues	129,899.76	
OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Pole survey	(100,000.00)	
Treasurer Salary	(250.00)	
Insurance	(3,454.00)	
Legal services	(8,027.50)	
Consulting	(9,393.60)	
Financial Award Management	(690.00)	
Marketing website		
Total operating expenses	(121,815.10)	
NONOPERATING INCOME AND (EXPENSES):		
Interest income	52.82	
Google Workspace	(851.51)	
Bank Fees	(70.00)	
Website Development	(2,400.00)	
Office Supplies	(185.95)	
Meeting Transcription	(778.75)	
Zoom Expenses	(322.00)	
Miscellaneous expenses	(111.73)	
Total Expenses	(4,667.12)	
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN FUND NET POSITION AND NET POSITION	(126,482.22)	

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BUDGET
Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2022

Revenues		Notes
H.315 Pre-Construction Grant *	139,500	Expected
NTIA Project *	9,058,985	Pending
Act 71 Construction Grant *	5,000,000	Estimated - Pending
Total Revenues	<u>14,198,485</u>	

Expenses		
NTIA Grant		
External Administration & Legal	102,574	
Internal Admin & Legal	61,000	
Architectural & Engineering	1,618,417	
Construction Total	3,798,776	
Equipment	3,478,218	
ACT 71 Construction Grant		
External Administration & Legal	56,615	
Internal Admin & Legal	33,668	
Architectural & Engineering	893,266	
Construction Total	2,096,690	
Equipment	1,919,761	
H.315 pre-Construction Grant		
CTC Survey & Technical Assistance	54,000	8,280 obligated in 2021
BCRC Operational Support	36,000	
Legal Services	20,000	8,027.50 obligated in 2021
General Operations & Administration	19,500	4331.25 obligated in 2021
Expenses Total	<u>14,188,485</u>	

Other income and (expense)		
Interest income	<u>65</u>	Estimate
Total other income (expense)	<u>65</u>	

Revenue - Expenses (under)	10,065
Net position, beginning of year	<u>2,529</u>
Net position, end of year	<u>12,594</u>