

Southern Vermont Communications Union District

Draft Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2024

Town Name	Representative Name	Voting = V Present = P Absent = A	Alternate Name	Voting = V Present = P Absent = A	2 nd Alternate Name	Voting = V Present = P Absent = A
Arlington	Cynthia Browning	V	Jamie Paustian	A	Nick Zaiac	P
Bennington	Eric Hatch	V	Ron Dubreuil	A	Beth Hardesty	A
Dorset	Jim Salsgiver	V	Bob Meszaros	A		
Landgrove	Susan Lenox	A				
Londonderry	John Hankin	V				
Manchester	Terrence Dorsey	V	Kathleen James	A		
Peru	Ben Foltz	A	Peter Bradford	A		
Pownal	Caitlin Randall	A	Karlan Eberhardt	A		
Rupert	Bill Meyer	V	Jed Rubin	P	Arlene Bentley	P
Sandgate	Sheila Kearns	V	Logan Weurslin	A		
Shaftsbury	Tim Scoggins	A	Michael Corey	V		
Sunderland	Andrew McKeever	V	Todd Lawrence	P		
Winhall	Lissa Stark	V				
Woodford						

Also present: Callie Fishburn (BCRC)

1. Call to order
The chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.
2. Roll call
Callie Fishburn called roll. A quorum of the board was present.
3. Conflict of interest
None
4. Additions to or deletions from the agenda [1 V.S.A. § 312]
None
5. Review and Approval of Minutes from February 28, 2024
*Motion to approve the minutes as presented by Jim Salsgiver, seconded by Sheila Kearns.
Passed unanimously.*

6. Public comments

None

7. Announcements

Todd Lawrence and Nick Zaiac have joined the governing board as alternates for Sunderland and Arlington respectively.

Representatives are reminded to please have their town select boards reappoint or appoint new representatives to the governing board by no later than the last Monday in April. The appointment resolution needs to be completed and sent to Callie.

8. Chair Report

Phase 3: Terry reached out to Leslie Cadwell, who has experience in telecommunications policy and briefly talked through the CUD's current position and what the options are for Phase 3. Some additional research in regulatory issues is probably needed, but the most likely option seems to be for the CUD to put out an RFP to see if any internet service provider or another CUD is willing to provide service to the hardest to reach addresses. Terry asked Leslie to put together a proposal with a cost estimate for regulatory research regarding Phase 3 that the board can review. If the board decides to move forward, Leslie research could be paid for with the CUD's largely unspent legal funds.

Jim Salsgiver asked for clarification regarding SoVT CUD's obligation to provide service to the hardest to reach addresses. Terry's understanding of the CUD's obligation is that it must make a good faith effort to provide every eligible household with 100/100 broadband service. The remaining households are only accessible from out of state. If jurisdictional boundaries present an insurmountable obstacle, and no internet service provider is willing or able to offer internet service, then that's all SoVT CUD can practically do.

VCBB & VCUDA/Legislative Updates: An amendment to H.657 which has to do with telecom taxes and fees exempts nearly all Telecom entities, including CUDs, from a tax that funds public television. The exemption does not include CCI.

State Auditor Doug Hoffer recently testified before the House Environment and Energy Committee on S.199. VCUDA is concerned that his comments were confusing and misleading. This may not impact SoVT CUD, but there may be some press coverage about the testimony. Auditor Hoffer's testimony may be based on the investigative report published last year, which identifies several weaknesses and concerns with the operation of CUDs.

CCI Sale: No update

9. Committee Updates

Audit/Finance: Jim will get together with the treasurer to review the CUD's financials and convene a finance committee before the next board meeting. Terry has also reached out to CCI to remind them that they owe the CUD an accounting of CUD-owned assets.

Governance: Tim has been working to increase attendance for several specific towns. Arlene Bentley is likely going to become the Woodford representative. Tim is also looking for a contact in Peru to reach out to about board representation [*from an email update from Tim*]. Jim knows the Peru select board chair and will contact him.

Sustainability: Bill has reached out to Callie to get information about the CUD's past and current expenses. He would like to have a meeting of the sustainability committee sometime in April to discuss the amount of funding needed to sustain the CUD on an annual basis and possible sources of funding.

10. Other Business

None

Motion to adjourn by Bill Meyer, seconded by Sheila Kearns. Passed unanimously.