

Southern Vermont Communications Union District

Draft Meeting Minutes

April 24, 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	A
Bennington	Eric Hatch	A	Ron Dubreuil	A	Beth Hardesty	A
Dorset	Jim Salsgiver	P	Bob Meszaros	V		
Landgrove	Susan Lenox	V				
Londonderry	John Hankin	A				
Manchester	Terrence Dorsey	V				
Peru	Jon Mowry	V	Ben Foltz	A		
Pownal	Caitlin Randall	V	Karlan Eberhardt	A		
Rupert	Bill Meyer	V	Jed Rubin	P	Arlene Bentley	P
Sandgate	Sheila Kearns	V	Logan Weurslin	V		
Shaftsbury	Tim Scoggins	V	Michael Corey	P		
Sunderland	Andrew McKeever	A	Todd Lawrence	V		
Winhall	Lissa Stark	V				
Woodford						

Also present: Callie Fishburn and Jonathan Cooper (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 March 27, 2024
*Motion to approve the minutes as presented by Tim Scoggins, seconded by Bill Meyer.
Passed unanimously.*

6. Public comments

None

7. Announcements

Callie reminded the board that the next meeting is the CUD's annual organizational meeting during which election of officers will take place. Terry requested that board members do their best to attend to ensure quorum.

8. Chair Report

Phase 3: Terry received a proposal from Leslie Cadwell, a lawyer with telecom regulation expertise. Leslie has done some initial research into potential regulatory barriers to providing service to the remaining 17 addresses from out of state, and she has offered to assist with developing an RFP to distribute to internet service providers for a flat fee of \$2,000. Terry believes the board should move forward with hiring Leslie and distributing RFP; if the RFP garners no responses, it may still provide the CUD with valuable information that can be shared with VCBB.

Sheila asked if the board should continue outreach to the remaining addresses to determine if they have adequate service (100/100). Terry believes most, if not all, of the addresses have below 100/100 service. Sheila said that the addresses on Chambers Road in Sandgate are served from New York and may have sufficient service to be removed from the list of remaining unserved addresses.

Motion to move forward with hiring Leslie Cadwell to develop an RFP and authorize the board to spend \$2,000 by Tim Scoggins, seconded by Sheila Kearns.

Discussion: Bill suggested that the board try to get more information from the addresses on Black Hole Hollow Rd about their internet service. Terry believes that there is only phone and DSL service on the Vermont side of the road. Verizon has Fios fiber on the New York side. It would be ideal if Verizon was willing to come across the border to provide service on Black Hole Hollow Rd, but it may not make business sense for them to do so.

Jonathan asked about what would happen if an entity responded to the RFP and where the funding would come from. Terry responded that the CUD has unspent construction grant funds that could potentially be used. There would need to be a discussion with VCBB about how to draw down those unspent funds – possibly the CUD could use it to contribute to the cost of line extensions for customers.

Tim said that it's likely the CUD will get very expensive proposals in response to its RFP and will need to figure out where the money will come from.

Motion passed unanimously.

VCBB & VCUDA/Legislative Updates: VCUDA has been focused on the passage of H.657 and S.199.

MOU with Otter Creek and Lamoille CUDs: Otter Creek and Lamoille are required by their grant agreements to develop a sustainability plan. There is an opportunity for all three CUDs to pool resources and work together on sustainability. Terry and Sheila have started regular meetings with Lamoille and Otter Creek and the next step is to formalize the relationship with an MOU. Eli Emerson at Primer Piper has begun drafting the document, which Terry will share with the board for approval once it's completed.

9. Committee Updates

Governance – Tim Scoggins: Efforts to get representatives appointed/reappointed and improve attendance have been largely successful. February of each year is a good time to begin reminding reps about reappointment. Thanks to Jim Salsgiver for reaching out to Peru and getting a new representative appointed.

Woodford still has no representative. Arlene Bentley of Rupert is willing to be the Woodford representative, and the select board is fine with that, but there hasn't been any movement on making that happen. Callie is already planning to attend the next Woodford select board meeting in May to discuss an unrelated matter, but she can bring the appointment form and ask them to appoint Arlene.

There are a few other towns who haven't submitted their appointment forms yet – Callie and Jonathan are reaching out to those towns.

Terry asked Tim to review S.199 and give a summary to the board at the next meeting.

Audit/Finance – Jim Salsgiver: Jessica Grimm-Lyon just reached out to Callie to say that she can no longer continue as CUD treasurer due to the demands of her job. Callie and Jonathan have already begun brainstorming possible replacements. Terry will also reach out to Otter Creek and Lamoille, and Denise Sullivan, the CPA hired by VCUDA.

Jim needs some financial information to begin putting together an RFP for an auditor. He has heard through other organizations he's involved with, that many accountants are not looking for more audit business at this time. Callie has limited access to the CUD QuickBooks account and will send Jim the financial reports she has access to. Terry has received an accounting of CUD-owned assets from CCI and will share that with Jim.

Sustainability – Bill Meyer: Callie shared a preliminary post-2024 budget with the sustainability committee which is based on the previous three years of operating

expenses. The sustainability plan that is developed across the three CUDs should be about more than just the budget.

10. Other Business

CCI Sale: No significant updates. The CUD's legal counsel is monitoring the PUC case and will provide any updates. SoVT CUD has standing in the case and can intervene if it feels the need to.

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