

Otter Creek
Communications Union
District
October 22, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Bill Moore (Brandon), Cassandra Hayes (Goshen), Amanda O'Connor (RRPC), Sam Jackson (Pittsford), Chris Custer (Hubbardton), Mary Ann Goulette (West Rutland)

Guests: Terry Williams (Poultney), Steve Hubbard

Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda approved: Cassandra made a motion to accept the agenda and Chris seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Open Meeting Laws:

- A brief discussion on what open meeting laws, transparency, and the free flow of information. All emails associated with the CUD and the information they contain about the CUD are available to the public upon request through the freedom of information act

New Member Approval:

- Benson, Chittenden, West Rutland, and Rutland Town
- Amanda made a motion to approve the above mentioned towns and their representatives. Cassandra seconded the motion. The motion passed
 - West Rutland: Mary Ann Goulette, John Harvey (Alt)
 - Chittenden: Andrew Quint, Barbara Gabrielson (Alt)
 - Benson: John Hill, Gina Cull (Alt)
 - Rutland Town: Bill Sweet
- **Legal Services RFP:**
 - RFP's were made available for Website development and legal services. The first round closed on 10/21/20. We need to give feedback to applicants by 10/28/20. Funds for these services have to be utilized by 12/15-12/30 due to the grant restrictions.
 - 1-2 individuals from the CUD are needed to go through the applicant process with Amanda and bring their suggestions back to the CUD for a vote. This will be done through email.
 - Time is a factor because the RPC is our current acting fiscal agent and we need to get our CUD fully established.
 - Mary Ann will join this subcommittee. Chris Custer is also willing to help with this process.
- **RTO Wireless Presentation: Steve Hubbard**
 - RTO Wireless has partnered with Microsoft
 - They are able to provide: 100 mb downloading capability and 10 mb uplink

- Their solution: Cell tower deployment and an Aerostat Blimp
- Planned coverage of 500 sq. miles (in good geography)
 - Flat areas with hill elevations not exceeding 1500-2000 ft above ground
- They are conscious of strategic placement and aesthetically conscious.
- Blimps are durable, can sustain up to 80 mph winds, winds above 90 begin to put strain on the blimp fabric. The blimps must be replaced in 3-5 years
 - Cost/Installation
 - Cost of unit, amount of equipment integration, and monthly operating costs
- To utilize available grant funds, a temporary system could be available.
 - \$800,000 for one envelope and system
 - \$200,000 integration costs (including monthly costs)
- AT&T has also joined RTO's mission. They have singled out 13 areas in Vermont as prime areas for utilizing RTO technologies. Brandon is one such area.
- We could potentially do a trial run with grant funds and then go back and redeploy if the trial run is successful.
- RTO would be the wireless provider and use local groups to sell and install.
- **Grant Updates:**
 - VT Community Foundation Grant for CUD's is available: \$20,000 to support broadband initiative.
 - This grant does not have to be used by a specific date, so we could use it in several ways depending on the needs of the CUD.
 - Mary Ann made a motion for the CUD to apply for this grant from the VCF. Amanda seconded the motion. The motion passed.
 - VT Cares Act Funds
 - To provide hot spots and extenders-Rutland has used these in the past and they would need to be updated.
 - Providers also need to be found who can run fiber.
 - Additional Caris funds needed for technicians to install emergency hot spots.
- **Job Descriptions:**
 - Clerk- Amanda will get a rough outline for the clerk job description and will email it to the CUD for approval.
- **First Light:**
 - Fiber service provider in VT
 - They own a lot of infrastructure in VT
- **To Do:**
 - CUD members will find out who provides telephone and internet services for their respective town offices and bring the information back to the CUD for discussion.
 - Continue to reach out to towns not involved in a CUD to strengthen our position.
 - Next meeting November 5th at 5:00 pm
- Chris made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed.