

Otter Creek
Communications Union
District
September 23, 2020
Meeting Minutes

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

Guests:

Meeting opened at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda approved:

- New member approval: Pittsford voted on 9/20 and approved the election of Samantha Jackson to the OCCUD Board.
- Amanda O'Connor from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.
- Hubbardton has voted to join our district, but has not appointed anyone to the board as of yet. Amended: **Chris Custer (Hubbardton) is serving for this appointment.**
- Amanda made a motion to approve the town of Hubbardton to the CUD and Cassandra seconded the motion.
- We have been told that Sudbury has brought up joining the CUD but we have received no official paperwork.
- Amanda has offered to reach out to them to be of assistance in getting the ball rolling to join the CUD. Bill has also been in contact with them to do so as well. We are working on communication issues.
- Amanda made a motion to approve the town of Sudbury into the CUD upon receiving the official paperwork and Cassandra seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Secretary of State Update:

- All required paper work has been submitted to the state of Vermont, so that we can officially become a municipality. We're just waiting for the official paperwork. The state has also updated their CUD map to include our CUD.

Grant Updates:

- Last week we applied for an additional \$100,000 grant from Vermont's Community Resilience Connectivity Grants through the Department of Public Service.
 - We have been approved to receive this grant. The agreement is being drawn up.
 - The monies have to be utilized by December 31, 2020.
- We have also been hearing that the state legislature will be approving Grants of \$300,000 per CUD. There will be an application process, and this grant will have the same time requirements of December 31, 2020.

- Addison CUD has been contacted to see if we could parallel the work that needs to be done, we can contract with someone jointly and expand the territory.
- This would help us to use all grant monies by the date required.
 - RFP's would need to be discussed such as a lawyer, the pursuit of a poll survey, RFP's for entertaining High-end engineering designs to guide us as we move forward so that we know or can anticipate when we get down to construction.
- We have been granted \$10,000 from the Vermont Community Foundation, but there is not an expenditure date limitation.

We are in the process of establishing an employee identification number so that we may hire employees such as a clerk to help with upcoming tasks and duties that will need to be dealt with. We don't yet have an EID number so our current Fiscal Agent is the Regional Planning Commission. They will be holding on to any funds that we obtain.

Website:

- Currently the town of Brandon is hosting all of our agendas and meeting minutes. A more useful marketing tool for us would be to create our own website. All members are in agreement that a website needs to be created for the sole use of the CUD. There is a lot of information that our CUD is in possession of, that other towns would find useful in helping town's people understand the need to join the CUD.
- Chris brought up a valid point concerning the use of a domain and whether it would be hosted through the government. Bill clarified that we will be using our own domain and that we have already had a URL registered, occud.org for the OCCUD domain. So now we just need to do the web design and hosting. Amanda reminded us that we would have to go through a procurement process for the website if we are going to use our current funds and give individuals who are interested in the job of designing the website an opportunity to bid. We would like to entertain at least three bids, if we are able to receive at least that many. We feel it is in our best interest to try to keep the bids local, if possible, from Rutland County.
- We had previously contacted an individual who helped us set up the initial URL and was willing to help with the website. Before we go further in the process we need to clarify whether the required credentials are met. Individuals must be able to do branding, logo design, and website.
- Cassandra will contact the individual who set up our URL to check on the credentials listed above.
- Bill made a motion to create an RFP and get it out immediately, and must contain details on web design, marketing, and hosting. Amanda seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- Bill will put the RFP together and use the procurement policy as a guide.
- We need to make sure to include a map of our towns service area and what level of service each site is currently able to receive.

- Bill made a motion to adopt the procurement policies of our fiscal agent, the Regional Planning Commission to guide our vendor/ services acquisition. Amanda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Legal Services, etc:

- We previously touched on the need for legal services and the need for an RFP.
- Obtaining our EIN, Certificate of Public Service, Insurance (Liability)
- Utilizing information from the Vermont Communication Union district Association (meet every Thursday 9-10 am).
- Thank you to Amanda for making the time to attend the VCUDA meetings.
- Amanda made a motion to join the VCUDA as an official organization and Bill seconded the motion and voiced that this is the right course for our CUD to take and will be very beneficial. The motion passed.

VCUDA Update:

- We need to appoint a primary and an alternate to VCUDA.
- Amanda accepted the appointment and Sam will be the alternate. These appointments were unanimously agreed upon. A motion document needs to be created and submitted to VCUDA, notifying them the appointments.

Poll Study/ Poll Survey:

- Due to funding requirements we will be further referring to the Poll Study as Poll survey.
- We need to better understand what exists in our areas, for efficiency purposes, a Poll survey will be done. From the survey, we will learn about our infrastructure, what the polls are in our 5 towns of Brandon, Goshen, Sudbury, Pittsdord, and Hubbardton. The majority if not all of the poles are owned by GMP. We need to learn exactly what is on the polls, and the age of the polls.
- We will need to go through the process of a feasibility study, a business plan, and a poll survey, the make ready faze, and then construction.
- We will need to come up with an RFP request proposal for somebody to do a poll survey for our member towns. Amanda suggested that we vote on creating an RFP for the poll survey so that we may begin the process as soon as possible due to the fact that it will be a fairly big taks.
- Chris commented and inquired about the vastness of the task of finding out where polls are located and which ones are in use.
- Amanda commented that we will be focusing on polls that are mostly on main roads. Polls on Right-of-ways or private property will be tricky. The goal is fiber to the premise.

- Legal support will be needed to apply for a certificate of public good, which will allow us to apply to work on these polls and put up infrastructure in a public place. Each certificate can encompass up to 200 Polls. We must reapply every 200 polls so that we can cover the required areas of our combined towns.
- For private roads, permission will need to be obtained from the landowner and or notification that we will be working on the polls.
- Chris made a motion that we create an RFP for the poll study. Cassandra seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Job Descriptions:

- Clerk: It was unanimously agreed to table any job descriptions until the next meeting.

RTO First Light: RTO Wireless

- This organization was created to get broadband and connectivity throughout Vermont's hardest to reach areas.
- We received a powerpoint detailing what their plans look like.
- We would like to invite them to our next board meeting to see if their plans could prove to be a stop-gap solution for use in the short term.
- Cassandra made a motion to invite RTO Wireless to our next board meeting. Amanda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

New Member Recruitment:

- As members of the CUD, we need to make sure that towns that are not involved in a CUD in Rutland County know what we're trying to do and that they can join.
- There are 27 towns in Rutland County and currently only four of them are in our CUD. Goshen being part of Addison County decided to join Rutland County CUD board.
- We will not be targeting the towns of Mount Holly, Killington, Danby, Middletown Springs, and Benson. They are set with fiber.
- An inquiry was made as to whether Whiting has joined with the Addison County CUD. Bill will look into this.
- Amanda has begun to reach out to the towns of Proctor, Fairhaven, and Rutland Town.
- Amanda has a recording of a Broadband 101 meeting that happened recently. This recording will be shared with board members.

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/jRZKXvpzOjKkSFMeJ4WDsBfCD3hvnuA1dH8VGcdGrB_aEm9t9a-PvoNBnR4CjA.9io97HXRAIxcRvou

New Business:

- No new business.

Next Meeting: Thursday October 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.