

1 **Northwest Communications Union District**  
2 **Governing Board Meeting**  
3 **November 17, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**  
4 **Zoom Virtual Meeting ID**  
5

6 **Attendance:** Sean Kio, Chair (Enosburgh Rep.), Chris Cota, Vice-Chair (Fairfax Rep), Everett McGinley  
7 (Montgomery Rep), Emily Klofft (NRPC), Moustafa Mends-Cole (Sheldon Alt.), Stu McGowan (Alburgh  
8 Alt.), Matthew Miner (Enosburgh Alt.), Dominic DeRosia (Berkshire Rep.) and Shaun Coleman (NRPC).  
9

10 **Call to Order and Adjustments to the Agenda**

11 Chair Sean Kio called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm, followed by roll call. A quorum was present. E.  
12 Klofft requested discussion with Lamoille CUD and NEK regarding EDA grant be included in Other  
13 Business.  
14

15 **Approval of Minutes**

16 E. McGinley asked to remove lines 32 and 33 because they are redundant.  
17 *C. Cota motioned to accept the minutes. Seconded by E. McGinley. Motion carried.*  
18

19 **Treasurer's Report**

20 E. Klofft provided the Treasurer's Report. The ending balance for CUD funds is \$5,107.50. The balance is  
21 the remaining amount from the original Vermont Community Foundation grant funds.  
22

23 *C. Cota motioned to approve the Treasurer's Report. E. McGinley seconded. Motion carried.*  
24

25 **Administrative Services Contract**

26 S. Kio reported he read through it and asked if anyone had any questions. E. Klofft provided a draft  
27 version of the Administrative Services agreement between NRPC and the CUD. There was a brief  
28 discussion in support of the agreement. Add the hourly rates.  
29

30 *E. McGinley motioned to approve administrative services agreement. C. Cota seconded. Motion carried.*  
31

32 **Social Media Policy**

33 E. Klofft reported she received the social media policy guidelines from VLCT and reviewed the draft  
34 policy. S. Kio noted that municipal entities run in the grey area where they can't necessarily block things  
35 but by adopting a social media policy you can have some protections. It is affording us some leeway into  
36 what is allowable and what is not.  
37

38 C. Cota asked if a post is made that is offensive, does it have to be documented? S. Kio recommended  
39 that the record be kept for reference.  
40

41 A discussion ensued as to whether or not a public commentary section should be added to social media  
42 platforms related to the CUD. The group discussed whether or not there was value to including/allowing  
43 comments on the social media page and how judicious the site administrator should be about

1 controlling and monitoring comments. Someone would have to be monitoring the site fairly regularly  
2 and the CUD doesn't have that capacity yet. The social media policy should help guide that.

3  
4 M. Miner noted that Enosburg Falls Village has a no engagement policy. There is an auto replay thanking  
5 the public for any comments submitted. The Village does not provide explanation or clarification of  
6 information when people are reacting to a general announcement.

7  
8 The consensus was that generally comments would be accepted where needed but there was no need  
9 to solicit comments on everything. S. McGowan advocated for having one place open for public  
10 engagement otherwise it would be unmanageable. E. Klofft noted that the way the policy is written  
11 now, only Twitter and Facebook allow comments but not the NWCUD website.

12  
13 C. Cota requested to table an action on the Policy until next meeting.

### 14 15 **CUD Subcommittees**

16 S. Kio reported asked S. Coleman for help in reaching out to other member communities for  
17 involvement. There isn't an immediate rush to get the subcommittees going but definitely want to get  
18 them active in the new year. They will work on soliciting the inactive members.

19  
20 S. Coleman noted that he was meeting with the Swanton Village Trustees on Monday regarding joining  
21 the CUD.

### 22 23 **Wi-Fi Hot Spots**

24 S. Kio spoke with Public Service earlier today. PSD should be working on installations in our District next  
25 Tuesday. Justin McCourt is the vendor the state selected. Sean will notify everyone as soon as he hears  
26 when the installations are to take place.

### 27 28 **CUD Planning Grant Survey**

29 S. Kio reported the survey on website. There are only a few surveys in. D. DeRosia offered to try to get  
30 the appropriate contact information for Supervisory Unions. The CUD representatives were to contact  
31 their municipal officials regarding posting survey and CUD information on the municipal websites.

- 32  
33
- Emily will check with Messenger regarding ad rates for survey. Sean estimated \$250 ad rate would be reasonable.
  - Sean will change survey mailer into postcard.
- 35  
36

37 S. Kio reported that 5,000 postcard mailers the cost is \$1,560 plus \$150 for printing. The CUD could do  
38 two runs of a mailing. The survey budget is \$8,000.

39  
40 *C. Cota motioned to approve the expenditure for two rounds of survey mailers not to exceed \$4,000*  
41 *pending review of postcard mailer. E. McGinley seconded. Motion carried.*

### 42 43 **CUD Planning Grant Consultant RFQ**

1 E. Klofft presented the RFQ with a deadline of response for 11/24. It should be low barrier for  
2 consultants to get back to us quickly because it is similar format to the BIG RFP. PSD wants the NWCUD  
3 to prove some noticeable improvement in accelerating our planning by the CARES Act deadline.

4  
5 There was a discussion started by Everett regarding including the total amount of \$65,000 in the RFQ  
6 given the limited time. The group agreed to refer to an hourly rate instead rather than a sum total of  
7 what is available.

8  
9 *C. Cota motioned to approve and release the RFQ. E. McGinley seconded. Motion carried.*

## 10 11 **Member Updates**

12 Alburgh – S. McGowan reported no updates.

13 Enosburgh Town – M. Miner reported no updates.

14 Fairfax – C. Cota reported that the next special meeting will be with MC Fiber on December 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.  
15 He requested the name correction on the insurance policy but they misspelled the District’s name.

16 Sheldon – M. Mends-Cole reported no activity and asked if more information was needed for the wi-fi  
17 deployment. S. Kio replied the state will reach out to town hopefully by next Tuesday.

18 Berkshire – D. DeRosia was contacted by PSD about wi-fi deployment for next Tuesday. No activity  
19 otherwise.

20 Montgomery – E. McGinley had requested address information from the town for the survey.

21  
22 S. Kio noted that he and Emily attended a meeting recently. Lamoille applied for an EDA grant that was  
23 not accepted with a note that they would be more successful if they collaborated with other CUDs. They  
24 reached out to NEK and they reached out to us. The idea is to have significant grant opportunities to  
25 allow for further consulting, feasibility and planning work done for all three CUDs. The stipulation is that  
26 it requires a match which wasn’t completely defined.

27  
28 E. Klofft noted that the match starts at 50/50 but the match can be adjusted based on economic stress  
29 indicators in the region. NRPC was able to get an 80/20 match rate on their EDA grant because of the  
30 economic stress adjustment for the region.

## 31 32 **Department of Public Service (Invited)**

33 No report.

## 34 35 **Other Business**

36 C. Cota reported that he was contacted by Christine Hallquist at NEK Broadband about participating in a  
37 VCUDA Policy Group. He informed Christine of the NWCUD’s current stance on VCUDA and is supposed  
38 to have a follow up discussion soon. S. Kio noted he was also contacted but hasn’t responded.

39  
40 E. Klofft reported that the USDA Rural Business Development Grant for \$30,000 with no match is open.  
41 Funding could be used for supporting broadband planning or CUD assistance and possibly infrastructure.  
42 They are resource intensive to apply for based on past experience. USDA said this could be a competitive  
43 project. Letter of intent are due on December 1 if the CUD is interested.

1 C. Cota noted that he has been trying to obtain a lawyer for the CUD. The last group that met with the  
2 NWCUD gave us a non-disclosure agreement to sign following the last meeting. A lot of VCUDA  
3 members use the same attorney.

4  
5 E. McGinley noted he has reviewed many NDA's over the years. Generally, an attorney is not needed to  
6 review them. He offered to review the NDA.

7  
8 S. Coleman reported that recently he attended a US Rural Development virtual conference session on  
9 CUD's. A CUD in the mid-west deployed wi-fi hotspots to improve the lives of migrant farmworkers and  
10 their families. This was the result after determining there was an urgent need for access to education,  
11 government and health services during the early stages of the pandemic where many of the  
12 farmworkers were isolated. UVM Farm Extension services could help the NWCUD identify those migrant  
13 farm worker communities in the District with similar broadband access needs.

14  
15 **Public Comment**

16 None.

17  
18 **Adjourn**

19 E. McGinley motioned to adjourn. C. Cota seconded. Motion carried.

20  
21 *Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.*