

1 **Northwest Communications Union District**
2 **September 2, 2020 DRAFT Minutes**
3 **Virtual Meeting (Zoom Meeting ID: 871 5973 6995)**
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5 **Attendance:** Emily Klofft (NRPC), Sean Kio, Chair (Enosburgh), Christopher Cota Vice-Chair
6 (Fairfax), Everett McGinley (Montgomery), Tara Wright (Georgia Alt.), Nick Norris (Sheldon), Ian
7 Scott (Montgomery), Matthew Miner (Enosburgh Alt.), Ken Millman (Alburgh), Shaun Coleman
8 (NRPC) and Jonathan DeLaBruere (Fairfield).
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10 **Call to Order and Adjustments to the Agenda**

11 Chair S. Kio called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. No adjustments to the agenda.
12

13 **Roll Call**

14 See Attendance above.
15

16 **Approval of Minutes**

17 *C. Cota motioned to approve the minutes. T. Wright seconded.*
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19 **Treasurer's Report - NRPC**

20 E. Klofft reported no changes since last meeting.

21 S. Kio noted the Catherine Dimitruk from NRPC was able to get the CUD an EIN and offered
22 suggestions on which bank to use. The CUD will need to determine which board members should be
23 signatories on the account. M. Miner noted some banks charge recurring fees and some do not.
24 Sean will work on opening an account.
25

26 *E. McGinley motioned to approve Treasurer's Report. C Cota seconded. Motion carried.*
27

28 **Acceptance of New Members**

29 E. Klofft reported that the Alburgh and Bakersfield Selectboards have passed resolutions to join.
30 Heather Jewett, Bakersfield representative could not attend.
31

32 **CUD Insurance**

33 C. Cota spoke with Rob Fish from PSD regarding insurance. To proceed with insurance coverage, an
34 EIN is needed as well as some basic background information from each Board member. There is a
35 provider that does offer coverage for CUDs. Once he has information, he will proceed with
36 purchasing the insurance policy.
37

38 **Update on Goals and Objectives**

39 C. Cota led the discussion and shared his screen of the draft goals and policies currently developed.

40 *E. McGinley motion to approve the NWCUD's Vision, Mission, Goals and Values statement. J.*

41 *DeLaBreure seconded. Motion carried.*
42

43 **COVID Planning Grant Program**

44 S. Kio reported that he had not seen anything from the state for pushing the funding deadline
45 beyond the end of the year. Given the timeline, it may be best to focus on data collections, surveying
46 and potentially deploying additional wi-fi hotspots.

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2 There was a discussion on hiring a consultant that may be able to advise the Board on constructing
3 what a feasibility study might look like and sketching out an outline for project plan.

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5 There is a rolling deadline for submitting the application. PSD suggested submitting one ASAP.

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7 **Senate Finance Committee Recap**

8 C. Cota reported that he testified before the Senate Finance Committee earlier this week along with
9 other CUDs from across the state. His testimony was distributed to the CUD board. The House
10 Committee on Energy and Technology also met to discuss the FY21 budget including CUD funding.
11 One recommendation from the House was to provide \$1.5 million for pole data collection separate
12 from the backing VEDA funds. VEDA funds were reduced from \$2 million to \$1.2 million. Overall,
13 more funding for CUDs than what was in Governor's budget proposal.

14
15 Christine Hallquist was present at the Committee Hearing. She is working as a manger/consultant
16 for NEK Broadband and is a great CUD advocate who can speak to the Senate Finance Committee in
17 terms they are familiar with. Franklin County Senator Randy Brock is a member of the Senate
18 Finance Committee.

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20 **Member Updates**

21 Enosburgh – No update

22 Fairfax – No updates.

23 Fairfield – No updates.

24 Montgomery – E. McGinley noted there was a CCI outage that took place in Montgomery over the
25 weekend. Also, AT&T put it in a transmitter on Harwood Hill some time ago as part of the First Net
26 rollout. It may now be live.

27 Alburgh – K. Millman reported that he hasn't been able to reach Isle La Motte Selectboard members.
28 Matrix Design Group was supposed to present to them tonight on a proposal to bring fiber to
29 premises however the meeting was cancelled.

30 Georgia – No report.

31 Sheldon – N. Norris introduced himself as Sheldon Rep.

32 Fairfield – J. DeLaBruere reported that the SB just voted to join.

33
34 S. Kio noted the NWCUD is on the Swanton Town Selectboard Agenda on October 6th. S. Coleman
35 added he would reach out to Swanton Village. E. Klofft said Richford is interested and we will reach
36 out to the Chair again. S. Kio said he is hopeful Enosburg Falls will join.

37
38 **Public Service District**

39 PSD was unable to attend.

40
41 **Other Business**

42 T. Wright and S. Kio will try to attend VCUDA meetings for the District.

43
44 E. Klofft will make a Doodle poll for a new meeting schedule. It might make sense to meet every
45 other week and to start forming subcommittees given the size of the board. All agreed to move to a
46 bi-weekly schedule starting week of September 14th.

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C. Cota asked if the Special Meetings that were recently held were useful. All agreed they were informative and useful.

E. McGinley reported that the survey deadline for VT Electric Co-op has passed. He will ask for the results of the data. K. Millman said they offered to share the data with Alburgh. There was a brief discussion on survey data including format and managing expectations of what the survey will mean to residents.

E. Klofft wrote a draft letter for CUD representatives to send to their state legislators. S. Kio noted that the timing is good as a follow-up to the Senate Finance Committee hearing. Senator Brock had some specific business planning/model questions. C. Cota recommended sending out the letter this week if possible because decisions are being made soon.

S. Kio reported that that he just received notice from the PSD of another connectivity initiative proposal in the District by Vtel, CCI, RTO and Franklin Telephone. The group discussed the proposal and formulated a response. S. Coleman will draft the response for the Chair to review and send within 7 days.

There was a discussion about the town-based PSD public wi-fi hotspot maps. NRPC staff recommended that there be some direct contact with each town made rather than just sending a letter. Municipal representatives should attend their local board meetings to provide context and solicit direct input. Selectboards will be more responsive from municipal representatives. C. Cota suggested having the representative bring the NWCUD vision and goals statement as well. Action items could be identifying a place in your town where you could use a wi-fi hot spot. NRPC will draft a letter and send it out for review.

T. Wright asked about VCUDA and sharing of information and resources. VCUDA could use a platform to share policy ideas or share network design feasibility, etc. PSD is aware of the issue. It is important that each CUD maintain its identity given the unique needs/issues of each District.

C. Cota offered to ask Jeremy from CV Fiber to share their experiences with the District.

E. McGinley asked everyone to consider what subcommittees might make sense in between this meeting and the next.

Public Comment

None.

Adjourn

T. Wright motioned to adjourn. C. Cota seconded. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.
