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Northwest Vermont Communications Union District
Project Management and Operations Sub Committee

May 11, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendance: Sean Kio, Chair (Enosburgh & Enosburg Falls Rep.), Brenda Churchill (Bakersfield Rep.), Jake Kane (Sheldon Rep.), Mary Kay Raymond (Fairfax Rep.), Emily Klofft (NRPC)

Selection of Chair

S. Kio started the meeting by asking if anyone wishes to nominate themselves or someone else as chair of the committee. He explained that the responsibilities include reporting back to the main committee about work done in the sub-committee, leading the sub-committee meetings, and making sure that the committee has fulfilled all the work it is required to.

The sub-committee decided to table the issue until the next meeting, as a new member will be joining and the discussion can continue then.

Sub Committee Goals and Responsibilities

S. Kio suggested that reviewing official reports and documents, working with network engineers to then report back to the main committee, contract reviews, and helping with operational staff will be the main responsibilities, the committee agrees.

S. Kio said the first task will be feasibility review.

J. Kane asked if there is a shared Google Drive that will be used for this sub-committee, S. Kio confirmed and sends out the shared link.

S. Kio suggested everyone in the group read the feasibility study, make notes and suggestions, and identify any sensitive information that could put the committee at a disadvantage if released publicly.

1 J. Kane asked if there is a timeline for this work, and E. Klofft mentions that from NRPC's perspective,
2 the sooner they can submit it to DPS, the more beneficial it is because that is required for release of
3 funds to NRPC. S. Kio added that DPS approval is needed in order to move forward to the next step of
4 business planning. He says that taking a couple of weeks seems reasonable. E. Klofft asked that the
5 group meet on May 18th with reviews of the feasibility in terms of anything that would put the group at
6 a competitive disadvantage.

7

8 S. Kio said he made a new folder named Project Manager in the Google Drive, and that there is an RFP in
9 there. The NEK shared their administrator RFP from when they hired their consultant so that can be a
10 starting point. He suggested the sub-committee review that, as well as find someone with strong open
11 access credentials to be on the team, but leaves that up to the team to decide. He also says another
12 longer term task could be to look at other plans of CUDs, look at other feasibilities and business plans,
13 try and determine what could work for this plan. This way, when the group goes to look at or create
14 reports, they will have something to compare it to.

15

16 B. Churchill wanted to know if committee members know people from other CUDs if there are any
17 constructive conversations or dialogues they should be having. This could be very helpful for
18 understanding the intentions and plans of other CUDs, as a dialogue can often be more clear than simply
19 reading a document. S. Kio thought this could be a helpful strategy.

20

21 There was discussion of the Saint Albans Messenger interview with Christine Hallquist. S. Kio said he has
22 spoken with the Messenger multiple times both before and after that article and continues to give
23 interviews. S. Kio also noted that Christine has a lot of knowledge on the subject and has agreed to make
24 herself available for discussion as well as review of the feasibility study.

25

26 J. Kane asked if there are any specific business plans of CUDs that are particularly well run and would be
27 a good place to start.

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29 S. Kio suggested maybe Lamoille, maybe NEK, just looking at our neighbors. He notes that some CUDs
30 have decided to go in a different direction than Northwest, so their business plans may be less helpful as
31 a point of comparison. He also noted that the state has agreed for CUDs to somewhat act as
32 gatekeepers of funding for subsidy expansion as they must meet the CUDs standards of universal access,
33 not allow them to build islands, not allow them to have varying access from one side of the street to the
34 other, etc.

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36 S. Kio summarized the three main tasks which are to go over the feasibility looking for sensitive
37 information while making other notes and comments, review the RFP for an administrative position,
38 and finally looking at other CUDs business plans and feasibilities.

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2 S. Kio asked if the CUD should have a project management platform that would allow each committee to
3 have somewhat of a road map of what to do next. MK. Raymond stated it can be done just as easily in a
4 free service like Excel, and worries that using a service like this might require people to spend a lot of
5 time learning the software. J. Kane stated that if they are going to get one Trello would probably be a
6 user friendly choice. B. Churchill agreed that Excel seems like a format almost all people would
7 understand. S. Kio also mentioned that in the beginning they used Slack, and bringing that back is
8 another option. Everyone agreed that Slack will be a helpful tool for keeping in touch and staying in tune
9 with the projects, but S. Kio also reminds everyone that because they are a public municipal entity, no
10 decisions can be made in a chat.

11 **Review of Feasibility Study**

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13 E. Klofft asked if a preliminary presentation of the feasibility study would be helpful, but everyone
14 agrees that they will read it first and then the presentation would be helpful at a later date.

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16 B. Churchill asked if its possible to have a list of all the sub-committees and contact information for all
17 the chairs. S. Kio agrees and says he will share it on the Drive. He also notes their minutes and agenda
18 will be made available on the website.

19 MK. Raymond motioned to adjourn and J. Kane seconds. Motion carried.

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21 The meeting is adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

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