

Northwest Vermont Communications Union District

Governing Board Meeting

July 1, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendance: Sean Kio, Chair (Enosburgh Village and Town), Ken Millman (Alburgh Town), Dave Stanley (Fairfax), Stu McGowan (Alburgh Town), Charen Fegard (Richford), Mary Kay Raymond (Fairfax), Jake Kane (Sheldon), Everett McGinley (Montgomery), JR Cox (Alburgh Village), Brenda Churchill (Bakersfield), Emily Klofft (NRPC), Shaun Coleman (NRPC)

Call to Order and Adjustments to the Agenda

S. Kio calls the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. K. Millman requests that Chair Stipend be added to the agenda. MK. Raymond motioned to accept the change, J. Kane seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

D. Stanley motioned to accept the minutes from June 10th, J. Kane seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report- NRPC

E. Klofft presented the Treasurer's Report, showing \$12,500 was spent on development of outreach web application RISI, \$1,452.20 on Facebook advertising, \$3,625.13 on NRPC admin services from July to December, and \$6,817.87 on NRPC admin services from January to March for a total of \$24,395.20 that has been invoiced. This report is coming back up because there was a small technical error in the numbers shown, so the NRPC admin services and Facebook advertising, as well as the full report, need to be approved again now that the errors are corrected. There is \$25,724.84 left in the grant balance, and most of that is obligated. There is about \$1,000 not obligated. For the Vermont Community Foundation Grant, there is \$24,820.92 left. There was about \$300 set aside for an ad in The Islander, but they never received an invoice and E. Klofft has been unable to find the ad in The Islander's archives, so she is under the impression it did not run. No one on the committee saw it run, and S. Kio has reached out to The Islander for confirmation but they haven't responded. B. Churchill motions to accept the NRPC admin services and the Facebook advertising, MK. Raymond seconds. Motion passed unanimously. C. Fegard motioned to approve the entire report, MK. Raymond seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Broadband Administrator RFP Update

S. Kio reported that they did not get any applications for this position, but that many other CUDs are facing this same issue. They are working to get the listing posted on the Fiber Broadband Association website once this CUD becomes an official member. There has been discussion of creating a shared position of Broadband Administrator for both the Lamoille County CUD and Northwest CUD. Additionally, the committee was previously under the impression that this funding had to be used by July 15th, but the money is available until November. In light of this, S. Kio suggested reposting the RFP

for another two weeks and attempt to get it posted on the Fiber Broadband Association website. MK. Raymond said she will get the word out and see if anyone she knows might be interested since she is in contact with people within the field. E. Klofft recommended extending the deadline for applications, and others agree.

Consultant RFQ Selection

S. Kio reported that they have received two responses to this RFQ. The first one is from Interisle, charging \$200 an hour on an hourly basis or a fixed price for a defined set of deliverables. They proposed a timeline of August to December for this project. The second one is from Fiber My Community, which is one of the finalists we had selected for the feasibility business plan phase. S. Kio thought this had benefits and thinks they would be a great fit with the project, but also thinks they would be very useful in a later and more hands on phase so it might be better not to use them for this smaller part to keep them available. B. Churchill suggested emailing the two firms and letting them know that the CUD needs more time to decide but that they are being considered, K. Millman agreed that this is a good idea.

Bookkeeper RFQ Update

S. Kio reported that while they reached out to three possible options, there have not been any responses to this RFQ.

RISI Outreach Platform

S. Kio gave the update that RISI has fulfilled their contract requirements in creating an outreach platform. He suggested having the Marketing Communications Sub-Committee look at it in order to decide whether to use the platform.

Third-Party Review of Feasibility Study

S. Kio reported that there is some additional funding available through VCF to hire RISI to do third party review of the feasibility study. It is a requirement in order to do the business planning phase, and is part of the reason this process has been delayed. The NRPC is working on an NDA for RISI to sign as they were a bidding competitor with Matrix who ended up winning the bid. E. Klofft suggested that delegating approval of the NDA to an individual would help move the process along. K. Millman motioned to allow the chair and vice chair to solidify the NDA for the purposes of the third party review, seconded by J. Kane. The motion passed unanimously.

NRPC Admin Services Contract

E. Klofft reported that the \$10,000 from the CUD planning grant has been used up, but there is an additional \$10,400 from the H.315 fund. She suggested simply amending the current contract to extend the dates and reflect the new balance. K. Millman motioned to accept the suggested amendments, E. McGinley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Sub-Committee Updates

S. Kio asked for each sub-committee to provide an update on their current activities. K. Millman reported that Facebook advertising will be the next step for the Marketing Communications Sub-Committee, with slightly different messaging for member towns versus prospective towns. There is

roughly \$1,100 available for marketing. They have been using the tagline This CUD's for You, and that has been getting a lot of traction so they will continue with that. S. Kio suggested doing a round table about Starlink because there are many questions about it and it could be good press for the CUD. B. Churchill suggested doing a series of round tables that will address different topics. No other sub-committees have updates, as many of them haven't met recently.

Chair Stipend

K. Millman stated that he believes it is the right thing to do to offer stipends to the Chair and Vice Chair. He suggested \$1,000 and \$750, respectively, or the same amount for both. He asked for other members input. C. Fegard motions to pay the Chair \$1,000 and the Vice Chair \$750, seconded by K. Millman. The motioned passed with two abstentions (S. Kio and MK. Raymond).

Member Updates

K. Millman reported on Alburgh's ongoing efforts with Matrix for their fiber proposal. The Selectboard had the town attorney review the MOU and they then handed it back to Matrix for review. The town also formed a Broadband Advisory Committee, which both K. Millman and JR. Cox are members of. B. Churchill reported that Heather did a PowerPoint presentation to the Selectboard and that it is available for viewing. She believed it is very helpful and is keeping interest up. J. Kane reported that Sheldon's Selectboard had reached out to him letting him know that Consolidated Communications had reached out to the select board and might want to partner with the Northwest CUD and asked about what money they had available, and J. Kane responded that they were not interested. E. McGinley reported he's been fielding questions from the town clerk and others. C. Fegard reported that she will be leaving the area, so she won't be able to be on the board after August. She stated that she will attempt to find a replacement, but she isn't sure who in the town would be qualified and willing. JR. Cox had nothing to report. NRPC had nothing to report.

Other Business

No other business.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

B. Churchill motioned to adjourn, MK. Raymond seconded. Meeting is adjourned at 7:02 p.m.