

Vermont Community Broadband Board Meeting

Monday, August 25th, 2023, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Draft Minutes

I. Meeting Call to Order, Roll Call, & Approval of Agenda

Patty Richards called the meeting to order at 12:07 and completed roll call.

- Patty Richards, Chair (Remote)
- Laura Sibilia (Remote)
- Brian Otley – (Remote)
- Holly Groschner (Remote)
- Dan Nelson (Not present)
- Christine Hallquist - Staff (Remote)
- Robert Fish – Staff (Remote)
- Toni Clithero – Staff (Remote)
- Steven Zubkoff – Staff (Remote)
- Herryng Herzog – Staff (Remote)
- Lucy Rogers – Staff (Remote)
- Chance Payette – Staff (Remote)

Patty Richards made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Holly. Holly asked about addressing the sub-committees. Patty mentioned that if time allowed, discussion for the sub-committee would take place at the end of the meeting. Christine informed the board that Public Comment is a requirement, and it was not included in the Agenda. Patty amended her motion to include a discussion on sub-committees and time for public comment. *Unanimously approved by Patty, Laura, Holly, and Brian.*

II. Consideration of BEAD 5-Year Plan for submission to NTIA

Lucy summarized the BEAD 5-Year Plan and took comments and questions from the Board. Patty opened comments with her appreciation of the work that went into the creation of a well-designed and easy-to-read plan. Page 24, table 7 discusses the state match. Patty asked if there is a need for a footnote regarding the 20 million dollars that was used for flood recovery? Potentially a footnote informing the Feds of the situation and adding the commitment to recommend replacing the funding borrowed. Holly asked about page 23 regarding affordability including \$34 million for affordability. Where does this money exist? Lucy explained that the format of the report requires inclusion of funding from the federal government that we at the State of Vermont do not have influence over. Reporting to the Legislature would have to explain the annualized projection of the 34 million dollars for ACP. Laura pointed out on page 87, definitions from the NTIA, that “reliable broadband service” is defined by what the broadband data maps show. What is staff’s interpretation of the maps? Lucy explained that the BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 1 will dive into this information more in depth. There are several different types of maps, Vermont did a great job challenging the FCC map. We will still attempt to use the BEAD state challenge process to further improve the mapping. We are also proposing treating wireless the same as DSL for the sake of BEAD funding and are working with the NTIA to find a solution. Holly mentioned that the Plan is not our state broadband policy, it is our broadband policy for BEAD, a particular federal program. Also mentioned removing the subtitle “internet for all,” however this is not a Vermont term, it is the federal title. Lucy added that the contractor has done the graphic design and accessibility check, and any changes would require a new accessibility check to be conducted may not be worth it if there were only small changes or footnotes. Christine pointed out that the Board could add to their resolution approving

the plan. The Board could make it clear that this is to meet the BEAD requirement and was only a subset of the work being done here. Patty confirmed that unless it was super important, the recommendation would be to not make changes at this time. Patty made a motion to approve the Bead 5-Year Plan as written to meet the BEAD requirements, seconded by Brian. *Voted unanimously by Patty, Holly, Laura, and Brian.*

III. Public Comment

Kim Gates, Franklin Telephone. One of the big challenges are the line extension costs for companies, any opportunity that the Board can include the line extension program would be helpful.

IV. Policy committee assignments

Christine began the discussion describing the process that she and Patty had worked on creating the list of committees, with Board members, staff, VCUDA, and CUD members.

Holly asked for clarification on the process. Patty responded that no formal process had been discussed but would hope that all policies would be developed by the end of the year. They are working with VCUDA and all the CUDs to create policy that works. Laura also feels a great sense of urgency and thinks the end of the year is too far away and would like to see October 1st as a deadline. There was discussion to make the deadline for policy creation the beginning of October, but no later than the end of October. Christine and staff will help to get meeting scheduled quickly. Rob Vietzke commented that BEAD Volume 2 is very significant in size. BEAD Volume 1 needs to be reviewed and approved in the next couple weeks and then on to Volume 2. Rob mentioned this will be a tremendous workload for VCUDA, CUDs and the Board and would require triple the efforts to complete everything. Holly asked for clarification regarding the due dates and who set them. Christine responded that the NTIA is who set the dates and it is set by legislation. Laura asked if staff could be tasked with helping to schedule meetings, including extra meetings in September and October. The Board will reach directly to Chance a for board technical support.

V. Confirm Meeting 9/11 & Motion to Adjourn

Patty made a motion to adjourn at 1:09. Seconded by Holly. Voted unanimously by Patty, Holly, Laura, and Brian.