

Vermont Community Broadband Board Meeting

Monday, November 21st, 2023, 8:00am – 12:00pm

Draft Minutes

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

Patty Richards called the meeting to order at 8:01 and completed roll call.

- Patty Richards, Chair (Remote)
- Laura Sibilia (Remote)
- Holly Groschner (Remote)
- Dan Nelson (Remote)
- Brian Otley (Remote), until 11:00am
- 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)
- Alexei Monsarrat– Staff (Remote)
- Kristin Brynga– Staff (Remote)
- Alissa Mathews– Staff (Remote)

Patty Richards made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Brian, with the following changes due to time constraints: Budget, Pole Rule 3.700, and the Executive Session concerning the Executive Director were moved to the next meeting with the current meeting limited to Items 4, 5, 7 and 8. Discussion concerned the late submission of the CV Fiber presentation slides, which should have been submitted at the same time as the Board Packet pursuant to the new Administrative Procedure for Board Packet and Timeliness. . *The motion to approve the agenda with changes as follows: Focusing on items 4, 5, 7, and 8. The Legislative Priorities (item 6) should be discussed in an Executive Session. Laura asked for an update from staff on progress on the RFP regarding Legislative Priorities and moving other items to the next meeting. Unanimously approved by Patty, Laura, Holly, Brian, and Dan.*

II. Public Comment

Christa Shute from NEK Broadband commented on the importance of today's approval of the BEAD Volume II submission and asked for all Board members to vote with no abstentions.

III. Approval of Minutes (September 11th Meeting)

Patty tabled the discussion on minutes for the September 11th meeting and would like to have a discussion offline with Christine to reflect on what was discussed. No further discussion. *No action was taken by the Board.*

IV. Approval of BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II

Lucy Rogers discussed that the final revisions to the draft document were technical corrections and reviewed changes to the finalized document. Patty moved to approve the Vermont Community Broadband Board, Vermont Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Initial Proposal Volume II document as presented in redline format, including that staff is authorized to make non-substantive

changes, seconded by Dan. No further discussion. *Unanimously approved by Patty, Laura, Holly, Brian, and Dan.*

V. Digital Equity Plan Review

Britaney Watson presented the Draft Digital Equity plan prior to its public comment period and went over a quick recap of the Digital Equity Timeline presented at the last Board meeting. The First Draft of the Digital Equity plan will be sent to the Board later today and the Board will have about a week to review and provide input prior to the beginning of the Public Comment period. Written Board input can continue beyond the start of the Public Comment period as well. There will be an Update presentation at the next Board meeting on 12/11. *No further discussion. No action was taken by the Board.*

VI. Legislative Priorities including Restoration of Funding include Letters to Committee

This discussion item was moved to after item #8. Toni briefed the Board on the status of the RFP. USF funds will be available to fund the government affairs position. The RFP is slated to be published as soon as possible, if not the week of, then the week after Thanksgiving.

VII. CV Fiber Construction Grant Amendment

Jerry Diamantides and Jennille Smith from CV Fiber presented a PowerPoint regarding a Construction Grant Amendment request. The request was regarding a reduction in the scope of work as there was a realized funding gap due to the rise in material and contractor costs. *The Board and CV Fiber agreed to bring this discussion back to the next Board meeting and an executive session would be needed at that time. The Board will send a list of questions and information needed to Christine for her to forward to CV Fiber to assist in their preparation for the next meeting. No action was taken by the Board.*

VIII. Otter Creek Update

Christine briefed the Board that since the grant agreement between the Board and Otter Creek, another party in the district has received funding and federal obligations to build out their area and their parties are currently in negotiation for a solution that benefits the public at large. *Patty made a motion to move into executive session to discuss proprietary information relative to Otter Creek, seconded by Dan. Christine, Toni, Rob, and Alexei from staff and Laura Black, Larry Corcel, and Caleb Boone for Otter Creek were included with the Board in Executive session. Motion was unanimously voted by Patty, Holly, Laura, Brian, and Dan. Entered Executive Session at 10:55 and returned at 11:41. No further discussion. No action taken by the Board.*

IX. VCUDA Updates

Rob Vietzke congratulated staff, Vernonburg, and everyone involved, on the BEAD Volume II submission and would hold other updates for the regularly scheduled Board meeting.

X. Public Comment

F.X. Flinn, EC Fiber, commented on the 3-year time requirement of cash flow and audited financials to enter the Revenue Bond market. The Bond market is more receptive to newer CUDs with less experience and with EC Fiber getting a rating from S&P is making a big difference.

Patty asked F.X. how much time it would take from the application submittal to the S&P approval rating. F.X. responded that the time period would be approximately 3 months.

XI. Parking Lot

Christine went over the newly added items. The Board asked for more description of the Parking Lot items. Patty asked that the process for approval of working group policy's drafts be in the agenda for December 11th meeting. Item #41 should be reviewed for a status update to close or revise the verbiage. The Administrative Procedure for Board Packet and Timeliness will be posted on the website. Chance was asked to set up a meeting with Patty and Christine to discuss the September 11th Board meeting.

XII. Confirm Special Meeting 12/11 & Motion to Adjourn

The next scheduled VCB Board meeting is Monday, December 11th from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm. *Items that were not discussed and the added agenda items will be moved to the 11th meeting. Patty made a motion to adjourn at 11:58, seconded by Dan. Motion was approved unanimously by Patty, Holly, Laura, and Dan.*