

Vermont Community Broadband Board Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024, 12:00pm to 4:00pm
Meeting Minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order, Roll Call, Approval of Agenda – The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm and completed roll call:

- Patty Richards
- Dan Nelson
- Brian Otley
- Laura Sibilila (joined at 12:06pm)
- Sarah Hofmann
- Christine Hallquist – Staff
- Rob Fish – Staff
- Toni Clithero – Staff
- Kristina Sweet – Staff
- Heryn Herzog – Staff
- Alissa Mathews – Staff
- Britaney Watson – Staff
- Lucie Fortier – Staff
- Ginny Raboin – Staff
- Yujie Li – Staff
- JB Ledoux – PSD Staff

The Chair moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Hofmann and asked for discussion. Ms. Hallquist requested to move the DE Update before the KPI Monthly Update. The Chair approved and moved the DE Update to item number 4.1 on the agenda. With no other changes the agenda was approved 4-0 with that modification.

2. Minutes Approval – 11.18.2024 - The Chair made a motion to approve the minutes of 11.18.2024 seconded by Mr. Otley and asked for discussion. The Chair requested three locations in the minutes that refer to Alexei Monsarrat be removed from the minutes. With no other discussion the minutes of 11.18.2024 were approved on a vote of 4-0.

3. Public Comment – Christine Hallquist No Public Comment, Ms. Sibilila joined the meeting at 12:06pm.

4. Introduction of New Staff – Christine Hallquist Ms. Hallquist introduced Yujie Li to Staff. Ms. Li shared her extensive resume and eagerness to leverage her expertise to support the mission of the VCBB. The Chair welcomed Ms. Li to the VCBB.

4.1 DE Update and Outreach Ideas – Britaney Watson, Herryyn Herzog Ms. Watson noted Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) received \$5.3M to implement the Digital Equity plan. The Digital Equity plan is due to roll out in January and the goal is to ensure that every individual in Vermont has access to accessible affordable technology. There are five programs and initiatives that will be implemented over the next five years to address data limitations, including the implementation of a Capacity Building Subgrant program, a Regional Device Program, a Digital Navigator Program and a Workforce Development Program. Year one, the focus is research and outreach, year two the Capacity Building Subgrant program, the Regional Device program and the Digital Navigator program. Year three, the focus will be on expanding our existing workforce development program including initiatives to increase digital inclusion. Year four the focus will be on EV and sustainability planning and year five, the focus will be on transitioning and completion of the programs. Staff held a listening session during the planning phase of drafting the digital equity plan and expects to host community events, focus groups, joining existing meetings and joint sessions with trusted organizations. Ms. Watson noted she will be hosting monthly and quarterly listening sessions to share results and the impact of digital equity related work. In those meetings the website will be a shared resource for public access to documents, find information on upcoming events and provide a way for the public to contact staff and share input. Ms. Richards shared that she attended a press conference announcing the grant award and noted an individual asked how are we going to get the word out to the covered populations? Ms. Richards noted the delivery of the information is really important and asked for any questions from other Board members. Ms. Hofmann asked if there would be alternative resources such, as printed documents for individuals who do not have access to the website. Ms. Watson noted the focus is on media outreach and community events which will have printed materials includes summary documents of the digital equity plan. Ms. Watson continued to note community libraries are an opportunity for outreach with printed flyers. Ms. Richards noted it is important to reach the people where they are at, and word of mouth will be a big help along with the printed materials. The selection of using the right words and meeting the covered population in their space is the challenge for Staff and stresses the importance of the deploying the grant dollars successfully to the covered populations. Ms. Richards asked for updates periodically on approaches that worked well and what didn't work well. Ms. Watson noted she will be presenting this information and the timeline in future Board meetings.

5. KPI Monthly Update – Kristina Sweet

Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s. 313 (a)(6), which protects records exempt from the access to the public records law, specifically 1 VSA s. 317(c)(9) confidential business records or information. Ms. Hallquist noted that this is the verbal update and requested moving into executive session. Ms. Richards made a motion to go into *Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s. 313 (a)(6), which protects records exempt from the access to the public records law, specifically 1 VSA s. 317(c)(9) confidential business records or information* seconded by Mr. Otley and asked for discussion. With no discussion on a vote of 5-0 the Board went into executive session at 12:30pm. The Board returned from executive session at 1:38pm with no action taken. Ms. Richards noted the Board will be holding a Special Board meeting on

December 20th at 10a.m. virtually to review information from one CUD in executive session.

6. New Mapping Interface and Dashboard Presentation – Alissa Matthews & Stone Environmental

Ms. Matthews introduced Stone Environmental to review the Vermont Location Fabric. Mr. Floersch of Stone Environmental introduced Mary Haley who presented VT Enhance 911 Emergency sites who advised that at times there are more than one E site associated to a single building footprint. Ms. Haley noted the grant programs report to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) broadband fabric data, which is a different, and a less accurate data set, which is managed by the federal government. The FCC data only has a single geographic point for a single building footprint. Ms. Haley noted Stone Environmental developed a matching process that aligns the Vermont E911 data and the federal location data. This matched core data is the Vermont Location Fabric. It is possible that there are FCC locations that are not represented in the E911 data set, likewise there are E911 locations that are not in the FCC locations. The matched data set went through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) challenge process, the deduplication process looking at the enforceable commitments. Finally, the data set remaining is a full representation of every location referred to as the post BEAD challenge eligibility data set. Ms. Haley noted that BEAD only recognizes FCC fabric Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) for funding opportunities. This presents a problem for our core data set due to multiple E site locations that are matched to one FCC location such as a condo or apartment building. They can only represent that location as a single address. Ms. Haley identified which of the matched E site and FCC locations to best represent the actual location. Stone Environmental prioritized each location to ensure they selected the principal location to best represent the occupied site. This process created the principal Vermont fabric location data set. Ms. Haley noted the maps created showed locations with grant funds associated to the address identified. Ms. Hallquist noted that funding is only provided on one FCC location or parcel even if there are multiple residences or E911 addresses on the parcel. Ms. Richards noted an apartment building on one parcel with ten apartments would only be one FCC location and receive funding as one parcel. Ms. Haley had to determine if there were multiple funding sources for one location and deduplicate it. Each location with no funding source is assigned a unique principal location and will be displayed on the map and would not appear as BEAD data because they are not considered NTIA approved for the FCC fabric. Ms. Haley noted that the status dashboard is on the VCBB website and tracks funding dollars and service status. Ms. Richards asked what other uses this data will provide. Mr. Floersch noted this data will support quarterly Federal reporting that is required as part of the non-BEAD grant funding and will be beneficial in terms of Digital Equity. Ms. Matthews noted it will be a tool to determine what E911 addresses remained that are not associated with a funding program.

7. Annual Report Draft – Herryn Herzog Ms. Herzog reviewed the outline to the Annual Report and asked for any comments or questions. Ms. Richards asked for each Board member to be characterized in the Annual Report noting on page 16 of the Board

Packet including a heading “Board of Directors”. Ms. Hofmann noted the Executive Summary stated the program will enable reliable broadband connections to occupy off grid addresses and asked if Staff could locate that number and include it in the report. Ms. Herzog noted that with those changes the report will be ready to submit. Ms. Richards made a motion to approve the Annual Report as presented with the changes noted, Staff does not need to come to the Board for approval once the changes are made. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hofmann. On a vote of 3-0 with Ms. Sibilila not casting a vote. Ms. Richards noted that Mr. Nelson left the Board meeting at 1:30pm.

8. DE Update and Outreach Ideas – Britaney Watson, Heryn Herzog See 4.1

9. Parking Lot – Ginny Raboin Ms. Raboin reviewed the items on the parking lot that were in progress, completed and ongoing.

10. BEAD Timeline Update Ms. Sweet noted no major changes to the timeline and advised the Pre-proposal window opened December 3rd and will close on January 9th at noon. Ms. Sweet noted during this time it is considered a quiet period, communications between prospective subrecipients and the public regarding the specific nature of a prospective subrecipients participation is prohibited. VCBB may communicate with grantees on non-BEAD related issues via VCBB.BEAD@vermont.gov and through the office hours noted on the VT-BEAD website.

11. VCUDA Update – Rob Vietzke Mr. Vietzke noted in the December update he likes to reflect on the progress over the previous year. He noted Otter Creek CUD and Lamoille FiberNet CUD had just begun their grant process at the start of the year. To date Otter Creek is complete and Lamoille FiberNet CUD have completed phase one. ECFiber territory has 1000 new customers and 150 miles of new network construction. Maple Broadband CUD activated 120 miles and are now servicing up to 12 towns and they have 323 new subscribers. NEKCV CUD reported over 600 miles across 50 towns and over 1150 customers online. Mr. Vietzke noted that in 2021, 64,000 were un/underserved, at the end of 2022 that was down to 58,000 or 6,000 served in 2022, in 2023 that number was down to 45,310 or an additional 13,000 served. There are about 18,900 addresses left to complete, less than a 1/3 of the addresses in three years noting the amazing progress.

12. Public Comment – Christine Hallquist No public comments.

13. Confirm next meeting date January 13, 2024, In Person Ms. Richards noted the regularly scheduled meeting was intended to be in person. Ms. Richards suggested moving the in-person meeting to February to review the KPI Quarterly review in person. Ms. Sibilila noted that during the legislative session she is not available in-person but could join virtually. Ms. Hofmann and Mr. Otley noted they would be in-person in February. Ms. Richards asked for Ms. Raboin to follow up with Mr. Nelson to advise availability and if he could be in person on February 13th.

14. Board Review - *Executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s.313(a)(3)(3), authorizing a public body to hold an executive session to consider personnel matters.* The Chair made a motion to go into Executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. s.313(a)(3) (3), authorizing a public body to hold an executive session to consider personnel matters, seconded by Mr. Otley, with no discussion on a vote of 4-0 the Board went into executive session at 2:39pm.

15. Adjourn The Board did not come back into public session.

Action Items:

- Ms. Hofmann noted the Executive Summary stated the program will enable reliable broadband connections to occupy off grid addresses and asked if Staff could locate that number and include it in the report.
- Ms. Richards asked for each Board member to be characterized in the Annual Report noting on page 16 of the Board Packet including “Board of Directors” and characterizing each Board member.
- Ms. Richards asked for Ms. Raboin to follow up with Mr. Nelson to advise availability on February 13 in person.