

# Vermont Community Broadband Board Organizational Meeting September 2, 2021 9am

## AGENDA

Meeting will be held in the GIGA Conference Room  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of 122 State Street, Montpelier VT  
Join by video; <https://bit.ly/3mL3xV5>

Join by Phone; +1 802-828-7667,,825526519#  
Phone Conference ID: 825 526 519#

- 09:00 Agenda change requests and vote to approve agenda
- 09:05 Minutes approval for 082621 meeting
- 09:10 June Tierney
  - Update on Pre-construction funds and what is next.
  - The process of Board approval of grants to when the funds get transferred to the CUDs
  - DPS vision of how the grant administration position will work
    - Priorities
    - Services provided
    - Process and expectations for the position
  - Clarification as to what is allowed for pay for staff attorney
  - Questions
- 09:50 Ratification of policy positions presented at 08/26/21 meeting (summarized on next page)
- 10:05 Work on Affordability definition
- 10:20 Review and approve revised budget
- 10:40 Break
- 10:55 Website
- 11:10 Work on over-arching standards
- 11:30 Plans/timelines for construction
- 11:50 Public Input
- 12:05 Motion to adjourn

Press inquiries; please contact Rob Fish, [Robert.fish@vermont.gov](mailto:Robert.fish@vermont.gov) 802-522-2617

**Policy Statements from 08/26/2021 Meeting  
(Presented for formal Board approval)**

- Business plans shall include all network costs to the premise, including drops.
- Individual CUDs will determine their respective pole ride-outs.
- CUDs will be allocated funds based on the towns that were members as of June 1, 2021
- An Operating Agreement shall be considered as part of the Pre-Construction grant. It shall be at least in negotiation, and it shall comply with ACT 71.

Vermont Community Broadband Board  
Unapproved Governing Board Meeting Minutes  
August 26, 2021  
Held in Dill Auditorium  
2178 Airport Road, Barre Vermont  
Christine Hallquist  
Executive Director  
Phone – 802-636-7853  
Email – [christine.hallquist@vermont.gov](mailto:christine.hallquist@vermont.gov)

*09:04 – meeting opened.*

- Roll call – Board members present; Patty Richards – chair, Dan Nelson, Holly Groschner, Laura Sibilia, Brian Otley (virtual)
- ***A request was made with no objection to modify the agenda to start with the History (Pre-construction presentation), Core Objectives and Base-line data to the front of the agenda.***
- ***Motion to approve agenda for this meeting; Holly Groschner moved, Dan Nelson seconded – motion passed.***

*Pre-construction presentation (History)*

A discussion ensued regarding make-ready costs as they relate to Detailed Design.

- Request was made to for the DPS to make available the annual capital plans of the utilities and the related GIS shapefiles so that the CUDs can coordinate. This request also extends to the Agency of Transportation.
- **The board made the following policy statements:**
  - **Business plans shall include all network costs to the premise, including drops.**
  - **Individual CUDs will determine their respective pole ride-outs.**

*Affordability and Low-income challenges*

A discussion ensued regarding how the Business Plans are going to create opportunities for low-income residents

- Include Affordability and Low-income strategies as part of the grant scoring process.
- These topics also will be part of the Business Plan quality assessment.
- The Board would like staff to find the 2019 report on distressed areas of the state.
- Provide the Board with criteria that was used for the Feasibility Studies and the Business Plans
- Constructing a network of the highest value shall be a topic included in the CUD workshops.
- Develop a scorecard for the Board.

*Grant Discussion*

- Board would like to know if the RFPs can be released prior to the state releasing the funds. The Board recommends a parallel effort with the administration.

- Grants will be evaluated based on addresses that *can* be served, versus *will* be served.
- Develop a checklist for compliance with ACT 71.
- Board requests staff to provide a common financial model for the CUDs.
- Recognize that some areas will have a higher cost per customer due to lower densities.
- Pre-construction funds are limited only to the CUDs.
- **Policy statements:**
  - **CUDs will be allocated funds based on the towns that were members as of June 1, 2021**
  - **An Operating Agreement shall be considered as part of the Pre-Construction grant. It shall be at least in negotiation, and it shall comply with ACT 71.**
- Staff will make grant recommendations to the Board. Board will approve those grants prior to funds disbursement.
  - Staff will ensure a legal review was completed prior to submittal.
- The Board will provide comments on the Draft RFP to staff by the end of the day on September 2, 2021. Staff will incorporate comments and issue RFP after.

#### *Baseline Data Discussion*

- Questions for staff – how are the CUDs accounting for baseline data?
- Board requests staff to put in motion a process to get the DPS data updated now. VCBB will fund the effort

#### *Core Objectives Discussion*

- Ensure CUD plans consider capacity of interconnections
- Define Open Access
- Include in plans how the last piece of the network will be funded
- Long-term funding of the network shall be included
- Board requests staff to source a municipal bond expert to help set criteria for CUD planning
- CUDs shall coordinate relationships with the electric utilities as well as the Telecom providers in their respective districts.
- Reliability will be part of the scoring criteria.
- Enabling E911 services will be part of the scoring criteria.
- Utility connectivity into the home will be needed for load control.
- The VCBB will review how the networks interconnect as well as the core transport systems.
- The VCBB will create minimum design standards.

#### *Budget Discussion*

- Include Broadband Project Developer as part of the VCBB staff.
- Divide the budget into; funding from ACT 71 administration budget; other funding.
- Include a Finance person as part of the VCBB staff.
- Board requested staff to work with NBRC to develop a 5-year funding plan.

## Public Input

- Steve Whittaker – Complying with 202 is not optional. The VCBB must comply
- Jerry Diamantides of CVFiber – appreciated the Board progress today.
- Kristen Fountain of NEK Broadband – Requests VCBB staff develop a process for near-to-real-time updates to the CUDs.
- Chris Recchia of ValleyNet – Pole surveys must be completed prior to Detailed Design:
  - Need to know pole ownership,
  - Identify pole gaps,
  - Identify underground,
  - Identify railroad and highway crossings.
- Jane Campbell of Lamoille Fibernet– Appreciates the Board progress and supports Kristen’s suggestion.

## Meeting Schedules

- Meetings will be held on Tuesday afternoons from 1 to 4 starting on September 28, 2021.
- September 2, 2021 meeting starts at 9.
- September 9, 2021 meeting starts at 9:30.
- There will be no meeting on September 20, 2021.

## Agenda for September 9, 2021 meeting

- Review revised budget
- Work on Affordability definition
- Work on over-arching standards
- Website
- Jane Tierney visit
  - Update on Pre-construction funds and what is next.
  - The process of Board approval of grants to when the funds get transferred to the CUDs
  - DPS vision of how grant administration will work
    - Priorities
    - Services provided
    - Process and expectations for the position
  - Clarification as to what is allowed for pay
- Plans/timelines for construction

*1:04 pm - Meeting adjourned with unanimous consent.*

Vermont Community Broadband Board  
 Draft and Proposed Agenda Item – Budget  
 September 2, 2021  
 Christine Hallquist  
 Executive Director  
 Phone – 802-636-7853  
 Email – [christine.hallquist@vermont.gov](mailto:christine.hallquist@vermont.gov)

**Vermont Community Broadband Board**

Proforma Income and Expenses  
 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2022

**ACT 71 Income for Administrative Expenses**

American Rescue Plan Administrative Expenses	\$1,500,000
• ACT 74 Appropriation section G500	

**ACT 71 Administrative Expenses**

Wages/Office - Salaries+Fringe

• Full time legal support for the VCBB staff and CUD's in drafting and reviewing contracts and agreements, draft and review legal opinions, provide legal guidance to the CUD's (base salary \$72K)	\$130,000
• Broadband Technical Assistant (base pay \$67K)	\$121,530
• Administrative Support for the board and staff. Point person and liaison for the Board, take minutes, post agendas, direct public inquiries, maintain, monitor, and manage schedules (base pay \$40K)	\$81,000
• Executive Director (base pay \$120K)	\$216,000
• Contingency	\$51,470
	\$51,470
Sub-total	\$600,000

Space, furniture, equipment, licenses, phone, office supplies	\$100,000
IT and other allocated costs	\$50,000
Board Per Diem + Travel + Childcare	\$60,000
Contract Board legal support	\$200,000
Grant administration through PSD	\$100,000
Contract engineering	\$200,000
Contract GIS Services	\$150,000
Software, training and travel	\$40,000
	\$40,000
Sub-total	\$900,000

<b>Total ACT 71 Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>
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**Northern Border Regional Commission Support Grant Income**

January 7, 2021 Grant \$1,000,000  
(Total grant size – we will request to extend grant to cover  
Multi-year administrative expenditures)

**Northern Border Regional Commission Support Grant Expenses**

Broadband Project Developer and program expenses \$250,000

**Universal Service Fund Income**

Vermont Universal Service Fund .4% Charge \$700,000

**Universal Service Fund Expenses**

VCBB Economic Services Administrator \$125,000

**Capital Funds**

Pre-construction grant \$30,000,000

American Rescue Plan Construction Grants \$118,500,000

- ACT 74 Appropriation section G500

American Rescue Plan \$ 200,000

- H315, Act 9, Section 21.b2B
  - Relay Service and WiFi Hotspot license renewals may reduce this amount

American Rescue Plan \$1,600,000

- H315, Act 9, Section 21.b2B
  - Pre-construction

Northern Border Regional Commission Grant \$1,250,000

- Must support infrastructure construction

CRF funds (remaining, subject to check) \$766,000

Total \$152,316,000

## **Proposed Job Descriptions**

### **Administrative Assistant**

Job Code: 050200

#### *Definition*

Complex administrative work as an assistant to a department or division manager. Positions in this class differ from lower-level administrative assistants in amount of authority and accountability for work performed, leeway for independent action and functioning for the position's supervisor in that person's absence. Assigned duties are generally of a more complex technical/professional level. Work is performed under the supervision of an administrative superior, but with need for significant interaction with other division or department staff, and outside service providers.

#### *Examples of Work*

Personally, plans and directs or assists in the administrative activities of a moderate or large sized agency, institution unit, or division. May serve as administrative officer to a state board or department. May plan, assign, supervise, and review the work of subordinate technical and clerical staff. Reviews office and field operating procedures and policies; recommends improvements where appropriate. May personally perform or supervise budget preparation, contracts administration; office management; mail and switchboard services; forms design and reproduction; purchasing; personnel administration; and other duties as assigned. Prepares various statistical, financial, and special reports. Where applicable, performs complex technical and professional tasks such as liaison with data processing staff, permits procedures and operations manuals, and others. May represent VCBB at public meetings.. Performs related work as required.

### **Broadband Project Developer**

Building fiber to the home high-speed internet networks is complex, risky, and expensive. These projects are more complex than redeveloping a city block or piecing together the funding for a large commercial development. Building out a single Communication Union District at \$30,000-\$50,000 per mile will likely exceed the cost of the \$56 million Putnam Block redevelopment project in Bennington, VT that involved more than 20 different financial partners. The CUDs do not at this time, nor may ever, have the capacity to negotiate the public and private partnerships necessary to piece together such a monumental project. The complexity of crafting such an investment is not a skill set currently possessed by the Public Service Department.

#### *Need for a Broadband Project Developer*

Ultimately, to be successful, most projects will require an individual or company layering federal and state subsidies, grants, and low-interest loans, on top of private investment, for this to work. There is a role for a project developer. Someone who will take existing plans and soon to be constructed infrastructure and puts together all the key tenants in a financial pro forma model and calculates exactly the economics to get this done. From here, that developer can connect all the parties, with the State and CUDs help.



The project developer will make connections, raise funds from federal, state, local, and private sources, and play a guiding hand to align the various financial instruments necessary to accelerate the expansion of broadband. The project developer will have experience in venture capital and technology and through his or her expertise will seek to quicken the pace of a fiber-to-the-home buildout and expand the reach.

The Broadband Project Developer will work hand-in-hand with the Communications Union Districts to layer various public and private financial instruments to accelerate fiber-to-the-home buildouts. The Broadband Project Developer will provide CUDs with direct assistance and technical support to find, leverage, and layer public and private financing.

### **Economic Services Administrator**

Like job code 480700

#### *Definition*

Budget management, financial management, fiscal monitoring, fiscal analysis, and managerial monetary guidance work at a high professional level for the Vermont Community Broadband Board. Duties involve managing money. This position is a hybrid of financial, operations, and program functions and is key to maximizing fiscal resources, coordinating, and assisting the Communication Union Districts with strategies, reporting, processes, and grant applications. There is significant interaction with other sections of the Department, other departments within the State. This function will help set policy, practice, operational guidance for the VCBB.

#### *Examples of Work:*

Analyzes, manages, consults, and provides managerial guidance in earning of revenues and expenditures of funds for all programs and operations. Works with million-dollar grants and contracts for the Communication Union District (and non-district towns) as well as grants budgets. As the lead resource person on these issues, s/he assists in developing and guiding the Communication Union District's fiscal year budget and budget adjustment processes well as provide support in developing grant applications. Negotiates and manages contracts and grant agreements with suppliers as needed. S/he is responsible for maintaining a thorough understanding of all VCBB and CUD practices as well as state and federal rules and regulations to successfully manage complex multi-million-dollar grant programs with multiple participants and diverse rules. S/he manages cross program issues, cost allocations, financial projections and perform grants and contracts management including assistance to the Communication Union Districts in writing, and monitoring grant and contract requirements. Negotiates and manages CUD and/or VCBB contracts and grant agreements with suppliers as needed. Assists CUDS and the VCBB in ensuring full compliance with all state and federal grant requirements. Reviews requests for proposals to ensure compliance with current bidding procedures and contracting guidelines. This person shall stay knowledgeable with all state and federal grants that are available to support broadband expansion. This position designs, supervises and conducts special surveys, studies, and projects. Performs related duties as required.

Vermont Community Broadband Board  
Website Agenda Item  
August 26, 2021  
Christine Hallquist  
Executive Director  
Phone – 802-636-7853  
Email – [christine.hallquist@vermont.gov](mailto:christine.hallquist@vermont.gov)

The objectives of this discussion are to obtain input from the Board regarding items that should be considered as part of website content. The VCBB website is housed at the following URL - <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb>

Here are some topic areas we are considering;

About

Board and staff – with board bios

Governance  
Agenda and Materials  
Minutes and Recordings

Act 71

Page for each CUD  
Calendar of all CUD board meetings

Grants  
opportunities  
awards (w links to agreements and reports?)

Mapping  
Availability  
CUD map

Resources  
Other Funding Opportunities  
Broadband Accelerator Program?

## Vermont Community Broadband Board Outside Plant Design (OSP) Requirements

*Note: Sections highlighted in blue will result in specific equipment specifications*

- Grantee must provide a clear constructable design with standards that cover the following for every CUD:
  - Fundamental Passive Optical Network FTTx architecture
  - Materials usage and installation parameters
  - Fiber splicing and reservation recommendations to assist with outside plant equipment and fiber sizing
  - Optical extents (Budgets)
  - Account for future and/or unplanned growth including public safety and mobile wireless
  - Power supply and back-up requirements for active locations
- Grantee must provide all design mapping deliverables in a single GIS (ESRI Preferred) format usable for the CUDs, Network Operators, Project Management, and relevant contractors including:
  - Online and downloadable field engineering data
  - Online and downloadable detailed construction maps
  - Real time Redlines
  - Real time As-builts.
- Grantee final as-built GIS data must be delivered in a consumable format (ESRI file geodatabase preferred)
- Grantee GIS design shall enable:
  - Online electronic redline changes available real time (defined as less than 48 hours) to assure the contractor is adhering to the OSP design and field changes are managed to assure compliance and limited construction interruptions.
  - As-builts to be delivered within two weeks after construction completion and handover to assure:
    - Locates can be accurate
    - Serviceable areas, connections and customer assignments are immediately available
    - Asset management is in place quickly in the case of an event that damages infrastructure
- Grantee design must include every CUD-approved demand point and include:

- Assigned specific and accounted for PON splitter and OLT port for every identified demand point so that provisioning and activation can be done with minimal truck rolls or future design requirements
  - Drop distance and route for every demand point should be known so that the impact to the material requirements and optical budget is understood.
  - Identification of slack loop locations
- Grantee's design deliverables must include detailed optical measured loss (dB) calculations
- Grantee's design deliverables must include a full detailed bill of materials mapped to corresponding RUS codes that are trackable and easily categorized to make reporting and material forecasting more manageable. Bills of materials must comply with specific ARPA requirements regarding content (i.e. domestic, banned nations, etc.)
- Grantee's detailed splice diagrams must be geospatially accurate and provide estimated measured loss at every connection point so that network performance can be assured and documented
- Grantee must identify integration locations for:
  - Geographic redundancy
  - Connections with adjacent CUD networks
  - Connections with private networks, including leased fiber routes
- Grantee must provide three current or past performance references demonstrating experience meeting the above referenced requirements.

# Draft time-line (general)

## CUD fiber design and Construction

