

**LAMOILLE FIBERNET COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Feb 17, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
MINUTES**

Action Needed	Who Leads	By When	Status
Feedback on Purchasing Policy to Lea	All committee members	Next Exec Comm Meeting	None as of 2/11
Draft CUD Collaboration Task Force charter	Michael	Next Exec Comm Meeting	Done
Clarify broadband bill's reference to funding for feasibility studies & business plans	Lucy	Next Exec Comm Meeting	Removed from bill
Cancel & reschedule Exec Comm meetings	Lea	Next Exec Comm Meeting	Done

Attending Members: Lea Kilvadyova, Jane Campbell, Larry Lackey, Jeff Tilton, Michael Rooney, Doug Molde

Guests: Lucy Rogers, Paul Warden

Call to order, changes to the agenda, public comment

Call to order Jeff Tilton at 7:07 pm.

Agenda changes:

- A VCF grant allows all CUDs to receive technical assistance from ValleyNet: how can Lamoille FiberNet use that assistance?
- GMP petition for pole attachments

Public comment: None

Michael arrived.

Minutes Review– Jan 20, 2021

Jane moved to approve minutes as submitted, Michael seconded. Approved unanimously.

Purchasing Policy Review

Important for purchasing goods and services and assigns monetary values for levels at which purchasing agent can make purchases without the delays caused by the need for board approval for even incidental purchases. Draft policy includes three levels of purchases, with varying levels of required approval. Highlights of the draft policy include:

- First level: draft recommends that Executive Committee is purchasing agent.
- Second level: allows for awarding of contracts without competitive bids.
- Third level: anything above \$30,000, and this level includes several sublevels, e.g.,

- \$30,000-\$100,000 would require at least two bids.
- Over \$100,000 would require an RFP.
- Federally funded items: would require following the federal process.

Doug Molde arrived.

Change to the draft:

Jane moved to change the draft policy: If an item is \$200 or less and is in the approved budget, the Treasurer may authorize the chair or clerk to make the purchase, and the Treasurer will then report the purchase at the next Executive Committee or Board meeting. Doug seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

The policy allows flexibility and indicates that the criteria for the winning bid will be laid out each time we issue an RFP. Discussion on the policy will continue in the next Executive Committee Meeting.

CUD Collaboration Task Force Discussion

This group would explore potential expansions, mergers or other forms of partnerships or collaborations with other CUDs, with the understanding that any partnership or collaboration needs to match our CUD's long-term needs. The task force discussions would need to fit with the business plan currently being developed.

The ValleyNet technical assistance could be helpful to us in shaping our approach to potential expansions, mergers or other forms of partnerships or collaborations.

House Energy and Technology Committee Draft Broadband Bill Discussion

The board discussed the broadband legislation that has been introduced. We understand that the committee is hearing from many people with expertise in the field and that the legislation is likely to change.

Questions included:

- What is the thought behind continuing funding for feasibility and business plans—is the thinking that new studies or plans may be needed if CUDs merge? Lucy will check on that section of the bill.
- If there is a separate entity outside of DPS, is there concern that it would involve setting up a whole new entity? Some advocates are concerned that housing the entity in DPS may present a conflict with DPS's regulatory function. One option to address that concern would be to establish a fund (similar to the Clean Energy Fund) within the DPS with oversight provided by a separate board.
- Is there anything we can do at this time that would be helpful to the committee? If there are specific funds that will be distributed to CUDs, the funding decisions will be the board's responsibility. Does LFCUD have concerns re how the funding decisions will be balanced? If the rules or criteria were clear, that would be helpful.

ValleyNet Technical Assistance

ValleyNet received a grant of approximately \$75,000 to provide technical assistance to all CUDs. We need clarity on the parameters of the grant. Keeping in mind that we still have VCF funding for developing partnerships and to find financing, here are possible assistance that Lamoille FiberNet could request:

1. Consultation on potential mergers or partnerships
2. How to handle discussions with ISPs, especially for our pilot project
3. Help with negotiating partner agreements
4. Advice on obtaining financing and/or subscription campaigns
5. Review/critique our business plan and the financing of our first pilot project and ask what do we need to do to be viable (and which scenarios might affect our viability)?

...but it may make more sense to ask them what's the most valuable help they could provide to us.

GMP Petition for Pole Attachments

FYI: Green Mountain Power is seeking permission to create a \$2,000/household subsidy for make ready costs for homes that are unserved. They are asking the PUC to allow them to recover those costs through their rates. GMP has little presence in our service area but if approved, other utilities might do the same.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:33. Jane moved. Michael seconded. The motion carried.