



**LAMOILLE FIBERNET COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
May 19, 2021 at 7:00p.m.
Location: Held via Zoom
MINUTES – Approved June 2, 2021**

7:02pm Jane Campbell called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Attending Members: Jane Campbell, Jeff Tilton, Teelah Hall, Stephen Friedman, Paul Warden, Larry Lackey (de facto)

Also Attending: Christine Hallquist, John Meyer

7:03pm Agenda Changes and Public comment: None.

7:04pm Consent Agenda:

-Christine provided updates on H360. Currently it has been passed through congress and is in front of the governor for signing into law. It is generally favorable for CUDs insofar as it requires private providers to partner with CUDs in order to be eligible for funding.

-Jane attended informational workshop for ARP funding and provided a brief analysis. The VT League of Cities and Towns advises towns to take their time, spend money wisely and to remember that they can leverage other state funds.

-There was a brief conversation concerning individual town's select board's perspectives on ARP funding, and there is concern that the select boards may be under the impression the broadband project can and should be funded outside of town relief funding.

-Christine gave update on grant opportunity that she was made aware of from DPS last Thursday. \$1.6M is available between now and end of June, but the application was due Monday (5/17). Christine filed grant application citing applicable expenses including Software licenses and subscriptions, Administrator salary, Legal services, bookkeeper services, and financial advisory services totaling \$21,070. She is confident the CUD will be awarded this. A future round 2 with \$9.6M available is in the works, but a different application process is likely. The availability of the round 2 funds might be good timing for pole studies.

-Between these grants and H360, we will be positioned well for the next several months.

-We may be around \$10M through H360 for initial buildout and we should budget for full time administrator.

-As of May 12th, individuals were able to apply for federal emergency broadband benefit subsidy, and Consolidated Communications is not on the list of participating providers.

CLERICAL NOTE: The meeting proceeded without approving the Consent Agenda.

730pm Policy: Levels of Authority for Executive Committee and Administrator: Christine suggests The Governing board review VEC Board Policy B.1 and begin developing a similar policy for LFCUD to streamline and clarify the roles and authority of the Administrator, Executive Committee, etc. The Purchasing policy and levels of authority are the most important. The policy should give administrator authority to deal with NDAs, for example, and should not need board approval to apply to grants. Larry: come up with general categories of tasks that can be delegated by board for streamlining purposes. Christine suggested having such a draft policy ready for the June Governing Board meeting and will work under Jane and Stephen's advice to draft one.

7:45pm Process for Selection of Partners: Christine provided update of partnership task force work pertaining to partnership selection and provided an example of the decision matrix used at NEK for choosing a business plan partner. The PTF is now building a similar matrix for project buildout and discussed attributes that the PTF has identified as important attribute considerations including:

- Collaborate well (with the CUD and with existing area providers);
- Flexibility (with rapidly changing landscape, materials and labor shortages; single rate schedule would be inflexible);
- Commitment to universal access & dealing with the last mile;
- Rapidity of the rollout;
- Capacity (important to have someone with alternatives & workarounds, e.g., part of national buying club is asset; access to national labor; trucks/vehicles, etc.);
- Demonstrated public outreach (residents, legs, communities);
- Customer support (good call center, well-trained staff);
- Technical performance (latency, light losses, perform to technical specs).

Jeff moved to use matrix process to choose partners. Teelah seconded. Larry and Jane suggested PTF construct matrix, executive committee review, and conduct a special Governing Board meeting to approve. Motion passed unanimously.

8:07pm Open Meeting Communication Protocols: There is significant gray area when it comes to open meeting laws and electronic communication.

-Do not use "reply all" or participate in an email chain with more than a quorum of any board, committee, or task force. Board members may hold an email discussion so long as no quorum of members exist.

-Committee members of 5 member committees: when 2 meet or email, it does not constitute quorum.

-Sending out message requesting feedback to a group is fine, as long as people do not reply all. Replying directly to individual is fine.

-Vermont league of cities and towns has a good resource on this subject

8:21pm How to Maximize Federal & State Grants: -Christine reiterated the importance of being nimble enough to respond quickly to opportunities.

-We can't use federal money to leverage loans, however we should look at complementary loan/grant programs.. in kind grants, etc.

-Volunteering while using technical expertise can be considered "in kind", and moving forward we should find a way to track such hours should they become applicable.

830pm Adjourn: Stephen Friedman moved to adjourn. Paul Warden seconded. Motion passed unanimously.