

Southern Vermont Communications Union District

Draft Meeting Minutes

December 13, 2023

Town Name	Representative Name	Voting = V Present = P Absent = A	Alternate Name	Voting = V Present = P Absent = A	2 nd Alternate Name	Voting = V Present = P Absent = A
Arlington	Cynthia Browning	A	Jamie Paustian	A		
Bennington	Eric Hatch	V	Ron Dubreuil	A	Beth Hardesty	A
Dorset	Mike Chase	A	Jim Salsgiver	A	Bob Meszaros	A
Landgrove	Jim Swartzentruber	A	Susan Lenox	A		
Londonderry	John Hankin	V	James Wilbur	A		
Manchester	Terrence Dorsey	V	Kathleen James	A		
Peru	Ben Foltz	A	Peter Bradford	A		
Pownal	Caitlin Randall	A	Karlan Eberhardt	V		
Rupert	Bill Meyer	V	Jed Rubin	P	Arlene Bentley	P
Sandgate	Sheila Kearns	A	Betsy Rathbun-Gunn	A	Logan Weurslin	V
Shaftsbury	Tim Scoggins	V	Michael Corey	P		
Sunderland	Andrew McKeever	V				
Winhall	Fred Schwacke	A				
Woodford						

Also present: Callie Fishburn (BCRC)

1. Call to order
The chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.
2. Roll call
Callie Fishburn called roll. A quorum of the board was present.
3. Conflict of interest
None
4. Additions to or deletions from the agenda [1 V.S.A. § 312]
5. Review and Approval of Minutes from October 18, November 8, and November 15, 2023
*Motion to approve all minutes as presented by Bill Meyer, seconded by Eric Hatch.
Passed unanimously.*

6. Public comments

None

7. Announcements

Bill Meyer announced that the homes on Mt. Antone Rd have been connected with Fidium and are pleased with the service. The recent storm caused some outages in Rupert, but CCI technicians responded quickly. Terry will reach out to CCI about the outage reporting procedure to ensure that the CUD is notified of future outages.

8. Review of Draft 2024 Contract with BCRC

The board reviewed the draft 2024 contract with BCRC. There are minimal changes from the 2023 contract, with a few new additions to the Scope of Work. The next step is to have the contract reviewed by the CUD's legal counsel.

Motion to approve the 2024 contract subject to legal review by Tim Scoggins, seconded by Karlan Eberhardt. Passed unanimously.

9. Appointment of VCUDA Representative

Motion to appoint Terry Dorsey as the SoVT CUD VCUDA representative by Bill Meyer, seconded by Eric Hatch. Passed unanimously.

10. Creation and Distribution of an Info Card

Terry developed draft text for a 4x9in info card which could be distributed in each of the CUD's towns. Several other board members expressed interest in having a smaller business card. Terry will look into the cost of designing and printing a few different sizes and will come back to the board with a few options.

11. Act 71 Grant Closeout Update

Now that construction has finished, and the closeout report has been submitted, the CUD is working with VCBB and CCI to get all final invoices submitted so that payment can be issued. Once the CUD receives the Act 71 Grant payment, they will turn around a reimbursement check to CCI. Payment may arrive by the end of the year; if so, the CUD will need to have a single audit in 2024.

12. Other Business

Tim will take the lead on distributing the press release about fiber coverage; he has already sent it to Matt Harrington at the Chamber of Commerce and Jonah Spivak at the Town of Bennington.

Bill Meyer asked if CCI could share customer numbers in each of the CUD towns. Terry said that CCI considers that proprietary information and is unlikely to share those numbers.

VCUDA Update: Main topics of discussion have included BEAD funding and financing, neither of which applies to SoVT CUD. VCUDA did a survey of all CUDs and found a high need for shared financial/auditing services. Terry is on the finance committee which is making progress on procuring financial services. VCUDA will have a lobbying day at the State House on January 31st – anyone interested in attending should let Terry know.

VCUDA has proposed a 2024 budget with a flat membership fee of \$10,000 for all CUDs. This represents a 20% increase for SoVT CUD. Terry is skeptical that the SoVT CUD will get \$10,000 of value from VCUDA membership next year even if shared services are made available. Several board members expressed a disconnect between VCUDA's priorities and the SoVT CUD model, and that the new proposed due structure stands to benefit other CUD's with different operating models more so than SoVT CUD.

Terry proposed that the board develop committees in 2024 including an audit/finance committee, sustainability committee, and governance committee. The governance committee could revisit the CUD's bylaws and investigate quorum issues.

Motion to adjourn by Tim Scoggins, seconded by Bill Meyer. Passed unanimously.