

Addison County Communications Union District

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2020

4:00 p.m. – 5:30p.m.

VIA ZOOM

Steve Huffaker, the Chair of the Addison County Communications Union District (“ACCUD”), welcomed the representatives of the Executive Committee to the meeting, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and took the roll.

1. Welcome/Introductions/Roll Call

The following members of the Executive Committee were present:

Steve Huffaker, Chair, Ferrisburgh;
Nancy Cornell, Vice Chair, Starksboro;
Billy Sneed, at large representative from Ripton;
Dan Sonneborn, at large representative from Bristol
Magna Dodge, at large representative from Cornwall
Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer, ex-officio, Ferrisburgh
Adam Lougee, Clerk, (“ACRPC”)

Guests:

Alex Kelley, RISI

Ellie Hagopian, New Haven

Ross Conrad, Middlebury

Carole Munroe, Valley.Net

John McNerney, Monkton

Jeremy Grip, Ripton

2. Approval of the Minutes. November 5, 2020. **Billy Sneed moved to approve the minutes Nancy seconded the motion, all approved.**
3. Approval of the Agenda. Steve Huffaker recommended adding 3 items listed below to the agenda. **Magna moved and Nancy seconded, all members present consented to the agenda and approved the addition of the following items:**
 - a. **Discussion of the CUD Name;**
 - b. **Discussion of Outreach Clearinghouse**
 - c. **VCUDA membership.**
4. Feasibility study discussion. Steve introduced Alex Kelley of Rural Innovation Strategies, Inc. and Carole Munroe of Valley.Net, the consultants ACRPC hired to undertake a feasibility study on ACCUD’s behalf. Alex and Carole proceeded to answer questions that various members of ACCUD’s Board had posed regarding the draft Feasibility Study that Alex presented to the Full Board on November 2nd.

Alex and Carole were able to address about half the questions in the time allotted. Alex will join the Executive Committee at its next meeting, November 19, 2020, to continue the discussion. He will also create written answers to questions he was unable to address.

5. **CARES grant amendment:** Steve summarized the status of ACCUD’s plan to amend its Cares grant to ask for additional funding. He noted that neither North Branch Networks or Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom (“WCVT”) felt that they could build projects meeting the CARES Act grant’s timeframe requirements and after a lot of hard work, reluctantly chose not to participate. Alex explained that RISI is working with Otter Creek CUD to create a platform/clearing house that all CUD’s could use to track customers and tailor marketing efforts. He noted the cost to each CUD for the tool would be \$12,500 and would need to be accompanied by \$5,000- \$10,000 of funding for marketing and outreach to populate the tool. Additionally, Steve noted that ACCUD still intended to pursue hotspots at 6 locations as discussed at the previous Executive Committee meeting. Based upon the information presented, **Nancy Cornell moved that Adam apply for an amendment to ACCUD’s CARES act grant in an amount up to an additional \$50,000 to pursue hotspots and the RISI tool and outreach budget, but also made the support of the RISI tool contingent upon RISI supplying the Committee with a more detailed understanding of how the tool will work and when payment will be due. Billy Sneed seconded the motion, which all approved.**
6. **ACCUD assumed name:** Steve lead the Executive Committee in a discuss involving its attempts to create a marketable tradename. He noted that the Full Board’s first choice, “Green Mountain Broadband”, while available at the Secretary of State’s office, is very similar to “Green Mountain Access”, the name used by WCVT for its broadband services. Since ACCUD is considering partnering with WCVT, who requested ACCUD not use that name, and because ACCUD desires to avoid any future legal issues, Steve recommended that the Board quickly choose another name prior to the marketing meetings and then ask the full Board to ratify its decision at its next meeting. Steve noted that the second choice, “Champlain Broadband” was unavailable and owned by the successor to Burlington Telecom. **Nancy Cornell moved that the Executive Committee pivot and choose its third choice, Maple Broadband, which is available and does not conflict with other offerings. Dan Sonneborn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**
7. **Other business:** The Committee deferred the rest of its agenda items to its next meeting.
8. **Future meeting:** 4 PM November 19
9. **Adjourn** Magna moved and the members voted to adjourn at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Adam Lougee, Clerk