

# Addison County Communications Union District

## Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2020

4:00 p.m. – 5:00p.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 4:00 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

Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer, ex-officio, Ferrisburgh  
Adam Lougee, Clerk, (“ACRPC”)  
Magna Dodge, guest Cornwall Representative  
Mark Boltz-Robinson, guest Monkton Representative

### **2. Approval of the Minutes. Nancy Cornell moved to approve the minutes, Billy Sneed seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

### **3. Approval of the Agenda.** All members present consented to the agenda.

### **4. Administrative Actions to date.**

Adam noted he had taken the following actions on behalf of ACCUD:

- a. Filing Sec of State: Completed
- b. Duns #: Pending
- c. Bank Account: National Bank of Middlebury (Pending)
- d. Insurance: Ben Fuller of the Richards Group is gathering information.

### **5. Review and Status of In Progress Activities**

- a. Feasibility Study and Business Plan. The feasibility study and business plan for the ACCUD are underway. Our consultants Valley.net and Rural Innovations Strategies, Inc. are gathering data and holding meetings with existing providers. The feasibility study is projected to be complete by the end of the month.
- b. Vermont Community Foundation Funding for ACCUD \$10,000. ACRPC secured a \$10,000 grant from the Vermont Community Foundation and is holding it for the ACCUD. The grant is for the purpose of forming and seeding the start of the ACCUD. **The money is very flexible, unlike the CARES money that expires at the end of the year.**

- c. DPS Grant funding for ACCUD \$100,000. ACRPC also secured a CARES act grant from DPS for ACCUD in the amount of \$100,000. That money is also to help the formation of the ACCUD and needs to be spent by the end of the year. Adam has invoiced for the first \$90,000 of that funds and he has received it. The Executive Committee is working on RFPs for professional services, website development and marketing.
- d. Legislative funding for ALL CUDs (+/- \$1,500,000) Adam noted it will be a competitive process, with all CUDs eligible to receive an additional \$300,000. Projects must relate to solving COVID issues and must be spent by the end of the year. Adam informed the board he had encouraged Jeremy Grip and North Branch Networks to consider working with the CUD if it could improve NBN system and serve new customers by the end of the year.

6. **ACRPC Invoice for Professional Services.**

Adam will create a proposed contract. Adam noted that through August ACRPC had spent \$4,346 establishing ACCUD and applying for grants to fund it. **Adam presented an invoice to Steve and Arabella.**

7. **Recruitment of New Members (Shelburne, Charlotte, Hinesburg and Huntington).**

Adam noted that we are up to 15 towns. All Addison County towns have been contacted. He has a meeting in Whiting on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Adam will continue his recruiting efforts. Additionally, Rob Fish from DPS reached out to Adam and asked whether ACCUD would accept towns outside the Addison Region. He noted the four towns immediately north of Addison County were orphans that had some broadband needs. Steve noted that at the last Full Board meeting the Board voted to automatically accept towns from Addison County. Others would need to be voted on by the Full Board. After some discussion regarding the pros and cons of expanding the service territory, **the Executive Board voted unanimously to explore the needs of the towns to the north and tasked Adam to reach out to them through his relationship with the Chittenden County RPC to explore their interest, if any. Steve and Adam will speak with our consultants regarding how this impacts the feasibility study.**

8. **Creation of Task list/Budget.** The Executive Committee focused on the three RFPs it had created and discussed creating a task list, budget and timeline regarding its use of the CARES funding. **Steve and Adam will work to develop a more complete list.**

9. **RFP Schedule and procedures.** Steve looked to establish procedures for sending out the RFPs the Committee had developed. **The Committee decided to send them out to at least 5 bidders, via blind copies, with responses to go to Steve, who will distribute them to all. The Committee also reviewed the timeline. Since we must spend the CARES money by December 20<sup>th</sup>, all agreed that time was of the essence. The Committee agreed that all responses should be returned, reviewed by the Committee and the Committee should present recommendations for consultants to the Board at its November 2, 2020 meeting.**

10. **Marketing RFP.** The Committee reviewed the proposed RFP, and endorsed Steve

sending it to the Bidders list. The Committee also supported marketing being sent via mail to all addresses in the Addison Region.

11. **Website RFP.** The Committee reviewed the proposed RFP, and endorsed Steve sending it to the Bidders list. The website architecture will include a place for a survey and a presubscription campaign.
12. **Legal Services RFP.** The Committee reviewed the proposed RFP, and endorsed Steve sending it to the Bidders list.
13. **CARES Funds.** The Committee discussed other initiatives to pursue with CARES Funding. Adam will ask Rob Fish about bidding guidelines. Adam has spoken with Fred Kenney of ACEDC about helping with financing initiatives.
14. **Collaboration platform.** Dan Sonneborn presented using Microsoft teams as ACCUD's collaboration platform. The Committee agreed to try the platform.
15. **ACCUD Name Selection.** The Executive Committee is interested in changing ACCUD's name to something with better marketing appeal. It intends to bring several alternatives to the Full Commission for its decision.
16. **New Member of the Executive Committee.** Steve announced Steve Pilcher had submitted his resignation from the Executive Committee. He will need to be replaced at the next Full Board meeting. Both Mark Boltz-Robinson and Magna Dodge expressed an interest in serving on the Executive Committee. Mark introduced himself as a digital security expert working for Symantec. Magna introduced herself as a financial professional with experience in raising capital.
17. **Housekeeping.** ACCRPC has set up a temporary website for ACCUD until it can create its own. It is <http://acrpc.org/programs-services/accud/>
18. **Future Meeting Schedule Pick dates/times.**  
The Executive Committee decided to meet weekly on Thursdays at 4:00 p.m. for the foreseeable future. Next meeting October 22<sup>th</sup>.
19. **Other/Adjourn**  
Adjourn –Nancy Cornell moved and the members voted to adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Adam Lougee, Clerk