

Newbury REDI Board minutes -- 2-12-2018

Tenney Library, Newbury, VT

Meeting called to order by Board Chair Claude Phipps at 4:45PM.

Board Members present: Ed Childs, Lenice Cicchini, Nate Dudenhoffer, Jim Henderson, Claude Phipps, Susan Underwood, Brad Vietje

Guests present: Laurie Williams, Rick Hausman, CJ Stumpf via conference phone.

Note taker: Edward Childs

Approval of minutes: Previous online approval of minutes was deemed acceptable.

Treasurer's Report: In Dan's absence, Claude reported that the Wells River Savings Bank account was setup including electronic access. In addition to the existing \$600 Claude reported an additional \$2,700 in donations. \$60 will be disbursed via check to cover the charges for Lenice's attendance of a course on Robert's Rules of order. However, Lenice indicated the intent to donate that amount. The charges for Brad's attendance at the course was covered by the Town (he is to be Moderator for the next Newbury Town Meeting). The domain names NewburyREDI.net/com/org have been purchased, Jim indicated that he will donate that amount.

Clerk's Report: Brad reported that meeting minutes will be available on the new domain when available. He noted that the Town website can no longer be used now that the by-laws have been approved.

Sub-Committee Reports:

Coordination with Fairpoint: Chip reported that Jeff Austin could not provide a jobs creation letter, although he provided a report on the impact of a similar fiber project in Craftsbury. There was discussion of a template form for a contract with Fairpoint. A similar survey was to have been performed in Dover. Chip will try to get a copy of that form.

Technology: Jim brought a conference phone, used for CJ to join the meeting.

Grants/Finance: There was quite a bit of discussion of funding possibilities, I will do my best to provide an outline:

1. Claude indicated some difficulty with Susie Poulin at USDA regarding potential profitability of Newbury REDI. As a municipality, Newbury REDI could potentially realize a profit and Susie was not satisfied with Claude's explanation that any profit would be used to pay down debt and/or lower rates. Claude was to seek advice from Paul Giuliani. Another suggestion was for USDA to make the grant to another non-profit who could then award the funds to Newbury REDI, however this solution seem unnecessarily complicated. A backup to the USDA grant is the Wells River Action Program.
2. Two legislative items could potentially provide funds for the Fairpoint survey:  
(a) Increase of the Universal Service Fund (show up on all ISP bills) by 0.05%, this would increase the connectivity fund which can be used to fund initiatives such as Newbury REDI, (b) bill raise \$400,000 to fund local initiatives (Secretary of Commerce Michael Shirling was mentioned in this connection). Preliminary discussion indicates that these monies could be a match with the Newbury REDI startup needs.
3. Laurie reported that the deadline for the USDA grant is now March 30th, and she has set a target date to get the application complete by March 1. She mentioned the need of a letter from the Town of Newbury.
4. The Vermont Municipal Bond bank announced an offering to Vermont investors targeting "Local Investment". Someone raised the issue of a "private actors clause" in municipal bond law which limits percent disbursement to private companies of more than 10% of the funds raised.

By-laws committee: Claude is awaiting a copy of the approved by-laws. The committee in the legislature is expected to take up amendments to the statute in one to two weeks.

Web Site: Jim reported that Dan will contact him in a few days regarding the mechanics of moving new content to the purchased domain. The existing domain will link back to the new one.

Central Vermont Internet: Claude has scheduled a call with Jeremy Hansen. CVI is relying on the Telecommunications Union District law which as was written for EC Fiber. CVI is aiming to have at least 2 towns (required for this law) and 6 subscribers per mile at a base cost of \$66 to the subscriber.

Other Business: Chip proposed the possibility of expanding the Newbury REDI district to include other towns at the outset, possibly with the benefits of economy or scale or more leverage with existing phone companies. There was a wide-ranging discussion, but no motions were put forward.

CJ Stumpf: CJ participated at various points during the meeting indicating contact and discussion with some of the players previously mentioned in the minutes, including Jeff Austin at Fairpoint. Brad suggested a meeting with CJ to take place Tuesday Feb. 20 at 2 PM in the statehouse cafeteria. The purpose of the meeting is to work with CJ's spreadsheet.

Upcoming Dates:

Next REDI Board Meeting 2-26-2018 at Tenney Library, 4:30 - 6:30

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.