

Okemo Valley TV Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting  
By Zoom  
Tuesday, April 14, 2020, 5:30 pm  
Monthly Minutes

Present: George O. Thomson, Fra DeVine, Noah Schmidt, Sharon Bixby, Patrick Cody, Executive Director, Okemo Valley TV

Don Richardson, Wendy Regier and John Cama participated by phone;

Absent: Noah Schmidt,

**I. Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by President Fra at 5:39 pm.

**II. Review Meeting Minutes (3/17/20)** Sharon made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Don seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

**III. Communications** – There have been a few communications since the last meeting. One is specifically timely from VTel. Recently, they have installed wifi routers to provide hot spots in Rutland to help get high speed in all areas. VTel is making the offer for free wifi routers to get hot spots in our communities. Our building might be a site for a hot spot. Microsoft may also have similar offers at no cost. They are looking for possible installations in schools, libraries, community centers, etc. The at home digital school learning has been a challenge for some of the schools because kids do not have connectivity or computers.

Patrick will get a little more detail and contact the superintendent of schools and the town officials to talk to them about this possibility to increase broad band. This would be free to our communities that are under served with broad band.

The intent of this is short term for the next couple of months but there may be possibilities for the future. This would reach further and provide a higher speed. It could possibly be a benefit in the future.

There was a great deal of discussion and questions about this possibility.

Patrick said that the offer includes the installation but it needs to be in the central part of the town.

Wendy urged Patrick to provide this information to all who might be interested because it places us in a position of a having information to help everyone all around.

**IV. Working Remotely / Extension of "Stay Home" Order** - Patrick indicated things are going well and the employees use Zoom a couple of times per week to check in with each other. The focus is on programming to make sure we have enough on the air. We are gearing up to get schedules in the papers and on the electronic program guide. The staff needed more time for packaging and planning the build out the schedules. Patrick said we need a 14 day lead to schedule for the papers. The staff has been focused on the electronic programming guide. The accounts are all set up and the channels are live.

Patrick said they are splitting up the tasks. Eric is doing some more long-range planning. Fred is doing scheduling. They are using a tool called Slack which is a chat application so they can communicate more effectively. Patrick said that he and Eric are working a minimum of 40 hours per week and Fred is working 20. They are actually working more now than before. Uploading programs from home is difficult as Fred and Eric have slower systems. Patrick has fiberoptic so he uploads some stuff from home.

Fra asked about the possibility of getting faster internet speed for Fred and Eric at their homes. Eric is hosting town Zoom programs from home. Fra said we should subsidize higher speed bandwidth if they need it. Patrick said it would cost \$75 each to put them at the next tier. Speed would be almost double the time. Fra suggests we just do it.

## **V. Director Report –**

Patrick has been thinking of how we might be of service to the schools as they end out the year. This is especially true for BR as they are closing down and it is the last year. He has been working some with a GM journalism class. He has contacted each of the principals but they said they had as much as they can handle at the time being. No one at Black River or the elementary schools were interested.

Tomorrow OVTV is recording a presentation by the SBA in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce. It will be recorded tomorrow and then in the server and ready to be seen by Thursday. Patrick suggested that no one see it until there is time to promote it. Fra suggests we put it out ASAP as SBA grants are on a first come first served basis. We could possibly all promote it on Facebook on through different programs that are available. A question and answer session with the business administration will follow the presentation.

Patrick informed the board that there will be a show forthcoming by the Solid Waste District as they are not able to do their composting workshops. The workshop will conclude with a Q and A session as well.

We plan to record a concert in May with Susan Haefner for FOLA. We are hoping it can be recorded in the studio but if not, then we may be able to do it through Zoom.

OVTV recently aired a statewide concert for the VT Food Bank which benefitted the COVID relief fund.

There was a discussion on the voice quality with Zoom. It varies greatly depending on the internet.

Fra mentioned that right now people are interested in COVID stuff. We need to try and use any method we can to get information out.

Eric interrupted the meeting. There is a Select Board meeting in Mt. Holly which he needs to host and record. We can't do two meetings at once on one Zoom account so we need to end our meeting soon. Fra suggested we get a second account with Zoom so we have more flexibility. When we are hosting on Zoom and recording, we can then air the programs.

**VI. Financial Report: Budget vs Actuals & FY21 Budget Priorities –** Currently, we have \$37,384 in the checking account and \$24,634 in the Money Market.

We did get our VTel franchise payment a couple weeks ago.

Patrick said the major point he wanted to emphasize is where we are currently vs. our projections. Based on what we knew when we put the budget together, we anticipated a big dip in franchise fees. But as it turns out, that is not the case this year. We will therefore be ahead of the game at the end of the fiscal year. We will receive about \$20,000 more than we budgeted. We will, however, have higher expenses for payroll. We are assigning more time for Fred so we will be over budget in salaries. Patrick projects we will have a net profit of \$12,000 by the end of the year. We budgeted a loss of \$6,000 so with the net increase in revenue will be about \$18,000 ahead of where we anticipated we would be. The VEDA loan will be paid off very soon. We had two loans and paid one off. The second one is scheduled to be paid off in a few months.

The rent is billed to us in June and then is paid off by the end of the fiscal year.

**The meeting ended abruptly at 6:22 as Eric had to start another meeting to record the Mt. Holly Selectmen's meeting. Patrick tried to reconvene the meeting with a conference call but was not successful in reaching enough board members.**

**VII. Old Business: Nominating & Elections, End-of-Year Planning -**

**VIII. Other Business -**

**IX. Review To-Do List -**

**X. Confirm Next Meeting Date(s) -**

**XI. Adjourn -**