



2025 Annual Summary Report and 2026 Budget

In late 2024 and early 2025, Otter Creek Communications Union District (“Otter Creek CUD,” “OCCUD,” “the District”), along with our partners, completed the build-out of the fiber-optic network, making high-speed broadband accessible to our constituents in the Rutland County region.

Since then, 2025 has been a year of issuing Otter Creek Communications Union District’s final project reports, reviewing our partners’ quarterly performance reports, and closing out our construction grant. Our operations have dramatically reduced as have our expenses.

Final Construction

The OCCUD’s previous annual report was issued in November 2024. At that time the construction of the fiber broadband network in the Consolidated Communications, Inc.(CCI) areas was complete. The construction of the fiber broadband network in the Go Netspeed area was completed in early spring 2025.

In April 2025, CCI submitted its final invoice, bringing the total construction grant expenditures to \$5,574,154.90, which was \$ 2,990,411.10 under budget. OCCUD was then able to return this amount back to the VCBB to continue their efforts for universal service in other areas of Vermont.

The network buildout completed by Consolidated Communications, Inc. under the construction grant is 208.43 miles and ~3,626 addresses passed including ~1,278 unserved addresses.

The network buildout completed by GoNetspeed is 128 Miles and ~2,040 addresses passed, including ~1,300 unserved addresses under their own EACAM funding.

Grant Close-out and Obligations:

Near the end of June 2025, OCCUD officially requested that our construction grant be closed. The Chair presented a close-out project review to the Vermont Communications Broadband Board on August 11 and it was received with praise and congratulations. (OCCUD then became the second of the now nine CUD's in the state which have completed their build-out). VCBB is currently in process of administering Otter Creek CUD's grant closure.

Now that the construction is completed and all constituents/addresses in our district towns now have access to high-speed broadband, OCCUD is obligated to fulfill the terms of our grant approvals and those of our contract with CCI as well as the Agreement with Go Netspeed. Thus, the quarterly performance reports from each provider are reviewed by OCCUD officers and results are reported to the OCCUD Governing Board at the quarterly meetings.

Operations in 2025:

- We continued our relationship with our contracted consultant, Vantage Point Solutions, who manages and provides our grant reporting, our grant submissions for financial reimbursement and other assignments.
- We hired and worked with a CPA to complete our federal single audit of 2024. The audit was successfully completed and submitted to Treasury on August 18, 2025.
- With the revised open meeting laws requiring a physical location for board meetings as well as our desire to transfer treasurer duties we approached the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) for these services and in June, Otter Creek and Rutland Regional Planning Commission executed a memorandum of agreement for services related to management of governing board meeting locations and the remote platform, as well as treasurer duties.
- As the Board tasks have dramatically decreased post construction, we have chosen to meet only quarterly in 2025. We voted the new schedule at the January 2025 Governing Board meeting. The 2025 Governing Board meeting dates were scheduled for: Jan, Mar, May (Annual Organizational Mtg), Aug, Nov, and in early 2026 for: Feb, and May (Annual Organizational Mtg).
- Officers and Executive Committee member elected at the 2025 Annual Organizational Meeting were:
 - Chair, Laura Black (Shrewsbury)

- Vice-chair, Larry Courcelle (Mendon)
- Clerk, Laura Black
- Executive Committee members – Chair Black, Vice-chair Courcelle, Steve Murray (Benson), Mike Small (Sudbury), Peter Werner (Brandon), Chris Custer (Hubbardton), Leslie Cadwell (Castleton).
- The Treasurer was appointed by the Executive Committee- Anna-Maria Barucco (Finance Assistant at RRPC). Notably, our volunteer treasurer, Jackie Savela was relieved of her volunteer duties as of July 1st and we are immensely thankful to her steadfast and careful management of our financials over the past many years.
- As not every town in the district desired to remain a member of the CUD and obligate a representative to the Board, four towns withdrew membership (per statute guidelines). These towns remain district non-member towns and though they have no voting rights on the OCCUD Governing Board, they do have the ability to request to rejoin the CUD at any time. OCCUD considers the constituents of those non-member towns to have the same opportunity to contact OCCUD with requests for information as well as assistance in communicating and negotiating with OCCUD's service providers.
- Currently, District member towns are – Benson, Brandon, Castleton, Fair Haven, Goshen, Hubbardton, Mendon, Pawlet, Pittsford, Poultney, Rutland City, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, , and West Haven. District non-member towns are- Chittenden, Rutland Town, Wells, West Rutland.
- The Otter Creek officers meet regularly with Consolidated Communications, Inc., and with Go Netspeed, to review performance metrics per contract and agreement. We are also in contact regularly to sort out miscellaneous constituents' construction and/or service issues.
- Otter Creek officers join VCUDA board meetings to review and discuss current district issues, and state and national legislative issues. Chair Black is currently serving as the vice chair of VCUDA. The Chair and Vice-chair report both the VCUDA and VCBB activities to the Executive Committee and to the Governing Board quarterly meetings.
- A Sustainability Planning group, including members of Otter Creek CUD, Lamoille Fibernet CUD, and Southern Vermont CUD has recently begun to meet on a weekly basis.

Sustainability Planning

Otter Creek CD officers and members have been meeting with Lamoille and Southern Vermont CUDs to start planning for upcoming years of our operations.

- Note that in 2024 a 10-year sustainability plan was developed and presented to the VCBB which included funding for our operations. This plan was a condition of VCBB's approval of our construction grant.
- Sustainability Planning for future years of operating: The CUD's executive officers have begun to meet with our fellow colleagues from Lamoille Fibernet CUD and Southern Vermont CUD to develop a structure to meet our needs in future years. We have drafted and signed an Interlocal Agreement defining our intentions to work together to find lowest costs of operations, and shared services where practical.

2026 Budget:

- Otter Creek CUD's budget for year 2026 includes our operational costs, cost for our contractor (Vantage Point Solutions) who manages the required reporting and financial submittals to the VCBB, costs for an audit of 2025, treasurer and accounting services, and legal services related to our sustainability plan. Other costs include VCUDA dues. We included a 20% contingency.
- The budget numbers are based primarily on actual costs for services received in 2024.

Otter Creek Communications Union District 2026 Budget	
Operational Expenses (RRPC, Google Workspace accounts, website host & maintenance, bank fees,)	\$6,000
DNO and Business insurance	\$2,000
Contracted Project Management (Reporting, Managing grants)	\$8,000
Legal Services	\$20,000
Audit	\$15,000
Accounting – Bookkeeper and Treasurer	\$10,500
Association Fees/Membership	\$15,000
Events & Conferences	\$2,000
Contingency (20%)	\$15,700
TOTAL:	\$94,200

Otter Creek CUD is not seeking to secure additional federal funds for broadband deployment because our Universal Service Plan is fully funded and the VCBG grant funded area is complete.

END OF 2025 ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT AND 2026 BUDGET

Brief History of Otter Creek Communications Union District's Mission Success
<u>Formation</u> – Otter Creek CUD (“OCCUD,” “the District”) was formed in 2020. The District consists of the following district towns and city –Brandon, Benson, Castleton, Chittenden, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Goshen, Mendon, Pawlet, Pittsford, Poultney, Rutland Town, Rutland City, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, Wells, West Rutland, and West Haven.
<u>Universal Service Plan</u> - In 2023 OCCUD was awarded a construction grant of \$8,564,566.00 by the Vermont Communications Broadband Board. (funds authorized through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021). OCCUD executed a contract with Consolidated Communications, Inc. (CCI) to build HS fiber broadband service in the grant funded areas of the District. OCCUD executed an Agreement with GoNetSpeed (GNS) to build HS fiber broadband service in the GNS areas of the OCCUD District.
<u>Building the Fiber Network</u> - Construction of the fiber network was completed in 2024 (with a very few areas finished off in early 2025) giving all residents and businesses in the OCCUD area access to high-speed broadband.
<u>Obligations</u> – OCCUD’s obligations include oversight of the terms of the contract with CCI and the agreement with GNS to ensure network performance and satisfactory customer service.
<u>Sustainability Planning</u> - OCCUD’s ability to continue functioning in the future depends on funding and participation by district member town’s appointed representatives.
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