



Director Report August 15 2025

Administrative

- Staffing: This Summer, we have been short-staffed (more so than normal), between Rebekah being out on leave and vacation time. Full capacity for us has been just slightly above 2 FTE (full time equivalent), while we have been used to operating at about 2.75 FTE for the past few years. Rebekah will be back from leave starting Thursday August 18th. She will be working half time (20 hours / week), with a breakdown of approx. 40% in person / 60% remote. This will bring us up to 2.5 FTE, which is what we budgeted for this fiscal year.
- PTO: It's been a tale of two Summers for me. I have enjoyed some time off, and have taken several days of PTO already, between a couple of different mini vacations, and a larger trip coming up Aug. 26 - Sept. 4. And when I have been around, the work hours have been long. I have been executing & managing everything from the day-to-day operational tasks to the administrative, while also spending some time on larger, longer-term projects.
- State Funding: We are projected to receive \$34,611 as a state appropriation, which is what is reflected in our budget. This is our distribution of the statewide contribution, which is made out to VAN (Vermont Access Network), our statewide membership and advocacy organization. The VAN Board made some changes to the distribution formula, after considering & then applying the feedback it received from a few members (including us). Last year (FY2025), the amount we received as a result of the formula was \$29,000 less than we had projected, which resulted in a large and unexpected budget shortfall, creating some challenges. I am thankful to the VAN Board for putting in the work to come up with this new formula, which is more reflective of the actual size of the individual stations.
- Accounting: The Finance Committee will be holding a brief meeting immediately before the donor appreciation event & Board meeting on Tuesday the 19th. Sammy, who has taken on the role of Treasurer, has asked to be given an overview on the financial processes and bookkeeping in the Quick Books accounting software we use. We will start that work with this meeting on the 19th.
- Strategic Planning: Our last strategic plan was completed in 2016, and was intended to be a 5-year plan. Changes brought on through the COVID pandemic and other factors stalled the process of initiating a new strategic plan. But over the last few years, the Board has recognized the need for a new one, and at different times has initiated the process, which has gone through fits and starts. As it turns out, it is good that this process has been delayed, since we are now in a much different position, with the addition of WLUD. Earlier this year, the Board made the decision to include WLUD as part of Okemo Valley TV. This impacts the overall strategy for the organization and the

decisions that would be made in a strategic plan, including marketing, branding, governance, and administrative functioning. There are other important administrative and financial considerations to be made, especially within the context of the funding models for both Okemo Valley TV and WLUD. This will all need to be discussed on the Board level before it can go anywhere, but from where I sit, strategic planning should be a priority for the coming year. The Vermont Community Foundation has grant funding to help with this, which could be pursued if the Board decides to proceed.

- Meeting Minutes: At the July meeting, with the automation of meeting minutes. The meeting was recorded in Zoom, from which a transcript was generated. That transcript was then imported into an AI notetaking application, which provided a thorough & accurate summary of the meeting. The notes would then just need to be proofread & edited. Those notes were provided to Newt, our new Secretary. I think this could be an effective solution for our minute taking workflow.

Buildings & Grounds

- Building Project Status: The agreement with VISC Construction Consultants has been signed. The timeline we have been given is that they are currently working on the update to the floor plan. Construction work is not scheduled to begin until October. They are projecting a two month window where they will have sub contractors on site doing the work. This means there is a good chance that our facility will be a construction zone through the holidays and into the New Year.

WLUD-LP

- Antenna & Transmitter Update: Carmine & I recently met with Diane DePalma Vullo, the Executive Assistant to GM Bruce Schmidt (and our main contact at Okemo with regard to WLUD) and Ben Partridge, the new Senior Manager of Base Area Operations. Both are very supportive of our antenna & transmitter being housed on the site of the “Pull” (rope tow for the half pipe and adjacent maintenance garage). The issue we are addressing at present is the need to establish an internet connection inside of the garage (in order to receive the signal that we will be sending out of our facility, to then feed to the transmitter). There will be some cost to this, which we are currently evaluating, but Okemo is generously donating the space and land. Ludlow Electric will be donating and installing a utility pole for the antenna, as well as the conduit to connect to the maintenance garage (where the transmitter will be housed). These levels of support are going a long way towards minimizing the out-of-pocket expenses of getting the broadcast signal out onto the air.
- Other Expenses: WLUD is currently operating out of the \$20K in earmarked ARPA funding from the Town of Ludlow. So far, we have spent approximately \$2500 of this. The remaining funds must be spent by Dec. 31, 2026, which is also the timeline we are working to go live at 93.3 FM.
- Memberships: We are now members of both the Vermont Association of Broadcasters (VAB) and the National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB). These relationships will bring a lot of value, offering a wealth of resources, to our start-up community radio station.

Community Engagement & Support

- Donor Appreciation Event: On Tuesday the 19th we are having our first donor appreciation event, which hopefully we can develop into a semi-regular thing. This first one is being hosted by The Killarney; it's from 5:30 - 6:30, immediately preceding our Board meeting. We have the big private room reserved for it (Mark is letting us stay in the room for the Board meeting as well). At present, there are more than 20 people who have RSVP'd; that means we may have around 30 people in the room, including Board members.
- Website: We have been going through the slow process of a new launch of our website, which has involved migrating over from the Content Management System (CMS) that we have used for the last 17+ years (Drupal), and onto Wordpress, which will offer us much more flexibility and is more user-friendly. Peter van Gorder (who works for us part time) has been handling the design, through his business "Dream Create Communicate". I have sent him my notes on requested design changes; he should be finishing that work up soon. I anticipate being able to launch the new site in October.
- Ludlow Farmers' Market: The Ludlow Farmers' Market is starting up a series of outdoor movie nights as a fundraiser, and have asked for us to partner with them and for our technical help. This is exactly the type of activity with which we should be involved, but of course, our capacity is low. The first one is Saturday Aug. 30th at Dorsey Park. Is anyone available to be there to help them with the projector and sound set up?
- FOLA: Back in June, a few of us met with FOLA (Friends of Ludlow Auditorium) Board members to discuss developing our partnership and mutual interests further. The intent was to continue the discussion on a monthly basis, to see where things went; anything seems to be on the table, from collaboration on film screenings to a possible eventual merger. It was determined that we need a Town liaison & representative as part of the discussions; Noah Schmidt, who is on the Selectboard, said he would be happy to take part. We tried to meet in July, but that fell apart; Jim Alic from FOLA (and who happens to also be on the WLUD committee) will be attending our Board meeting on Tuesday.
- Chamber Best of VT Festival: Chamber of Commerce Director Carol Lighthall has invited us to participate in the upcoming "Best of VT" festival in Ludlow on Aug. 23-24, by having an info booth and doing whatever we want with it (solicit memberships, promote WLUD, etc.). It may end up being that we just send a staff member and/or volunteer to cover the event, as we have done over the last 4 years. We have an in-kind barter agreement with the Chamber for membership; part of the agreement includes donating a couple of hours of production services each year, which typically involves covering their events (like this one and the Annual Meeting in the Spring). In exchange, we receive membership to the Chamber, and in turn they are also members of Okemo Valley TV.
- Reading Fall Festival: Last year, as part of our community outreach effort in Reading, we covered the first ever Reading Fall Festival (Sarah Devereux from our staff was there with volunteer Shawn Kershaw). The festival committee has asked us if we could come out again this year - which is Saturday, October 4th. However, we already have our own event that day (see below); but this does show that our outreach last year was effective in some way. And now, we are using the opportunity to educate them of the opportunities

to borrow equipment from us & get training, in the hopes that they can get a volunteer to do it. This is really at the core of what we do and the role that we play. The more people in the community who know this - and hopefully take advantage of it - will result in more and diverse programming, more community engagement, and a greater overall impact.

- Oct. 4th Oktoberfest Fundraiser: Wendell, Sammy, & Lisa started meeting as an ad hoc committee back in the Spring, with the goal of organizing a fundraiser event, in light of there being an immediate need, due to the significant budget shortfall that we were experiencing. As we know, they landed with Four Square Hospitality, who offered to host an Oktoberfest event and do all of the marketing. It will be Saturday October 4th at Off the Rails in Ludlow. When Trevor joined the Board last month, he also joined this ad hoc committee. The committee has been able to get several event sponsors (8 local businesses) - so far we have received \$4,000 in sponsorship revenue, which should cover approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the event's expenses. The posters have been printed and there is a web page on Off the Rails' site, and it's being promoted on social media. More to come on this!
- Oct. 18th Oktoberfest: John is organizing his 2nd annual Oktoberfest event, based out of Johnny's Kitchen and the surrounding grounds. It is a community event, and we (Okemo Valley TV / WLUD) should be there. However, I will not be around that Saturday; this is something we should plan in the Community Engagement Committee and with John directly.

Production

- Studio shows: The studio has seen an uptick in activity of late. Sammy is back with season 2 of "The Tasty Twist", a platform for fellow musicians, as well as others. We are now 6 episodes deep.
- Sports: Will Simoneau, a Springfield resident, runs a non profit sports media outlet, TecGym Sports. Since June, has covered a huge amount of Summer league youth basketball from right next door at the Community Center; there were 4 games per night, at least 3 nights per week, and he covered them all! We have all of the programming, and we are working our way through it. He also covered some of the American Legion baseball games taking place right outside our building, as well as a few of the away games for the Ludlow post. It's a tireless, dedicated effort, most of which Will does single-handedly.
- Summer concerts: Pat Moore has recorded several of the Summer concerts at Jackson Gore, plus one of the Cavendish concerts on the Proctorsville Green. I was there for the first one of the season from Proctorsville (Gypsy Reel).
- Production Services for Hire: We completed two basic productions-for-hire recently- the Lake Rescue Association's Annual Meeting and a workshop for Sustainable Woodstock.