



Director Report September 22, 2025

Administrative

- Staffing: Rebekah ended maternity leave in mid-August and came back to work on a part-time basis. She is in the office Thursdays & Fridays, and is working remotely at different times during the week, for a total of about 20 hours per week. Our current staffing level is about 2.5 FTE, which is what we have budgeted for the year. We have one full timer (me), and Rebekah, Willem, Elia each working approximately .5 FTE. Peter and Gavin are working on an assignment / fill-in basis.
- VAN State Funding: The FY2026 statewide appropriation to VAN (Vermont Access Network) is \$1.25m, which was finalized through the approval of the State budget at the end of the legislative session in May. It has been confirmed that our share of this will be \$34,611, which is what is reflected in this year's operating budget. The payment will be going to VAN from the Secretary of State's office and VAN will then make the disbursements to each of the members. We anticipate our check to be coming in October.
- Community Radio State Funding: Thanks to the advocacy of Vermont Association of Broadcasters (VAB) and others (notably Llu Mulvaney-Stanak from WGDR in Plainfield), community radio stations, including start-ups such as WLUD, will be eligible for a one-time grant from the State for emergency services. From these funds, WLUD will be applying for \$7,500. The application window is now open.
- Board Recruitment: There are some immediate needs to address, which at least one vacancy to be filled, along with the possibility of the addition of new seats, through a future By Law revision.
- By Laws revisions: Wendell & Newt have been working as an ad hoc committee, reviewing our current By Laws and looking where revisions & additions are needed.
- Strategic Planning: With everything we have going on as an organization, we are in need of a new strategic plan. Our last one is from 2016, when we were at a different inflection point. With the addition of WLUD, a possible rebrand, building plans, a shift towards more fundraising, collaborative projects, By Law revisions, etc., we have new & different needs, and with that, the need to carve out a new path and codify our vision and goals. We are applying for a "Nonprofit Capacity Building" grant from the VT Community Foundation, which would help fund a consultant to help with this process.

Buildings & Grounds

- Building Project Status: Earlier in the Summer, VISC Construction Consultants provided a project timeline indicating that the renovation project would begin in early October, which is very soon. We will need to be able to plan around this, but before anything can begin,

we need to agree on a plan. To date, I have only seen designs for a preliminary plan for the editing suites and back office area. I have asked for a status update.

- Roadside Signage: Back in 2017, we got approval from the Town to install the roadside sign. We split the cost with Black River Good Neighbors. The Town did not financially contribute. Prior to this, there was no signage for our building nor the Community Center along the road. (to this date, there is still no signage on the Community Center building itself, which is an odd thing and causes some confusion). A couple of years ago, we gave the OK to LAST (Ludlow Area Sports Trails) to use the structure to hand a sign. They now have a new sign designed, and have engaged with Green Mountain Sign & Graphics to get it produced. Green Mountain Sign & Graphics is proposing to replace all of the signs on the structure, noting that they are starting to deteriorate. I was just presented with the proposal today and will share it with you for discussion & consideration.

WLUD-LP

- IT & Engineering Support: For more than a year, Carmine Iannace has been volunteering to do all of the IT & engineering work to help get WLUD off the ground and onto the air (and streaming). This has been a huge benefit not just to radio stations but for the entire organization. He has been spearheading our entire IT back-end infrastructure, all on volunteer hours.
- Music Library: As part of that IT “back-end”, Carmine set up our music library, which lives on the local network. Now we need to populate it! To give us a start, WOOL FM donated its entire digital library to us. WGDR has offered a large chunk of theirs. And then we have literally thousands upon thousands of CDs that need to be ripped. John Hanlon came by recently to get the process going. It’s going to require many thousands of hours of volunteer work to ingest all of these CDs. Anyone with some extra time on their hands & looking for a volunteer project should contact me. I have fantasies about getting a grant to fund an archivist / media librarian position (in addition to these thousands of CDs for WLUD, we also have many thousands of video programs from our earlier years that need to be digitized & catalogued).
- WOOL FM Donations: Back in July, WOOL FM donated their old transmitter and antenna to us. The value of these two pieces together is over \$1,500. Carmine tested them and reports that the transmitter will work as a solid back-up (we will need a more powerful, 300 watt, transmitter to serve as our primary unit...but it’s always good to have a back-up because hardware does go down on occasion!). The antenna works well but needs a replacement part, so I have offered it back to WOOL in case they wanted to sell it, or donate it to another station.
- New Banner: Thanks to Matt Sydorowich for taking the lead on getting WLUD a banner, and for paying for it as a donation to the station. We will have it available for the Ludlow Oktoberfest event - and if there is room and/or a need for it at the Okemo Valley Oktoberfest as well.

Community Engagement & Support

- Website: We are finally rounding the corner and nearing launch of the new site. Peter's work on it is complete, save for a couple of tweaks. There are still some things I need to do before launch, including creating web forms, and to create a page for WLUD. But we are ready for the "soft launch", which is unveiling it to the Board for input. It's at that point, at long last.
- FOLA: We have been in talks with FOLA (Friends of Ludlow Auditorium) about how we can work together to bring more events - film screenings & art performances, specifically - to the Town Hall, and better streamline the use of the space, oversight of the AV equipment, etc. The big question in front of us is what a merger between our two organizations looks like - what are the costs, funding opportunities, other risks, or benefits? Involved in these discussions so far have been some of the FOLA Board members, Noah Schmidt (Ludlow Selectman & former Okemo Valley TV Board member), Wendell, and me. Noah is helping to gauge what the Town might be able to do to support such a collaboration or merger. This is still very much just in the exploratory phase.
- Oct. 4th "Okemo Valley Oktoberfest" Fundraiser: We have raised \$6,000 from the event sponsors. Wendell Perkins & Mary Davis Real Estate have contributed \$1,000 each. The following have contributed \$500 each: Green Mountain Sugar House, Green Mountain Fireside, Master Plumbing & Heating, Down to the Roots, Brewfest Beverage, VT Properties / William Raevis Real Estate, Killington Distillery, Allen Pools & Spas. In-kind sponsors are Off the Rails / Four Square Hospitality, Green Mountain Sign & Graphics, Sammy B, Diamond Realty, & Stowe Cider. Thank you to all of our sponsors and to Wendell, Sammy, Lisa, & Trevor for all of the event planning. So far, the event expenses are at \$2,212, which means a net of \$3,788 has been raised before the event. We need to finalize plans for what we are doing with AV during the event. As far as publicity, Off the Rails has done a lot with online marketing, and we have a Facebook event page and some information on our website. We are also running a social media campaign, thanking each sponsor (one per day leading up to the event). We also paid for a small ad in The Mountain Times, and there is a large banner at Off the Rails. The Facebook event page has not garnered much attention, so I am not sure how much stock needs to be put into that. I encourage everyone to personally invite people & get them there. Also remember to mention the October 18th Oktoberfest! We will be participating in that as well.
- Oct. 18th "Ludlow Oktoberfest": John & other Ludlow restaurateurs are hosting the 2nd annual Ludlow Oktoberfest on Sat. October 18th. Anyone who will be around that weekend should go to that. I will be traveling & not around the local area that day but trying to coordinate some logistics with the WLUD committee in advance. The plan is to have some sort of booth for WLUD to record audio during the event, and perhaps a camera as well.
- Donor Appreciation Recap: The August 19th donor appreciation at The Killarney went well, especially for a first time event. We had about 20 people there. Unfortunately, the reservation & the communication related to the overall plan slipped through the cracks, as the expenses were quite a bit more than had been discussed (approx. double). So

that is something that would need to be fleshed out if / when we do more of these (which I think we should). It was a really good opportunity for in person community engagement, which is still the best kind (despite all of the online platforms available at our fingertips).