

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, September 9, 2021

PRESENT: Chair Mark Parker

Directors Mark Fisher
Tom Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Chris Newell
Jerry Petersen
Michael Riis-Christianson
Gerry Thiessen - left at 12:50 p.m., returned at 1:07 p.m.

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Megan D'Arcy, Agriculture Coordinator (West) – via Zoom – left at 10:45 a.m.
Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – left at 1:05 p.m.
Janette Derksen, Waste Diversion Supervisor
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer – arrived at 10:19 a.m.
Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 10:15 a.m., returned at 12:45 p.m.
Michelle Roberge, Agriculture Coordinator (East) – via Zoom – left at 10:45 a.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Others Gladys Atrill, Town of Smithers – arrived at 11:50 a.m.
Annette Morgan, Village of Telkwa
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle – via Teleconference
Bob Motion, District of Fort St. James

Media Eddie Huband, Lakes District News – left at 12:03 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2021-7-1

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for September 9, 2021 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes -June 10, 2021

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

RDC.2021-7-2

“That the minutes of the Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting of June 10, 2021 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Development Variance Permit Applications to Legalize Existing Buildings

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

RDC.2021-7-3

“That the Committee receive the Director of Planning’s Development Variance Permit Applications to Legalize existing Buildings staff report.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the evaluation of each Development Variance Permit on an application-by-application basis and recommendations on all applications being based on land use issues and impacts associated with proposed or existing development. Other agency permits being issued independently of the RDBN Building Permit process was discussed.

AGRICULTURE REPORTS

Veterinary Shortages in the RDBN

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2021-7-4

“That the Committee recommend that the Board write letters to the Ministers of Advanced Education and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in support of the request made to the Province by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) – Society of BC Veterinarians (SBCV) Chapter to make veterinary training a funding priority and increase the number of seats available to BC students at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Chair Parker commented that he will speak to the veterinary shortages with Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries during the 2021 Virtual UBCM Convention Minister Meeting. Discussion took place in regard to forwarding the letter to Regional Districts. Concerns were raised regarding:

- the lack of available seats in the veterinary program available to BC students
- the 20 seats available to BC students at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon is subsidized by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and are significantly oversubscribed
- students can also qualify for international seats
 - o increased annual tuition from approximately \$11,000 to over \$65,000.

BCSPCA Inspections on Commercial Livestock and Poultry Operations

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2021-7-5

“That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator’s BCSPCA Inspections on Commercial Livestock and Poultry Operations memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RURAL REPORTS

Concerns were brought forward regarding the BCSPCA Inspections on Commercial Livestock and Poultry Operations, and the lack of information provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries regarding the implementation of the BCSPCA inspections.

COVID-19 Relief Funds -Remaining Allocation

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

RDC.2021-7-6

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee recommend that the Board approve \$12,740.89 of the COVID-19 Relief Funds to the Community Group Allocations:

- Lake Kathlyn Protection Society – COVID – related contract work
- \$8,430.61
- Colleymount Recreation Society – Insurance, Hydro, Propane
- \$2,710.28
- Arocha (Houston Hatchery) – Outdoor Meeting Space - \$1,600.00.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- continuation of COVID-19 and the potential to allocate the COVID-19 relief funding into 2022
- utilizing COVID-19 relief funding for Broadband strategies
- increasing contingency funding as COVID-19 continues and additional community needs may be identified
- proposed municipal recreation allocation moved to contingency
- contacting municipalities to determine recreation programming needs
- optional federal funding for the Smithers Regional Airport
- staff will bring forward additional information at a future RDBN meeting for consideration.

Break for the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Reconvened at 12:45 p.m.

Universal Broadband Fund and Connectivity Update

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
Seconded by Director Lambert

RDC.2021-7-7

“That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development’s Universal Broadband Fund and Connectivity Update memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Federal Universal Broadband Fund (UBF)
 - o No notifications until after the completion of the Federal election
- staff developing a draft RDBN Connectivity Strategy
 - o bring forward for consideration in October, 2021
 - o opportunity to brainstorm rural connectivity connections and determine options moving forward
- connectivity continually evolves
- Telus connectivity issues in the Fraser Lake, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James areas.

RURAL REPORTS (CONT'D)

Canada Community Building Fund/Gas Tax Fund Top-Up Payment and Update Eligibility Guidelines

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2021-7-8

“That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development’s Canada Community Building Fund/Gas Tax Fund Top-Up Payment and Updated Eligibility Guidelines memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the Canada Community Building Fund/Gas Tax Fund Top-Up Payment and Updated Eligibility Guidelines memorandum. Staff will continue to provide updates as they become available.

Grant in Aid Update: April -June 2021

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Lambert

RDC.2021-7-9

“That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development’s Grant in Aid Update: April – June 2021 memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RDBN Rural Septage

Janette Derksen, Waste Diversion Supervisor provided an overview of RDBN Rural Septage memorandum.

Discussion took place regarding:

- user pay systems
- municipal partnerships to accept LNG camp liquid waste
- annual permit fee of \$1,000 per site, per hauler
- site maintenance of the RDBN septage receiving beds
 - o more volumes more cleanout of the beds is required
 - o Smithers/Telkwa Transfer Station is a lagoon system
 - o Fort Fraser, Burns Lake Transfer Station and Knockholt Landfill are engineered sites
- impact of changes in 2004 to the sewage system standards
 - o rural areas choosing to install more holding tanks vs. septic tank/field systems
- impacts of Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy regulation changes and requirements
- partnering with municipalities
- treatment of ammonia at sites
- utilization of treated waste
- Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA) would be a benefit to addressing infrastructure maintenance/upgrades such as septage receiving beds.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2021-7-10

“That the meeting be adjourned at 1:35 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services