

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE
(Committee of the Whole)

Thursday, November 24, 2016

PRESENT: Chair Bill Miller

Directors Eileen Benedict
Shane Brienen
Mark Fisher
John Illes
Dwayne Lindstrom
Rob MacDougall
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Darcy Repen
Gerry Thiessen

Directors Taylor Bachrach, Town of Smithers
Absent Tom Greenaway, Electoral Area "C" (Fort St. James Rural)
Thomas Liversidge, Village of Granisle
Rob Newell, Electoral Area "G" (Houston Rural)

Alternate Directors Bob Hughes, Electoral Area "C" (Fort St. James Rural)
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle
Andrew Newell, Electoral Area "G" (Houston Rural)

Staff Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
Roxanne Shepherd, Chief Financial Officer
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Others Tom Clement, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Vanderhoof
Lori Egli, Deputy Corporate Officer, District of Vanderhoof
Tara William, Wet'suwet'en First Nation
Debbie West, General Manager, Nee Tahi Buhn Band

Via Tele-Conference: Matthew Boyd, Regional Planning, Work Lead, BC Transit
Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit
Lyn Hall, Mayor, City of Prince George
Linda Harmon, Transit Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Art Kaehn, Chair, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Jillian Merrick, Councillor, City of Prince George
Kathleen Soltis, City Manager, City of Prince George
Tania Wegwitz, MCIP, RPP, Manager of Planning, BC Transit
Anne Yanciw, CAO, Town of Smithers
Lara Beckett, Director, Electoral Area C/Chilako River-Nechako, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George
Jim Martin, Chief Administrative Officer, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.

**AGENDA &
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Illes

RTC.2016-4-1

“That the agenda of the November 24, 2016 Regional Transit Committee Meeting be approved; and further, that the Supplementary Agenda be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Regional Transit Committee
Minutes – November 3, 2016
& Regional Transit Committee
Minutes (In-Camera)
-September 22, 2016

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Illes

RTC.2016-4-2

“That the Regional Transit Committee Minutes of November 3, 2016 be received; and further, that the Regional Transit Committee Minutes (In-Camera) of September 22, 2016 be brought forward to the public.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORRESPONDENCE

City of Prince George
-Highway 16 Inter-Community
Transit

Moved by Director Illes
Seconded by Director Brienen

RTC.2016-4-3

“That the Regional Transit Committee receive the following correspondence:

-City of Prince George regarding Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit Appointees;
-BC Healthy Living Alliance/Heart & Stroke Foundation – *Communities on the Move* Declaration: Creating Smart, Fair and Healthy Transportation Options for All BC Communities.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION ITEM

Regional Transit Service Establishment – Participants and Cost Apportionment Model

Chair Miller mentioned that he has met with Deborah Bowman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Transportation Policy and Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Chief Vivian Tom, Wet’suwet’en First Nation, and along with Director Bachrach, has also met with Chief Wilf Adam, Lake Babine Nation. He mentioned that further meetings are being scheduled to engage with the First Nations communities and provide a formal invitation to participate in the Regional Transit discussions.

Village of Burns Lake

- Agreed to contribute \$12,500 for 2017;
- At this time will not join a Regional District service function unless it includes the entire Regional District;

DISCUSSION ITEM (CONT'D)

- Propose that the Regional District proceed with an elector assent process in 2017 to establish a service for the entire region;
- Develop a costing system in relation to all considerations in order to be equitable to all areas of the region.

District of Vanderhoof

- Committed \$22,460 for 2017;
- Providing notice that the \$22,460 is the total commitment;
- Desire to see an assessment of the service based on ridership for each area;

Village of Fraser Lake

- Passed a motion at Village of Fraser Lake Council Meeting on November 23, 2016 in the amount indicated on the RDBN Chief Administrative Officer's October 26, 2016 memo titled "Transit Committee Preliminary Cost Calculations" for the Village of Fraser Lake;

Village of Telkwa

- Discussed the matter In-Camera.

**SPECIAL IN-CAMERA
MEETING MOTION**

Moved by Director Repen
Seconded by Director Illes

RTC.2016-4-4

"In accordance with Section 90 of the *Community Charter*, it is the opinion of the Board of Directors that matters pertaining to Section 90 (1)(k) – negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public (Highway 16 Transit) or information received relating to these matters must be closed to the public therefore exercise their option of excluding the public for this meeting."

(All/Directors/Majority)

DEFEATED

Town of Smithers

- Resolved to commit \$24,660 towards the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit;
- Resolved to commit approximately \$10,000 to extend the Smithers and District Transit system to provide six days a week service between Smithers and Moricetown.

Village of Telkwa

- Approved the funding request as per the RDBN Chief Administrative Officer's October 26, 2016 memo titled "Transit Committee Preliminary Cost Calculations" for the Village of Telkwa.

District of Houston

- Discussed In-Camera;
 - o Budget considerations have been made;
 - o Will be brought forward at the District of Houston December 6, 2016 Council Meeting.

District of Fort St. James

- Resolved to contribute \$1,776.

DISCUSSION ITEM (CONT'D)

Village of Granisle

- Transit Committee Preliminary Cost Calculations will be discussed at the December 7, 2016 Village of Granisle Council Meeting;
 - o Off Corridor Preliminary Cost Allocation of \$304 was discussed;
 - o Off Corridor cost allocations took into consideration a reduced rate to offset the cost it will require off corridor communities to tie into the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit System;
 - Residents from the Village of Granisle will need to access the service principally at the Topley location.

City of Prince George

- Mayor Lyn Hall and Councillor Jillian Merrick have been tasked with contacting Lheidli T'enneh and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George to discuss Regional Transit;
- Will bring forward the "Transit Committee Preliminary Cost Calculation" of \$50,000 flat rate allocation for Prince George at the next City of Prince George Council Meeting.

Mayor Lyn Hall, City of Prince George requested clarification in regard to the municipalities that are committing to Regional Transit for a one year term. Chair Miller mentioned that they are committing to the "draft" Terms of Reference until there is a better understanding of the ridership. Director Thiessen commented that the District of Vanderhoof is committing to one year with the request that a different funding model be formulated, possibly based on ridership, and that challenges faced by Vanderhoof in accessing the western portion of the service are considered. The service is intended to be a regional service and the current funding model, due to legislative requirements, relies heavily on the municipalities along the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit route. The District of Vanderhoof is willing to contribute to begin the initial process in order to better determine the possible benefits and challenges of Regional Transit to the community. Councillor Merrick, City of Prince George spoke to the challenges in determining where riders reside unless asked to show identification. Discussion took place in regard to having further detailed discussions in the future in regard to funding models.

The hiring of a Transit Coordinator and the ability for the Coordinator to examine the function and make recommendations as the transit system moves forward in the first year was discussed. Director Repen spoke to the benefits to communities that will be receiving riders. Anne Yanciw, CAO, Town of Smithers mentioned that the Town of Smithers considers the Regional Transit Service as an economic development opportunity to support its residents.

Director Fisher mentioned that during the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board meeting held earlier the following resolution was passed: "That the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Electoral Areas "A" (Smithers Rural), "B" (Burns Lake Rural), and "G" (Houston Rural) each contribute \$1,000 toward startup costs for the Regional Transit Service."

Debbie West, General Manager, Nee Tahi Buhn Band has not yet brought the information forward to her council but will do so in the future. Chair Miller commented that he is committed to meeting with Nee Tahi Buhn Band in the future.

Tara William, Wet'suwet'en First Nation indicated that they may have a Council meeting in December wherein the topic will be on the agenda for discussion.

In moving forward, Chair Miller noted that the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and BC Transit are needing a commitment from the majority of the partners by the end of 2016 in order to continue with developing the Regional Transit Service.

DISCUSSION ITEM (CONT'D)

Discussion took place regarding the continuance of the transit service if a partner removes themselves from the service. The following options would need to be reviewed:

1. Continue the services status quo with the reapportionment of costs allocated;
2. Reduce service levels to make the service more affordable; and/or
3. Terminate the service.

Next Steps

- **Linda Harmon, Transit Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit**
 - o Draft service establishment bylaw brought forward to Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development;
 - o Be in a position to sign an operating agreement with BC Transit;
 - o Allow for logistical arrangements;
 - Ongoing process of refining and revising proposed routing;
 - BC Transit – Updated – Detailed Route and Stop Locations – October 24, 2016 document is the most recent update;
 - City of Prince George Stops:
 - o Westgate;
 - o Pine Centre Mall;
 - o Spruce Land Mall;
 - o University of Northern B.C. Hospital; and,
 - o Downtown.
 - Incorporate into an implementation agreement;
 - RFP for Provision of Services;
 - Process will take approximately five months;
 - o Implementation of service Summer 2017.

Ms. Merrick noted the need to determine ridership detail metrics prior to people riding the bus and targeting vulnerable users and users that don't have the means to pay for transport. Further and ongoing discussions will need to continue to take place as the service moves forward.

Director Fisher noted that the service extends from Prince Rupert to Prince George, and questioned the progress of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine in regard to service levels from Moricetown to Prince Rupert. Mr. Fudge noted that there are direct parallels but due to existing transit services and agreements existing transit services will move at a quicker pace.

Director Repen spoke to the possibility of extending funding for the Regional Transit Coordinator in order to assess the transit system for an entire year and determine the effectiveness of the system. Ms. Harmon mentioned that the Regional Transit Coordinator position was to be provided \$80,000 through to the end of March, 2019. Ms. Harmon noted that a review could take place in the future if it is determined that the position may need to be extended time wise. Chair Miller provided a brief overview of the Regional Transit Coordinator posting and position and noted that the Regional Board is considering hiring in January, 2017.

Director Repen noted that the intent of the transit system is to provide safe access to transportation on the Highway 16 corridor but it is also to provide a support system for all rider demographics.

Jim Martin, CAO, Regional District of Fraser-Fort George requested BC Transit provide the document titled "BC Transit – Updated – Detailed Route and Stop Locations – October 24, 2016" and any other documentation related to the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit System. Mr. Fudge indicated that they will provide the information and would be willing to meet with anyone needing further information.

DISCUSSION ITEM (CONT'D)

The Carrier Sekani Family Services Highway of Tears Project has been involved at a higher level and on the original steering committee formulated by the Province. Carrier Sekani Family Services has requested that they be included in the Regional Transit Committee Distribution List to receive information and are interested in partnering in the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit service. Discussion took place regarding new participants to the Regional Transit Committee. They will be financial contributors to the transit service and will follow the Regional Transit Committee “draft” Terms of Reference which will be a steering committee that will address all items regarding transit.

Chair Miller thanked everyone that attended the Regional Transit Committee in person and via teleconference.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Correspondence

Moved by Director Brien
Seconded by Director MacDougall

RTC.2016-4-5

“That the Regional Transit Committee receive the following correspondence:

- Village of Burns Lake – BC Transit Initiative;
- District of Vanderhoof – Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Alternate Director Hughes

RTC.2016-4-6

“That the meeting be adjourned at 2:02 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Bill Miller, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant