

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

RURAL DIRECTORS COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, August 18, 2016

PRESENT: Chair Eileen Benedict

Directors Mark Fisher
Tom Greenaway
Bill Miller
Rob Newell – left at 3:31 p.m.
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen

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

CALL TO ORDER Chair Benedict called the meeting to order at 2:52 p.m.

AGENDA Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2016-7-1 “That the Rural Directors Committee Agenda for August 18, 2016 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

MINUTES

Rural Directors Committee Meeting Minutes -June 9, 2016 Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2016-7-2 “That the minutes of the Rural Directors Committee meeting of June 9, 2016 be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

REPORT

Electoral Area Allocations of Federal Gas Tax Funds -Second Quarter 2016 Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2016-7-3 “That the Rural Directors Committee receive the Finance/Administration Coordinator’s August 4, 2016 memo titled “Electoral Area Allocations of Federal Gas Tax Funds – Second Quarter 2016.”

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

DISCUSSION ITEM

Rural Broadband

Director Newell mentioned that he has been in contact with Robert Richards, Com Com Services Ltd. in regard to providing high speed internet to rural residents in Smithers, Houston and Burns Lake. Mr. Richards indicated that it would take 7-10 days to survey the Smithers, Houston and Burns Lake areas to determine what is needed and what would be required in regard to high speed internet.

Discussion took place regarding the potential cost to complete an assessment for the entire region and the possible usage and need for a tower, or the usage of fibre optics and LTE (Long Term Evolution – a 4G wireless communications standard) to provide adequate internet service to the rural region of the RDBN.

Director Parker noted that ABC Communications is expanding its service in Electoral Area “D” (Fraser Lake Rural) utilizing the LTE network for the majority of the area around Francois Lake and Fraser Lake and to the north boundary of the RDBN Electoral Area “D” (Fraser Lake) boundary. Discussion took place regarding the cost, upload and download speeds for internet through ABC Communications. Director Petersen mentioned that Electoral Area “F” (Vanderhoof Rural) currently has adequate internet coverage in the rural area.

Discussion took place regarding the technical component of connecting LTE and fibre optic to Telus and bandwidth access.

Determining the areas within the RDBN that do not have coverage, the areas that do have coverage, what coverage is available, the Internet Service Providers in the area, and the ability to connect to Telus was discussed.

Director Newell brought forward the need to move forward in a timely manner in order to potentially use available grant funding opportunities. Director Miller spoke of the Connecting British Columbia program administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust. Director Parker mentioned that ABC Communications has received funding in order to expand its services and a requirement in applying for grant funding is to identify the areas in which they will be serving.

Discussion took place regarding the backbone of Telus bandwidth and the slowing of internet speeds when usage increases. The service gap between ISP (Internet Service Providers) companies in the region was discussed. The potential of having the ISP companies attend a future RDBN meeting was brought forward for discussion.

Internet Service Information Request for Proposal

Moved by Director Fisher
Seconded by Director Miller

RDC.2016-7-4

“That the Rural Directors Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors request staff to consult with a Communications Consultant to draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) that will outline the tangible information that is required to determine the high speed internet needs of rural RDBN; and further, that the RFP include the deliverables required to have high speed internet throughout rural RDBN; and further, that staff investigate the possibility of utilizing Federal Gas Tax funds or other funding for the costs of developing the RFP.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Miller

RDC.2016-7-5

“That the meeting be adjourned at 3:34 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Eileen Benedict, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant