



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
AGENDA**

Thursday, October 7, 2021

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>First Nations Acknowledgement</u>	
	<u>AGENDA- September 9, 2021</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
xx	Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - September 9, 2021	Approve
	<u>REPORTS</u>	
xx	Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services – 2022 UBCM Community Resilience Investment Grant	Recommendation
	<u>SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA</u>	
	<u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Thursday, September 9, 2021

PRESENT: Chair Gerry Thiessen

Directors Gladys Atrill – via Zoom
Shane Brien
Mark Fisher
Dolores Funk
Tom Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Linda McGuire – via Teleconference
Annette Morgan
Bob Motion – via Zoom
Chris Newell
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Michael Riis-Christianson
Sarrah Storey – via Zoom

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Taddea Kunkel, First Nations Liaison – left at 11:38 a.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Media Eddie Huband, Lakes District News

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thiessen called the meeting to order at 11:13 a.m.

OATH OF OFFICE

Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer administered the Oath of Office to Annette Morgan, Director, Village of Telkwa.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Greenaway

C.W.2021-8-1

“That the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 9, 2021 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole
Minutes – July 15, 2021

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Lambert

C.W.2021-8-2

“That the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of July 15, 2021 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Northern BC Solid Waste Management Forum -October 12 & 13, 2021 (Virtual)

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
Seconded by Director Parker

C.W.2021-8-3

“That the Rural Directors be authorized to attend the Virtual Northern BC Solid Waste Management Forum on October 12 & 13, 2021.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Coast Waste Management Association 2021 Conference

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Funk

C.W.2021-8-4

“That the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Board of Directors that Director Fisher be authorized to attend the Coast Waste Management Association 2021 Conference to be held October 20-22, 2021 in Victoria, B.C.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Moved by Director Funk
Seconded by Director Fisher

C.W.2021-8-5

“That the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Board the approval of the amended Statutory and Legal Holidays Policy as presented.”

Opposed: Director Fisher

CARRIED

(All/Directors/Majority)

Discussion took place regarding the Federal and Provincial Government implementation of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

2021 Remuneration Bylaw Update

The following was discussed:

- Reducing the Directors basic remuneration in implementation of extended health and dental benefits
 - o Options for Directors that currently have benefits outside the RDBN
 - o Directors not participating in RDBN benefits will not have a reduction in remuneration
- Section 4 (c)– Interpretation and Application
 - o Amend Section 4 (c) to read “Disputes regarding Directors’ Remuneration and Expense Reports shall be forwarded to the RDBN Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Administrative Officer for resolution.
- Candidate attraction – four-year term – similar to attracting employees
- Time and commitment of Directors
- Remuneration remaining at the current allocation with benefits added in addition to the basic remuneration.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

2021 Remuneration Bylaw Update

Moved by Director Brien
Seconded by Director Lambert

C.W.2021-8-6

“That staff bring back a bylaw to amend Bylaw No. 1837 a Bylaw for Directors’ Remuneration to a future Board Meeting with the proposed updates including: amending Section 4 (c) – Interpretation and Application; and further, that Director’s basic remuneration remains at the current rate with the rate of benefits being added.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

BC Emergency Health Services

Director McGuire mentioned that the Village of Granisle met with BC Emergency Health Services regarding Ambulance Service. She will forward the information to the Board.

Director Brien noted the District of Houston also had a meeting with BCEHS and a number of the concerns raised are being addressed.

Chair Thiessen spoke of inviting BCEHS to a future meeting.

Director Fisher commented that the Northwest Regional Hospital District has meetings with Adrian Dix, Minister of Health September 13th and Northern Health on September 15th during the 2021 Virtual UBCM Convention.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Brien
Seconded by Director Lambert

C.W.2021-8-7

“That the meeting be adjourned at 12:03 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Gerry Thiessen, Chair

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY NECHAKO STAFF REPORT

TO: Chair Thiessen and the Board of Directors
FROM: Protective Services
DATE: October 7, 2021
SUBJECT: **2022 UBCM Community Resilience Investment Grant**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board support a UBCM Community Resilience grant application that includes a letter requesting that they waive the stipulation that rebate funding can only be 50% of the funding for the activities listed in Table 3.

VOTING: All/Directors/Majority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2021, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) can reapply to the UBCM Community Resiliency Investment grant (CRI) to support the RDBN FireSmart program.

The 2022 CRI grant limits FireSmart Home Rebates to 50% of the granted "Development Considerations" funding. Staff believe the "Development Considerations" activities are cost-prohibitive and more suitable to higher density populations and municipal governments. Staff are requesting permission to send a letter to CRI, along with the application, asking that they waive this stipulation for the RDBN.

Written by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lindsay King", written over a horizontal line.

Lindsay King
FireSmart Educator

Reviewed by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah Jones-Middleton", written over a horizontal line.

Deborah Jones-Middleton
Director of Protective Services

And

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jason Lewellyn", written over a horizontal line.

Jason Lewellyn
Director of Planning

Attachment:

Letter to the Honourable Katrine Conroy re: 2022 Stream 1 Community Resilience Grant Funding Restrictions

BACKGROUND:

The RDBN received funding for the FireSmart program for 2020 and 2021 for a full-time FireSmart Educator, FireSmart Summer Student, public outreach events, and private home assessments, including training and travel. The funding also included a rebate program that provided residents with 50% of eligible expenses to a maximum of \$500 for costs related to FireSmarting their property. This rebate program has been an essential component of the FireSmart Program and is why many residents consent to a private home assessment and learning more about FireSmart.

CRI GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

The 2022 Grant Application has changed from previous grant funding to “rebates are limited to 50% of the total cost of the eligible activities identified in Table 3.” Table 3 includes the following activities:

1. Amend Official Community Plans, Comprehensive Community Plans and/or land use, engineering, and public works bylaws to incorporate FireSmart principles.
2. Revise landscaping requirements in zoning and development permit documents to require fire resistant landscaping or include other FireSmart considerations.
3. Establish Development Permit Areas for Wildfire Hazard in order to establish requirements for the exterior design and finish of buildings.
4. Include wildfire prevention and suppression considerations in the design of subdivisions (e.g. road widths, turning radius for emergency vehicles, and access and egress points).
5. Amend referral process for new developments to ensure multiple departments, including the fire department and/or emergency management personnel, are included.

DISCUSSION:

Activity 1:

All the RDBN’s Official Community Plans and land use bylaws have been developed with consideration of FireSmart considerations and all OCPs have incorporated FireSmart principles. The Planning Department reviews these principles regularly. This process has no significant cost and includes the staff time necessary to ensure bylaws follow best practices appropriate for the RDBN.

Activity 2:

Given the rural character of the RDBN the RDBN has limited landscaping requirements in the zoning bylaw. Achieving fire-resistant landscaping through regulation would have numerous enforcement and implementation challenges, given the low-density character of the region. The costs to make the necessary changes to the zoning bylaw would include limited staff time. The highest cost would be the long-term workload for staff to review and withhold building permits for compliance with the landscaping regulations and associated enforcement activity.

Activity 3:

Given the rural character of the RDBN the RDBN does not utilize its development permit areas authority. Achieving fire-resistant landscaping through a development permit approval process would also have several enforcement and implementation challenges given the RDBN's low population density. The development permit approval process requires rural property owners to submit landscaping and development plans that meet FireSmart principles to the Board for approval and issuance of a permit. The RDBN may delegate approval to staff. The permit must then be registered on each properties title so future

property owners know that they cannot change landscaping and site development contrary to the permit without RDBN consent. The costs to make the necessary changes to the Official Community Plans and zoning bylaw would require limited staff time. The most notable cost would be the long-term workload for staff to process development permit applications for rural property development and enforcement of compliance with the regulations. Implementing development permits in any meaningful way would require the hiring of at least one additional staff person.

Activity 4:

The RDBN is not responsible for regulating subdivisions in rural areas. This activity is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. The RDBN could implement bylaws that increased rural development standards concerning road widths, turning radius for emergency vehicles, and access and egress. The costs to develop a bylaw implementing subdivision standards over and above the Provincial standard would include the necessary staff time. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure would be responsible for implementing this bylaw; however, the RDBN would have to process requests to vary those standards occasionally.

Activity 5:

The RDBN can, at no notable cost, amend the referral process for new developments to include fire departments and/or emergency management personnel in this process. Planning Department staff already include Fire Department and FireSmart staff when necessary and at their discretion.

Summary:

The RDBN has considered how best to include FireSmart principles in all its development regulations. Staff are eager to take the necessary steps to improve its bylaws and processes to facilitate FireSmart development. However, introducing the above noted new regulations to enforce FireSmart principles will have a notable long-term budget impact, and residents may not receive this level of regulation well. Implementing landscaping regulations and development permit regulations on low-density rural residential areas is challenging. These regulations are more commonly and successfully implemented in urban environments and higher-density rural areas.

Staff are concerned that the year-to-year grant funding currently being offered will not adequately cover the implementation costs (particularly in the long term), the regulations would not be well received by the public and compliance would be exceedingly low, and the efforts would be ineffectual in facilitating FireSmart development in the rural area. This grant stipulation seems more appropriate to an urban context. The focus of resources on public education and awareness is seen as a much more effective strategy. Staff also believe that without the funding opportunity for residents to FireSmart their properties the number of residents interested in having an assessment would be greatly diminished.

Despite these concerns, the Planning and Protective Services Departments are willing to further examine the possibility of implementing these activities with the Boards direction.



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REGIONAL DISTRICT
OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
"A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN OUR REGION"

October 7, 2021

Honourable Katrine Conroy

Via email: FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Re: 2022 Stream 1 Community Resilience Grant Funding Restrictions

Dear Minister Conroy,

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) presents in this letter some concerns regarding the 2022 Stream 1 FireSmart Funding. For two years, the RDBN has received FireSmart funding. The grant has included a rebate program that provided residents with 50% of eligible expenses to a maximum of \$500 for costs related to FireSmarting their property. This rebate program has been an essential component of the FireSmart Program and is why many residents consent to a private home assessment and learn more about FireSmart.

The 2022 FireSmart Community and Supports Program & Application Guide stipulates that home rebates are now limited to 50% of the total cost of the eligible activities identified below.

- Amend Official Community Plans, Comprehensive Community Plans and/or land use, engineering, and public works bylaws to incorporate FireSmart principles.
- Revise landscaping requirements in zoning and development permit documents to require fire resistant landscaping or include other FireSmart considerations.
- Establish Development Permit Areas for Wildfire Hazard in order to establish requirements for the exterior design and finish of buildings.
- Include wildfire prevention and suppression considerations in the design of subdivisions (e.g. road widths, turning radius for emergency vehicles, and access and egress points).
- Amend referral process for new developments to ensure multiple departments, including the fire department and/or emergency management personnel, are included.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako's Protective Services and Planning departments have discussed the possibility of implementing the activities listed above. The geographic size of the RDBN and its relatively low tax base ultimately make these activities expensive and challenging to implement. The RDBN is concerned that year-to-year grant funding cannot assure that these activities would be enforced and maintained satisfactorily. In this light, this grant stipulation seems more appropriate to an urban or highly populated regional context where the tax-base likely already supports such widespread bylaw development and implementation.

This grant stipulation is concerning since the RDBN is prone to wildfires, as illustrated in recent wildfire seasons. Furthermore, wildfire suppression efforts often prioritize more populated regions when competing for resources, exacerbating these inequalities.

MUNICIPALITIES:

SMITHERS FORT ST. JAMES
VANDERHOOF FRASER LAKE
HOUSTON TELKWA
BURNS LAKE GRANISLE

ELECTORAL AREAS:

A - SMITHERS RURAL E - OOTSA LAKE/FRANCOIS LAKE
B - BURNS LAKE RURAL F - VANDERHOOF RURAL
C - FORT ST. JAMES RURAL G - HOUSTON RURAL
D - FRASER LAKE RURAL

INQUIRIES@RDBN.BC.CA
WWW.RDBN.BC.CA

PH: 250-692-3195
FX: 250-692-3305
TF: 800-320-3339

The RDBN requests that it be exempt from this requirement and allowed to continue administrating FireSmart Home Rebates. Despite the relatively insignificant amount of funding allocated to the FireSmart Home Rebates in the RDBN (\$5,662.50 to date in the 2021 program year), it has been indispensable in encouraging homeowners to FireSmart their properties and promoting the program in general. Homeowners who received the FireSmart Home Rebate under the 2021 grant (to date) submitted expenses amounting to \$74,736.41. Every dollar rebated has resulted in another twelve dollars spent by RDBN homeowners, and this does not include costs incurred by the homeowners for activities not rebated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gerry Thiessen
Chair

Cc: Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations
Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs