

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Thursday, September 3, 2015

PRESENT: Chairperson Bill Miller

Directors Taylor Bachrach
Eileen Benedict
Shane Brien
Mark Fisher
Dwayne Lindstrom
Rob MacDougall
Rob Newell – arrived at 11:34 a.m.
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Darcy Repen
Luke Strimbold
Gerry Thiessen

Directors Absent Tom Greenaway, Electoral Area “C” (Fort St. James Rural)
Thomas Liversidge, Village of Granisle

Alternate Directors Bob Hughes, Electoral Area “C” (Fort St. James Rural)
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle

Staff Gail Chapman, Chief Administrative Officer
Janine Dougall, Director of Environmental Services
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – arrived at 12:20 p.m., left at 12:48 p.m., returned at 12:54 p.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Other Nathan Cullen, MP Skeena Bulkley Valley, New Democratic Party – arrived 10:37 a.m., left at 12:20 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Brien

C.W.2015-6-1

“That the Agenda of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole meeting of September 3, 2015 be approved; and further that the Supplementary Agenda be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole Minutes – June 11, 2015

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Petersen

C.W.2015-6-2

“That the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of June 11, 2015 be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

REPORT

RDBN Staff Attendance at
UBCM Convention, 2015

Moved by Director Repen
Seconded by Director Bachrach

C.W.2015-6-3

“That the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors that it endorse sending Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning/Interim Deputy Administrator to the 2015 UBCM Convention in Vancouver, in place of the RDBN CAO.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

NATHAN CULLEN, MP Skeena Bulkley Valley, New Democratic Party

Chair Miller welcomed Nathan Cullen, MP Skeena Bulkley Valley, New Democratic Party.

Mr. Cullen thanked the Regional Board of Directors for a chance to come and present to the Board.

He mentioned that he is currently assisting a colleague in regard to the Syrian refugee crisis that has recently taken place.

Mr. Cullen mentioned that with the writ being dropped on August 1, 2015 and ending October 19, 2015 that this is the longest Federal Election. With the election being a longer period of time it also increases the cost by an additional \$200-\$300 million.

He spoke to the early commitments made by the New Democratic Party (NDP) during the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Convention in Edmonton, June 4-8, 2015 to add an extra cent on the gas tax revenues to Regional Districts and Municipalities.

Mr. Cullen noted the recession that Canada has experienced in the early part of 2015 and the negative growth that has occurred. The economy is fragile and is experiencing the lowest job creation rate in two years in comparison to the past 45 years. He noted that infrastructure is a hallmark to moving forward in tough economic times. The NDP is planning to have infrastructure projects aligned to allow for a shovel ready approach if the NDP is elected. The NDP is also committed to a balanced budget the first year. If elected they will assume the last quarter current budget and are committed to balancing the budget for the 2016-2017 budget year.

He noted that consumer affairs are key: for example the current low price per barrel of oil is not reflected at the pumps. Mr. Cullen spoke of a study completed on the disconnect in regard to oil prices and prices at the fuel pumps and the analogy “rocket up and feather down” was discussed. If oil prices are up the price at the pump is up, if oil prices drop the price at the pump feathers down. There has been the suggestion of implementing a Gas Ombudsperson. Another key factor is the lack of refining capacity in Canada. Chair Miller mentioned that fuel prices at the pump have a direct effect on economic growth.

Chair Miller suggested the need for Federal Parliament and the Provincial Legislature to work together and find solutions and consensus.

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

NATHAN CULLEN, MP Skeena Bulkley Valley, New Democratic Party

Mr. Cullen spoke of the Unisto'ot'en Camp south of Houston. Concerns have been brought forward in regard for the potential for an escalation of violence and the inconsistency as to who is allowed into the area. Mr. Cullen mentioned that representatives from the Unisto'ot'en and the RCMP are working on communication. He noted that rumours from the media and social media have had an impact and he has attempted to correct them in order to keep the atmosphere neutral. Director Strimbold asked at what point and whose role is it to find a resolution to the issue. Mr. Cullen commented that pipelines are an issue and will continue to be, he mentioned that the land issues need to be resolved. It creates uncertainty for investors and is overwhelming for citizens, First Nations, and non-First Nations. He mentioned the importance of having the province engaged also.

Director Thiessen noted the refugee crisis and spoke to the churches sponsoring refugees in the past but those opportunities do not seem to be available today. What can communities do to assist in the refugee crisis? Mr. Cullen explained that during the Vietnam crisis and the faith sponsorships during that time Canada received 60,000 refugees but currently faith based applications are being rejected outright. In the last three years Canada has received approximately 1,000 refugees. He also stated that Turkey has offered assistance to Canada but Canada has not moved forward.

Director Thiessen spoke to concerns that there has been no new rental housing projects and the elimination of capital gains to assist in reinvesting in light rental housing projects would be very beneficial. People have to often leave their communities or find poorer housing because of the lack of affordable rental housing. Mr. Cullen mentioned that the NDP has committed to 10,000 housing units across Canada in the first year. They are working with CMHC and developing plans that can be customized for each community to address its needs. He noted that the pace of making changes to the capital gains depends on the budget. He also mentioned that Canada is the only country that doesn't have a national housing strategy.

Alternate Director Hughes commented on the issues of internet/cell coverage in the region. He mentioned the importance and necessity of having internet and hopes there can be more focus on coverage in the region. Alternate Director Hughes stated concerns regarding the frequencies auctioned by Industry Canada and the lack of acknowledgement and compensation to people using those frequencies. Mr. Cullen reported that Telus has shown interest in completing coverage along Highway 16. Mr. Cullen mentioned that Netflix takes up approximately 2/3 of broadband width. He spoke to connectivity needing to be a joint effort between industry and government. Director McGuire thanked Mr. Cullen for taking a letter forward from the Village of Granisle in regard to receiving funding through the Connecting Canadians Grant Funding for cell coverage.

Director McGuire inquired as to the grant funding that was put on hold recently until the federal election is complete. Mr. Cullen noted that 4-5 communities that have received letters of support but have been requested to delay announcement of funds received. The NDP has stated that if an organization has in hand a letter of approval from the federal government that money is in the budget for the 2015 budget year and will be provided. He stated that organizations should announce that they have received funding but understands that due to the direction provided they are withholding announcing funding received.

Chair Miller brought forward the resolution forwarded to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in regard to the \$800 million that was to be allocated to Mountain Pine Beetle impacted areas and communities. Mr. Cullen reported that approximately \$200 million of those funds have been allocated but when inquiring about the remaining funds it no longer appears to be a part of the budget. He mentioned that he cannot commit to providing the funds as there requires further research into the actual location of the funds.

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

NATHAN CULLEN, MP Skeena Bulkley Valley, New Democratic Party

Director Repen asked if the NDP had a plan to reinvest in rural areas and draw human resources to support an evolution in economy and provide stability to the country. Mr. Cullen mentioned the need to have manufacturing abilities in the country and that Canada needs to refine its raw resources in country. He noted that BC currently exports 97% of its raw logs and that in research and development Canada ranks 30 out of 30 developed countries. He spoke to the need to get smarter in order to get better at managing resources. Mr. Cullen also stated that Canada has the lowest rate of patents and that innovation is also a key component to success. Mr. Cullen reported that schools like BCIT (British Columbia Institute of Technology) are also moving forward with innovative ideas.

Mr. Cullen noted that the NDP has committed to reducing the small business tax rate by 25% along with a \$40 million innovation fund and an accelerated capital cost allowance to allow to write down equipment quicker.

He mentioned that funds had been allocated to Elections Canada to conduct pilot projects for online voting but unfortunately that funding was cut and the project was not able to move forward.

Discussion took place regarding the senate and the issues it faces. Reviewing the senate requires opening the constitution and requires conversations with the provinces.

Mr. Cullen commented that if communities are not on the campaign debate list to please write to his campaign and request an opportunity to have Mr. Cullen come to their community.

Director MacDougall spoke of the challenges and issues with CN and companies not able to get products to market due to lack of rail service. He also asked Mr. Cullen about the Bills being brought forward. Mr. Cullen mentioned that he had introduced a bill that was defeated regarding the banning of raw bulk exports off the coast of Prince Rupert regarding Enbridge. One of the Private Members Bills being brought forward is in regard to notification for dangerous goods moving through communities via rail. He has had conversations with the National Fire Chiefs Association and wanted a policy in place for pre-notification to communities. He expressed his frustration regarding the liability and lack of training for volunteer fire departments in regard to what is being transported through communities. The National Fire Chiefs Association has indicated they are having good dialogue with the Transportation Safety Board and will keep moving forward. He commented that there should be penalties in place for CN when rail cars are not being supplied to get product to market.

Chair Miller thanked Mr. Cullen for attending the meeting.

Break for lunch at 11:37 a.m.

Reconvened at 12:20 p.m.

REPORT

Re-Use Shed Closure and Salvaging Ban

Director McGuire expressed her concerns that not all communities should have the same guidelines for the reuse sheds as each community is different. Janine Dougall, Director of Environmental Services noted that Granisle and Southside may not have the same level of issues that the other facilities in the region have encountered but they have had issues also. Discussion took place regarding the need to have consistent service levels in the region and closing the re-use sheds initially until a solution could be found.

Re-Use Shed Closure and Salvaging Ban (CONT'D)

Chair Miller spoke to the necessity of the decision to address the risk and liabilities to staff, volunteers and the public.

Directors Repen, Fisher and Bachrach met at the Smithers Telkwa Transfer Station and reviewed possible solutions for the safety issues. Director Repen will provide the information to staff.

The re-use sheds will be closed as soon as reasonably possible if the Regional Board moves forward with the recommendations.

Discussion took place regarding the need to find a solution to the issues associated with the re-use sheds. The need to move forward as soon as possible was discussed.

Discussion took place regarding the media release titled "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Media Release –Closure of Re-Use Sheds and Banning of Salvaging Activities at Solid Waste Management Facilities."

A timeline in regard to the closure of the re-use sheds along with the media outlets utilized was outlined.

Input provided at the public meetings along with any input provided to the RDBN, be it verbal or written, will be recorded and considered during the public consultation process.

Discussion took place regarding the need to have the public meetings relatively soon and the scheduling of those meetings. Staff will be working with the Regional Board of Directors this afternoon and tomorrow to schedule public meetings at the discretion of the Regional Board of Directors schedules.

Re-Use Shed Closure and Salvaging Ban

Moved by Alternate Director McGuire
Seconded by Alternate Director Hughes

C.W.2015-6-4

1. "That the Committee of the Whole receive the Director of Environmental Services' August 25, 2015 memo titled "Re-Use Shed Closure and Salvaging Ban."
2. Further, that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors authorize staff to issue the media release titled "Closure of Re-Use Sheds and Banning of Salvaging Activities at Solid Waste Management Facilities."
3. Further, that the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors authorize staff to proceed with the public meetings as outlined."

Re-Use Shed Closure and Salvaging Ban (CONT'D)

Moved by Director Fisher
Seconded by Director Bachrach

C.W.2015-6-5

“That Motion C.W.2015-6-4 be amended to include the date of each community meeting on the closure notices.”

Opposed: Dir. Benedict CARRIED
 Dir. Brienen
 Dir. MacDougall

(All/Directors/Majority)

“The question be called on Motion C.W.2015-6-4 as amended.”

Opposed: Dir. Bachrach
 Dir. Fisher
 Alt. Dir. Hughes
 Alt. Dir. McGuire
 Dir. MacDougall

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED

DISCUSSION

1. Guiding Principles – Airshed, Water Management and Solid Waste

Director Reppen noted the need for a combination of public education and the utilization of best practices by industry, businesses and residents in regard to airshed, water use and solid waste management in the region. This is a key component to a healthy economically viable region.

Discussion took place in regard to the possible impacts to the region and the cost that may be borne by the region in regard to future development. The importance of welcoming new businesses and industry and encouraging growth in the region was also discussed.

Director Fisher drafted and read an outline of a guiding principle. He will provide the information to the Regional Board of Directors and staff for further comment and the statement will be brought forward at a future meeting.

Director Thiessen noted concerns regarding air quality and the District of Vanderhoof Council has recently supported an initiative with students in the community called the David Suzuki Blue Dot Project. The project aims to add environmental rights into the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom by gathering support from seven out of 10 provinces.

Discussion took place regarding the strategic plan of the Regional Board and the priorities of the Board along with staffing implications.

Director MacDougall spoke to individual community initiatives that could be shared across the region.

Outdoor wood burning stoves and the issues and air quality impacts associated with the emissions from the units was discussed. Director Thiessen stated that everyone has a right to free air and access to water.

DISCUSSION (CONT'D)

Director Bachrach commented on the permit associated with the development of a pellet plant in Smithers along with the air particulates from CN Rail Trains in communities.

Director Newell mentioned that the potential for negative impacts expand beyond the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and include neighboring Regional Districts in northwest B.C.

2. TransCanada Timber Salvage Strategy

Chair Miller commented that the TransCanada Timber Salvage Strategy relates to the guiding principles in regard to airshed, water management and solid waste management.

NEW BUSINESS

Cell Service to Granisle

Alternate Director McGuire mentioned that Grainisle now has cell service.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Brien

C.W.2015-6-6

“That the meeting be adjourned at 1:37 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Bill Miller, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant