

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE
(Committee of the Whole)

Thursday, January 26, 2017

PRESENT: Chair Taylor Bachrach

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

Directors Rob Newell, Electoral Area "G" (Houston Rural)
Absent Thomas Liversidge, Village of Granisle

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

Others Chris Beach, Mayor, Village of Burns Lake
Albert Gerow, Economic Development Officer, Burns Lake Band
Linda Harmon, Transit Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of
Transportation and Infrastructure
Kevin Schubert, Director, Regional Transit Systems, BC Transit
Tanya Stump, Councillor, Nadleh Whut'en Band
Sheryl Worthing, CAO, Village of Burns Lake

Via Tele- Tom Clement, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Vanderhoof
Conference: – arrived at 1:12 p.m.
Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit
Lyn Hall, Mayor, City of Prince George
Terri McConnochie, Councillor, City of Prince George
Jillian Merrick, Councillor, City of Prince George
Dyra Pridham, Executive Assistant, City of Prince George
Tiina Schaeffer, Manager of Sustainable Community Development and
Transit, City of Prince George
Kathleen Soltis, City Manager, City of Prince George
Anne Yanciw, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Smithers
Jim Martin, Chief Administrative Officer, Regional District of Fraser-Fort
George

Media Flavio Nienow, LD News – left at 1:41 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER Chair Bachrach called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

**AGENDA &
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Repen

RTC.2017-1-1

"That the agenda of the January 26, 2017 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 24, 2016

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Petersen

RTC.2017-1-2

"That the Regional Transit Committee Minutes of November 24, 2016 be received."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORT

Update on Highway 16
Regional Para-Transit Service
Establishment

Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Illes

RTC.2017-1-3

"That the Regional Transit Committee receive the Chief Administrative Officer's January 19, 2017 memo titled "Update on Highway 16 Regional Para-Transit Service Establishment."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Melany de Weerd, CAO mentioned that the RDBN has received a response and approval of the adoption of Bylaw No. 1790 from the following municipalities:

- Fort St. James
- Fraser Lake
- Granisle
- Houston
- Telkwa and,
- Smithers.

The District of Vanderhoof and Village of Burns Lake are giving further consideration of the "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016."

Mayor Lyn Hall, City of Prince George clarified that the City of Prince George has passed a resolution of support for one year of funding at this time. They have requested that the RDBN provide a letter outlining what is being requested of them (number of years, draft terms of agreement) to present to their Council for further consideration.

REPORT (CONT'D)

Director Repen brought forward the Regional Transit Committee Terms of Reference and spoke of the parameters allowing the withdrawal of a funding partner from the committee and that approval will be require by a 2/3 majority vote from the Regional Board. He discussed needing to bring it forward to the Village of Telkwa Council members.

Chair Bachrach commented that if a funding partner withdrew from the service different funding options for the remaining partners would need to be considered. The funds would need to be distributed amongst the remaining partners, service levels could be adjusted or the service would come to an end.

Chair Bachrach spoke of the incredible opportunity that has been provided in regard to the Highway 16 Transit funding model being offered by the Province. He also noted the partnerships between regional municipalities and First Nations working to move the service forward. Transportation along the Highway 16 corridor has been a topic of discussion for a number of years and the proposed transit system is a positive step moving forward. Chair Bachrach questioned what could be done to alleviate concerns and move forward with the Highway 16 Transit system.

Discussion took place regarding the work completed thus far and that further discussion with MoTI and BC Transit may assist to provide answers in regard to some of the concerns brought forward.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

DELEGATION

Linda Harmon, Transit and Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Kevin Schubert, Director, Regional Transit Systems, BC Transit RE: Regional Transit Service

Chair Bachrach welcomed Linda Harmon, Transit and Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Kevin Schubert, Director, Regional Transit Systems, BC Transit.

Ms. Harmon congratulated Smithers and Chief Mitchell, Morcietown Band for moving forward and building their partnership along with the immense opportunity that will be provided in regard to the expanded transportation between Smithers and Morcietown.

Ms. Harmon recognized everyone that has worked together in regard to the Highway 16 Transit Service and acknowledged the concerns that have been brought forward. She stated that the Province has addressed the concerns of the three year current operating funding model of 2/3 provincial funding and 1/3 local government funding and the funding model will be extended to five years. This will match the five year duration of the Transit Master Agreement.

Concerns were brought forward to the Province in regard to the amount of funding and the length of time for the Regional Transit Coordinator position to be in place. The effort to build the new service and communication being a key component the indication is that the Regional Transit Coordinator position will require a larger commitment than what was originally offered by the Province. The Province's original offer of \$80,000 over two years with the first year being full time and the second year being a reduced work week. The Province has reviewed the concern and will increase the funding for a three year period. Ms. de Weerdts noted the RDBN has been reviewing the position and determined that if the service moves forward a fulltime position for a longer period of time would be in the best interest of the service. Ms.

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

Linda Harmon, Transit and Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Kevin Schubert, Director, Regional Transit Systems, BC Transit RE: Regional Transit Service

Harmon indicated the funding will be \$60,000 per year for a total of three years. The position will support the operating transit system and will be in agreement with BC Transit.

Director Repen mentioned that the Village of Telkwa Council has expressed concern in regard to the amount of flexibility that will be given in regard to the design of the service. He mentioned that concerns have also been expressed in regard to the ability to have influence to make change within the partnership. He spoke to the need to ensure that the partners have the ability to have a strong influence in the areas of performance of the service to better suit the needs of the ridership as the service develops.

Mr. Schubert noted that he was a part of the original advisory committee in regard to Highway 16 Regional Transit and has recently returned and noted the progress that has been made. He acknowledged that this is a key stage in the process and spoke of the amount of consultation and interaction that has taken place to this point in the process. He mentioned in the past when BC Transit has been entering into a new service arrangement there has never been the amount of Provincial funding available that has been provided for the Highway 16 Regional Transit Service. This opportunity will allow the time to develop and evolve the service which can take two to three years to grow and evolve. Mr. Schubert mentioned that the service will most likely require adjustments and changes moving forward to best fit the needs of the region. In the past, communities within the region have requested that BC Transit conduct feasibility studies to initiate transit but the opportunity at that time did not include the subsidized funding from the province. The initiation of the Highway 16 Regional Transit service is not unlike other new services initiated throughout the province. BC Transit partners and works with local governments to develop service plans and shared service models with modifications where needed. BC Transit can also provide resources to support changes. The Regional Transit Coordinator position is an important positive first step and may become a declining need moving forward when BC Transit resources can be fully utilized.

Director Miller stated the process needs to be dynamic and ongoing and have the ability to grow and adapt to the needs of the communities and riders. In meeting with First Nations, Director Miller spoke of their support and recognition of being beneficiaries of the transit system. First Nations participation is critical to the roll out and success of a regional transit system. The Regional Transit Committee that includes all First Nations, municipalities and stakeholders requires strength and responsiveness.

The Highway 16 Community Transportation Funding Program was discussed. Ms. Harmon mentioned that the funding program is a component of the 5 Point Transportation Action Plan for Highway 16 outlined by the MoTI. Although the Highway 16 Regional Transit system has yet to be finalized and applications have been accepted for the Highway 16 Community Transportation Funding Program, all elements will need to work together to compliment and complete the program. The Community Transportation Grant Program has been vastly oversubscribed in dollar requests and numbers. The evaluations have been completed and provided to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure for recommendations. The desire is for all components to coordinate and move forward including and with assistance of the Regional Transit Coordinator position.

Director Repen spoke to the safety portion of the Highway of Tears initiative and the installation of cameras along the corridor. He mentioned that there did not seem to be consultation as to the placement of the cameras and the need for the cameras to be located in areas that are frequented by hitchhikers. He spoke to the importance of increasing the safety of hitchhikers by locating cameras in areas where hitch hikers are and target at risk populations. He encouraged and voiced the importance of utilizing social media to assist in hitchhiker safety.

CORRESPONDENCE

Village of Telkwa – Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016 Moved by Director Repen
Seconded by Director Miller

RTC.2017-1-4 “That the Regional Transit Committee receive the correspondence from the Village of Telkwa RE: Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

INVITATION

The Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure and the Honourable John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations & Reconciliation and MLA of Nechako Lakes – Important Announcement Regarding the Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan – Jan 27, 2017 – Smithers, B.C. Moved by Director Miller
Seconded by Director Illes

RTC.2017-1-5 “That the Regional Transit Committee receive the invitation from the Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Honourable John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and MLA of Nechako Lakes – Important Announcement Regarding the Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan – January 27, 2017 – Smithers, B.C.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SPECIAL IN-CAMERA MEETING MOTION

Moved by Director Brien
Seconded by Director Repen

RTC.2017-1-6 “In accordance with Section 90 and 91 of the *Community Charter*, it is the opinion of the Board of Directors that matters pertaining to Section 90 (2)(b) and 91 (2)(b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party (Highway 16 Transit) or information received relating to these matters must be closed to the public. If all or part of a meeting is closed to the public, the Board may allow a person other than municipal officers and employees to attend if the Board considers this necessary.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Repen
Seconded by Director Miller

RTC.2017-1-7

"That the meeting be adjourned at 1:42 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Taylor Bachrach, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant