

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Thursday, January 14, 2021

PRESENT: Chair Gerry Thiessen

Directors Gladys Atrill
Shane Brienen
Mark Fisher
Dolores Funk
Tom Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Linda McGuire
Bob Motion
Chris Newell
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Michael Riis-Christianson
Sarrah Storey

Director Absent Brad Layton, Village of Telkwa

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services – left at 11:32 a.m.
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 11:32 a.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Others Taylor Bachrach, MP Skeena-Bulkley Valley – left at 11:45 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thiessen called the meeting to order at 10:52 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Funk

C.W.2021-1-1

“That the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole meeting of January 14, 2021 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole
Minutes – November 5, 2020

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Parker

C.W.2021-1-2

“That the Committee of the Whole meeting minutes of October 8, 2020 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

TAYLOR BACHRACH, MP, SKEENA-BULKLEY VALLEY RE: CN Issues

Chair Thiessen welcomed Taylor Bachrach, MP, Skeena-Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Bachrach spoke of the following:

- A past meeting with CN and Regional Fire Chiefs after the rail disaster in Lac-Megantic, Quebec
 - o Discussed response capacity within the RDBN
 - o Questioned if adequate follow up had taken place
- Rail safety and rail land topics brought to his attention recently are:
 - o Whistle cessation at rail crossings
 - o Transportation of dangerous goods
 - o Cleanup near rail yards and tracks
 - o Vacant land near railway properties
- Rail issues a priority for the coming year
- Rail issues unite communities throughout the region
- A number of rail derailments in northwest B.C.
- Projected increase in dangerous goods through the corridor
- Developing a Cumulative Risk Assessment
 - o Various projects have risk assessment processes
 - o May not include rail transportation in the assessment scope
 - o Case for a regional risk assessment
 - What is the response capacity of the region?
 - CN indicated in a recent meeting with the RDBN that rail safety is a shared responsibility
 - Volunteer Fire Departments have indicated they do not have the capacity to respond, and the responsibility is too great a risk for volunteers to respond to major industrial fire involving dangerous goods in rail yards and along rail ways
 - Important to communicate to the Federal Government and CN
- Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport
 - o Advocating for a rail safety study
- Public Accounts Committee
 - o Recent delegation from the Environment Commissioners Office
 - Follow up on audit of Transport Canada's handling of Dangerous Goods
 - Identified lack of follow up by Transport Canada in regard to violations
 - Lack of comprehensive understanding of compliance monitoring
 - o Follow up to continue to ensure that Transport Canada rectifies the issue
- Parliamentary petition
 - o Regionwide risk assessment of rail safety
 - o Need to understand what communities envision as solution
- New Minister of Transport
 - o Scheduled to meet January 15, 2021
- Challenges in meeting with CN and addressing issues.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Past meeting with Minister of Transport focused on ocean travel safety guidelines rather than rail travel
- Unacceptable that Rail companies expect local response teams within municipalities to be the primary response to a rail incident
- Tabletop exercise to identify the areas requiring attention
- CN's lack of industrial firefighting equipment located in the region
 - o Equipment located outside the region in Terrace, Prince George and Edmonton

DELEGATION (Cont'd)

TAYLOR BACHRACH, MP, SKEENA-BULKLEY VALLEY RE: CN Issues (Cont'd)

- Investigating solutions to address the issues
 - o Funding to address inadequate emergency response for rail safety in the region
 - o Grant in lieu of taxes
 - o Staff will research CN lines and taxation
- New CN Safety Manager Position located in Prince George
- Response times for a potential rail disaster significant
 - o Require legislation and/or policy
 - Clear response times and targets
 - Response times triggered to magnitude of response
 - Guarantee of safety measures in remote areas
 - Mr. Bachrach indicated his willingness to bring the information forward
- Concerns regarding response times and safety issues have been brought forward numerous times with no changes
 - o Local Government continues to repeat the issues, but the answers don't change
 - o Imperative that the Federal Government understands the impact and vulnerabilities of communities from rail transportation and the transportation of dangerous goods
- Rail capacity of corridor through the region
- Private crossings
 - o Safety concerns due to trains blocking private crossing for long periods of time
 - o Grade Crossing Regulations
 - Prohibitions for public crossings do not apply to private crossings
 - o Encourage residents to document
 - o Mr. Bachrach will bring the issue forward
- Emergency vehicles ability to cross railway crossing
 - o Length of time to split a train can be significant
- RDBN addressing whistle cessation concerns in Smithers area
- Potential twining of tracks in the Smithers area
- Corporate responsibility of the rail company to clean up and improve railway work sites
 - o Unsightly Premise Bylaw
- Impacts from changes to other modes of transport of goods
 - o Nav Can services
 - o Potential changes to air service delivery of goods
- Spraying invasive species along the rail corridor
 - o Proper signage
- Fire mitigation along the rail corridor
- CN's response of trespassing to the District of Vanderhoof's initiative to clean up litter along railway
- Industry impacted by lack of available rail cars or time to load rail cars
- Railway land not available for sale
 - o Potential economic benefit for small businesses to have access to available lands.

Chair Thiessen thanked Mr. Bachrach for attending the meeting.

REPORT

Property Assessment Changes 2021 Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Greenaway

C.W.2021-1-3 "That the Committee of the Whole receive the Chief Financial Officer's Property Assessment Changes 2021 memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORT (CONT'D)

CFO Illes provided an overview of the Property Assessment Changes 2021 and the Non-Market change report.

The following was discussed:

- Rate per \$1,000 in regard to Utilities
 - Staff will bring forward information at a future Board meeting
- Impact of pipeline activity
- Staff bringing forward a taxation strategy at a future Board meeting for consideration
- Director Lambert identified significant increase to property assessments in Electoral Area "E" (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)
- B.C. Assessment Appeal process
- Legacy Policy in regard to industrial activity.

IN-CAMERA MOTION

Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Brien

C.W.2021-1-4

"In accordance with Section 90 of the *Community Charter*, it is the opinion of the Board of Directors that matters pertaining to Section 90(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 (Connectivity), must be closed to the public, therefore exercise their option of excluding the public for this meeting."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Storey
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

C.W.2021-1-5

"That the meeting be adjourned at 12:05 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Gerry Thiessen, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant