

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

RURAL DIRECTORS COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, September 7, 2017

PRESENT: Chair Eileen Benedict – left at 3:13 p.m.

Directors Mark Fisher
Tom Greenaway
Bill Miller
Rob Newell – arrived at 2:45 p.m., left at 3:00 p.m.
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen

Staff Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 3:15 p.m.
Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Transit Coordinator – left at 3:23 p.m.
Roxanne Shepherd, Chief Financial Officer
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Other Theresa Fresco, Assistant Regional Manager, Upper Fraser, Fraser Basin Council – left at 3:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Benedict called the meeting to order at 2:41 p.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Parker

RDC.2017-8-1

“That the Rural Directors Committee Agenda for September 7, 2017 be approved; and that the Supplementary Agenda be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**SUPPLEMENTARY
AGENDA**

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Miller

RDC.2017-8-2

“That the Supplementary Agenda be dealt with at this meeting.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural Directors Committee
Meeting Minutes
-July 20, 2017

Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Miller

RDC.2017-8-3

“That the minutes of the Rural Directors Committee meeting of July 20, 2017 be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

FRASER BASIN COUNCIL – Theresa Fresco, Assistant Regional Manager, Upper Fraser RE: Update Nechako Watershed

Chair Benedict welcomed Theresa Fresco, Assistant Regional Manager, Upper Fraser, Fraser Basin Council.

Ms. Fresco provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR): Update on Activities and Progress

Nechako Watershed Roundtable – Timeline

Date	Key Milestones
October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launch of the Nechako Watershed Roundtable
October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nechako Watershed Health Report• Nechako Watershed Health Online Atlas
October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nechako Watershed Strategy
2016-2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment of New Core Committee Members• Implementation of the Nechako Watershed Strategy• Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Project

Core Committee Membership

Local Government

- Brian Frenkel, Councillor, District of Vanderhoof
 - Alternate – Micheal Riis-Christianson, Burns Lake
- Director Tom Greenaway, RDBN
- Director Lara Beckett, FFGRD

First Nations

- Mike Robertson, Cheslatta Carrier Nation
- Christina Ciesielski, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council
- TBD, Nak'azdli Whut'en

NGO / Civil Society

- Steve Litke, Fraser Basin Council (CHAIR)
- Dr. Margot Parkes, UNBC
- Wayne Salewski, Nechako Environment and Water Stewardship Society (NEWSS)
- Adam Thomas, Saik'uz First Nation (Youth Representative)

Nechako Watershed Strategy – Action Categories

- Water quality and quantity
- Lakes and Wetlands
- Invasive Species
- Education and outreach
- Addressing data gaps

Actions Underway

- Water Portal
- Data Assessment
- Citizen Science
- Relationship Building
- Watershed Planning
- Sustainable Funding

NWR Organizational Development

- ✓ Scoping and creation of the NWR
- ✓ Pursuit of shorter term development funds
- ✓ Completion of foundational research
- ✓ Strategic plan developed
- ✓ Convening of diverse interests in the watershed

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

**FRASER BASIN COUNCIL – Theresa Fresco, Assistant Regional Manager, Upper Fraser RE:
 Update Nechako Watershed (Cont'd)**

NEXT STEP:

- ❖ Pursuit of sustainable funding

Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative (SFWGI)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- Research, test and implement sustainable local funding mechanism(s) to support the operational and project expenses for the Nechako Watershed Roundtable

MAJOR OUTPUTS:

- Business Case
- Successful BC Case Studies
- Comparative Analysis / Feasibility Study
- Communications Strategy to gauge public support

NWR Funding Needs	Expenses	Cost
Operational Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator Labour • Core Committee and Roundtable meetings • Watershed queries • Relationship building • Administration expenses 	\$90,000
Project Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator Labour • Strategy implementation • Consultation fees • Travel • Administration expenses 	\$110,000
Total Annual Expenses		\$200,000

Examples of Local Government Mechanisms

- Establishment of a Water/Watershed Service Bylaw (Regional District)
 - **Examples:** Shuswap Watershed Council, Regional District of Nanaimo, Shawnigan Basin Authority
- Establishment of a Conservation Fund
 - **Example:** East Kootenay Regional District – Columbia Valley Conservation Fund
- Funding the service
 - Parcel Tax (flat rate per parcel, \$ per assessed value)
 - Per Capita or Per Household levy (\$2/capita/year, \$5/household/year)

Business Case Findings

(1) Alignment with Local Government Objectives and Policies

- OCP's (5 municipalities, 7 electoral areas)
- Regional District strategic priorities
 1. Protection and enhancement of watersheds and water resources
 2. Collaboration with First Nations, residents and community groups
 3. Enhancing environmental awareness
 4. Connection between a healthy environment and economic development

(2) Value of economic activities in the Nechako watershed

- \$ value of key economic activities that depend on watershed health – forestry, mining, agriculture, tourism

NWR Information hub:

- State of watershed health
- Recommendations on actions to improve watershed health
- Valuation of the Nechako – economic activities, ecosystem services
- Public inquiries and concerns

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

**FRASER BASIN COUNCIL – Theresa Fresco, Assistant Regional Manager, Upper Fraser RE:
 Update Nechako Watershed (Cont'd)**

Accomplishments to Date

Milestones	Accomplishments
Launch of the Nechako Watershed Roundtable (2015)	Consensus on the vision, mission, goals, objectives, guiding principles and governance structure from diverse interests in the watershed
Nechako Watershed Health Report (2015)	First report on the state of health of the watershed Establishment of the Technical Advisory Committee
Nechako Watershed Strategy (2016)	Overview of issues, concerns and proposed actions. List of projects and initiatives in the watershed.

Fostering Strategic Partnerships

- **FFGRD Electoral Area C and FLNRO**
 - Monitoring station on the Chilako River
 - Restoration projects to mitigate erosion
- **NEWSS, School District 91, UNBC, CNC**
 - Environmental education program with elementary and high school students
 - Students and faculty partnering with NEWSS on restoration projects and research
- **Lakes Monitoring Proposal** - NWIPC, BC Lakes Stewardship Society, Yekooche FN, Bednesti Lake Community Association

What We've Heard....

"The Roundtable has united everyone behind the same conversation. It is a place where people's voices and concerns can be heard."

"The Roundtable has demonstrated that there is a need and a momentum for watershed work. It connects and enables groups to forge strategic partnerships with stakeholders and funders."

"The greatest value of the Roundtable is communications and knowledge sharing amongst individuals, agencies and communities who live and work in the watershed."

Next Steps

- Assess feasibility of proposed local government mechanisms with local government staff
- Delegations to Nechako municipalities, electoral areas and regional districts (Sept – Nov)
- Communications strategy to engage the public and elicit support
- Seek short-term funding for the 'transition period' - \$20,000

Questions for Nechako Electoral Area Directors

- Willingness to financially support the NWR in the transition period (Oct 2017- 2018) as a sustainable funding mechanism is established?
- Willingness to support the NWR's ask for a sustainable funding mechanisms at the Regional District Board table?

Ms. Fresco mentioned that a Nechako Watershed meeting is being scheduled for October 12, 2017 in Vanderhoof. A Watershed Plan is being proposed for the Nechako Reservoir.

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

FRASER BASIN COUNCIL – Theresa Fresco, Assistant Regional Manager, Upper Fraser RE: Update Nechako Watershed (Cont'd)

Discussion took place in regard to the potential workload for the Nechako Watershed Roundtable if a water use plan moves forward for the Nechako Reservoir. Ms. Fresco indicated that the Province moving forward with a plan and the scope of work the Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR) could potentially be used as a mechanism to engage representatives.

Director Miller questioned if there was industry funding to assist with sustainable funding for the NWR. Ms. Fresco mentioned that a 1:2 ratio for funding has been considered, local government provides funding that can be utilized to leverage additional funding from industry. Director Petersen asked if a service was developed for the Nechako Watershed Roundtable and what areas would be considered. Ms. Fresco identified the Districts of Vanderhoof and Fort St. James and the Villages of Fraser Lake and Burns Lake along with Electoral Areas “B” (Burns Lake Rural), “C” (Fort St. James Rural), “D” (Fraser Lake Rural), “E” (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural), and “F” (Vanderhoof Rural). If a service moves forward there will need to be further consideration in regard to the area that will provide the service. Chair Benedict mentioned that involving more of the First Nations communities within the Nechako Watershed is very important moving forward. Ms. Fresco noted that she has received a verbal commitment of funding support from the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and will provide that information to the RDBN in October, 2017.

Chair Benedict noted that in the past Rio Tinto and the Province contributed to the Watershed Council. She questioned if that funding model was considered. Ms. Fresco mentioned that it had been considered.

Discussion took place regarding the Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA) and the potential for funding in the future as discussions move forward with the Province.

Ms. Fresco spoke of the importance of involving residents and tax payers in the education and value of the watershed to the region. She also indicated the need to find ways to include residents in the process.

Director Greenaway mentioned that the Nechako Watershed Roundtable has moved forward due to the work from the Fraser Basin Council and the University of Northern B.C. (UNBC).

Acting Chair Miller thanked Theresa for attending the meeting.

REPORT

The Grendel Group - Request for Grant in Aid – Electoral Area “A” (Smithers Rural) Moved by Director Fisher
Seconded by Director Parker

RDC.2017-8-3

“That the Rural Directors Committee recommend to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors that The Grendel Group be given \$4,000 grant in aid monies from Electoral Area “A” (Smithers Rural) to purchase specialized kitchen equipment for its “From the Garden to the Kitchen” project.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (All Directors)

REFERRALS

Land Referral File No.7409947 Moved by Director Petersen
Prince & Harvey Seconded by Director Greenaway
– Electoral Area “F”

RDC.2017-8-4 “That the comment sheet titled “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Comment Sheet on Crown Land Referral No. 7409947 be provided to the Province as the Regional District’s comments on Crown Land Referral 7409947.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION ITEMS

July 2017 Transit Ridership Breakdown

Discussion took place in regard to further information being provided in the Ridership Breakdown once the Community buses become operational.

Melany de Weerd, CAO mentioned that reviewing the Ridership Breakdown is to assist the Rural Directors in determining rural contributions moving into the 2018 Budget preliminary discussions.

Staff will continue to provide the monthly Ridership Breakdown to the Rural Directors Committee.

Director Petersen noted the need to gather further information as to where riders reside that are taking the bus. Director Fisher suggested completing spot questions in the future and asking questions to have a better determination as to where people live that are riding the Regional Transit System.

July 2017 Transit Ridership Moved by Director Greenaway
Breakdown Seconded by Director Parker

RDC.2017-8-5 “That the Rural Directors Committee receive the Regional Transit Coordinator’s August 24, 2017 memo titled “July 2017 Ridership Breakdown.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RDBN – Electoral Area Grant in Aid

Acting Chair Miller mentioned that at times the needs in Electoral Area “B” (Burns Lake Rural) for electoral area grant in aid do not always fit the exact guidelines and numerous factors require consideration. Discussion took place in regard to having some flexibility in the guidelines to fit the needs of each area individually. Groups requesting grant in aid on a more consistent basis was discussed. Some groups have different projects yearly or twice yearly that benefit the communities so there are challenges to determine eligibility. If there is a need for an organization to seek annual funding the Electoral Area Director can determine if a service should be established.

Discussion took place regarding the RDBN Electoral Area Grant in Aid Guidelines working well and providing the flexibility required to be able to assist the various groups requesting grant in aid. The ability to have a simple form or report for organizations to provide if their grant in aid exceeds \$2,500 was discussed. Staff can request for organizations to provide follow up information in the letter documenting the grant approval at the discretion of the Electoral Area Director.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONT'D)

Discussion took place in regard to options utilized by other Regional Districts in the Province and the use of a pooled approach to grant in aid funds. The *Local Government Aict* legislation that allows Electoral Area Directors to determine the funding for grant in aid was discussed.

SUPPLEMENTARY

REPORT

Fort St. James Primary Care Services- Request for Grant in Aid – Electoral Area “C” (Fort St.James Rural)

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Petersen

RDC.2017-8-6

“That the Rural Directors Committee recommend to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors that the Fort St. James Primary Care Services be given \$1,250 grant in aid monies from Electoral Area “C” (Fort St. James Rural) for attendance at the St. Paul’s Medical Conference in Whistler, B.C.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2017-8-7

“That the meeting be adjourned at 3:39 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Eileen Benedict, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant