



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MINUTES
Thursday, April 16, 2026

Directors Present: Chair Mark Parker
Gladys Atrill
Martin Elphee
Judy Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Linda McGuire
Kevin Moutray
Chris Newell
Michael Riis-Christianson
Stoney Stoltenberg
Sarraah Storey
Henry Wiebe
Alternate Director Alex Kulchar
Alternate Director Annette Morgan

Directors Absent: Shane Brien, District of Houston
Leroy Dekens, Village of Telkwa
Shirley Moon, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof)

Staff: Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - left at 11:38 a.m.
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services
Trevor Tapp, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - East - left at 11:12 a.m., left at 11:38 a.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Others: Errol Winter, Executive Director, Northern Interior Rural Division of Family Practice - via Zoom-left at 11:11 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

First Nations Acknowledgement

AGENDA

April 16, 2026

2026-COWM-072

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Committee of the Whole Agenda for April 16, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - February 12, 2026

2026-COWM-073

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Newell

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATIONS

NORTHERN INTERIOR RURAL DIVISION OF FAMILY PRACTICE - Errol Winter, Executive Director

Re: Healthcare Recruitment and Retention

Chair Parker welcomed Errol Winter, Executive Director, Northern Interior Rural Division of Family Practice.

Mr. Winter provided an outline of the area the Northern Interior Rural Division of Family Practice encompasses and a history of his past experience.

Mr. Winter noted that across the region the NIRDFP represents approximately 1000

healthcare practitioners and has had over 100 students brought through the region with funding support. It has been a successful program. Mr. Winter noted the province's funding priorities differ from those of the region. He spoke of follow up conversations with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George about creating a safety net collaborative structure across the region for recruitment and retention.

Mr. Winter noted that there is 10-12% retention of Practice Ready Assessment Candidates and Return of Service Candidates in the region. NIRDFP is investigating solutions to improve retention rates. He commented that creative ideas are being considered such as:

- Student bridge programs with UNBC,
- Student tours of the north
 - Physicians have a 2-3 year contract with the ability to spend approximately 4 months in various communities allowing medical professionals the opportunity to explore and experience northern communities.
- Creating rural designations and compensation to reflect the diverse level of skills and service provided by a primary care physician to meet the health care need in the north versus practicing in larger communities in southern B.C.
- Retirement mentorship programs.
- Technology and implementing more AI.
- Home based monitoring programs.
- Creating economies of scale and amalgamating successful programs throughout the region.
- Working with Health Authorities and corporations to participate in a region wide recruitment and retention program.
- NIRDFP would like to provide additional presentations in the future as ideas are developed and information is available.

Conversation took place regarding:

- Challenges created with varying incentives between communities and competing with neighbouring communities for adequate physician levels
 - Incentive program caps
- Challenges regarding the lack of trained professionals to fill the need
- Education programs changing to adjust to the need
- Technology and digital infrastructure being implemented to assist with support and attraction
 - Drone Pilot Program in Fraser Lake

- Starlink and mobile starlink infrastructure
- Virtual access to physicians and clinicians
- Successful housing programs that can be implemented in other communities
- Augmenting Northern Health's retention and recruitment strategy
 - NIRDFP working with Northern Health to implement and support programs
 - Participating and partnering to attend conferences
- Community assistance with "Red Carpet" program for healthcare practitioners interested in practicing in communities. Providing assistance and support for housing, employment for spouses, childcare, education, etc.
- The need for advanced and new technology to draw newly educated medical professionals
 - Some programs initiated by NIRDFP
 - portable ultrasound program
 - I pads in Emergency Departments to provide virtual assistance
 - Mobile Starlink to provide connectivity access to increase levels of virtual support
 - Investigating imaging and diagnostic solutions
- Collective voice for a healthcare recruitment and retention initiative.

2026-COWM-074

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Moutray

That the Committee recommend that the Board supports further discussion with Northern Interior Rural Division of Family Practice on a health care recruitment and retention initiative.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services -
Heritage Conservation Act Transformation Project Revisions**

2026-COWM-075

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Storey

That staff be directed to respond to the request for feedback on the *Heritage*

Conservation Act Transformation Project Phase 3 Technical Policy Paper – March 2026 with the following comments:

- The Province should ensure that adequate supports are in place for local governments and First Nations to administer the additional roles and responsibilities created by the proposed legislative changes before they are implemented.
- The Province should refer the draft legislation and regulations to stakeholders for comment prior to adoption.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Provincial Agricultural Land Commission Staff Layoffs

2026-COWM-076

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Provincial Agricultural Land Commission Staff Layoffs memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2026-COWM-077

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Alternate Director Kulchar

That the Committee recommend that the Board write a letter to the Honourable Davide Eby, Premier and the Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture and Food regarding provincial Agricultural Land Commission staff layoffs.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Solutions for Sustainable Livestock Processing in Northwest BC Report

2026-COWM-078

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Alternate Director Kulchar

That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Solutions for Sustainable Livestock Processing in Northwest BC Report memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Committee discussed the challenges farmers face in relation to the the levels of regulation for livestock processing in northwest BC. Gathering statistical information was discussed. Staff will bring forward information for the Committee's consideration regarding advocacy in relation to the RDBN's Strategic Plan - Community and Economic Sustainability.

Lunch and RBA Committee Meeting Break

Break at 11:38 a.m.

Reconvened at 1:02 p.m.

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Continuity of Reserves

2026-COWM-079

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

That the Board receive the Chief Financial Officer's Continuity of Reserves memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer provided an overview of the operational reserve target and unearned revenue.

The following was discussed:

- Long term reserve investments
 - GICs
 - MFA stock fund
 - Earning monies through investing with MFA
- MFA has stock fund - long term for landfill decommission
- Landfill decommission and closure reserve
- Reserves and interest earned - remains specific to reserve
 - legislated for provincial and federal grants
- Reserve goals for each purpose a moving target and increases with inflationary pressures
- Plan for reserve targets
 - Fort Fraser Sewer and Water reserve plan
 - Additional plans will be created through the Asset Management Plan
- Borrowing funds
 - Various models of borrowing and saving

- Board discretion and decision
- As the RDBN finalizes the Asset Management Plan in the coming year there will be discussions regarding future reserve planning
- Landfill closure costs and future funding for landfill replacements and opening of new landfills

ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE

North Central Local Government Association and City of Dawson Creek - Request for Support - Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services Resolution

2026-COWM-080

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Storey

That the Committee receive the North Central Local Government Association and City of Dawson Creek Request for Support for Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services Resolution.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2026-COWM-081

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee recommend that the Board co-sponsor the North Central Local Government Association and City of Dawson Creek Improved Access to Publicly Funded Mental Health Services Resolution.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

2026-COWM-082

Moved by Director Newell

Seconded by Director Greenaway

That the meeting be adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services