



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MINUTES

Thursday, August 06, 2026

Directors Present: Chair Mark Parker
Gladys Atrill
Shane Brien, via Zoom - arrived at 11:13 a.m.,
left at 12:02 p.m.
Martin Elphee
Judy Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Shirley Moon
Kevin Moutray
Chris Newell
Michael Riis-Christianson
Stoney Stoltenberg
Sarrah Storey - via Zoom - left at 12:02 p.m.
Henry Wiebe
Alternate Director Heather Dedio

Directors Absent: Leroy Dekens, Village of Telkwa
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle

Staff: Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator -
arrived at 11:28 a.m., left at 1:06 p.m.
Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and
Rural Services - arrived at 11:28 a.m., left at 1:06
p.m.
Alex Eriksen, Director of Environmental Services -
arrived at 10:25 a.m., left at 11:09 a.m.
Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and
Development Services - left at 11:07 a.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate
Services - via Zoom
Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services -
arrived at 10:23 a.m., left at 11:07 a.m., returned at
1:10 p.m.

Others: Merewyn Comeau, LD News - Black Press
Dan Levitt, BC Seniors Advocate - via Zoom - left
at 10:55 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:00 am

*** FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*** OATH OF OFFICE**

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services administered the Oath of Office for Heather Dedio, Alternate Director, Village of Granisle.

AGENDA

August 6, 2026

2026-COWM-092

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Elphee

That the Committee of the Whole Agenda for August 6, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - May 14, 2026

2026-COWM-093

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes for May 14, 2026 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATIONS

OFFICE OF THE SENIORS ADVOCATE OF BC - Dan Levitt, Seniors Advocate (via Zoom) - Re: Update

Chair Parker welcomed Dan Levitt, Seniors Advocate, Office of the Seniors Advocate of BC.

Mr. Levitt provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Supporting BC Seniors Challenges and Opportunities British Columbia is Aging

- Snapshot of B.C. Seniors
- What Seniors Tell Us About Aging in B.C.
- Financial Strain
- Housing Instability
- Home Support Shortfalls
- Long-Term Care Delayed
- Issues for Seniors in Rural B.C.

The following was discussed:

- Value and prioritizing seniors support and care in society
- Providing benefit plans for seniors
- The need for senior levels of government to provide funding support for at home programs rather than removing seniors from their homes for younger people to purchase
 - Finding other housing solutions for younger people
- How to support the Office of the Seniors Advocate of BC
 - Creating a Seniors Plan for the region
 - What services are available
 - Gap analysis
 - Existing bed count and what is required
 - Supporting Health Authorities and development of Senior's housing Initiatives
- Seniors income
 - How many seniors are experiencing poverty or below poverty
 - Seniors without pensions
 - Office of the Seniors Advocate of BC utilizes an average of \$2,000 per month in calculating seniors income/expenses
 - Old Age Security pension and Canada Pension Plan can be minimal
 - Impediments for home insurance and other insurances once someone reaches certain ages
- Technological changes and challenges are limiting seniors access to services rather than improving access
 - Cost of devices and plans can exceed affordability
 - Technology is not seamless and with such organizations as banks it can have a significant fee if you do not utilize their online systems

- Province stopped producing the BC Seniors Guide and made it accessible on line
 - for many seniors this creates a lack of accessibility
- Vanderhoof is a good example of improved seniors care in the community
 - Aurora Home at Parkview Place
 - Provides care options for dementia care patients
 - Land and funding support for the project from the District of Vanderhoof and the community
 - Stuart Nechako Manager
 - Specific beds for dementia residents
- Importance of seniors remaining in their communities as they age
- Housing Reports
 - Immediate need for seniors housing and long term care
 - Wait list of 400 people in Burns Lake
 - Province reduced support for housing projects
 - Write a letter to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs and BC Housing
 - Funding required from the Provincial and Federal Government
- Industry in some areas has expressed awareness and support for housing
 - Increased housing costs, rent costs and access and affordability issues associated with industrial development
- Office of the Seniors Advocate of BC is considering a seniors housing study
 - Suggested including information regarding impacts in northern B.C. and industrial development on housing
 - Mr. Levitt will be meeting with the Executive Committee and will bring forward the information and request
- Resource extraction dollars remaining in communities to support such projects as seniors housing - should be a part of building a better B.C.
- Community Care Models
 - Aurora Home and Vanderhoof Men's Shed in Vanderhoof are good examples
 - Ideas such as prefab or manufactured units being built in the north were discussed
 - Start with small ideas - adult day programs - provide care giver relief
- Navigating systems and documentation and knowing seniors rights e.g. WorkSafe BC claims from past work place injuries
- United Nations human rights initiatives
 - Actively negotiating a new, legally binding Convention on the Rights of Older Persons
- B.C. Government reallocating funding in its 2026 budget suspending the Community Housing Fund (CHF)
 - Communities across the province have been forced to cancel affordable housing projects
- District of Vanderhoof's support for Aurora Home by providing funding and land
- Need for increased Health Care Assistant workers
 - Recent cancellation of Health Care Assistant program

- Importance of encouraging education and training programs to ensure support workers are in place to address the help needed for seniors care
- Mr. Levitt will be available to meet at the 2026 UBCM Conference.

Chair Parker thanked Mr. Levitt for attending the meeting.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - Q2 Quarterly Report

2026-COWM-094

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Committee receive the Director of Corporate Services' Q2 Quarterly Report memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Director Moutray's travel expenses - recovered from Municipal Finance Authority
- Reuse Shed operations and challenges
 - Direct education program at the Smithers/Telkwa Reuse Shed
 - Customer behaviour
 - Future consideration of increasing employees to focus on reuse shed operations
 - Other options for residents to drop off items
 - Some organizations are overwhelmed with products
 - Consider existing recycling locations to potentially oversee reuse sheds
 - Finding locations and ways to manage volume of products received
 - Evaluating options and potential solutions in the future
 - Recent staffing shortages.

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Directors' Remuneration Update

2026-COWM-095

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Greenaway

That Bylaw 2115 be brought forward to the Board at a future meeting for consideration with remuneration amounts being adjusted to Option 1A.

CAO Helgesen provided an overview of the Directors' Remuneration Update memorandum and moving towards the median and spoke of the Peace River Regional District's hiring of a consultant and the preliminary information that has been shared from the report.

The Committee discussed:

- In favour of items 1-5 outlined
- Gradual remuneration increase over the four year term
- Review on a yearly basis vs. reviewing less often
- Option 1A
- 18% increase to move to the median for basic remuneration for electoral area directors and a 3% increase for municipal directors
 - Impact if there is no increase or a lesser increase and a larger increase in the future
- Payment Reviewer
 - Increase the annual rate from \$1,716 to \$2,000 rather than \$3,000
 - An alternate be paid on a per time basis
- Independent Directors' Remuneration review
- Attracting people to be elected officials
 - Setting the tone
 - Good governance structure
 - Value time commitment
 - Compensation to fill jobs and home life
- Elected officials create a sense of community
- Personal software on RDBN devices.

2026-COWM-096

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Lambert

That Motion 2026-COWM-95 be amended as follows:

That the Payment Reviewer be increased from \$1,716 to \$2,000 per year; and that the alternate Payment Reviewer be the Chair or Vice-Chair.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2026-COWM-097

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Newell

That Motion 2026-COWM-095 be amended as follows:

That the Directors Remuneration increase of 18% be implemented over a four year period.

DEFEATED

2026-COWM-098

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Newell

That Motion 2026-CWM-095 be amended to include:

That the Directors Remuneration increase be reviewed yearly.

DEFEATED

That the question be called on Motion 2026-CWM-095 as amended.

DEFEATED

2026-COWM-099

Moved by Director Atrill

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That Bylaw 2115 be brought forward to the Board at a future meeting for consideration with remuneration amounts being adjusted to Option 1B with the Payment Reviewer increased from \$1716 to \$2,000 per year with the alternate Payment Reviewer being the Chair or Vice-Chair.

Opposed: Director Lambert

Director Moon

Director Moutray

Director Newell

Director Riis-Christianson

CARRIED

Discussion took place about achieving the median for Directors' Remuneration over the next four year term. The Peace River Regional District Directors' Remuneration report included all northern regional districts and may not be finalized and distributed until January 2027.

The following was discussed:

- Challenges determining remuneration based on per capita
- Supporting one's community when choosing to run as an elected official
- Workload increase over the past term
- Consideration for being away from work and/or family to fulfill the role of an elected official
- Reasonable compensation.

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer - Local Government Climate Action Program 2025 Report

2026-COWM-100

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Elphee

That the Committee receive the Chief Financial Officer's Local Government Climate Action Program 2025 Report memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Committee discussed finding alternate solutions to support Climate Action and the work planned for 2027. Director Newell brought forward the importance of rural culture and supporting the needs of rural residents.

Break for lunch at 12:02 p.m.

Reconvened at 12:43 p.m.

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Grant in Aid for Bulkley Valley Agricultural and Industrial Association - Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

2026-COWM-101

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Atrill

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve a Regional Grant in Aid of \$30,000 from the Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) allocation to the Bulkley Valley Agricultural and Industrial Association for new bleachers at the Bulkley Valley Exhibition Fair Grounds.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Grant in Aid for Paul Lychak Evelyn Community Hall - Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

2026-COWM-102

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Atrill

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve a Regional Grant in Aid of \$50,000 from the Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) allocation to the Paul Lychak Evelyn Community Hall for a Roof and Kitchen upgrade project.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Community Pasture
Jurisdictional Review
2026-COWM-103**

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Community Pasture Jurisdictional Review memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Moon asked if young farmers wanted to access agricultural development area land, could they apply for a grazing lease. Staff indicated that yes that is possible.

Director Lambert noted that due to holidays, retirement, leaves and provincial staffing reductions there is one Agrologist in the region from Smithers to Burns Lake. He commented that the provincial government staffing reductions are creating significant challenges. Director Lambert indicated the importance of advocating for Agrologists in the region and the value of the agriculture sector to the region and the Province.

Chair Parker noted that the BC Cattlemen's Association is working on the issue and has written a letter that the Board may consider supporting.

Director Newell brought forward utilizing range lands for community fire guards. Ms. D'Arcy spoke of a research project in the Okanagan and the moderate success achieved as well as the challenges identified including the significant work for cattle producers. Contacting the Range Agrologist was discussed. The use of radio collars to track and move livestock along with the popularity of the device and possible funding was brought forward for discussion. Director Lambert spoke of an example on his range that was seeded following the 2018 wildfire event that is used for grazing and the fire guard that can be reestablished in the event of another wildfire.

**Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator - Irrigation Infrastructure
Investment Jurisdictional Review
2026-COWM-104**

Moved by Director Moon

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Irrigation Infrastructure Investment Jurisdictional Review memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Lambert noted that he is currently working on an irrigation system and commented that there are significant challenges and requirements. Director Moon noted the challenges with the Investment Agriculture web page.

ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE

Northern Development Initiative trust - 2026 Economic Development Capacity Building

2026-COWM-107

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the Administration Correspondence from Northern Development Initiative Trust regarding 2026 Economic Development Capacity Building.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs - Code of Conduct and Parental Leave Legislative Update

2026-COWM-108

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Wiebe

That the Committee receive the Administration Correspondence from the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs regarding Code of Conduct and Parental Leave Legislative Update.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Sharon Hartwell, MLA Bulkley Valley-Stikine- UBCM Meeting Schedule

2026-COWM-109

Moved by Director Newell

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Committee receive the Administration Correspondence from Sharon Hartwell, MLA Bulkley Valley-Stikine - regarding UBCM Meeting Schedule.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

VERBAL REPORTS - Chair Parker

1. BC Parks Foundation Meeting

- Met with Tim Ennis, Senior Conservation Specialist, BC Parks Foundation in Vanderhoof
 - Provided a better understanding of the BC Parks Foundation acquisition of agricultural land and BC Parks Foundation farm land restoration
- Will follow up over the next month.

2. EU Deforestation Regulation Meeting

- Met with Janel Quiring, Senior Director, Construction Innovation Branch, Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth along with the individual responsible for international trade
- Working with the Federal Government
- Impacts from farmers unable to sell logs from their farm lands
- Not overly optimistic.

2026-COWM-105

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Chair's Verbal Report be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Seniors Advocacy

Director Newell brought forward the need for additional seniors advocacy and developing a Seniors housing plan/gap analysis. Discussion took place regarding the Regional District Housing needs assessment and similar member municipality reports. Discussion took place about gathering existing information and revisiting the topic in the future.

Director Moon spoke of the wait list for long-term care beds in the Vanderhoof area. Director Moutray commented about the importance of working together to discuss options and solutions to support seniors and additional long-term care beds.

Director Greenaway noted that seniors requiring long-term care beds may be located outside their community throughout Northern Health.

Director Riis-Christianson mentioned the need to follow-up with the BC Seniors Advocate regarding lobbying the Province for funding for housing initiatives.

Chair Parker encouraged the Board to connect with Mr. Levitt while attending UBCM in September 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

2026-COWM-106

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Newell

That the meeting be adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services