

## **STUART-NECHAKO REGIONAL HOSPITAL DISTRICT**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025**

PRESENT: Chair Judy Greenaway

Directors Martin Elphee  
Clint Lambert – arrived at 10:03 a.m.  
Linda McGuire  
Kevin Moutray  
Mark Parker  
Michael Riis-Christianson  
Henry Wiebe

Directors Shirley Moon, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)  
Absent Sarrah Storey, Village of Fraser Lake

Alternate Directors Audrey Fennema, Village of Fraser Lake – left at 10:25 a.m., returned at 10:29 a.m.  
Alex Kulchar, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Secretary  
Cheryl Anderson, Acting Secretary  
John Illes, Treasurer  
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and Development Services – arrived at 10:58 a.m.  
Wendy Wainwright, Confidential Clerk

Others Joelle Barfoot, Project Procurement Manager, CityWest – via Zoom – arrived at 10:56 a.m.  
Wes Eisses, Vice President of Projects, CityWest– via Zoom – arrived at 10:57 a.m.  
Michael Hoefer, Executive Director, Capital Planning, Facilities Operations and logistics, Northern Health – via Zoom – arrived at 10:06 a.m.  
Chris Newell, Electoral Area G (Houston Rural) – arrived at 10:25 a.m., left at 10:28 a.m.  
Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim), Northern Interior Rural, Northern Health  
Stoney Stoltenberg, Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)  
Tamara Gillis, Smithers  
Stefan Woloszyn, Chief Executive Officer, CityWest– via Zoom – arrived at 11:00 a.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Greenaway called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **AGENDA**

Moved by Director Parker  
Seconded by Alternate Director Kulchar

SNRHD.2025-3-1

"That the Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District Agenda of February 27, 2025 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **MINUTES**

Stuart-Nechako Regional  
Hospital District Meeting  
Minutes – February 13, 2025

Moved by Director Elphee  
Seconded by Director McGuire

SNRHD.2025-3-2

"That the minutes of the Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District meeting of February 13, 2025 be adopted."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **DELEGATIONS**

### **NORTHERN HEALTH – Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim), Northern Interior Rural, Northern Health RE: Emergency Room Diversions**

Chair Greenaway welcomed Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim), Northern Interior Rural, Northern Health.

Mr. Petsul provided an overview regarding:

- His history in healthcare and with Northern Health
- Diversion Data
  - o January to December 2024 – Specific to Emergency Department closures
    - Fraser Lake – 16
    - Smithers – 0
    - Houston – 4
    - Burns Lake – 30
      - Burns Lake is currently experiencing 55% of physician vacancies
      - Currently have a full complement of nursing Emergency Room staff
    - Vanderhoof – 2
    - Fort St. James – 11
    - Combination of either nurse or physician vacancies
      - More nursing vacancies in the first half of 2024
      - More physician vacancies in the latter half of 2024
- Physicians within the RDBN
  - o Continual recruitment efforts with a dedicated team
    - Physicians do off-hour recruitment
  - o Smithers
    - Recruiting for Family Physician, Emergency Room, Anesthesia, and Pediatrics
  - o Houston - Complement is stable

## **DELEGATIONS (CONT'D)**

### **NORTHERN HEALTH – Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim), Northern Interior Rural, Northern Health RE: Emergency Room Diversions (Cont'd)**

- Burns Lake –4 vacancies posted
  - Recruitment/retention position approved by the Joint Recruitment and Retention of Medical Professionals Committee
    - Key role to transition health care professionals into the community
    - Two new physicians joining the community starting April 2025
    - Planning for Rural elective in medical school
- Vanderhoof – 4 vacancies posted
  - Recent Northern Medical Programs Trust graduate in community for four months has expressed an interest in the community and the Emergency Department
- Fort St. James – 4 vacancies posted
  - New Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) starting in March 2025
- Fraser Lake – ‘Doc Talks’ – presentation to UNHBC Family Practice residents will highlight Fraser Lake on February 28<sup>th</sup>
  - One locum expressing interest in a permanent position
- Locum coverage for vacant shifts considerable
- Many PRA physicians – three-year return of service guarantee
- NH Staff
  - Labour force challenges similar to other industries
  - Demographic shifts
    - Generational
    - Work-life balance
    - Preference for casual work
    - Aging population
  - Globally – 10-million-person shortfall in health care
  - Fewer applicants for health care programs
  - Capital/program expansions require increased staff
- Recruitment/Retention
  - Several sites partnering with other agencies for career fairs for high school students eg. Rotary
  - Rural and remote recruitment/retention initiatives
  - ‘Earn and Learn’ programs
  - Employed students
  - Provincial efforts to seek out and streamline internationally-educated health professionals
- Trends/Results
  - Reduced vacancy rates for first time in 4 years
  - Increased hires and decreased losses
  - Increased regular workforce
  - Decrease in employees going from regular to casual status
    - Common over the past 5 years
  - Overall, a 23% increase in regular workforce. Nursing is 9%

## **DELEGATIONS (CONT'D)**

### **NORTHERN HEALTH – Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim), Northern Interior Rural, Northern Health RE: Emergency Room Diversions (Cont'd)**

- Increase in Hires from 2023-2024
  - o RN – 77% from 2023
  - o LPN – 109% from 2023
  - o Care Aides – 10%
  - o Allied Health (Imaging, Lab, PT/OT, etc) – 23%
  - o All Hires – 21%
- Retention Increases 2023-2024
  - o RN – 42%
  - o LPN – 47
  - o Care Aides – 57
  - o Allied Health – 27
  - o Support Services (kitchen/laundry/stores/hskp) – 54
  - o All Exits (all job classifications) – 42% decrease
- GoHealth
  - o Pool of 'travel nurses' that are hired by NH
  - o Currently over 500 and growing
  - o Enables nurses to live in an urban centre but work with a compressed schedule in NH rural and remote sites Self scheduling
  - o Future – a “GoTeam” concept that would enable the rapid deployment of ER trained nurses to attend an emergency situation or mitigate potential diversions.

The following was discussed:

- Granisle diversion numbers
  - o Mr. Petsul will follow up with Director McGuire
- Youth Pathway Program in Port Alberni school curriculum that provides students with school credits to participate in shadowing paramedics or healthcare professionals
- South African Doctors arriving in Burns Lake requiring additional accreditation
  - o Mr. Petsul will follow up
- Burns Lake having 7 physician vacancies a year ago and currently have 4 vacancies but the diversion occurrences have increased
- Clinically trained healthcare professionals moving into management/education positions
  - o Mr. Petsul will follow up with Director Wiebe regarding the challenges in Burns Lake
- Recruitment/Retention
  - o Discussions happening at the provincial level and world-wide
  - o Imperative to have a seamless welcome and transition for health care professionals moving to new communities
    - First 2-3 years is crucial
    - Creating innovative ideas to welcome new healthcare professionals
  - o Impacts of negative social media comments regarding healthcare

**DELEGATIONS (CONT'D)**

**NORTHERN HEALTH – Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim), Northern Interior Rural, Northern Health RE: Emergency Room Diversions (Cont'd)**

- Smithers
  - o Nurse Practitioners hospital privileges
  - o Inability to connect with a family doctor due to having a nurse practitioner
    - Mr. Petsul will follow up with Director Stoltenberg.

Chair Greenaway thanked Mr. Petsul for attending the meeting.

**NORTHERN HEALTH – Michael Hoefer, Executive Director, Capital Planning, Facilities Operations and Logistics – RE: Stuart Lake Hospital Redevelopment Project Status, Vanderhoof Primary Care Medical Clinic and Replacement of St. John Hospital (Vanderhoof) – Predicted Costs & Timing**

Chair Greenaway welcomed Michael Hoefer, Executive Director, Capital Planning, Facilities Operations and Logistics, Northern Health.

**Stuart Lake Hospital Redevelopment**

- Moved into new facility
- Turned over old facility and going through the design builder abatement process and will complete deconstruction in the spring
- Working through some adjustments
- On time, on budget and on schedule
- Official naming ceremony will be held in mid spring
- Naming on signage in the development stage to include First Nations naming
  - o Wayfinder volunteers assist patients to find their way.

**Vanderhoof Primary Care Medical Clinic**

- In design development
- Working to 90% design and align cost reports to go to tender
- Working through scheduling to move forward the tender process in the spring/summer 2025
- Site cleared and prepared
- On schedule and working through budget
- Will prepare Cost A Schedule to go to tender
- Government approval and Regional Hospital District Funding
- Ensuring landscape design and expenses are cost effective.

## **DELEGATIONS (CONT'D)**

### **NORTHERN HEALTH – Michael Hoefer, Executive Director, Capital Planning, Facilities Operations and Logistics – RE: Stuart Lake Hospital Redevelopment Project Status, Vanderhoof Primary Care Medical Clinic and Replacement of St. John Hospital (Vanderhoof) – Predicted Costs & Timing (Cont'd)**

#### **St. John Hospital (Vanderhoof) Predicted Costs & Timing**

- No schedule currently
- Included in Northern Health's Master Plan Schedule
  - o Current Facility Condition Index (FCI) of 0.71
  - o Potentially start master planning in 2026/2027 going into 2027/2028
    - Once complete submit to the Provincial government for consideration (no set timeline)
- Preliminary discussion with Regional District staff regarding cost.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Fraser Lake Community Health Centre
  - o Northern Health Master Plan for 2035/2036
- Facility Condition Index
  - o Not an accurate assessment of current needs as it is based on what the facility was originally designed for
  - o When developing concept and business plan Northern Health reviews functional requirements
- Status of safety door at the Granisle Medical Clinic.

Chair Greenaway thanked Mr. Hoefer for attending the meeting.

## **REPORTS**

Transfer of Capital Equipment Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director McGuire

SNRHD.2025-3-3 "That the Board of the Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District support the transfer of the generator from the old Stuart Lake Hospital to the Valemount Health Centre."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Expected Northern Health Funding Requests 2025-2029 Moved by Director Riis-Christianson  
Seconded by Director Lambert

SNRHD.2025-3-4 "That the Board receive the Treasurer's Expected Northern Health Funding Requests 2025-2029 memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Helipad for the Southside of Francois Lake Director Lambert met with Daryl Petsul, Senior Operations Officer (Interim) and Michael Hoefer, Executive Director, Capital Planning, Facilities Operations and Logistics, Northern Health to discuss a helipad. The Southside Health and Wellness Centre Society approved in principle a helipad project.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Parker

SNRHD.2025-3-5

"That the meeting be adjourned at 11:05 a.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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Judy Greenaway, Chairperson

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Wendy Wainwright, Confidential Secretary