

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

RURAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, June 5, 2025

PRESENT:	Chair	Michael Riis-Christianson
	Directors	Judy Greenaway Clint Lambert – via Zoom Shirley Moon Chris Newell Mark Parker Stoney Stoltenberg
	Staff	Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief Megan D’Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator – via Zoom – arrived at 10:16 a.m. John Illes, Chief Financial Officer Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and Development Services Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services Scott Zayac, Director of Protective Services – arrived at 10:57 a.m.
	Others	Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle – via Zoom Kevin Moutray, District of Vanderhoof – arrived at 9:56 a.m. Jason Olmsted, RPF, P.Eng., Northern Engineering Group Leader, Integrated Resource Operations Division, Engineering Branch, Ministry of Forests – via Zoom – left at 10:11 a.m. Sarrah Storey, Village of Fraser Lake – via Zoom – arrived at 9:50 a.m., left at 9:55 a.m., returned at 9:57 a.m. Henry Wiebe, Village of Burns Lake
	Media	Jake Wray, LD News – via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Riis-Christianson called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Parker

RSC.2025-6-1

“That the Rural Services Committee Agenda for June 5, 2025 be approved as amended.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural Services Committee
Meeting Minutes
-May 8, 2025

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RSC.2025-6-2

"That the minutes of the Rural Services Committee meeting of
May 8, 2025 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

MINISTRY OF FORESTS – Jason Olmsted, RPF, P.Eng. Northern Engineering Group Leader. **Integrated Resource Operations Division, Engineering Branch Re: Resource Roads – via Zoom**

Chair Riis-Christianson welcomed Jason Olmsted, RPF, P.Eng., Northern Engineering Group Leader, Integrated Resource Operations Division, Engineering Branch, Ministry of Forests.

Mr. Olmsted noted that the Engineering Group provides support to all Forest Districts in the north in relation to forestry roads and networks. They provide three support roles:

- Funding source
 - Operational funding for road maintenance
 - Capital funding
 - Build new bridges and road construction (only applied to capital Forest Service Roads (FSRs))
 - Liability fund to deactivate roads
- Provides professional oversight practices and services for roads and bridges
- Policy and standards division
 - Sets policy, legislation and guidelines for use of funding.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Use of FSRs for recreational purposes
- Recent decrease in forestry activity impacting maintenance
- Annual budget for capital and operational road works
- Morice-Owen FSR
 - Competing users
 - High recreational use
 - Morice River
 - Coastal GasLink
 - Forestry companies
 - Mining and Exploration companies
 - Sharing road costs is inequitable
- User groups have different maintenance standards
- Highway access to an FSR requires the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to maintain road
- Possible solutions in the province to address the inequities of shared costs for road users
- Road user groups

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

- When a main contractor is no longer utilizing an FSR the Province can take over the care and maintenance outlined in their policies and standards
- Mr. Olmstead indicated he could meet individuals regarding specific areas along with the Forest District Manager
- Closures of historical FSRs traversing through private property
 - o Antimony FSR
 - o Extensively utilized by cabin owners and other users in the area
 - o Consultation with the public and road users when closure of an FSR is considered
- Changes in provincial regulations approximately 5 years ago wherein the Ministry of Forest or Transportation used taxpayers' dollars to fund a road, they would then be responsible for that road and that no longer occurs
- Director Newell will follow up with the Nadina District Manager
- Chair Riis-Christianson spoke of following up with Land Tenures department of the Ministry of Forests.

Chair Riis-Christianson thanked Mr. Olmstead for attending the meeting.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Crown Land Referral Moved by Director Greenaway
No. 7410358 – Electoral Area Seconded by Director Parker
C (Fort St. James Rural)

RSC.2025-6-3 "That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 7410358."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Crown Land Referral No. Moved by Director Greenaway
6409543 – Electoral Area E Seconded by Director Stoltenberg
(Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)

RSC.2025-6-4 "That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 6409543."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Peace River Regional District Removed from Rural Services Committee Agenda and moved to
Referral Regional Growth Board Agenda.
Strategy Bylaw No. 2571

REPORTS

Resource Roads

Moved by Director Newell
Seconded by Director Moon

RSC.2025-6-5

"That the Committee receive the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Service's Resource Roads memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Rural Community Hall Support

Moved by Director Moon
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RSC.2025-6-6

"That the Committee receive the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Service's Rural Community Hall Support memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Lambert commented that he has considered creating a service to support rural community halls. He also spoke of encouraging the installation of commercial kitchens to assist farmers markets and other producers. Director Lambert noted the use of Community Halls for seniors' gatherings and community social activities.

The following was discussed:

- Utilizing industrial and utilities taxation to support Community Halls
- Volunteerism
 - Volunteer Canada
- Inviting all the Community Hall representatives from across the region to attend a brainstorming session to discuss possible solutions and ideas
 - Provide pros and cons for various ideas
- Challenges for Community Halls to obtain insurance due to costs
- Investigating the options for Insurance Buyers Groups.

Rural Community Hall Support

Moved by Director Moon
Seconded by Director Lambert

RDC.2025-6-7

"That the Committee recommend that the Board invite the leaders of the region's Community Halls to a brainstorming session to discuss ideas and possible support for the halls."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

IN-CAMERA MOTION

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Newell

RSC.2025-6-8

"That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to Labour Relations."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Newell

RSC.2025-6-9

"That the meeting be adjourned 10:30 a.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Michael Riis-Christianson, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services