



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
RURAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Thursday, February 12, 2026**

Directors Present: Chair Michael Riis-Christianson
Judy Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Shirley Moon
Chris Newell
Mark Parker
Stoney Stoltenberg

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 - arrived at 2:27 p.m., left at 3:01
p.m.
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning and
Development Services - left at 2:30 p.m.
Amy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Planning and
Development Services- left at 2:30 p.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate
Services

Others: Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle - left at 3:10
p.m.
Kevin Moutray, District of Vanderhoof - left at 3:06
p.m.
Sarrah Storey, Village of Fraser Lake - left at 2:33
p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Riis-Christianson called the meeting to order at 2:24 p.m.

AGENDA

February 12, 2026

2026-RSC-025

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Moon

That the Rural Services Committee Meeting Agenda for February 12, 2026 be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural Services Committee Meeting Minutes - January 15, 2026

2026-RSC-026

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Newell

That the Rural Services Committee Meeting Minutes for January 15, 2026 be received

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Referrals

Cameron Kral, Planner - Recreation Referral No. REC272988 - Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

2026-RSC-027

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Newell

That the comment sheet be provided to Recreation Sites and Trails BC as the RDBN's response to recreation referral No. REC272988.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Danielle Patterson, Senior Planner - Crown Land Referral Application No. 410395 - Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)

2026-RSC-028

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Moon

That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 410395 for a Section 16 Withdrawal of Disposition.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Economic Development Service Grants for Labour Market Research Plan Applications

2026-RSC-029

Moved by Director Parker

Seconded by Director Newell

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve a grant of \$10,000 for Electoral Areas B (Burns Lake Rural), D (Fraser Lake Rural), F(Vanderhoof Rural) and G (Houston/Topley Rural) from Northern Capital Planning Grant (NCPG) to the Village of Burns Lake for the Village's application to the Labour Market Research Plan program facilitated by NDIT.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Community Hall Engagement Update

2026-RSC-030

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services' Community Hall Engagement Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services Healthcare Recruitment and Retention Efforts

2026-RSC-031

Moved by Director Parker

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee receive the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services' Healthcare Recruitment and Retention Efforts memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- Report is an overview of some of the initiatives underway
- Canada's Healthcare Infusion endeavor
 - Passionate community members that have started the endeavor
- Various approaches to in-house initiatives
- Burns Lake, Electoral Areas B (Burns Lake Rural) and E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) Recruitment and Retention Committee
- Scope creep
 - Traditionally federal and provincial mandate
 - Local governments stepping into the breach
- Errol Winters, Executive Director, Northern Interior Rural Family Practice attended the Burns Lake Medical Professionals Recruitment and Retention Committee and spoke of provincial downloading
- Loss of anesthesiologist in Vanderhoof in June 2026
 - Services levels will be at risk with a reduction of anesthesiologists
- Working together and supporting a regional hub model for medical professionals
 - Regional approach
 - Forming a healthcare committee that includes all members of the Stuart-Nechako Regional Hospital District to formulate a 5-year plan going forward
 - Hospital District mandate to fund capital projects
- District of Kitimat February 6, 2026 Report to the Kitimat Health Group regarding Kitimat Healthcare Professionals Retention & Recruitment - Health Recruitment and Retention Incentive Package
 - Challenges of communities offering additional incentives
 - Incentive amounts
 - Industrial pressures on healthcare in the community
- Northern Health incentives to medical practitioners
- Fort St. James Medical Professionals Recruitment and Retention Committee
 - Coordinator Position
 - Received applications
 - Challenges due to structure of Committee
 - Committee is investigating not for profit status
- Access to medical equipment assists in recruitment and retention of physicians and other medical professionals
- Inviting Errol Winters, Executive Director, Northern Interior Rural Division of Family Practice.

2026-RSC-032

Moved by Director Greenaway

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

That the Committee recommend that the Board invite Errol Winter, Executive Director, Northern Interior Rural Division of Family Practice to attend a future meeting to discuss recruitment and retention in healthcare.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Passive Infrastructure Update

2026-RSC-033

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Greenaway

That the Committee receive the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services' Passive Infrastructure Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services - Rural Directors Survey Update

2026-RSC-034

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the Committee receive the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services' Rural Directors Survey Update memorandum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Rural Services Committee future discussion items were discussed:

- Rural culture and lifestyle
 - Pressures
 - Exploring ways to champion and guard the culture and lifestyle
 - Similar for farming and ranching
 - Increased regulation and requirements impede the ability to encourage and protect the lifestyle.

NEW BUSINESS

Agriculture Coordinator Update

- Interviews in progress.

ADJOURNMENT

2026-RSC-035

Moved by Director Newell

Seconded by Director Lambert

That the meeting be adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Michael Riis-Christianson, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services