

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO****RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE  
AGENDA****Thursday, October 7, 2021**

<b><u>PAGE NO.</u></b>		<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<b><u>AGENDA- October 7, 2021</u></b>	<b>Approve</b>
	<b><u>Supplementary Agenda</u></b>	<b>Receive</b>
	<b><u>MINUTES</u></b>	
<b>2-6</b>	<b>Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes - September 9, 2021</b>	<b>Approve</b>
	<b><u>AGRICULTURE REPORTS</u></b>	
<b>7-8</b>	<b>Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator (West) – Food and Agriculture Plan -Implementation Update</b>	<b>Receive</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Michelle Roberge, Regional Agriculture Coordinator (East) – Agriculture Outreach Initiatives</b>	<b>Receive</b>
	<b><u>RURAL REPORTS</u></b>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – COVID-19 Relief Funds - Allocation to Electoral Area Services</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – COVID-19 Relief Funds -Application Approval</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – Grant in Aid – Federal Gas Tax Internal Trade</b>	<b>Receive</b>
	<b><u>SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA</u></b>	
	<b><u>NEW BUSINESS</u></b>	
	<b><u>ADJOURNMENT</u></b>	

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO****RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING****Thursday, September 9, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Chair Mark Parker

Directors Mark Fisher  
Tom Greenaway  
Clint Lambert  
Chris Newell  
Jerry Petersen  
Michael Riis-Christianson  
Gerry Thiessen - left at 12:50 p.m., returned at 1:07 p.m.

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer  
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services  
Megan D'Arcy, Agriculture Coordinator (West) – via Zoom – left at 10:45 a.m.  
Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – left at 1:05 p.m.  
Janette Derksen, Waste Diversion Supervisor  
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer – arrived at 10:19 a.m.  
Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services  
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 10:15 a.m., returned at 12:45 p.m.  
Michelle Roberge, Agriculture Coordinator (East) – via Zoom – left at 10:45 a.m.  
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Others Gladys Atrill, Town of Smithers – arrived at 11:50 a.m.  
Annette Morgan, Village of Telkwa  
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle – via Teleconference  
Bob Motion, District of Fort St. James

Media Eddie Huband, Lakes District News – left at 12:03 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**AGENDA**Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Petersen**RDC.2021-7-1**

"That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for September 9, 2021 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY****MINUTES****Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes - June 10, 2021**Moved by Director Petersen  
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson**RDC.2021-7-2**

"That the minutes of the Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting of June 10, 2021 be adopted."

(All/Directors/Majority)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

### **Development Variance Permit Applications to Legalize Existing Buildings**

Moved by Director Lambert  
 Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

RDC.2021-7-3

“That the Committee receive the Director of Planning’s Development Variance Permit Applications to Legalize existing Buildings staff report.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Discussion took place regarding the evaluation of each Development Variance Permit on an application-by-application basis and recommendations on all applications being based on land use issues and impacts associated with proposed or existing development. Other agency permits being issued independently of the RDBN Building Permit process was discussed.

## **AGRICULTURE REPORTS**

### **Veterinary Shortages in the RDBN**

Moved by Director Petersen  
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2021-7-4

“That the Committee recommend that the Board write letters to the Ministers of Advanced Education and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries in support of the request made to the Province by the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) – Society of BC Veterinarians (SBCV) Chapter to make veterinary training a funding priority and increase the number of seats available to BC students at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Chair Parker commented that he will speak to the veterinary shortages with Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries during the 2021 Virtual UBCM Convention Minister Meeting. Discussion took place in regard to forwarding the letter to Regional Districts. Concerns were raised regarding:

- the lack of available seats in the veterinary program available to BC students
- the 20 seats available to BC students at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon is subsidized by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and are significantly oversubscribed
- students can also qualify for international seats
  - o increased annual tuition from approximately \$11,000 to over \$65,000.

### **BCSPCA Inspections on Commercial Livestock and Poultry Operations**

Moved by Director Lambert  
 Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2021-7-5

“That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator’s BCSPCA Inspections on Commercial Livestock and Poultry Operations memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **RURAL REPORTS**

Concerns were brought forward regarding the BCSPCA Inspections on Commercial Livestock and Poultry Operations, and the lack of information provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries regarding the implementation of the BCSPCA inspections.

### **COVID-19 Relief Funds -Remaining Allocation**

Moved by Director Lambert  
 Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

### **RDC.2021-7-6**

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee recommend that the Board approve \$12,740.89 of the COVID-19 Relief Funds to the Community Group Allocations:

- Lake Kathlyn Protection Society – COVID – related contract work - \$8,430.61
- Colleymount Recreation Society – Insurance, Hydro, Propane - \$2,710.28
- Arocha (Houston Hatchery) – Outdoor Meeting Space - \$1,600.00.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- continuation of COVID-19 and the potential to allocate the COVID-19 relief funding into 2022
- utilizing COVID-19 relief funding for Broadband strategies
- increasing contingency funding as COVID-19 continues and additional community needs may be identified
- proposed municipal recreation allocation moved to contingency
- contacting municipalities to determine recreation programming needs
- optional federal funding for the Smithers Regional Airport
- staff will bring forward additional information at a future RDBN meeting for consideration.

## **Break for the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 11:05 a.m.**

### **Reconvened at 12:45 p.m.**

### **Universal Broadband Fund and Connectivity Update**

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson  
 Seconded by Director Lambert

### **RDC.2021-7-7**

“That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development’s Universal Broadband Fund and Connectivity Update memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Federal Universal Broadband Fund (UBF)
  - o No notifications until after the completion of the Federal election
- staff developing a draft RDBN Connectivity Strategy
  - o bring forward for consideration in October, 2021
  - o opportunity to brainstorm rural connectivity connections and determine options moving forward
- connectivity continually evolves
- Telus connectivity issues in the Fraser Lake, Vanderhoof and Fort St. James areas.

## **RURAL REPORTS (CONT'D)**

### **Canada Community Building Fund/Gas Tax Fund Top-Up Payment and Update Eligibility Guidelines**

Moved by Director Lambert  
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2021-7-8

“That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development’s Canada Community Building Fund/Gas Tax Fund Top-Up Payment and Updated Eligibility Guidelines memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the Canada Community Building Fund/Gas Tax Fund Top-Up Payment and Updated Eligibility Guidelines memorandum. Staff will continue to provide updates as they become available.

### **Grant in Aid Update: April -June 2021**

Moved by Director Petersen  
 Seconded by Director Lambert

RDC.2021-7-9

“That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development’s Grant in Aid Update: April – June 2021 memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### **RDBN Rural Septage**

Janette Derksen, Waste Diversion Supervisor provided an overview of RDBN Rural Septage memorandum.

Discussion took place regarding:

- user pay systems
- municipal partnerships to accept LNG camp liquid waste
- annual permit fee of \$1,000 per site, per hauler
- site maintenance of the RDBN septage receiving beds
  - o more volumes more cleanout of the beds is required
  - o Smithers/Telkwa Transfer Station is a lagoon system
  - o Fort Fraser, Burns Lake Transfer Station and Knockholt Landfill are engineered sites
- impact of changes in 2004 to the sewage system standards
  - o rural areas choosing to install more holding tanks vs. septic tank/field systems
- impacts of Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy regulation changes and requirements
- partnering with municipalities
- treatment of ammonia at sites
- utilization of treated waste
- Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA) would be a benefit to addressing infrastructure maintenance/upgrades such as septage receiving beds.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Director Lambert  
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2021-7-10

“That the meeting be adjourned at 1:35 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

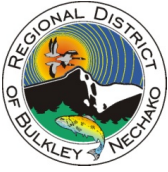
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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Mark Parker, Chair

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Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural / Agriculture Committee Memorandum

To: Chair Parker and Committee  
 From: Megan D'Arcy, Agriculture Coordinator (West)  
 Date: October 7, 2021  
 Regarding: **Food and Agriculture Plan – Implementation Update**

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive.

### **Background:**

Upon completion of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan in April 2020, staff committed to providing regular updates on the Implementation Strategy. The Plan is currently in Phase 1: 2020-2023. Several Priority Area actions have been (or are soon to be) completed. For reference, the eight top Priority Areas from the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan are:

1. Support producers in navigating government policies and requirements
2. Prepare for emergencies
3. Develop the food and agriculture sector and market(s) for RDBN goods
4. Engage a broad audience in regional food and agriculture activities and information
5. Prevent and manage invasive and harmful species
6. Ensure agricultural policies are in-place and consistent across the region
7. Increase climate change resiliency and adaptation capacity
8. Continue to build capacity for effective and strategic implementation

Each Priority Area includes specific actions which are included in the three-phase implementation strategy. The phases contain concurrent actions. Phase 1 is not required to be complete prior to Phases 2 and 3, but each phase represents short, medium or long-term goals.

The following Implementation Actions remain underway and are ongoing through all three Phases:

- 3.2 Continue to update and distribute the Connecting Consumers and Producers Guide annually.
- 4.1 Continue to support and build relationships and networks around RDBN food and agriculture.

6.2 Continue to advocate to senior levels of government and industry around issues that impact RDBN producers.

8.2 Maintain the Agriculture Coordinator Position.

8.3 Compile and consolidate quantitative and qualitative data on food systems and agriculture in the RDBN.

8.4 Continue to be a learning organization.

The following Implementation Actions are associated with specific project work that is already complete, or well underway:

**1.1 Develop a communication strategy to disseminate information to producers on government regulations affecting agriculture.**

Communication with the Agriculture community has increased recently thanks to the Growing Opportunities Newsletter, produced monthly. The newsletter has already reached 75 subscribers. The newsletter archives are available on the website here: <https://www.rdbn.bc.ca/departments/agriculture/growing-opportunities-rdbn-ag-newsletter>

**1.2 Create and disseminate producer-focused tools to support clarity with the multiple levels of government regulation.**

Plans are underway to explore field days, printed materials as well as a podcast series aimed at producer-focussed information about high priority topics. These projects may include applications to the Province's Knowledge Transfer funding program to support project budgets.

**3.3 Undertake a food hub feasibility study and a regional food economy assessment. b) Identify possible pilot projects of food processing and distribution hub(s) within the region and establish working group for each pilot and set objectives for increasing local food access**

Open Houses are being planned with a focus on people involved or interested in slaughter and meat processing (i.e., cut and wrap services). Plans include inviting representatives from local colleges, TRU (who offer industry certification), industry, Work BC, high schools and the public.

**7.2 Increase climate risk mitigation and adaptation for agriculture lands.**

The RDBN continues to participate with the Climate Action Initiative on initiatives identified in the Bulkley-Nechako & Fraser-Fort George BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategies.

Recently, Webinars focussed on Best Practices for Managing Water have been added to the website.

<https://www.rdbn.bc.ca/departments/agriculture/climate-change>





## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural / Agriculture Committee Memorandum

To: Chair Parker and Committee  
From: Michelle Roberge, Regional Agriculture Coordinator, East  
Date: October 7, 2021  
Regarding: Agriculture Outreach Initiatives

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive.

### **Background:**

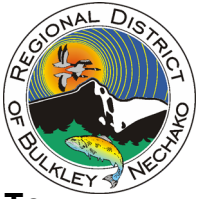
The Regional Agriculture Coordinators are developing initiatives to address two Priority Areas (PA) within the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan (2020): *PA 1 – Support producers in navigating government policies*; and *PA 4- Engage a broad audience in food and agricultural activities and information*.

Both initiatives share the goal to disseminate relevant information about aspects of operating an agricultural operation as well as basic knowledge for living on rural property in the RDBN. These include topics such as understanding the various government Acts and By-laws related to agriculture, the fundamentals about fences, keeping bees, the noises and smells of rural living, etc. The initiatives provide a multi-media approach to information sharing to reach the wide demographic we serve. The approach includes print, social media posts, podcasts, and YouTube videos.

The first initiative is a Podcast Series, which will be piloted this fall. The project involves a partnership with CICK radio in Smithers to support the audio recording and editing components. The RDBN Agriculture Coordinators will be the hosts and will recruit local experts and producers for each topic. The initial pilot run of the Podcast Series will include 6-7 podcasts, each 35-45 minutes in length. They will be shared via CICK, as well as from our website and social media, and possibly other services that offer podcast streaming. The hope is that the uptake on the podcast pilot will be positive, and we can continue the series throughout next year, possibility incorporating overlap departments within the RDBN (e.g. Planning and Emergency Services).

The second initiative is a video series on the Top 10 things to know about rural living in the RDBN. This project will require grant funding and would take place next spring/summer. The videos will include 'characters' that walk us through the do's and don'ts of the key aspects of rural living. The intent is to make the videos engaging, funny, and to the point. In addition, we plan to develop print and digital content of the Top 10 list to be shared with community Chambers of Commerce, Realtor offices and Municipalities to distribute to folks that are considering rural living.

The Agriculture Coordinators have compiled an initial list of topics to start the initiatives and are also open to suggestions on topics from the Directors.



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural/Agriculture Committee

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development  
**Date:** October 7, 2021  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Relief Funds – Allocation to Electoral Area Services

### RECOMMENDATION

(all/directors/majority)

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the following allocations.

### Background:

At the September Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting, Rural Directors discussed keeping remaining COVID-19 Relief Funds available both to Community Groups and as a contingency as the fourth wave of the pandemic continues to impact communities.

At the time of this memo, \$340,019.33 remains in the Rural Directors Committee Allocation. Staff continue to receive and process community group requests for those funds.

#### 1) Additional Allocation to Electoral Area Services to support community groups

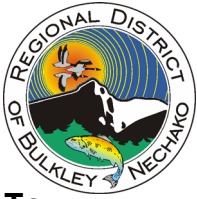
Originally, \$132,047.00 was allocated to Electoral Area Services for this purpose. Those funds were fully allocated, with an over-allocation to-date of \$43,187.67. An additional allocation is recommended for \$175,000, divided based on population. The result would be:

Area A	\$	56,630.96
Area B	\$	20,881.05
Area C	\$	15,245.97
Area D	\$	15,860.12
Area E	\$	17,163.83
Area F	\$	39,488.67
Area G	\$	9,729.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>175,000.00</b>

These funds will remain available via application to community groups restricted from normal revenue generation activities as a result of the pandemic.

#### 2) Contingency - \$165,019.33

Remaining funds will be held as contingency and may be proposed at a later date for previously discussed items, including RDBN building rewiring for Category 7 capacity or Municipal Recreation support.



# Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural/Agriculture Committee

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development  
**Date:** October 7, 2021  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Relief Funds – Application Approval

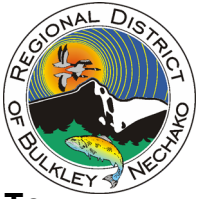
## RECOMMENDATION

(all/directors/majority)

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the following Application for COVID-19 Relief Funds.

### Background:

Community Group	Project	Amount
<b>Area 'A' (Smithers Rural)</b>		
Smithers District Chamber of Commerce	Live, Love, Local Campaign	\$5,000.00
<b>Area 'B' (Burns Lake Rural)</b>		
<b>Area 'C' (Fort St; James Rural)</b>		
<b>Area 'D' (Fraser Lake Rural)</b>		
<b>Area 'E' (Francois/Ootsa Rural)</b>		
<b>Area 'F' (Vanderhoof Rural)</b>		
<b>Area 'G' (Houston Rural)</b>		



## Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural/Agriculture Committee

**To:** Chair and Committee  
**From:** Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development  
**Date:** October 7, 2021  
**Subject:** Grant in Aid – Federal Gas Tax Internal Trade

### RECOMMENDATION

(all/directors/majority)

Receive.

### Background:

To facilitate support for projects in Area A that are not eligible for Federal Gas Tax, Electoral Area “A” and Electoral Area “E” Directors have agreed to the following internal trade of Grant in Aid funds for Federal Gas Tax.

	Current Allocation	Proposed Trade	Resulting Balance
Area A Gas Tax	\$1,134,898.36	\$ (50,000.00)	\$1,084,898.36
Area E Gas Tax	\$358,582.63	\$50,000.00	\$408,582.63
Area A Grant in Aid	\$34,973.91	\$50,000.00	\$ 84,973.91
Area E Grant in Aid	\$94,789.02	\$ (50,000.00)	\$ 44,789.02