

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING

(VIRTUAL)

(Committee of the Whole)

Thursday, November 4, 2021

PRESENT: Chair Gerry Thiessen

Directors Shane Brienens
Mark Fisher
Dolores Funk
Tom Greenaway
Clint Lambert
Linda McGuire
Annette Morgan
Bob Motion
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Michael Riis-Christianson

Directors Absent Gladys Atrill, Town of Smithers
Chris Newell, Electoral Area "G" (Houston Rural)
Sarrah Storey, Village of Fraser Lake

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician/Regional Transit Coordinator
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Others Michael Coulson, Transit Planner, City of Prince George
Linda Harmon, Director, Strategic Outreach & Business Engagement, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Joel McKay, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Development Initiative Trust
Lindsay Taylor, Government Relations Manager, BC Transit

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thiessen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Lambert

RTC.2021-2-1

"That the Regional Transit Agenda of November 4, 2021 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Regional Transit Committee Minutes – April 6, 2021 Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director Fisher

RTC.2021-2-2 “That the Regional Transit Committee meeting minutes of April 6, 2021 be adopted.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TRUST – Joel McKay, Chief Executive Officer RE: Northern Passenger Transportation Fund

Chair Thiessen welcomed Joel McKay, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Mr. McKay provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

Northern Passenger Transportation Service Fund

- Engagement
- March 2021 NDIT entered into the Safe Restart Funding Agreement with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI)
 - o Over next 3 years to support transportation from Lytton to Yukon border
- Long haul transportation
 - o Currently in negotiation for a one-year extension for BC Bus North to complete a consultation/analysis of the service
 - o Commitment to ensure long haul services
 - o Goal to improve and integrate service
- Community Vehicle Program
 - o Started in 2017 as part of the Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan
 - Funding was committed through Community Transportation Grant Program (Community Vehicles)
- NDIT's Goal
 - o Maintain and improve transportation services throughout northern BC
 - o Integrate transit services
 - o Increase knowledge, awareness of available services
 - o Wishing to provide multiyear funding
 - o Ensure no interruptions of current transportation options
 - o Awareness of another phase of consultation regarding long haul transportation.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Community Vehicle Program (CVP) Application
 - o Launch and intake time frame
 - o Awareness provided to current operators and communities
 - o Current Community Vehicle Program operators' budgets and future funding
 - o Competitive process for all applications
 - o CVP Application for capital and operating expenses
 - o NDIT funding allocation
 - 80% funding
 - Community matching funds/in-kind donation for consideration
 - o New applicants receiving approval will be working with a consultant to refine budgets and service
- Creative and innovative transportation ideas
 - o Flexibility regarding collaborative partnerships and types of services
- Important that available service is accessible and inclusive
- Capital/operational financial sustainability

DELEGATION (CONT'D)

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TRUST – Joel McKay, Chief Executive Officer RE: Northern Passenger Transportation Fund (Cont'd)

- Fort St. James transit challenges
 - o Various community bus operators
 - Each bus has specific use or community demographic
 - o Minimal consolidation/partnerships
 - o Witnessing young individuals continuing to hitchhike
 - o Residents relocate due to lack of transit service to other communities for medical appointments etc.
- Vanderhoof and Saik'uz First Nation bus – good ridership
- Vanderhoof allocation of funds to purchase new bus as original bus was no longer road worthy
- NDIT perspective – vitality of community going forward will be tied to a reliable transportation service
- Transit – requires a “made in the north solution”
- Consolidation of transit services.

Chair Thiessen thanked Mr. McKay for attending the meeting.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE – Linda Harmon, Director, Strategic Outreach & Business Engagement – RE: BC Bus North

Chair Thiessen welcomed Linda Harmon, Director, Strategic Outreach & Business Engagement, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Ms. Harmon provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

BC Bus North

- Routes
- Passenger Profile (2019)
- Community Benefits & Economic Impact.

The following was discussed:

- BC Bus North funding to end of March 2022
- MoTI to provide report to Federal Government regarding how BC Bus North has impacted individuals and the economy
 - o Availability of information
 - o RDBN Directors require further information from MoTI to provide feedback in regard to the impact to communities
- Approximately 15,000 passengers have travelled on BC Bus North since 2018
- People wanting to age in place – transit services needed
- Community benefits of busing
- BC Bus North fare structure change in 2020 to distance-based fare
- Utilized for intercommunity as well as long distance travelling
- Ridership information needed.

Chair Thiessen thanked Ms. Harmon for attending the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Lambert

RTC.2021-2-3

“That the meeting be adjourned at 1:55 p.m.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Gerry Thiessen, Chair

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services