

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, November 9, 2023

PRESENT: Chair Clint Lambert

Directors Judy Greenaway
Shirley Moon
Chris Newell
Mark Parker
Michael Riis-Christianson
Stoney Stoltenberg

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Megan D'Arcy, Regional Agricultural Coordinator
Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – left at 3:00 p.m.
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Others Shane Brienen, District of Houston
Martin Elphee, District of Fort. St. James
Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle – via Zoom
Kevin Moutray, District of Vanderhoof – left at 2:30 p.m.
Sarrah Storey, Village of Fraser Lake

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lambert called the meeting to order at 1:48 p.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2023-6-1

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for November 9, 2023 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes
-September 7, 2023

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

RDC.2023-6-2

“That the minutes of the Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting of September 7, 2023 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Food and Agriculture Plan -Implementation Update

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2023-6-3

"That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Food and Agriculture Plan – Implementation Update memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- Food sustainability and a food hub
- Core group of producers at the 2023 RDBN Business Forum discussed the practicality of a food hub and pursuing value added processing
 - o Requires a dedicated and focused group to move forward
- Receiving an update from CleanFarms
 - o Staff will follow-up.

Northwest Invasive Plant Council Update Fall 2023

Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2023-6-4

"That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Northwest Invasive Plant Council Update Fall 2023 memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- New Provincial information collection database
 - o NWIPC Contractors experiencing challenges inputting and extracting data
 - o Awaiting full reporting regarding the preseason workplan
 - Staff will follow-up
- NWIPC Board of Directors changes – awaiting notification of next meeting and update
- Field crews were able to respond in a timely manner to requests
- Weeds surviving drought conditions
 - o Lack of ability for desirable forage crops to compete with the invasive species has allowed the invasive species to become more prominent
- Observation of scentless chamomile growing along the Cycle 16 Trail
 - o Scentless chamomile is not a priority by the province
 - o The RDBN can make a request to the NWIPC and with available resources it may be treated
- Treating Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure gravel pits
- Treatment levels of various municipalities
 - o Encourage other municipalities to increase invasive plant treatments.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Regional Engagement Program

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2023-6-5

"That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Ministry of Agriculture and Food Regional Engagement Program memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding:

- Crop selection
 - o Growing hemp and its impact to soil
- Regional Extension Open Houses hosted by Ministry of Agriculture and Food
 - o Advertised to a targeted audience.

Veterinary Drug and Medicated Feed Regulation

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

RDC.2023-6-6

"That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Veterinary Drug and Medicated Feed Regulation memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Staff will continue to follow up with Dr. Burns, the province's Chief Veterinarian as no response has been received to date.

Water Restrictions for Agriculture Operations

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2023-6-7

"That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Water Restrictions for Agriculture Operations memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Municipal Agriculture Disaster Declaration

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2023-6-8

"That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development's Municipal Agriculture Disaster Declaration memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS (CONT'D)

The following was discussed:

- Farmers and ranchers registering for a water licence
- Water licensing rollout challenges
- Government aquifer monitoring well near Vanderhoof
- Inviting the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to a future meeting
- Development of water storage
- Due to drought conditions lakes in the area are observed as having lower levels
- Water levels of the Nechako
 - o Explore options to utilize high water levels for water storage
- Provincial Government irrigation and water storage program.

Invitation to Minister Cullen to Attend a Future Meeting

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Moon

RDC.2023-6-9

"That the Committee invite the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to a future meeting to discuss water licensing and agricultural water usage."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Municipal Agriculture Disaster Declaration

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Parker

RDC.2023-6-10

"That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development's Municipal Agriculture Disaster Declaration memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Committee spoke of the following:

- Declaring an agriculture disaster:
 - o Awareness by other levels of government
 - o Potential impacts
 - o Collecting data during harvest time to use as a condition assessment tool
 - BC Cattlemen's Association collects some data
 - Statistics Canada data
 - Collecting data to capture small farm, hobby farm and forage farm operations
 - Staff will review workplans and bring forward to the Committee for review.

CORRESPONDENCE

Federal-Provincial Support Helping Disaster-Affected Farmers

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2023-6-11

"That the Committee receive the correspondence regarding the Federal-Provincial Support Helping Disaster-Affected Farmers."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the price discrepancy in hay prices year over year and insurance coverage based on previous years hay prices and not actuals. Director Parker encouraged people to fill out the AgriRecovery Applications. In the past BC Cattlemen's had an individual who would travel to communities to assist farmers in filling out forms and paperwork. The long-term impacts of the drought were discussed and the continued advocacy of higher levels of government for support.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Volunteer of the Year

Chair Lambert noted that some municipalities recognize volunteers by having a Volunteer of the Year program and asked if the Committee would want to consider a similar program. The following was discussed:

- Municipal nomination process
- Exploring a rural citizen/volunteer nomination process
- BC Achievement Awards
 - o No nominations from northern B.C.
 - o Need to encourage nominations
- Options to recognize volunteers
 - o Banquet to include all volunteers
 - o Rural Directors Volunteer Breakfast
 - o Certificates
 - o Youth and adult recognition
 - o Province of BC proclaimed BC Non-Profit Day - October 30th
 - o Volunteer of the Year week – opportunity to encourage new volunteers
- Staff will bring forward options for a Rural Citizen/Volunteer of the Year Recognition for the Committee to consider.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2023-6-10

"That the meeting be adjourned at 3:00 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Clint Lambert, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director
of Corporate Services