

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 9, 2024

PRESENT: Acting Chair Mark Parker

Directors Judy Greenaway
Clint Lambert – via Zoom
Stoney Stoltenberg

Directors Shirley Moon, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)
Absent Chris Newell, Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)
Michael Riis-Christianson, Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural)

Alternate Directors Doug Bysouth, Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural)
Alex Kulchar, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)
Elijah Newell, Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Megan D’Arcy, Regional Agriculture Coordinator
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer – arrived at 2:22 p.m.
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning - arrived at 2:21 p.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Others Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James
Annette Morgan, Village of Telkwa – via Zoom – arrived at 2:20 p.m.

Media Jeremy Hull, LD News

CALL TO ORDER Acting Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 2:19 p.m.

AGENDA Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Alternate Director Kulchar

RDC.2024-4-1 “That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for May 9, 2024 be approved.

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes -March 7, 2024 Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Alternate Director Kulchar

RDC.2024-4-2 "That the minutes of the Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting of March 7, 2024 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

AGRICULTURE REPORTS

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Follow-up Letter Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Alternate Director Bysouth

RDC.2024-4-3 "That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the follow-up letter to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

BC Vegetable Marketing Commission - Update Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-4-4 "That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's BC Vegetable Marketing Commission - Update memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Acting Chair Parker will follow up with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George regarding their request for a meeting with the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission.

RURAL REPORT

Grant in Aid Under \$2,500 Approval Update Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-4-5 "That the Committee receive the Manager of Regional Economic Development's Grant in Aid Under \$2,500 Approval Update memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Farm Animal Advisory Panel

Alternate Director Kulchar spoke of participating on the Farmed Animal Welfare Advisory Panel and meeting with stakeholders to provide recommendations to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Alternate Director Kulchar commented that Recommendation 6 - Shortage of Livestock Veterinarians, Especially in Rural and Remote Areas has received funding toward B.C. Veterinarian clinics that treat farm animals. He also noted Recommendation 1 - Enforcement, Inspections, Audits, Oversight - Public Trust recommends that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food create a new inspection and enforcement function within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to assume responsibility for implementation of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*.

Community Emergency Response Societies

Director Stoltenberg mentioned that he has received a number of inquiries from Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) area residents to form Community Emergency Response Societies similar to the Chinook Emergency Response Society in Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural). He noted that one group has received its society status and two groups are working toward achieving status.

Chair Lambert provided an overview of the Chinook Emergency Response Society funding structure.

Community Irrigation

Chair Lambert spoke of community irrigation systems for areas that are prominent farming locations. He noted the importance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food having aquifer mapping.

Discussion took place regarding dam costs, standardized dam sizing and building requirements, operations, and liability. Inviting the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to a future Board meeting to discuss water licensing and community irrigation prior to allocating staff resources for additional research on such a project was discussed.

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer noted that the Regional District oversees Glacier Gulch dam in Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural). It was noted that the Province has indicated that it will provide permits to Regional Districts only.

Advocacy with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food regarding funding for community irrigation projects was discussed. The Provincially funded Agricultural Water Infrastructure Program administered through the Investment Agriculture Foundation requires a farmer to have an Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-4-6

"That the meeting be adjourned at 2:45 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Acting Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director
of Corporate Services