

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, May 7, 2020

Via Video/Teleconference

PRESENT: Chair Michael Riis-Christianson

Directors Mark Fisher
Clint Lambert
Chris Newell
Mark Parker
Gerry Thiessen – left at 9:58 a.m.

Director Absent Tom Greenaway, Electoral Area “C” (Fort St. James Rural)

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
Nellie Davis, Regional Economic Development Coordinator
Debbie Evans – arrived at 9:59 a.m.
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Deborah Jones-Middleton, Director of Protective Services
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – arrived at 10:10 a.m.
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Others Taylor Turkington, Manager, Assurance, Beswick Hildebrandt Lund
Shane Brienen, District of Houston
Jerry Petersen, Electoral Area “F” (Vanderhoof Rural)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Riis-Christianson called the meeting to order 9:31 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Parker

BBC.2020-2-1

“That the Broadband Committee Agenda for May 7, 2020 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

**Broadband Committee
Meeting Minutes
–January 9, 2020**

Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Lambert

BBC.2020-2-2

“That the Broadband Committee Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2020 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORT

Connecting British Columbia
Funding Program: COVID-19
Response Moved by Director Thiessen
Seconded by Director Lambert

BBC.2020-2-3

“That the Broadband Committee receive the Regional Economic Development Coordinator’s May 7, 2020 memo titled Connecting British Columbia Funding Program: COVID-19 Response.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place in regard to funding criteria concerning download and upload speeds. Chair Riis-Christianson commented that a meeting is scheduled May 8, 2020 with Telus. Telus’ purchase of ABC Communications was discussed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. How does the RDBN advance its 3 projects?

The following was discussed:

- Frustrations in regard to working with Telco’s to move projects forward
- Staff are scheduling meetings with Telco’s in the region working to advance projects
- Finding alternate solutions to move forward
 - Continue lobbying and advocate for adequate service levels
 - RDBN Board write a letter to Federal and Provincial Government Authorities
 - Request Letters of Support from the municipalities and First Nations communities in the region
 - Highlighting the importance of improving internet service
 - COVID-19 Pandemic impact
 - Lack of internet creates
 - Public safety and health issues
- Lack of educational opportunities for rural B.C. youth due to lack of internet service levels.

Report to RDBN Board
Meeting

Moved by Director Parker
Seconded by Director Lambert

BBC.2020-2-4

“That the Broadband Committee direct staff to bring forward a comprehensive lobbying and strategy report to the May 21, 2020 Board Meeting including requests for letters of support from local governments and First Nations Governments in the region.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. Provincial \$50 million fund for small connectivity projects

- Contacting all Internet Service Provider’s (ISP’s) in the region
 - i. Asking if there is an opportunity to utilize fund

DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONT'D)

3. Provincial model for advancing connectivity in rural and remote areas

- Province and Federal approval of connectivity in rural and remote areas requires local governments or ISP's to be in business for three years; and/or local governments to partner with ISP's that are in business for three years
- Request that the Province and Federal governments consider connectivity as an essential service
- Suggest backbone and fibre optic infrastructure be owned by Provincial/Federal Government.

Provincial Ownership of
Digital Infrastructure

Moved by Director Newell
Seconded by Director Parker

BBC.2020-2-5

"That the Broadband Committee recommend that the Board write a letter to the Ministry of Citizens' Services suggesting that the Provincial Government consider that internet service be an essential service; and further, that the Provincial Government consider owning digital infrastructure similar to transportation infrastructure."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

RigStar Discussion

- Chair Riis-Christianson met with RigStar May 6, 2020
- RigStar working with TC Energy to provide wireless connectivity along pipeline route
- Potential opportunity to create synergies in the region
 - Reviewed map of areas for potential opportunities
- RDBN will share Broadband Study and priority projects
- Staff will follow up with RigStar in regard to the method used to access internet infrastructure and the cellular user system.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Newell

BBC.2020-2-6

"That the meeting be adjourned 10:12 a.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Michael Riis-Christianson, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant