



BROADBAND INTERNET AND MOBILITY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
1981 Alaska Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC

Directors Present: Chair Hiebert, Electoral Area D
Vice Chair Quibell, District of Hudson's Hope (via Zoom)
Director Dober, City of Dawson Creek
Director Hansen, City of Fort St. John (via Zoom)
Director Kealy, Electoral Area B
Director Sperling, Electoral Area C
Director Taillefer, District of Taylor (via Zoom)
Director Veach, Pouce Coupe
Director Zabinsky, City of Fort St. John

Directors Absent: Director Courtoreille, District of Chetwynd
Director Krakowka, District of Tumbler Ridge
Director Rose, Electoral Area E

Staff Present: Tyra Henderson, Corporate Officer
Trevor Ouellette, IT Manager
Terri Henrickson, Regional Connectivity Coordinator

Delegations: Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, Connectivity Division
Rachel Greenspan, Executive Director Network BC
Megan Chadwick, Director, Community Engagement Connected Communities BC, Connectivity Division (via Zoom)
Jeanne Holliss, Executive Director, Connected Communities (via Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOVED Director Dober

SECONDED Director Taillefer

That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee adopt the April 24, 2024, Meeting Agenda:

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. GALLERY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

(Cont'd on next page)



4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Draft Meeting Minutes of January 26, 2024

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6. DELEGATIONS

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. REPORTS

8.1 Contract Award – Planetworks Consulting (RFP 12-2024), ADM-BIMC-023

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. CONSENT

11. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

11.1 Telecom Decision CRTC 2024-69

11.2 Northeast Connectivity NDIT Funded Projects

11.3 Terms of Reference

11.4 Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee – Guiding Principles

11.5 Bylaw No.2487, 2022

12. RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

12.1 Notice of Closed Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Meeting – April 24, 2024, ADM-BIMC-022

13. ADJOURNMENT

CARRIED

3. GALLERY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Draft Meeting Minutes of January 26, 2024

MOVED Director Dober

SECONDED Director Zabinsky

That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Meeting Minutes of January 26, 2024 be amended to reflect Director Veach's return to the meeting at 10:41 a.m. and be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

VARY AGENDA

The Chair varied the agenda to move to Item 12 – Notice of Closed Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Meeting – April 24, 2024.

12. RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

12.1 Notice of Closed Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Meeting – April 24, 2024, ADM-BIMC-022

MOVED Director Sperling

SECONDED Director Zabinsky

That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee recess to a Closed Meeting at 10:07 a.m. for the purpose of discussing the following items:



12.1 Notice of Closed Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Meeting – April 24, 2024, ADM-BIMC-022 (Cont’d)

Agenda Item	Description	Authority
3.1	Minutes	CC Section 97(1)(b) Closed Minutes, Access to Records.
5.1	Delegation	CC Section 90(1)(j) Information Prohibited from Disclosure.

CARRIED

RECONVENED

The Chair reconvened the Open Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee meeting at 11:08 a.m. and returned to Agenda Item 6 – Delegations.

6. DELEGATIONS

6.1 Connected Communities and Networks BC Presentation

Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, Connectivity Division and Rachel Greenspan, Executive Director Network BC presented in person, while Jeanne Hollis, Executive Director Connected Communities, and Megan Chadwick, Director Community Engagement Connected Communities BC, Connectivity Division attended via Zoom.

Connected Communities and Networks BC presented a Connectivity Update and topics included:

1. Short and long-term impacts of connectivity funding for rural regions of BC.
2. Economic return from connectivity investments - Northern region
3. Province-wide Impact
4. Funding & Project Landscape
5. Projects in progress
6. Intake 3 areas of focus
7. Highway cellular
8. LEO Constellations - expanding opportunities.
9. Emerging Issues

Connectivity is a priority; Connected Communities and Network BC of the Ministry of Citizens' Services shared that connectivity is foundational to government priorities. BC's Economic Plan, the *Declaration Act*, and the Ministry Mandate are three plans of action that aggressively accelerate the timeline to connect all BC communities and First Nations to high-speed internet services and networks.

Connectivity affects various mandates of other ministries like the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General where access to justice is dependent on connectivity. Ankle monitors need connectivity to work and if connectivity is not available, this type of justice or sentence is not possible. Other ministries affected by connectivity are healthcare and education.

The goal is to achieve that every home and that of First Nations be connected by 2027.

6.1 Connected Communities and Networks BC Presentation (Cont'd)

Service providers and community relationships are important because after the projects are funded by the government and completed the service providers must be held accountable for the service they provide.

The next Connectivity Report will be released in the Spring of 2024. BC Stats analyzed the short and Long-term impacts of connectivity funding for rural regions of BC. Stats show that connectivity investments in the North deliver seven times the economic return from approved provincial funding over the longer term (approximately \$16,150 per person).

Various funding and projects have been implemented to close the digital divide such as Connecting BC, Universal Broadband Fund, New Highway Cellular funding, Connecting Communities. The Provincial Government has invested 584 million into connectivity. Nearly all the money is used for projects that are in-flight projects, but there is still money available to be utilized.

A total of 3 project applications have been received for Zone 3 one from each intake, and these are in assessment. There is still an intake open until June 20, 2024. The program will continue to have an open intake until it has the maximum projects that cover the terrestrial terrain.

Currently there are 8,900kms of highway with LTE cellular coverage and 15,000 kms total of highway in BC. Connecting British Columbia program funded 532kms of highway, 33 rest areas, and five emergency call boxes. In 2023 \$75 million to expand cellular service to another 550kms. NDI administers this funding. This cellular program intake is open. The roads that do not have power need a different solution for connectivity and cell to satellite is currently being piloted to provide this type of solution. Call boxes are also used.

There is currently only one Leo Satellite provider in Canada that serves Leo satellite service.

Starlink is moving into the mobile space and makes satellite dishes available for mobile units. Starlink is still waiting to deploy all their services in Canada.

Connected Families is a program where the service providers provide low-cost plans for low-income families. Northwest Tel, Rogers, and TELUS are the service providers involved in this program.

Connectivity Programs provide the first step funding for infrastructure and allow communities to realize the benefits of digital access. There is a need to enhance government coordination and programming to meet the high demands as more communities are connected. When connectivity is not included in infrastructure plans you can end up with an infrastructure project that does not meet your needs such as a water treatment plant that was constructed but could not be fully operational because of the lack of connectivity. Connected Communities and Networks BC are working with other ministries to be sure that connectivity is a part of any infrastructure plan or build.



6.1 Connected Communities and Networks BC Presentation (Cont'd)

Director Quibell left the meeting at 11:35 am and did not return.

A question-and-answer period ensued, and discussion included:

- Leo Satellite dependency and deployment for the remaining 8 or 9% (20,000 homes) in remote areas all over BC. Terrestrial builds that were thought to be far off are moving forward. Planetworks' has had great success and involvement with a project near Atlin.
- Discussion as to where the remote homes that would need satellite deployment are located and that there is no one set area but that they exist all over BC.
- Internet Service Providers (ISP) collaboration with government and the slight shift in those companies who only focused on profitability are now shifting to an interest to expand services to remote areas.
- Why the Alaska Highway, which is a primary highway, is getting emergency call boxes rather than more substantial mobile connectivity infrastructure. It is important to note that because of Leo Satellite technology and terrestrial cellular, this year we will be able to call 911 when out of cellular range and within two years we will be able to text and complete a voice call.
- Government investing in terrestrial builds at this point along with satellite because terrestrial builds are more reliable and resilient than satellites right now.
- Roaming agreements and how they help us stay connected. ROGERS roams on all of TELUS' networks here in BC, but TELUS roams selectively on Rogers' network infrastructure.
- Cell signal and coverage issues and Connected Community delegates will take this information to Rogers for further discussion.

Director Veach left the meeting at 11:48 a.m. and returned at 11:51 a.m.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

8. REPORTS

8.1 Contract Award – Planetworks Consulting (RFP 12-2024), ADM-BIMC-023

MOVED Director Veach

SECONDED Director Sperling

That the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee recommend that the Regional Board award the contract for "Regional Connectivity Strategy Report RFP 12-2024" to Planetworks Consulting Corp. at the cost of \$92,740.00 (excluding taxes); further that the Chair and Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to sign the contract on behalf of the Regional District.

CARRIED

Vice Chair Quibell, District of Hudson Hope left the meeting at 11:55 a.m. He did not return.

9. NEW BUSINESS



10. CONSENT CALENDAR

11. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

- 11.1 Telecom Decision CRTC 2024-69
- 11.2 Northeast Connectivity NDIT Funded Projects
- 11.3 Terms of Reference
- 11.4 Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee - Guiding Principles
- 11.5 Bylaw No. 2487, 2022

13. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

CERTIFIED a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Broadband Internet and Mobility Committee Meeting held on April 24, 2024 in the PRRD Board Room, 1981 Alaska Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC.

Leonard Hiebert, Chair

Terri Henrickson, Regional Connectivity
Coordinator/Recording Clerk

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