



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
1981 Alaska Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC

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

Directors Absent: Director Krakowka, District of Tumbler Ridge

Staff Present: Shawn Dahlen, Chief Administrative Officer
Roxanne Shepherd, Chief Financial Officer
Tyra Henderson, Corporate Officer
Joanne Caldecott, Deputy Corporate Officer
Kari Bondaroff, General Manager of Environmental Services
Gerritt Lacey, Solid Waste Services Manager
Kevin Clarkson, General Manager of Community Services
Ashley Murphey, General Manager of Development Services
Annette Andrews, Communications Manager
Trevor Ouellette, IT Manager
Carmen Willms, Legislative Services Clerk/Recorder

Delegations: Mr. Larry Neufeld, MLA – Peace River South
Mr. Jordan Kealy, MLA – Peace River North (via Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

CW/25/01/01

MOVED Director Dober

SECONDED Director Quibell

That the Committee of the Whole adopt the January 23, 2025 meeting agenda:

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA (Cont'd)

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3. GALLERY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Mr. Larry Neufeld, South Peace MLA - Introduction to Board

4.2 Mr. Jordan Kealy, North Peace MLA - Introduction to Board

5. REPORTS

5.1 Board Discussion Re: BC Call for Power (including wind farms, environmental assessments, emission caps, impacts on industry and the economy)

a. Electoral Area Directors Recommendations Report from December 12, 2024, ADM-BRD-564 (from January 9, 2025 Board Agenda)

b. September 13, 2024 Letter from Minister Osborne

c. December 10, 2024 Excerpt from B.C. Today

d. Premier Eby Statement Re: Assessment and Management Process

6. MEDIA QUESTIONS

7. ADJOURNMENT

CARRIED

3. GALLERY COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

4. DELEGATIONS

4.1 Mr. Larry Neufeld, MLA – Peace River South - Introduction to Board

Mr. Larry Neufeld, MLA – Peace River South introduced himself to the Regional Board. He spoke about his personal background and the opportunities he experienced as the South Peace MLA in the British Columbia Legislature. He confirmed his role as the Shadow Minister of Energy and Climate Solutions and highlighted his portfolio.

4.2 Mr. Jordan Kealy, MLA – Peace River North - Introduction to Board

Mr. Jordan Kealy, MLA – Peace River North and former Director, greeted the Regional Board and spoke about his new role. He confirmed the location of his new offices in Fort St. John and Fort Nelson and noted the challenges faced by the Province of British Columbia highlighting the economic impacts. He confirmed his new role as Critic to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Chair opened the floor to questions from the Directors to both Mr. Neufeld and Mr. Kealy which included the following:

- Whether the 2025 Agriculture Forum in Abbotsford recognized the grain and cattle production from the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) despite lack of representation. Mr. Kealy explained that the Grain Producers Association and the Cattlemen's Association were present at the 2025 Agriculture Forum, however the main issue discussed was the possibility of tariffs imposed by the United States. Mr. Neufeld added that tariffs could also affect commodity prices of oil and gas. Both MLAs mentioned the need for diversification and infrastructure to lessen the impact of tariffs.
- Directors asked both MLAs how they would work with the current provincial government to bring about positive change as members of the opposition to promote the Peace River Region. Mr. Neufeld explained he was developing a relationship with Minister Dix to share information and ideas. Mr. Kealy noted that he was committed

4. DELEGATIONS (Cont'd)

- to work with Minister Poplin to grow internal infrastructure which could mitigate tariff or trade threats from other countries.
- The importance of navigating *the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPPA). Mr. Kealy noted that more clarity was needed to avoid uncertainty in markets. He explained that proper communication with First Nations was essential.
- The possible reaction of the Conservative Party on the waiver of Environmental Assessments for new Calls for Power by the Province. Mr. Neufeld explained that the senior leadership of the Conservative Party were currently considering responses.
- Directors asked what local challenges were facing Mr. Kealy and Mr. Neufeld in their new roles. Mr. Kealy spoke of ensuring his constituents had a voice by setting up offices and ensuring they were represented well to various groups/entities. He also noted the challenge of holding the current NDP government accountable and familiarizing himself with his role. Mr. Neufeld echoed Mr. Kealy's statements and added that his challenges included problems with road maintenance and health care in the South Peace riding.
- Concerns were raised around the Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions setting aside Environmental Assessments (EAs) for the Call for Power. Mr. Neufeld spoke of the hypocrisy of the provincial government in not requiring EAs for these projects. Discussion continued regarding new energy projects and included the move of the projects from crown land to private land, power line loss, and the lack of economic benefit from these projects for the Regional District.
- The need to expand the Registered Nurse program at the Northern Lights College in Fort St. John was discussed.

Mr. Neufeld left the meeting at 10:57 a.m.

- Concerns regarding food security. Mr. Kealy noted that Canada has the capability of producing all it needs, which could lessen dependency on other countries. He noted that food security would require all branches of government to work in collaboration.
- Transparency from the provincial government. Mr. Kealy explained that trust in government was dependent on transparent communication, and the recognition of differences and the important roles played by both regional districts and the province.

Director Courtoreille, District of Chetwynd, left the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

5. REPORTS

5.1 Board Discussion Re: BC Call for Power (including wind farms, environmental assessments, emission caps, impacts on industry and the economy)

CW/25/01/02

MOVED

Director Veach

SECONDED

Director Sperling

That the Committee of the Whole receive the attached report titled "Electoral Area Directors Recommendations Report from December 12, 2024, ADM-BRD-564" for discussion.

CARRIED

5.1 Board Discussion Re: BC Call for Power (including wind farms, environmental assessments, emission caps, impacts on industry and the economy) (Cont'd)

Directors discussed their meeting with Minister Dix during the recent BC Natural Resources Forum event held in Prince George regarding the cumulative impact of wind farms. They noted that Minister Dix had claimed there were many other countries smaller than the PRRD with thousands of wind turbines however he was not willing to share information the province had received in this regard. Directors discussed the fact that First Nations owned 51% of all approved projects and could have a lot of impact with the province regarding the concerns being brought forward; a suggestion to invite First Nations in the Regional District to share their concerns was discussed.

Directors discussed the Environmental Assessment (EA) process, noting it was one of the only ways the province received feedback from Regional Districts regarding the proposed energy projects. They discussed the letter previously sent to the Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions in 2024 which outlined their concerns and noted that the province had stated that the EA process would allow their concerns to be heard. Directors discussed the length of time the EA process takes, and that streamlining the process was needed. They also reflected that the proposed energy projects would use land from the Agriculture Land Reserve.

Director Courtoreille, District of Chetwynd joined the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

CW/25/01/03

MOVED Director Sperling
SECONDED Director Hansen

That the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Regional Board send a letter to Premier Eby and the British Columbia Legislature that states that the Peace River Regional District opposes any removal of the environmental assessment process on wind farms.

CARRIED

CW/25/01/04

MOVED Director Sperling
SECONDED Director Veach

That the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Regional Board send a letter to Premier Eby and the British Columbia Legislature reaffirming the three previous recommendations that were sent to the Province in July 2024 regarding wind farms:

July 18, 2024

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board request that the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation undertake a study on the cumulative impacts of wind farms within the Peace River Region to understand the effects of the disturbance to the land base and to inform future decisions on wind farm siting and volume.

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board request that the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation require proponents to prepare and submit reclamation and responsible asset disposal plans as part of the approval process for wind farm



5.1 Board Discussion Re: BC Call for Power (including wind farms, environmental assessments, emission caps, impacts on industry and the economy) (Cont'd)

development to ensure appropriate end of lifecycle planning is in place for wind farms in the Peace River Regional District.

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED,

That the Regional Board request that the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation enter into an economic impact benefit agreement with the Peace River Regional District for wind farms located in the Peace River Regional District.

CARRIED

CW/25/01/05

MOVED

Director Veach

SECONDED

Director Hansen

That the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Regional Board send letters to all seven First Nations in the Peace River Regional District highlighting the Regional Board's concerns about removal of environmental assessments and the cumulative impacts of wind farms and invite them to forward their concerns to the Province.

CARRIED

6. MEDIA QUESTIONS

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair adjourned the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 11:42 a.m.

CERTIFIED a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Peace River Regional District's Committee of the Whole meeting held on January 23, 2025, in the PRRD Board Room, 1981 Alaska Avenue, Dawson Creek, BC.

Leonard Hiebert, Chair

Tyra Henderson, Corporate Officer