

TOWN OF SMITHERS

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1027 ALDOUS STREET, SMITHERS, B.C. ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2011, AT 6:00 PM.

Council Present:

Cress Farrow, Mayor
Norm Adomeit, Councillor
Mark Bandstra, Councillor
Lorne Benson, Councillor (6:12 p.m.)
Jo Ann Groves, Councillor
Charlie Northrup, Councillor
Frank Wray, Councillor.

Invited Guests:

Don Manson, UNBC
Allan Stroet, BVEDA.

Staff Present:

Susan Bassett, Director of Corporate Services
Penny Goodacre, Recording Secretary.

Staff Excused:

Deborah Sargent, Chief Administrative Officer
Leslie Ford, Director of Finance
Andrew Hillaby, Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture
Keith Stecko, Fire Chief
Wilf Taekema, Director of Works and Operations
Mark Allen, Director of Development Services
Rob Blackburn, Airport Manager.

Media Present: R. Schierer, The Interior News.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Farrow called the meeting to order (6:00 p.m.).

2. CORRESPONDENCE / REPORTS

ALTER AGENDA

Council agreed to alter the agenda to deal with Item #2.2 at this point in the meeting.

2.2 EMERGENCY SERVICES

Adomeit/

THAT Council authorize the Mayor and Acting Chief Administrative Officer to sign the contract for the Emergency Services between the Town of Smithers and the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, as recommended in Report ADM 11-041 dated May 17, 2011, from S. Bassett Director of Corporate Services (Vault).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ACTING MAYOR

Bandstra/

THAT Council appoint Deputy Mayor Groves as Acting Mayor for the period of Thursday, May 19, 2011 to Monday, May 23, 2011, in Mayor Farrow's absence.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2.1 NEV2: THE RECESSION RESPONSE PROJECT

Bandstra/

THAT the presentation by Don Manson, Community Development Institute, University of Northern British Columbia, be received (0530-05).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discussion:

D. Manson, Community Development Institute, University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), thanked Council for participating in tonight's meeting. He explained that the purpose of the "Northern BC Economic Development Vision and Strategy Project (NEV2): Recession Response" is to learn more about how northern British Columbia's small local governments are making choices and decisions respecting what they think are the best coping strategies so that they are poised, equipped, and ready to take advantage of the next economic upswing. The NEV2 Project is a follow up study from the NEV1 Project that was conducted seven years ago and initiated by the Federal Government to create an economic strategy for northern British Columbia.

The Community Development Institute at the UNBC is interested in two fundamental issues for communities in northern British Columbia: community capacity and community development. By undertaking research, sharing information, and supporting education outreach, the Institute is becoming an important partner to communities interested in making informed decisions about their futures.

Since NEV1, research has found that local governments have transformed with a better understanding of their circumstances, histories, and opportunities in a fast paced global economy. They are now better prepared and better connected. One of the challenges facing local governments appears to be that senior government levels (Provincial and Federal) have not yet been able to keep pace with these transitions. While the global economy continues to move at high pace and flexible, responsive, and innovative reactions are needed in local communities, senior governments' ability to support and provide the necessary tools for community development and community economic development are presently lagging.

NEV2 research involves meeting with Chief Administrative Officers, members of local Councils, Regional Districts, economic development officers and organizations, to ascertain policy recommendations that can be shared with the Provincial Government.

D. Manson asked for suggestions around economic and policy supports that can be offered to local governments for economic transition, community viability, and sustainability. Council provided the following response: a) policy regarding First Nations consultations, Protocol Agreements to move land claims ahead for development; b) access to grant funding and restrictive criteria around the use of the funds (providing one third funding share for grants is a hardship, grants should be based on population not politics); c) stop downloading of levels of service provided by governments (policing costs); d) keep the money in local communities; e) overlapping government services; f) recognize uniqueness of individual communities (do not treat all the same and equal - Smithers very different from Surrey); g) use the GDP of each communities for "Fair Share" contributions; h) need to coordinate and plan with other communities, so that all are not doing same thing at the same time (competing for the same grants); and i) need to bring forward a collective voice from the north (strong northern leadership) to the senior government levels.

(Councillor Northrup left for the duration of the meeting 7:24 p.m.).

3. OTHER BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS

None.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Bandstra/

THAT the meeting be adjourned (7:39 p.m.).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Cress Farrow
Mayor

Susan Bassett
Director of Corporate Services/A/CAO

Certified a True and Correct Copy of the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Council meeting held Wednesday, May 18, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 1027 Aldous Street, Smithers, B.C.

Deborah Sargent
Corporate Administrator