



Senator Lillian Dyke and Mayor Foster on January 14, 2020 in Vancouver. Mayor Foster attended the 2020 Finding the Path Forward: UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples event.



# From the Bear Pit

Regional Council Newsletter

January 13, 2020

## Public Comments/Questions at Council Meetings

In line with their strategic goal to increase community engagement, Regional Council has agreed to amend the bylaw [NRRM Bylaw No. 01, 2009](#) to allow to provide an opportunity for public comment at the beginning of Regular Council Meetings.

This will allow the public to comment prior to Regional Council's voting on agenda items. There will still be an opportunity for the public to speak at the end of the meeting as well.

Details such as length of comment time per person have yet to be determined. [Administration Report No. 01/20](#)

## Toad River Community Water Supply

In July 2019, at a Special Regional Council meeting in Toad River, residents communicated concerns that they do not have access to potable water within the community. Currently the community has a surface water spring which many residents use to collect water and there is concern about potential contamination risks and the significant treatment necessary to provide potable water.

[Administration Report #03/20](#) was presented to Council to introduce the need for further exploration. It is estimated that a water supply study would cost \$50,000 and would include options for the a reliable, safe drainage water source for Toad River, including cost of capital improvements and required operations and maintenance.

Grant opportunities for projects relating to the sustainability of safe drinking water are historically strong candidates. At this time, no specific grant intakes have been identified, however staff will continue to seek opportunities for both this study, and potential construction costs.

## Visitor Information Center Update

Executive Director Vandersteen from the Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce appeared before Council to provide a presentation on [2019 Visitor Information Centre operations and the 2020 projected budget](#). Recorded visitors to the NRRM were down slightly in 2019 with 12,729 visitors versus 13,202 in 2018. The decline may have been impacted by the homicides that occurred near the Liard Hotsprings, with the Dawson Creek visitor information centre noting that a number of travelers changed their minds about continuing up the Alaska highway and rerouted to the Stewart Cassiar highway instead.

The VIC continues to build on their success with the Artist's Consignment program, providing a successful venue for local artisans to display and sell their products. They are continuing to expand their stock, which includes NRRM promotional items, as finances permit. The Visitor Centre will be open for the Northern Lights Festival and will be running the *Ask a Local* program again this year.

Regional Council preapproved the 2020 Visitor Information Centre budget of \$93,200, which is a decrease of slightly over 3% from 2019.

## 2020 WildSafeBC Community Coordinator Grant Application

Regional Council pre-approved a budget of \$6,000 (subject to approval of grant funds) and the submission of a grant application for the provision of a WildSafe BC Community Coordinator. Additional funding provides for extended hours/season for the contract and completion of the Bear Hazard Assessment as the first step toward becoming a designated Bear Smart Community.

[Administration Report No. 02/20](#) • [WildsafeBC NRRM 2019 Annual Report](#) • [Program Information](#)

## Also of note...

- Regional Council approved the award of engineering agreements with Urban Systems, Kerr Wood Leidal, HMR (Beirsto & Associates), TetraTech and GHD. These companies bring expertise in various areas of service relating to asset management, roads and drainage, water, sewer and environmental consulting. [Administration Report No. 04/20](#)
- Regional Council approved a [request for letters of support](#) to the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) to accompany the Fort Nelson Events Society application for Northern Lights Festival 2020/2021 grant funding.
- Regional Council Regional Council approved a letter of support to Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) Community Halls and Recreation Facilities grant fund to accompany the [Poplar Hill Golf and Country Club's](#) application.
- Regional Council received for information [correspondence from the North Central Local Government Association](#) seeking financial support to host a Solid Waste Management Forum in Prince George.
- Mayor Foster's [4th Quarter 2019 Discretionary Charges Report](#) was received for information.
- The December [Recreation Statistics](#) were received for information.
- Regional Council approved travel expenses for Councillor Andrews to attend the Canada Gas & LNG Conference in May and to attend the NorthRiver Midstream Open House Event in Fort St. John in January. Regional Council also approved Councillor Roper's travel expenses to attend both the Northern Medical Program Trust board meeting/BC Natural Resources Forum in Prince George. Regional Council also approved Councillor Gerwing's attendance at the Rural BC Healthcare Partnership meeting.
- A letter of support was approved, to be provided to the Resource Municipalities Coalition for a grant application for the Regional Railway Analysis.
- Regional Council approved a [fee waiver for Municipal Charity Hockey Game](#) ice user fees for scheduled times on December 13, 2019 and February 7, 2020 in the amount of \$132 plus taxes each date. Northern Rockies Fire Rescue and Northern Rockies Public Works donate the admission funds collected to charity.
- Regional Councillor Gerwing reported that the vermicomposting presentation to the Peace River Regional District in December 2019 was well-received and productive, with many questions from the audience afterward.



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