



Fawns on Simpson Trail: staff photo



From the Bear Pit

Regional Council Newsletter

August 10, 2020

Tabular Stumpage Rates in Fort Nelson

On Friday, August 7th, Chris Cooper, District Manager—Fort Nelson Resources Operations provided an update on tabular stumpage rates for Fort Nelson.

Cooper noted that rates have been inequitably based off neighboring resource districts that possess active forest industries. With no forest industry in Fort Nelson for over a decade, no fibre bids were received on timber blocks marketed for sale. The absence of sales is not motivation in itself for amendments to existing stumpage rates, but BC Timber Sales is proposing to offer smaller license for sale to gather information on current regional market conditions.

Stumpage pricing geared to local market conditions could pave the way for small scale operators to acquire logs at a sustainable cost.

Property Tax Sale Postponed One Year

Province of BC [Ministerial Order No. M159/2020](#) provided additional measures to assist municipalities and residents experiencing economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among these measures is the option to postpone the 2020 tax sale of properties with delinquent (3 years overdue) balances until 2021.

Noting that with COVID-19 some residents have been financially impacted and may be unable to make the necessary payment to keep their homes from being auctioned for past due taxes, Regional Council agreed to adopt [NRRM Tax Sale Deferment Bylaw No. 185/2020](#). The interest charges will continue to be accrued.

[Bylaw Report 185/20 Tax Sale Deferment](#)

Fourth Quarter Grant-in-Aid Request

The most recent intake for the 2020 Grant-in-Aid (GIA) program received one [application from the Northern Lamplighters Activity Center Association](#). A grant-in-aid of \$1,000 was approved. [Grant in Aid Policy](#) • [Administration Report No. 55/20](#) • [Year-to-Date GIA Approvals](#) • [Review Summary](#)

Airport Fencing Installation Contract 2020.18

Regional Council has approved the award of the Airport Fencing Installation Contract 2020.18 to BKT Wall Contracting as the lowest compliant bidder, for the amount of \$574,500 plus applicable taxes. [Administration Report No. 53/20](#)

Sanitary Sewer Collection Renewal Program Part 2 Contract 2020.12

The Sanitary Sewer Collection Renewal Program Part 2 was awarded to Garcia and Sons Transfer Ltd. for the amount of \$376,592.09 plus applicable taxes.

Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellite Potential to increase NRRM Connectivity

In June of this year Regional Council requested staff to provide a report on [Starlink](#), a low orbit satellite constellation that may improve broadband connectivity across northern Canada. Starlink is being constructed by SpaceX and aims to provide high-bandwidth and low-latency Internet.

Another communications company, [Telesat](#), has partnered with the government of Canada and will likely deliver improved broadband connectivity before SpaceX. Northwestel has signed a memorandum of understanding with Telesat to deliver improved broadband connectivity to Northern Canada by 2023, allowing Northwestel to meet its mandated requirements by 2030.

Staff continues to investigate emerging technologies as part of ongoing work to attract provincial/federal funding. In alignment with the [Regional Connectivity Strategy](#), work is ongoing to identify strategic partnerships with both Northwestel and alternative service providers, First Nations, and local governments familiar with the connectivity challenges northern communities experience. [Administration No 56/20](#) • [Regional Connectivity Strategy Executive Summary](#) • [Administration No 57/20](#) • [Correspondence Attachment](#)

Broadband Internet Affordability Concerns

[Administration Report No. 57/20](#) investigates [correspondence from Northern Rockies Lodge](#) regarding the high cost of internet communications that impacts their ability to conduct business.

Cost and quality of connectivity present a barrier to economic development in the region. Council approved [correspondence to Minister of Citizens' Services, Anne Kang](#), regarding inequity between customers across Northwestel's service area.

Did you know that you can watch Regional Council meetings (even special meetings) from the comfort of your own home?

Click to visit the municipal YouTube channel by searching NRRM or accessing www.NorthernRockies.ca/councilcast

CouncilCast



Also of note...

- Council approved Northern Rockies Community Arts Council's request to use the town square parking lot for a September 12, 2020 arts event. [Request](#)
- Council ratified an [email poll](#) approving a [letter supporting Northern Lights College agricultural labour study](#).
- [Zoning Amendment \(RM-1 Single Family Setbacks\) Bylaw No. 184, 2020](#) was adopted, after no comments or concerns were received from the public at the August 10th Public Hearing. [Bylaw Report No. 184/20](#)
- [Airport Fees Amendment Bylaw No. 186, 2020](#) was adopted. [Bylaw Report No. 186/20](#) — [Current Fee Schedule](#) • [Bylaw No. 186, 2020 Airport Fees Amendment](#)
- Regional Council approved correspondence to Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, the honourable George Heyman. The letter advocated for [reopening of the Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park](#) as soon as possible.
- Regional Council approved correspondence to Mr. John Hawkings, Director of Recreation Sites and Trails BC regarding [Road Maintenance at Parker Lake \(Fort Nelson\) Recreation Site \(#REC32114\)](#)
- Regional Council approved correspondence to Hon. Doug Donaldson, Minister Of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, regarding [Tabular Stumpage Rates; Fort Nelson Forest District](#).

