



## PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

### EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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DATE: Tuesday, June 20, 2017

PLACE: Regional District Offices, Dawson Creek, BC

PRESENT: Director Sperling, Electoral Area 'C' – Committee Chair  
Director Goodings, Electoral Area 'B'  
Director Rose, Electoral Area 'E'  
Director Bumstead, City of Dawson Creek  
Chris Cvik, Chief Administrative Officer

#### Staff

Trish Morgan, General Manager of Community Services  
Deborah Jones-Middleton, Protective Services Manager  
Jill Rickert, Community Services Coordinator  
Suzanne Garrett, Corporate Services Coordinator

#### Guests

Les Husband, Fire Centre Manager, BC Wildfire Service, Prince George  
Tom Reinbold, Fire Protection Officer, Fort St. John  
Steve Mulholland, Forest Protection Officer, Dawson Creek

1) Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am

#### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:**

2) Adoption of the Agenda MOVED by Director Bumstead, SECONDED by Director Rose, that the Emergency Executive Committee agenda for the June 20, 2017 including Director's new business and additional items for the agenda, be adopted as amended:

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **NOTICE OF NEW BUSINESS**
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
4. **ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**
  - M-1 Emergency Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2017
5. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**
6. **DELEGATION:**
  - D-1 Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations regarding fire operations and risk management issues
6. **CORRESPONDENCE**
  - C-1 March 31, 2017 response letter from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations regarding 2017 fire season preparation
7. **REPORTS:**
  - R-1 June 12, 2017 proposed change in procedure for annual Search and Rescue grants
  - R-2 June 1, 2017 Mass Communication System
  - R-3 May 19, 2017 Elected Officials Emergency Management Handbook
  - R-4 June 13, 2017 Search and Rescue Grant application review (handout)
8. **NEW BUSINESS:**
9. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:**
  - I-1 Diary Items
  - I-2 For reference: PRRD Emergency and Disaster Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1598, 2005 and PRRD Emergency and Disaster Operations Bylaw No. 1599, 2005.
  - I-3 Emergency Incident Register
10. **Adjournment:** CARRIED.

**MINUTES:**

3) M-1 EEC Mtg. Minutes of Feb 7, 2017

MOVED by Director Bumstead, SECONDED by Director Goodings, that the Emergency Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2017 be adopted.

CARRIED.

**DELEGATION:**

4) D-1 re:  
Wildfire operations

Representatives from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations were in attendance to provide information on issues identified following the 2016 fire season in the peace region. Topics included:

- Fire crews are not on site fighting the fire late or early enough
- Crews work 12 hour shifts, after that fatigue sets in, especially if the fire event lasts more than a few days
- Crews are not available earlier in the season, training starts in February. Ministry relies on university students – most likely to take on this seasonal type of work.
- Students are not available until April (30% come back). As a condition of employment all crews undergo a “fit test”. Training takes two weeks, includes tree falling/bucking, chainsaw safety, starting pumps, aviation management, etc. Boot camp takes place beginning of April.
- It was suggested that crews be mixed – include experienced crew members in with the trainees
- Due to the seasonal nature of the work many recruits do not come back, most have found full time work.
- Recruiting/screening methods will be reviewed in 2018
- The biggest issue with working crews longer hours is that it increases the risk of injury. If crews do work longer they can only run equipment and are not allowed to work the fire line, it is a matter of safety
- When the fire crew takes over the fire line they become responsible for safety, including that of any members of the public, if someone gets hurt the onus is on the Ministry, who have to default to their standards
- Use of local equipment rather than the expensive option of transporting it from Terrace
- Equipment is hired and contracted out early in the year. Anyone with equipment for hire can go to the local fire zone office in Dawson Creek or Fort St. John and be added to the “equipment list.” Those offering up equipment will need to provide WorkSafe BC certification and insurance.
- Equipment rates paid are based on the “blue book” rates.
- Ministry does communicate with local equipment contractors (Nodes/Pavlis).
- Specialized equipment may still need to be brought in from outside the region.
- Anyone with questions can call the fire zone office in Dawson or Fort St. John.
- Post and pre communication with community members is very valuable, provides opportunity to respond to questions/issues/updates. Have experienced issues with social media especially if information is incorrect – spend weeks dealing with the outfall.

4) D-1 continued

- Residents being evacuated yet they cannot see the fire.
- Many factors go into determining if residents should be evacuated or alerted. Fires are assessed – what values are at risk (barns/fields/domiciles, etc), what are the long term weather trends, winds, cold fronts, fuel types, will containment involve 1, 2 days or more, Incident Commander makes the decision to put out an alert or evacuate. Fire prediction system is leading edge and scientifically based. It is a fine balance – lessons learned from the Fort McMurray scenario.
- Communication – include information on preventative programs that would identify hazards such as the community wildfire programs
- Ministry agreed to meet on an annual basis with the Committee, identify and address concerns
- Regional District will contact Ministry during winter months to obtain fire plan information
- It was suggested that public meetings be held in the community during a fire event to address concerns and provide updates to residents

The delegation left the meeting at 11:35 am

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

5) C-1 re:  
2017 fire season

MOVED by Director Bumstead, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
That the Emergency Executive Committee recommends to the Regional Board that a letter be forwarded to Madeline Maley, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, requesting clarification that the BC Wildfire Service has conducted communications in the region targeting local agricultural groups, forest licensees and oil and gas lessees, as well as increased engagement of Compliance and Enforcement and the Conservation Officers Service prior to April 1, 2017.

CARRIED.

**REPORTS:**

6) R-1 re:  
SAR grants

The Regional District has provided grants to the four local search and rescue (SAR) groups since 2008. Prior to 2017 funding for SAR grants was requisitioned from the electoral areas as a line item under the Emergency Services function. This changed in 2017 and the grant now comes under the “Grants to Community Organizations” function. With this change the current policy will need to be revised to reflect this change.

MOVED by Director Bumstead, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
a) That the Emergency Executive Committee recommends to the Regional Board that the review and approval of search and rescue grant applications be delegated by the Regional Board to the Emergency Executive Committee, and  
b) That the revised Search and Rescue Grant Policy be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

7) R-2 re:  
Mass communication  
system

The Emergency Executive Committee, at its June 21, 2016 meeting authorized staff to research the availability and cost of leveraging technology to assist in communications and information gathering.

- 7) R-2 continued      Various mass notification systems were evaluated including Everbridge, Voyent Connect Rocket, e-Pact and the pRRRdy ReCollect systems. Everbridge was identified as being able to provide the best overall value for the following reasons:
1. Ability to identify areas to be contacted by GIS mapping
  2. System provides notification to residents on up to 30 devices per household
  3. Annual fee allows up to 23,166 households to sign up
  4. System will continue to message until the resident acknowledges the message; the acknowledgement report is available to the Regional District.
  5. Everbridge has a large client base and has been in business for 15 years
  6. System can be used for more than just emergencies
  7. System can be shared with member municipalities.

MOVED by Director Goodings, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
That the Emergency Executive Committee recommend to the Regional Board that staff be authorized to consult and prepare a report outlining which municipalities would be interested in participating in the Everbridge service and share the system costs.

CARRIED.

- 8) R-3 re:  
Handbook      The Regional Board, at its meeting held on June 9, 2016 authorized staff to develop an elected officials handbook for emergency management that would outline the roles and responsibilities of elected officials during an emergency event.

MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Chris Cvik,  
That the Emergency Executive Committee recommends to the Regional Board that the "Elected Officials Emergency Management Handbook" be released, for review with Directors, at a Committee of the Whole meeting.

CARRIED.

- 9) R-4 re: SAR  
Grant application  
Review  
(handout)      MOVED by Director Rose, SECONDED by Director Bumstead.  
That the Emergency Executive Committee approved the following:
- a) That Wednesday, July 19, 2017 at 10:00 am be approved as the meeting date for the 2017 Search and Rescue Grant Application meeting; and
  - b) that upon review of the 2017 Search and Rescue Grant applications staff be authorized to invite the eligible search and rescue grant applicants to attend the allocation meeting on July 19, 2017; and
  - c) That Director Sperling, as a member of the Emergency Executive Committee, attend the July 19, 2017 Search and Rescue Grant allocation meeting.

CARRIED.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:**

- 10) Diary      MOVED by Director Goodings, SECONDED by Director Rose,  
That the Emergency Executive Committee recommends to the Regional Board that a letter be forwarded to Bob Zimmer, MP requesting a response to the February 27, 2017 letter regarding the request to Drive BC to include Mile 83 of the Alaska Highway to the Yukon border in its program to advise the travelling public of current road conditions, with copies to George Smith, Manager, Maintenance and Operations, Public Works and Government Services Canada, and the Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

CARRIED.

It was noted that the Minister of Transportation could be changed.

11) Follow-up  
from D-1

MOVED by Director Sperling, SECONDED by Director Bumstead,  
a) that the Emergency Executive Committee recommends to the Regional Board that staff be authorized to schedule rural community meetings, between October 2017 and February 2018, in areas that experienced issues with the 2016 fire event to provide information, i.e. community wildfire programs, address residents' concerns; and  
b) invite staff members from the BC Wildfire Service to participate at these community meetings.

CARRIED.

12) Adjournment: The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:35 pm

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Brad Sperling,  
Chair

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Suzanne Garrett,  
Corporate Services Coordinator