

Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board

September 18th, 2012

Fort McPherson, NT

Present:

Amy Thompson, Charlie Snowshoe, Cindy Allen, Dan Topolniski, Joel Ingram, Johnny Charlie

1. Call to Order

Amy Thompson called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m.

2. Agenda

Amy Thompson reviewed the items to be covered in this meeting. Discussion of in camera items will be moved to the end of the meeting.

3. Appointment of Chairperson

Motion #12-32

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors appoints Dan Topolniski as the Chairperson for the September 18th, 2012.

Moved by: Joel Ingram

Seconded by: Johnny Charlie

Question called: **CARRIED**

Dan Topolniski took over as Chair for the meeting.

4. Minutes

Dan Topolniski explained there are a number of minutes that have not been formally approved at this point. Suggest we go through them one at a time.

Motion #12-33

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the June 1st, 2011, teleconference minutes as drafted.

Moved by: Joel Ingram

Seconded by: Dan Topolniski

Discussion:

Charlie Snowshoe commented he was not involved in the meeting. Joel Ingram explained it was because there were no Gwich'in members at that time on the Board of Directors.

Only those who participated in the meeting can vote on the minutes.

Question called: **CARRIED**

Amy Thompson explained there are also subcommittee meeting notes provided for information only.

Motion #12-34

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the minutes of the September 7th, 2011, teleconference be approved as drafted.

Moved by: Dan Topolniski

Seconded by: Joel Ingram

Question called: **CARRIED**

Motion #12-35

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the minutes of the November 24th, 2011, teleconference be approved as drafted.

Moved by: Johnny Charlie

Seconded by: Cindy Allen

Question called: **CARRIED**

Information session notes from January 19th, 2012, were reviewed.

Motion #12-36

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the minutes of the January 20th to 22nd, 2012, meeting as drafted.

Moved by: Cindy Allen

Seconded by: Joel Ingram

Discussion:

Cindy Allen asked if Brenda Parlee ever came back to talk about her project. Amy Thompson answered she is usually open to coming to talk, but has not had a chance to talk to her lately. Robert Charlie authored a chapter in the book regarding caribou management.

Question called: **CARRIED**

Motion #12-37

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the minutes of the March 22nd, 2012, teleconference as amended.

Moved by: Johnny Charlie

Seconded by: Joel Ingram

Discussion:

Amy Thompson commented that these notes are summarized discussion only. Could be re-drafted to match the format of other teleconference meetings if required.

Cindy Allen asked if the supplementary information was provided for the Wildlife Studies Fund – the motion was approved contingent on additional information being provided.

Amy Thompson explained that approval was dependent on every project receiving Renewable Resources Council support. Cindy Allen asked if the motion could be amended to reflect that more clearly. Amy Thompson made the required change.

Dan Topolniski commented the presentation is fine as it is.

Question called: **CARRIED**

Meeting notes for June 12th, 2012, teleconference are in rough draft only at the present time. The notes were distributed for information only. Will be submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval at a later meeting.

5. Financial Statements

The Finance Committee met July 4th, 2012. The committee includes Amy Thompson, Dan Topolniski and Eugene Pascal. They reviewed the financial statements. Amy Thompson and Cheryl Greenland had gone through the audit with the Auditor. Amy Thompson presented that information to the Finance Committee. There were no suggested changes and the Finance Committee approved the statements as presented.

Amy Thompson reviewed the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board Financial Statements as at March 31st, 2012.

On the Statement of Financial Position – there was money in the bank and less contributions outstanding. There was no bank indebtedness. We had more deferred contributions – money that could be spent in the following fiscal year. Not a significant difference in payables. Fund balances – general operating fund comes from Core funding. Gwich'in Environmental Knowledge Fund – from sale of books, but was not any sales. Training Fund – for training. Wildlife Studies Fund – spent for Research Projects.

Dan Topolniski commented the bottom line is, our finances were well managed this year.

Statement of Cash Flows – shows a positive amount.

Schedule 1 on page 12 – Shows Revenue & Expenditures for Federal Funding. This is a variance report showing the amount spent, the budget and the previous year's spending. Numbers are fairly consistent year to year. Had a surplus of \$11,162 at year end.

There are differences in the funding agreement this year. Received a letter by email indicating there are complications with the way they allow surpluses to be carried over. They have indicated they will allow us to keep our surplus, but there are some kinks to be worked out. In the future, there may be more restrictions – you will have to use it towards the workplan. If you need to change what the surplus will be spent on, you would have to submit a new workplan and use it before the end of the next fiscal year. Amy Thompson will be talking to them further to ensure that details are clear.

Projects – we had more than in the previous year. There were no large variances to discuss. Anything displaying a surplus was deferred into the following year if possible.

Dan Topolniski the impression that Eugene Pascal and I formed was we have a well managed operation and we are comfortable with the Financial Statements as presented.

Motion #12-38

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the Audited Financial Statements of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board for the year ended March 31st, 2012.

Moved by: Joel Ingram

Seconded by: Johnny Charlie

Question called: **CARRIED**

Charlie Snowshoe commented he does not really understand the Financial Statements, but he agrees to support it. Dan Topolniski explained that on over \$1 million of activity, the money in was matched to the money out within \$11 thousand.

Amy Thompson reviewed the Wildlife Studies Fund Audited Financial Statements as at March 31st, 2012. The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board has a fund that is invested to provide funds for the Wildlife Studies. There was a small loss in the fund due to market conditions. The Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board put \$64 thousand towards projects in 2012. In 2011, funds were transferred before the 2010 fiscal year end, so this number is skewed.

Dan Topolniski looked at potential changes to the investment fund with the investment managers. Task is to review and approve the statements now, but will need a new person to step forward to participate in the Finance Committee. Dan Topolniski looked at whether or not we intended to preserve the capital investment in the Wildlife Studies Fund – and so should we be looking at the adjusted value of the fund for inflation rather than the current value. Pleased with the balance on hand at the present time.

Motion #12-39

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves the audited financial statements of the Wildlife Studies Fund as at March 31st, 2012.

Moved by: Joel Ingram

Seconded by: Johnny Charlie

Discussion:

Charlie Snowshoe asked what is a bond? Dan Topolniski explained it is like a promise to give a guaranteed rate of return on the money given. It is a financial instrument that is issued by Government of Canada, provinces or companies.

Cindy Allen commented as a shareholder you have certain rights and entitlements. Who makes decision on these investments? Dan Topolniski answered we have an investment manager and have an investment policy that defines what our risk tolerance is – what proportion should be held in fixed investment items and what should be invested in shares.

Action Item: Provide a copy of the Investment Policy to all Board Members.

Dan Topolniski commented that the fund managers suggested it was possible to speak to the preservation of the fund capital in the investment policy.

Cindy Allen suggested considering making “green” investments rather than investing with companies that may have issues globally with things like Human Rights. Is the Province of Alberta investing in the oil sands? Would not be comfortable with investing in things that harm our neighbours or kill caribou.

The Board can consider adding this to the investment policy. The process would be to get a copy of the policy, get on the committee and encourage that review to be done.

Question called: **CARRIED**

Action: Finance Committee Membership to be discussed at the next regular Board of Directors meeting or the next teleconference.

6. Research Priorities

Dan Topolniski asked if anyone has any questions or comments re what went on at the workshop yesterday.

Overall, the Board members felt that the workshop was well run.

There was some discussion on the community ranking results. Dan Topolniski felt that the criteria for ranking the Research Priority should have been based on the importance of the species and not on the importance of research on the species. He felt the importance of the research should have come from the ranking exercise and not be a criteria in the ranking. It is clear that communities would like the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board to look at how they are currently focusing their Research Priorities. Partners have a concern that if the results of the Workshop show there is a low priority for caribou research, funding may not be available for them to do planned work. It was suggested it might be a good idea to go back to the communities to review the results.

The Board will be able to look at the information more during the Strategic Planning Workshop.

Some commitments exist for Research Priorities based on management plans and agreements and the Board cannot simply walk away from those based on this exercise. Can possibly look at the frequency of this research.

The Research Priorities list is forever growing with each of the management plans. This also magnifies the importance of the management plans, because they bring heavy obligations.

7. Office Lease Update

Amy Thompson reminded the Board of Directors, the next face to face meeting is in February. The lease expires March 31st, 2013. Amy Thompson will look at the notice requirement for making changes. Usually, they want to sign a 5 year lease commitment. Talked to GTC this week, are in favour of moving forward with the arrangement. Was not sure about the position of the new Executive, but RA has indicated they need more space and are interested in having those two boards relocate to our building.

Have direction from the Board of Directors to continue in this direction.

Building ownership may change. The Nihtat Gwich'in Council are looking at getting ownership of the building again. They are working with Inuvik Commercial Properties.

Joel Ingram asked if there were roadblocks re insurance? Amy Thompson answered the Inuvik Commercial Properties will not change the way the lease is worded. Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board does not want to sign the lease with the current wording. We did not have much room, so we signed onto the lease with the wording that was not desired. There was a concern that they wanted our insurance company to list our landlord on the insurance policy.

Joel Ingram asked if there are any alternatives? Amy Thompson answered the Land & Water Board and Land Use Planning Board leases expire in December and they will have to vacate if they are not wanted in that building. Likely it will happen. If not, Arctic Energy Alliance would be interested in leasing some space from us.

Dan Topolniski would prefer if the Gwich'in Boards were together.

Amy Thompson commented if the ownership of the building changes, the lease conditions might be more appealing to everyone and it may all work out.

Charlie Snowshoe commented the Land Use Planning Board was ready to go, but when the amendment came to the Board system, do not know what happened to that. That was where Sue and Robert Alexie stated they wanted to stay until they knew what was happening. Don't know the status on that issue.

Cindy Allen offered to be involved in the process if required. Amy Thompson commented Jozef Carnogursky is on top of things with the purchase of the building.

8. Go Paperless

The board has \$63 thousand in the Board training fund. That money is not used unless the Board makes a decision. It accumulates through administration fees, etc. Since we have decided to go paperless, it would be nice for each Board member to have a laptop or something to bring to meetings. Have talked to other boards and it can be difficult to get the device back when Members live far away. Can also be difficult if other programs are loaded into the systems which create maintenance issues.

Question to be decided – does the Board own the device or the member? Amy Thompson presented two options. In the Member owned option – the Board purchases the equipment up front but the member uses one day per meeting of the honorarium to repay the costs. This removes the requirement to reclaim laptops.

Amy Thompson recommends Option 2 – for both Members and Staff. Right now the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board has a laptop for the Executive Director and one for Wildlife. The one purchased in 2008 no longer works. You may not need one for every member of staff or every board member, but each new member would have that opportunity as they join the board. Looks like \$6-8 thousand for 12 computers. Waiting on another quote, so may get a cheaper rate. These are the most basic computer.

The least expensive option has a very small screen and is difficult for use. 12 Net books with carrying cases and software is \$5,474. Asked for the most basic computer to use MS Office, view PDFs. Laptops with 15" screen, the total is \$6877.

Amy Thompson explained if the money is going to be spent, we will need a motion because the fund is spent at the Board's discretion.

Another possibility is to do another workplan re the \$11 thousand rather than using the training fund. Amy Thompson would have to have another discussion on that with the Coordinator to make sure that would be acceptable.

Cindy Allen asked if Eugene Pascal or Jozef Carnogursky indicated interest in getting computers. Amy Thompson answered Jozef Carnogursky has and Eugene Pascal has been using a laptop from the office since he took over the Interim Chair's position. Dan Topolniski commented the only time he has a problem is when he comes to a meeting because he only has a desktop computer of his own. Suggests that we make a commitment to get the computers and make Amy Thompson responsible for getting the least cost/most service alternative and leave it in her hands. Otherwise, you will be talking about this on a conference call and will be rushing to get them organized after Christmas. This should be for those that are ready, willing and able to go paperless, but for those that need paper, Amy Thompson will provide that paper.

It was confirmed that paper packages would still be available to Board members that are unable to use computers. Computer training could also be provided/subsidized for Board members that require it.

Motion #12-40

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves going paperless for meetings and authorizes Amy Thompson to purchase the required computers in consultation with Members re their requirements.

Moved by: Charlie Snowshoe

Seconded by: Joel Ingram

Discussion:

Charlie Snowshoe can go to the Education Centre to get training. Amy Thompson suggested the Board could pay for that.

Question called: **CARRIED**

9. Barn Swallow – Environment Canada listing as threatened

There was a presentation made at the last meeting. There has been an extended consultation period.

Amy Thompson explained the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board has the responsibility of approving the designation for Species At Risk and the management plans that come from that. There has been consultation. The staff have no concerns on this. Donna is good at checking in with everyone and engaging on this.

Motion would be required by November 8, 2012.

Cindy Allen asked if this means there would be a requirement for us to do additional work or consultation, or is this Environment Canada?

Joel Ingram explained if it is listed as a Species At Risk, there will be a requirement for a recovery strategy. There will be an opportunity to be involved, if it is accepted by the Minister and in an Order in Council, but it might not be a requirement since we are on the fringe of the extent of the species and it is not important to the Gwich'in.

Motion #12-41

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board approves designation of Barn Swallow as a "threatened" under the Federal Species at Risk Act.

Moved by: Charlie Snowshoe

Seconded by: Johnny Charlie

Question called: **CARRIED**

10. In Camera Session

Motion #12-42

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board begin an in camera session at 9:16 p.m.

Moved by: Johnny Charlie

Seconded by: Joel Ingram

Question called: **CARRIED**

Motion #12-43

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Board of Directors of the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board ends their in camera session at 10:45 p.m.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Question called: CARRIED

Motion #12-44

To adjourn the meeting at 10:45 p.m.

Moved by: