

# TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

## Economic Development Executive Committee

### AGENDA - August 4, 2021, 12:00 PM

#### MEETING - Civic Centre

Session #7

#### Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

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Or call in (audio only)

[+1 807-701-5975,,380994425#](#) Canada, Thunder Bay

Phone Conference ID: 380 994 425#

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Page

1. **Call to Order / Roll Call**
2. **Disclosure of pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof**
3. **Approval of Previous Committee Minutes**
  - 3.1 Session 6 - 07 July 2021 4 - 5
4. **Items Referred from Council - None**
5. **New Business**
  5. MAT meeting follow up - Post Covid discussion re attracting and retaining staff  
1 for local businesses.  
  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/billconerly/2021/07/07/the-labor-shortage-is-why-supply-chains-are-disrupted/?sh=b7b8f2f301d5V>  
  
<https://financialpost.com/executive/executive-summary/posthaste-labour-shortages-are-set-to-get-worse-in-canada-and-you-can-blame-immigration#:~:text=Brown%20says%20the%20reason%20for,permanent%20residents%20into%20the%20country.>
6. **Outstanding Items**
  - 6.1 Standing items for updating:

**Ranier Bridge** - *Letters to Stauber and Klobuchar - Concerns re rail bridge. C. Vangel*

*to communicate with CN Public Affairs group and bring further information back to next*

*meeting. Working group to be created and consist of C. Vangel, J. Caul, J. McTaggart*

*and D. Cridland. 2021/06/09: Working group to meet within next two weeks*

*2021/07/07: Conversation with CN Public Affairs and C. Vangel re future status of*

*Ranier Bridge. Concerns identified included flood risk and economic gateway between*

*two communities. Project in infancy stage with 3-5 year potential. TOFF requested to*

*be kept apprised of consultation process.*

**Orea White Paper Small Towns Big Opportunities** - *Further information re action*

*plan/seeking organizations that can assist in lobbying to be sought. Item identified at*

*RRDMA - on radar, may assist in lobbying going forward. Query pilot project.*

*2021/06/09: Item to proceed to NOMA in January with CAO involvement. 2021/07/07:*

*No updates. Keep as item on agenda*

**Winnipeg to Thunder Bay tourism route initiative** - *Work in progress. NOMA*

*tourism panel aware - possible intent to draw people to Hwy 11 and onto 71 corridor.*

*2021/06/09: No updates. 2021/06/29: Heart of Canada Touring Route 2021/07/07: In*

*final stages of touring route between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay. Regional initiative*

*and a focus on Highway 71 corridor. Recommendation via Committee for Council to*

*support RRFDC by way of resolution a seat on affiliated steering committee. Public*

*launch of initiative to occur at 2022 Rendez-vous Canada.*

**Cross Border Fishing Activity** - *Status of reciprocal agreement re walleye report to be*

*determined. 2021/06/09: Correspondence forwarded. No further updates. 2021/07/07:*

*Correspondence outstanding. Keep as item on agenda*

**7. Information**

7.1 City of International Falls - Resolution No. 48-2021 6 - 9

7.2 July - TOFF 2 year workplan REPORT to EDEC 10 - 12

**8. In-Camera - none**

**9. Adjourn / Next Meeting Date - 08 Sept 2021**

## TOWN OF FORT FRANCES

### MINUTES

### SESSION NO. #6

July 7, 2021

The meeting of Economic Development Executive Committee of the Town of Fort Frances was held virtually in the Civic Centre on July 7, 2021 from 1203 to 1245 hrs.

PRESENT: Chairperson D. Judson, Councillors M. Behan and J. McTaggart, Mayor J. Caul (ex-officio) 1208 hrs

ALSO PRESENT: D. Cridland, J. Pryde, C. Vangel, CBO / Municipal Planner, G. Gillon, RRFDC, J. Forbes, Human Resources Manager, E. Slomke, Clerk, Joerg Ruppenstine, CAO, FFPC, K. Haney, Deputy Clerk, M. Emara, Fort Frances Times, R. Thoms, B93.1, Heather Grupp (Guest)

REGRETS: T. Drysdale, Economic Development Consultant, T. Ryll

**1. Call to Order @ 1203 hrs / Roll Call**

**2. Disclosure of pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof - none**

**3. Approval of Previous Committee Minutes**

3.1 Session no 5 - 09 June 2021 - Accepted as presented

**4. Items Referred from Council**

4.1 International Bridge - Mayor Caul and Councillor McTaggart met with Minister Rickford. Meeting to be organised with TOFF, to include Federal government (Marc Powlowski) for further discussion re International bridge status.

**5. New Business - None**

**6. Outstanding Items**

**6.1 Standing items for updating:**

**Ranier Bridge** - Letters to Stauber and Klobuchar - Concerns re rail bridge. C. Vangel to communicate with CN Public Affairs group and bring further information back to next meeting. Working group to be created and consist of C. Vangel, J. Caul, J. McTaggart and D. Cridland. 2021/06/09: Working group to meet within next two weeks  
2021/07/07: Conversation with CN Public Affairs and C. Vangel re future status of Ranier Bridge. Concerns identified included flood risk and economic gateway between two communities. Project in infancy stage with 3-5 year potential. TOFF requested to be kept apprised of consultation process.

**Orea White Paper Small Towns Big Opportunities** - Further information re action plan/seeking organizations that can assist in lobbying to be sought. Item identified at RRDMA - on radar, may assist in lobbying going forward. Query pilot project.  
2021/06/09: Item to proceed to NOMA in January with CAO involvement. 2021/07/07: No updates. Keep as item on agenda

**Winnipeg to Thunder Bay tourism route initiative** - Work in progress. NOMA tourism panel aware - possible intent to draw people to Hwy 11 and onto 71 corridor.  
2021/06/09: No updates. 2021/06/29: Heart of Canada Touring Route 2021/07/07: In final stages of touring route between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay. Regional initiative and a focus on Highway 71 corridor. Recommendation via Committee for Council to support RRFDC by way of resolution a seat on affiliated steering committee. Public launch of initiative to occur at 2022 Rendez-vous Canada.

**Cross Border Fishing Activity** - Status of reciprocal agreement re walleye report to be determined. 2021/06/09: Correspondence forwarded. No further updates. 2021/07/07: Correspondence outstanding. Keep as item on agenda

**7. Information**

7.1 TOFF 2 year workplan - Report to EDEC - Accepted as presented

**8. In-Camera - none**

**9. Adjourn @ 1245 hrs / Next Meeting Date - 04 August 2021**

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Executive Committee Chair

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, Acting CAO

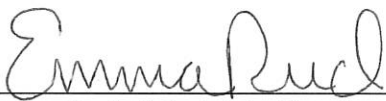


STATE OF MINNESOTA )  
COUNTY OF KOOCHICHING )  
CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS )

**CERTIFICATE OF ADMINISTRATOR**

I, the undersigned, Administration Support Specialist of International Falls, Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the attached copy and certify that it is an exact duplicate of: **Resolution No. 48-2021**, duly adopted July 6, 2021 by the City Council of the City of International Falls, Minnesota.

WITNESS my hand this 7th day of July, 2021.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Emma Rud, Administration Support Specialist

**CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MINNESOTA  
RESOLUTION No. 48-2021**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION IN THE  
SALE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE**

Resolution offered by Councilor: Krause  
Resolution supported by Councilor: Holden

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Fort Frances is known as the “Sister City” to the City of International Falls, sharing an International border; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fort Frances—International Falls International Bridge ["International Bridge"] is a critical economic and community link connecting the City of International Falls, Minnesota and Town of Fort Frances, Ontario; and

**WHEREAS**, the International Bridge sees more than 800,000 vehicle crossing annually, including: tourists destined throughout Minnesota and Northwestern Ontario, local trips for employment, business, recreational, educational, medical, emergency response, and family reasons, commercial traffic serving the resource-based economy west of Thunder Bay, and the importing of goods used in the mining, agricultural, and forestry sectors; and

**WHEREAS**, the International Bridge has been privately owned by the operators of local paper mills since it was built in 1908, and is currently owned, through subsidiaries, by the Packaging Corporation of America and Resolute Forest Products ["Resolute"], which is required by the Customs Act to provide the Canada Border Services Agency with facilities on the Canadian side of the International Bridge; and

**WHEREAS**, in Ontario, tolls on international bridges are authorized by the provincial Minister of Transportation under the Toll Bridges Act, but the bridge owners have placed their toll collection on the Minnesota side; and

**WHEREAS**, these tolls have become a growing concern for the citizens of International Falls, Fort Frances, and the surrounding communities, and deter Canadian locals and visitors from crossing into the United States to support local businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, the only other privately-owned toll bridge connecting the United States and Canada is the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit and Windsor, which is 7,500 feet in length and charges less per crossing; and

**WHEREAS**, a January 31, 2006 public meeting revealed that one span of the International Bridge had only 15 to 20 years left in its lifespan before it needed to be replaced, at a then-estimated cost of \$8 million (USD); and

**WHEREAS**, since 2006, it has been understood that high tolls were being charged by the bridge owners in order to rehabilitate the bridge in the 2020s, but Resolute now indicates that it wishes to divest itself from ownership, after collecting these high tolls for many years; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Fort Frances Council adopted resolutions in 2005 and 2006 calling on the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to acquire the International Bridge and make it a public asset without tolls, but those calls went unanswered; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of International Falls and its neighboring communities are concerned that new private ownership of the International Bridge will result in even higher tolls or that public access to the bridge will be compromised for safety or financial reasons; and

**WHEREAS**, Ontario's Toll Bridges Act permits the Government of Ontario to enter into agreements with any Canadian or foreign authority for "the joint financing, construction or operation of any international bridge or tunnel and for any matter incidental thereto", as reflected in the provincial and state governments' \$30 million investment to replace the Rainy River Baudette Bridge, which continues to operate without tolls; and

**WHEREAS**, access to the International Bridge facilitates treaty obligations, including under the Jay Treaty of 1794, which allows Indigenous people from Canada to live and work freely in the United States, and allows access to traditional territories in northern Minnesota; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of International Falls' 2019 Comprehensive Plan recognized the opportunity for Federal, State, Provincial, and Local governments to work together to reconsider relocation of the International Bridge to plan for a publically-owned International Bridge that would provide for a safer, more attractive, and toll-free International Boundary crossing; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of International Falls, Minnesota urges through this Resolution to its lawmakers to immediately intervene in the sale of the International Bridge and make all necessary efforts to acquire the International Bridge with their Canadian counterparts, operate it as a public asset, and remove tolls, and to meet with Council and administration of the municipality to brief it on their efforts and plans to protect this vital economic and community link; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the City Administrator is directed to forward this resolution in support of Governmental Intervention in the Sale of the International Bridge to Representative Pete Stauber, Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Tina Smith, Governor Tim Walz, Representative Rob Ecklund, Senator Tom Bakk, Koochiching County, Packaging Corporation of America, and the Town of Fort Frances.



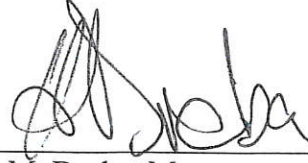
Yeas: Councilors Ditsch, Holden, Krause, and Mayor Droba

Nays: none

Abstained: none

Absent: Councilor Buller

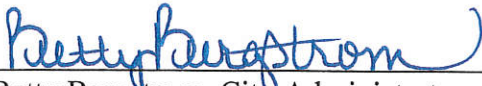
Approved and adopted on the 6th day of July, 2021.



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Harley M. Droba, Mayor

Attest:



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Betty Bergstrom, City Administrator



**RAINY RIVER FUTURE  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
A Community Futures Development Corporation



**Dated: July 2, 2021**

**Period: JULY 2021**

**RRFDC 2 Year Action Plan:**

	<b>KPI and (Completion Date)</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Mill Site:</b> Planning and collaboration Work with Riversedge/Aazhogan Seek opportunities for development.	Complete study (Q1 2022) Create collaborative plan with partners (Ongoing) Assist with marketing efforts and support (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Industrial Rate Study Completed approved by committee and sent to A and F</li><li>• First Meeting – Project in Progress</li></ul>
<b>MAT Committee: (Tourism)</b> Implement Marketing Plan with FedNor and NOHFC funding Experiential Tourism New product development	Website development (Q2 2021) Host workshops on experiential tourism (Q4 2021) Initialize a digital marketing program (Q3 2021) Return occupancy to pre-COVID-19 19 levels (Q4 2022) Preparation for growth (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soliciting experiences – workshops fall 2021</li><li>• Fishing Derby Virtual Derby Set for August</li><li>• Welcome back August 9 campaign</li><li>• Digital Border program August 1</li></ul>
<b>Downtown Re-vitalization and SME Retention:</b> Promote increased use of market square. Support (loans etc.) - Digital Support (Training)	Market the square to micro and home businesses startups (Ongoing) Maintain GL percentage usage (Ongoing-Q4 2022) Add net 2 new merchant members. (Q4 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GL new signs</li><li>• Increased Social Media</li><li>• Digital Training Late Fall</li></ul>

- GoLocal		
<b>Woodyard and Gateway:</b> RFI for “Attraction Land” Promote woodyard to hotel developers. Promote site to multi-residential developers.	Issue RFI (Q2 2021) Market property to 40 hotel developers (Q1 2022) Market to housing developers (Q1 2022) Create marketing materials (Ongoing to Q1 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel investment groups list creation is ongoing.</li> <li>• Two presentations to developers</li> <li>• Package in design.</li> </ul>
<b>Industrial Lots:</b> Promote the industrial lot sites.	Provide recommendations to Council on economic value (Ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Potential sale in development for multiple acres</li> <li>• Report to Council on offer August</li> </ul>
<b>Mining Supply and Service:</b> Market Fort Frances as a location	Two meetings with New Gold (Annually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting One 2021</li> <li>• Welcome Packages sent</li> <li>• Outreach in late fall presentation – Meeting 2 November 2021</li> </ul>
<b>Rainy Lake Square Activities/Project Petunia/Canada Day:</b> Assist in the transition to museum staff.	Ensure a smooth transition (Q1 2021) Monitor activities and assist were needed (Q3 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transferring assets and files, providing assistance as required.</li> <li>• Market is very successful!</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary Waters Forest Management/Wood Products:</b> Participate in BWFMC Seek users for available fiber.	Attend BW meetings (Ongoing) Communicate opportunities (Q2/3 2021 start) Market fiber available with BWFMC (Q3 2021) Execute fiber study Q2 2021 (based on NOHFC) Share fiber information with potential users (Ongoing) Meet with 4 possible users (Q4 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attended BWFMC Meetings</li> <li>• CRIBE Study participation</li> <li>• Early-stage opportunity</li> <li>• Marketing bio mass and small round wood</li> <li>• Application to NOHFC approved</li> </ul>

<b>Partnerships and Relationships</b>	Attend BIA and Chamber Meetings RRDMA linkages Meetings with all Ind Ec Dev Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with FN Regional Ec Corp.</li> <li>• RRDMA presentation in Spring</li> <li>• RRFDC at meetings for BIA and Chamber</li> <li>• </li> </ul>
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**Additional Activities:**

- Inbound inquires
- Requests for information
- Support to community groups when requested
- Fort Frances Social Media