
Follow up to your letter of 21 January, 2021

Maggie Putulik / Brian Zawadski <titan@northwestel.net>

Thu, Jan 21, 2021 at 8:05 PM

To: stephanie.autut@nwb-oen.ca

Cc: richard.dwyer@nwb-oen.ca

Good Day.

Thank you for responding to the email I sent two days ago concerning the conduct of the meeting to review the Agnico Eagle amended water application for the Meliadine Mine.

Clearly the email of Monday night was sent because I was frustrated with the proceedings of the meeting and felt it important to bring my concerns to the attention of the NWB.

I wish to respond to your letter of today on a number of points.

First of all, I disagree on your statement about the adjustments that were required to be made to address simultaneous translation and that “these adjustments resulted in a 20 minute delay in the proceedings.” That would be your narrow interpretation of the specific delay required to address issues with translation and making digital presentations available to people in attendance. There were delays in the proceedings prior to the recess to address these issues when the issues of no translation and no printed materials were available. So total cumulative delays would be well in excess of twenty minutes.

Regardless of how long the meeting was delayed due to technical difficulties, one would assume the NWB would have set up and tested the technologies to make sure they were functioning properly in advance of the meeting to mitigate potential problems come meeting time. So was any prior testing done? If not, why not?

In terms of notice for the community session, what specifically are your “normal channels of the distribution list” for distribution of the notice for the 19 January, 2021 session? If you had only sent said information to the “Parties” (e.g. AEM, CIRNAC, KIA, HTO, etc.) then is it their responsibility to notify the general public about the session?

As a resident of Rankin Inlet, I did not hear any public announcement on the local radio nor saw any Notice on any public bulletin board. I am not a follower of social media but other individuals do update me on current events that are posted on the likes of Facebook. So I was not aware of the meeting until it was brought to my attention two days by another “Party” letting me know about the meeting for January. In the morning of the session this “Party” also forwarded the Agenda and Presentations.

The question is, what efforts did NWB make to specifically notify the general public of Rankin Inlet about the 19 January, 2021 community session?

It is perhaps unfair to compare the logistics of the recent NIRB technical meetings with the community session the NWB attempted to conduct. For sure the NWB had undertaken a more technologically challenging approach, however the point is, as noted above, why was the NWB not more prepared and practised for the challenge? Realistically you all know the date of the session on 10 December and therefore had ample time to get the equipment set up and tested.

This leads to my claim about using Covid-19 as an excuse for your failures. I know full well what the impact of Covid-19 is on the community and the regulatory meetings both the NIRB and the NWB have been attempting to conduct so I need no enlightenment on that front. In this time of social distancing and remote work many organizations had adapted and made alternatives means of communication workable alternatives to in person meetings. The NWB did make such an attempt with limited success but had the opportunity to be better prepared.

And not having staff on the ground in the community in advance of the meeting really is a cop out for not being better prepared. As was pointed out by one participant at the hub, we do have pretty fast internet. And apparently old fax technology still works because I received a fax from the NIRB yesterday about their 11 and 12 February community consultation meetings.

So for the 19 January NWB session I do not understand why the presentations were not sent to an organization in Rankin Inlet, perhaps the KIA or NTI, to have them printed out and available at the meeting? Pandemic or not, the internet and printers still work; as do fax machines. There really is no excuse for not having the print material available.

As for translation, it would have been prudent to have arranged for a local person to provide translation at the hub as a backup if the technology failed.

Why I was embarrassed over the conduct of the session was that the NWB had to rely on the proponent, Agnico Eagle, to troubleshoot the meeting technical issues and use their expertise to make the presentations accessible to the community members present – kudos to AEM for stepping up otherwise the session would have been a disaster. However, AEM should never have been in the position as the proponent of the water licence amendment application to do the

work of the NWB, an Institution of Public Government, to ensure the completion of the 19 January, 2021 Community Session. The NWB should have prepared better by using the resources of other Rankin Inlet located Nunavut Land Claims organizations to ensure the meeting was conducted efficiently and effectively.

For planning of the next community consultation, be aware that community Covid-19 vaccinations are ongoing with the first injections completed in a number of Kivalliq communities and the remaining communities scheduled to receive their vaccinations over the next few weeks. As you are well aware, a second vaccination is required 21 days after the first which will mean potential Kivalliq meeting participants will be getting their second doses from mid-February to mid-March. You will need to contact the appropriate health authorities to determine when the second vaccinations are scheduled so as to not have a scheduling conflict between vaccinations and the Public Hearing for Kivalliq participants.

Cheers,

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