



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT FOR Valley REN Liaison and Oversight Committee

Submitted by: Chrystal Remme, Councillor District 3

Meeting Date: May 28, 2026

Meeting Location: Zoom

SUMMARY/UPDATE OF THE COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES:

At the May 28, 2026, Valley REN Liaison and Oversight Committee meeting, members received updates on Valley REN's ongoing restructuring work, provincial funding opportunities, immigration services, and upcoming engagement with municipal partners.

A significant portion of the meeting focused on Valley REN's restructuring process and future funding model. The Board Emergency Taskforce continues to explore options for long-term sustainability, including private sector partnerships, alternative governance structures, and opportunities to strengthen regional collaboration. Staff advised that discussions are ongoing with private sector partners, other regional economic development organizations, and municipalities. One-on-one meetings with municipalities are planned over the coming weeks, with further discussion expected at the Valley REN Annual General Meeting and through future municipal engagement sessions.

Valley REN also provided an update on the Province's new Regional Economic Partnership Program. Staff advised that Valley REN scored well during the assessment process and has moved into funding negotiations with the Province. The funding request focused on Regional Coordination and Business Navigation activities, which align closely with provincial priorities. Staff indicated they are hopeful funding decisions will be finalized within the next few weeks.

The Committee received an update on changes to Valley REN's immigration services. The current Immigration and Settlement Navigator position will conclude on June 30, 2026, and be replaced by a Registered Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC). Staff noted that the new role will focus on immigration navigation and employer supports, while continuing to work with community partners involved in newcomer attraction and retention. Discussion also highlighted the importance of community connections and belonging in retaining newcomers within the region.

Members also discussed efforts to better measure and communicate the impact of economic development activities. Valley REN is exploring additional reporting tools, including referral tracking and key performance indicators, to better demonstrate outcomes and the value of economic development work to municipal partners.

Discussion took place regarding a proposed Joint Council Economic Development Session planned for early fall. The session is intended to improve understanding of economic development roles, responsibilities, performance measurement, and the various organizations involved in economic development activities. Staff also noted that a forthcoming Economic Development Canada report may help inform these discussions.

Additional updates included recently approved CanExport funding to support investment readiness and the development of regional economic profiles, as well as ongoing partnership and business development discussions related to labour force and economic opportunities within the region.

The Valley REN Annual General Meeting is scheduled for June 30, 2026, at Glooscap First Nation. Staff advised that the annual audit is nearing completion and is expected to be presented at the AGM.