



Town of Fort Smith
Protective Services Standing Committee
Tuesday, June 4th, 2024 at 7:15 pm
Town Hall Council Chambers

Chairperson: Cr. Couvrette
Members: Mayor Daniels, Cr. Pischinger, Cr. Beaulieu, Cr. Tuckey
Regrets:
Staff Present: Emily Colucci, Director of Community Services, Acting SAO
Sarah Westwell, Clerk/ Reception
Guests:

1. Call to Order

Mayor Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:18pm and handed the Chair to Cr. Fergusson.

Mayor Daniels passed the Chair to Cr. Campbell

2. Declaration of Financial Interest

- a. Statement of Disclosure of Interest

3. Delegations

- a. Kelvyn Modeste – Repurpose and Closure of the Male Unit

Cr. Campbell invited Kelvyn Modeste up to speak about the Repurpose and Closure of the Male Unit. Cr. Campbell welcomed Kelvyn and passed the floor to him.

Kelvyn Modeste started off by stating he has grown up in Fort Smith for most of his life. Formerly with the Smith Landing First Nation band and now part of the Delene First Nation band. Currently employed with Fort Smith Corrections explaining that he is here today to speak about his concerns regarding the closure of the Fort Smith Correctional Facility.

His concern is that he had recently read about the meeting on May 30th, 2024 and RJs mentioned that leadership was receptive to this idea and continued by reading a letter to Council

To Whom It May Concern: We are writing to express our deepest concerns regarding the proposed closure of the correctional facility in the Town of Fort Smith and the plan to open a wellness centre in its place. These changes pose significant risks to the community's well-being, economic stability, and safety. The potential impacts are profound, and it is crucial that we address these issues thoughtfully and comprehensively. Here are the key areas of concern:

Duplication of Wellness Services: The presence of two wellness centres in Fort Smith, operated by the Salt River First Nation Band and the Fort Smith Health Centre, respectively, raises questions about the necessity of establishing another wellness centre.
Operational Efficiency and Staffing Challenges: Our staff members are tasked with dual or more positions to ensure cost-effective service delivery, a practice not commonly observed in other facilities.

Termination of Offender Education Program: The decision to cut a valuable offender program service is concerning, particularly as the teacher is employed through the male unit but also provides her services to the female unit facility. With classrooms in both facilities, she has facilitated 60 GED exams since October 2021, resulting in many students gaining admission to their desired subjects at Aurora College. This education program at FSCC offers significant opportunities for offenders aiming for a brighter future. Education plays a crucial role in reducing recidivism, fostering safer communities within the NWT, and facilitating the successful reintegration of offenders into their communities.

Economic Impact: The proposed changes will negatively affect the local economy,

resulting in a loss of \$2.7 million in salary earnings, which will adversely impact local businesses and the broader community.

Safety of Vulnerable Offenders: The vulnerable offenders at NSCC have endured immense challenges, facing health and safety risks and incidents involving threats from more violent offenders. To protect them, NSCC has transferred these individuals to FSCC, where the environment is safer and more supportive. This compassionate move has provided a critical sanctuary, allowing vulnerable offenders to serve their time with dignity and security. Losing this refuge would be a heartbreaking setback, stripping away a vital layer of protection for those who need it most.

Remand Offenders: The Hay River Correctional Centre does not accommodate REMAND offenders or take admissions from the RCMP, whereas Fort Smith assists the Southern regions in managing criminal activity.

Historical Failures of Treatment Centres: In the history of NWT, we've witnessed several closures of wellness centers and often met with opposition from the then Health Minister Julie Green, who questioned their efficacy for the community. This track record of unsuccessful treatment centers raises significant concerns about the proposed closure of the correctional facility in favour of a wellness center. Over the decades, numerous centers have opened and closed, casting doubt on the viability of such initiatives. Contrastingly, the provision of education and a safe environment at FSCC has been a resounding success. We firmly believe that by positively impacting one person's life, we can serve as an example for the entire community. Our educational annual report from last year showcases the impactful work we've accomplished, surpassing the collective efforts of many wellness centers.

Impact on Female Unit: Closing the male unit would eliminate vital support for the female unit, where trained officers have been instrumental in managing incidents and addressing staffing shortages. Past experiences have demonstrated the indispensable role of male correctional staff in handling challenging situations promptly and effectively. Without their assistance, the female unit could be left vulnerable to potential risks and difficulties.

Job Security and Economic Hardship: The looming risk of job loss among local and Indigenous residents of Fort Smith, particularly at the male correctional unit, has triggered immense stress and anxiety within the community. Many individuals are grappling with the prospect of unemployment, uncertain about their financial future and livelihoods. They are turning to our leaders for support during this time of crisis and hardship, seeking reassurance and guidance as they navigate the challenges ahead.

Retention of Institutional Knowledge: The loss of experienced correctional staff would result in the departure of valuable institutional knowledge and expertise accumulated over years of service. This knowledge is essential for maintaining continuity and effectiveness in correctional operations and ensuring the safety of staff and inmates.

Lack of Plan for Wellness Centre: The Minister of Finance's omission to provide a set plan or timeline for repurposing the male unit facility into a wellness centre has sparked uncertainty and is perceived as less than optimal. This lack of clarity and direction undermines confidence in the proposed transition, emphasizing the importance of transparent and well-defined planning processes.

An online petition will be going up, and we look forward to your support in signing it.

Feel free to leave comments to further our cause.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the significant and far-reaching impacts that the proposed closure of the correctional facility and the establishment of another wellness centre will have on our community. It is imperative that we thoroughly evaluate these concerns and prioritize the well-being, safety, and economic stability of Fort Smith. I strongly advocate for a comprehensive review and reconsideration of this plan to ensure that any changes made are truly in the best interest of our community.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Thank you,

Mayor Daniels stated that the first thing he wanted to get straight was that the Justice Minister has not said anything to the leadership, nor did we agree on anything. As a matter of fact the Justice Minister has never met with us. Mayor Daniels will be issuing a letter to the Justice Minister tomorrow. He is ramming this down peoples throat of Fort Smith and he did not follow the Federal Mandate, which is the duty to consult with aboriginal groups and he has not done that. That has to be acknowledged. He has not come to Fort Smith, he has mentioned it and we found out about it. It could be a treatment centre but there is a lot of attachments to that. Are they going to fund it? Are they going to redo the jail? Is it even feasible? We do not have the books from Hay River

which they say are up in numbers. We have not seen that. We haven't seen anything. Before we get to anything we should be sitting down. What Mayor Daniels is asking for from leadership is to stall it until Fort Smith people have a good look inside of it on either option. Right now there has been no agreement. He should have come to Fort Smith first instead of sending the person who has the pink slips. That is not how you do business around here. A lot of people fought for the duty to consult. They as a territorial government should know this forefront. But that hasn't happened so that has to be addressed. Mayor Daniels stated that he just wanted to make that clear before we go any further. We haven't met with them, there is no consensus on this treatment centre/jail. We heard it through the grapevine like everyone else. He has not met with us, we have not given consent to anything and we are still waiting for him to meet with us.

Kelvyn Modeste thanked Mayor Daniels for speaking on that stating that he was confused when reading the excerpt that they spoke to the leaders already. He wasn't sure what to think which is why he brought it up today. One thing that Kelvyn Modeste forgot to mention was that in their facility, the staff there work multiple positions and that is not done at any other facility. That does for SM and North Slave. Kelvyn is currently a case manager, sentence administrator, helps on the floor, floor security, transports, help manage the female facility case manager position and its administration position there when it was vacant, and mentored and supervised without any increase in pay. If they are looking for cost-effectiveness, he is doing his best, he is not trying to gouge the government for money, he is not trying to do any harm to the budget. If anything Kelvyn stated he is doing his part.

Cr. Tuckey stated that he is assuming that people have met with people over at corrections.

Kelvyn Modeste asked for clarity on what Cr. Tuckey meant by people, what people. Kelvyn stated that the Director came to speak to employees and he was the one that notified the staff.

Cr. Tuckey asked if they established their intentions on why they are closing this facility rather than a facility such as the North Slave or South Mackenzie. One of the questions Cr. Tuckey would be asking is why are they closing down one of our newest corrections center versus the older ones that have been around for a multitude of decades longer than the facility here in Fort Smith. Cr. Tuckey stated that did not make sense to him.

Kelvyn Modeste spoke to what he read based in the Hansard, that they will not consider closing SMCC due to the fact that they have remodeled it to the therapeutic model and they have built in alignment with the Governments goals. Treating, aftercare and rehabilitation. So they feel that is the most of wellness center they can get which is still being corrections. Kelvyn stated that his issues surrounding that is that they did renovations that took two years to SMCC running and training on the therapeutic model. Two years of no offenders, and still paying that full-time list of employees. It is disheartening that the efforts are made so strongly over there to keep it going and help them out and then what is happening to us is a little overlooked. The reasoning for closure is that the jail is that out of all of the jails and facilities they are only at 44% capacity. North Slave could easily take the inmates we have currently and house them at North Slave they confidently feel that they would not reach capacity.

Cr. Tuckey stated that he was at a loss. So if they can take our population and put it in the North Slave so they would probably have to increase the staff in order to facilitate the proper maintenance over the inmates.

Kelvyn Modeste stated that he would have to agree, down the line it is a good prediction.

Cr. Couvrette thanked Kelvyn Modeste for his delegation assuring Kelvyn that he has spoken at the last Council meeting regarding this matter and will continue to be a strong advocate that Fort Smith has to be taken into account.

Mayor Daniels stated that he will be doing that letter tomorrow with leadership and what he will ask is that they postpone this until they come and meet with leadership and the public and lets go over this stuff. From Mayor Daniel's position, he can not afford to loose any money. We have large infrastructure issues that we have to fix. There is piping,

water intake. We can not afford this and they have been doing this for the last 10-15 years. When is it going to stop. Are they going to take something away from Hay River, probably not too much because you have two MLAs there. The only place to hit is probably Fort Smith and we have been taking out beatings over the last 15 years over everything and there are times where they are going to downgrade the government. This is not a shot at it, this is doing the exact opposite. As far as this treatment centre, they also got a call into Yellowknife for putting it out. So why are they watering us down if that was their intent on what it was going to be. We have a right to be consulted and until that happens then we are in a dogfight. Mayor Daniels stated that he will use every paper he can get to fight this. We can't do this, the town can't. We need to bring in people, we need to solve our housing problems. Our infrastructure is 40 years old, and it all needs to be fixed. He does not have the town hall on his list for the next 10 years, does not have beautification because we can't afford it. All we have is our infrastructure. Hopefully in October whoever is the new Mayor will go down that same road because it is at the point that we have to fix it and there is no putting it off until the next election. No, it has to be done now. This is going to be a dog fight and Mayor Daniels stated that he was in Kelvyn Modestes corner. they said that Hay River is going to have to hire people, but they didn't mention that some of you guys could go over there automatically, instead of applying on a job, employees should be called in there but it was not mentioned so we do not know where that is. There's a lot of things here that we just don't know and as far as ramming it down Fort Smith people's throats, Mayor Daniels stated that he has a big problem with that, they have been doing that over the years. When does it stop, when do we start downgrading Government. Yes, Government works in the Yukon because all of their communities are closer to the capital, here it's not like that we are hundreds of miles away from the capital it's going to cost more money. There's a lot of things that they just never thought about. Mayor Daniels believes they just basically took the breaststroke cutting various things thinking no one was going to say anything, it's a different story here now because in Fort Smith all the Leadership works together. That's why when they come to meet us it's Leadership, they will meet like this as a whole before Government used to go to Salt River, Metis, and tell different stories until we got all buggered up and they thought they got away with it. Well, today's changed because we have seen that happen, so yes we are behind you.

Cr. Couvrette suggested that Council move on to the next delegation and thank Kelvyn Modestes for his delegation stating that they will be following up with this.

- a. Chris Westwell- GNWT Budget Cuts and the proposed closing of the Men's Facility on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce.

Chris Westwell was welcomed as the second delegation speaking on behalf of the Thebacha Chamber of Commerce regarding GNWT budget cuts and the proposed closing of the men's facility passing the floor to Chris Westwell.

Chris Westwell thanked the Chair stating that it has been a while as he has had the pleasure of working with most of Council in one way or another over the years. Chris announced that he is currently the president of the local Chamber of Commerce in which they have a new executive and they have been trying to get their new members involved. Chris Westwell started by stating that this is a quick blow to our community right out of the gate and he wanted to take this evening to speak in cooperation with our local union representation as well on just how detrimental the budget proposal could be to our community and a little bit about how this is sort of a same old song we've heard before.

Everybody who has had an opportunity to see the 2024/2025 budget and if you have read the highlights it is confusing to take the positives and negatives and come up with a standing that makes any sense. On the first page of the budget highlights there is \$100 million just lost due to rounding, which is problematic especially when the budget is all about \$100 million in in cuts and changes. It's explained in the larger budget documents that the Government is trying to cut \$48 million in expenditures but they have managed to do that but not do that, all while dramatically increasing spending in a bunch of other areas. It does look like Justice is going to be a minor reduction less than what other departments are receiving regarding the budget. For those who are familiar they do have a fiscal strategy adopted in February to effectively reduce the debt load by \$150 million by 2028. They are going to do that by effectively making cuts to the budget or that's the

anticipation they have to cut to make their targets, approximately \$50 million a year for the next three years to meet that target. In their fiscal strategy, it does outline that their objectives are that surpluses must be large enough to repay a minimum of \$150 million of short-term debt by March 31st of 2028. They have capped how much forced growth initiatives can be worked into the budget which is going to affect negotiations and other positions and they've also put caps on how much of the reserves they can use. They are trying to save \$50 million out of this budget and the fiscal strategy identifies that next year departments will find \$65 million in additional savings or revenues which means this is just the beginning, this is one component of an overarching bad picture the Government is painting. The budget outlines that there has been since 2019/2020 the public sector has grown by 27% apparently with 1391 additional positions. He is not aware of those positions in Fort Smith by any means but can certainly name a few that are no longer here. If that is to be true Chris believes that's actually inflated data based on again COVID and all the hiring around the secretary and all the other initiatives. The full information is never really presented in budget documents, it's simply data based on rationalizing why the cuts have to happen.

Economic highlights are not positive either, the NWT they say, is stable but we've had a GDP growth in 2023 of 0.6% which is defined as just stable, they are calling for the GDP to shrink and enter a recession this year which means that even outside of the influence of this budget they're calling for a likely a contraction of 1% of the economy and due to the 4.7% reduction in investment in private sector so oil, gas, mining, it's not looking good. Starting in 2020 the number of residents employed in the Northwest Territories public sector to the private sector, flipped the balance that since 2020 there have been more public sector employees throughout the NWT than there have been private sector employees prior to that, which was going back roughly 10 years of data assuming back into the 70s, but that that was not the case. Since 2020 the private sector has decreased or stayed stable while the public sector has grown according to their data. Chris stated that he has not experienced that growth or seen that growth in his community that he is aware of. The NWT is currently the only major investor in new infrastructure and projects in the Northwest Territories, we haven't seen any major project development mines or roads or anything that wasn't effectively public infrastructure, which again, all of this adds up to we are facing this year to three years of reductions in their spending, they have become the largest contributor to public projects and jobs so by cutting their positions that he is not sure to have even exist or seen to exist, or in the last four years projects that he's seen exist, the Town of Fort Smith has been the largest private developer with other indigenous governments for the last five or six years. Ever since the completion of the women's correctional facility and the hospital.

Chris stated that every reduction that they make is going to be more and more felt every time that they adjust their budget it's going to be that much harder, not just for Fort Smith but for the entire NWT and the problem he has with that, is that this entire fiscal strategy policy that they've adopted is one of self-inflicted suffering. Purely based on a policy decision we're going to see 30 people this year lose their jobs just in our community perhaps another 30 next year and perhaps another 30 after that if they are to keep this train going and to reach nothing. What is an objective policy decision to reduce their spending which he does not disagree with from a sustainability perspective but it flies in the face of the reality that for 20 years the government has squandered any opportunity to get private development done that would create an economy that would actually sustain itself and help grow outside of government public infrastructure and spending. We mentioned this when the Minister came to town and they are aware of this. The investment that is needed to try to keep the private sector investment in mining and development so we do not become so dependent on government spending which for the last four years we have been and then now thought to adopt a poison pill strategy to that policy in such short order is purely mean. Chris stated If there has been a 27% increase in employment and he cannot think of those positions in our community that means that they must be somewhere, so that level of we just adopted a budget three weeks ago or less than three weeks ago and now those positions are going to cease to exist is so incredibly short knee-jerk reaction to planning as far as he could tell because this policy was only adopted in February to a new legislator. This is a budget policy that was put in place for a new sitting group who whether or not familiar with their portfolios adopted something that they may not were prepared to adopt and hadn't faced or been received all of the data necessary to really get a good picture of what exactly the fires, floods, evacuations, and pandemic and how terrible it is so to also follow that up with a fiscal strategy that's going to guarantee further economic suffering this is a terrible initiative.

The GNWT is a leader in self-inflicting suffering they have imposed policies and procedures that limit the performance and productivity and then they punish the institution for the resulting decline, they manufacture bias to create rationale, use data that suggests failure of an institution or its staff that neglects to include the background information and inform the public that its own policies and procedures imposed on the organization from upper levels of government led to the situation that created the data that is supporting their decision to intervene. We have seen this behavior before and it is too common, at this time we're discussing the closure of the men's Correctional Facility in Fort Smith but this could just as well be about the health center, about the college campus, about the airport. Discussions we've all seen the information that's been presented to us that is based on bad data or based on bad information, based on trying to rationalize a decision based on biased decision-making or ill-informed decision-making that doesn't take into effect that the government has self-imposed its own suffering.

Tonight, Chris asked if Council could write to the MLAs, not just the leadership group. He would like everybody to talk to the union leaders, talk to the staff, organize discussions, get in the media. Not just as a threat but to actually get in the media. Chris stated that he has been approached by the media over the last three weeks already he has been disappointed at the lack of other engagement. Voice your opinions, not just here where there's a smaller group than he wished. The group cannot stay silent, this is what our jobs are, this is what we do, this is not just angry in a room, but engaged. All we have with tools to deal with this level of government is engagement in informing the population voicing your opinion and creating dissent, is our job. We need to make sure people are informed and people are upset enough to engage. It shouldn't take three weeks to write a letter, it cannot take three weeks to write a letter, and it does not take three weeks to write a letter. Everybody who as far as he understands and he does not know who among Council was present at the leadership meeting that took place before the budget announcement. The Chamber of Commerce executive met with the MLA on Friday and as he understands it, on May 18th after the employees had been informed by their director of the decision to close the facility, but before the official announcement, a number of local leadership I'm not sure all the people who were there were informed of this decision. It is actually at that meeting that the idea of becoming a Wellness Center was discussed, reading the budget announcements, it read it like that was a GNWT plan only to find out that there is no funding there is no plan for that to be in GNWT it was at best suggested that maybe the local groups could get together and collectively find a way to seek Federal funding to make a Wellness Center happen. Chirs mentioned that he was also informed, and again this is not new, that the government at this meeting presented the idea that we could lose our health center and that the opportunity was that the health center was on a chopping block. Five beds, Midwifery, no after hours care was proposed at this leadership meeting which was obviously met with anger and obvious upset that it would be detrimental to our community so it cannot happen. Chirs believed that was bullheaded negotiating and that somehow we've swallowed the idea that the correctional facility loss is somehow not quite as bad as what they were threatening. Chris states that he was not in attendance at the meeting and could possibly be going off of misinformation because there has been a vacuum of information.

Chris stated that he wants to hear from his Mayor and his Council. What is happening in my community? He does not want to wait for everybody to get together and hopefully agree on a letter before we even know what the stance is on our organization. We have been through this before, he's been through this before with Council. We have to be sharper. If there's a group of leadership involved that's fantastic but it can't take three weeks. Chris questioned if anyone from Council was aware of said discussions because, in the meeting he was in, they had a member from Salt River, Metis Council, Smiths Landing, and Fort Smith Council who were all unaware of that level of discussion happening so he feels like either he's being lied to from the top which is problematic or there is a complete breakdown of communication. It would have given us time to present the opposition to have a rally we still have some time but not as much time he hope we can postpone this and asked Council to all write to ask them to postpone this. Honestly that's not usually how these budget processes happen postponing the budget for lack of consultation would be fantastic, he hasn't seen them do it so it would be a great change of heart on their part because you're right this is something that we should have information about. They should talk to everybody and find out what about the change to the correctional institution. That it wouldn't just affect Fort Smith this would affect the entire institution as well and he believes that all deserves our feedback.

From an economic perspective from a chamber perspective, this is bad, we have some businesses that have large contracts. We will lose jobs for this, not just in the actual Correctional Facility but this will trickle down. When you are talking about a reduction of 5% to 7% of our government employees in the community you're talking about losing a teacher, its Health, its education. It is their families and it all bubbles into a huge amount when we did the numbers 10 - 15 years ago, every single government position itself is worth like \$25,000 - \$50,000 in contribution funding agreements it compounds rapidly before a single person pulled out of the community and their family ripples through every component in every corner of the economy. Every business will be affected, every person who currently works in a government department will be affected because even then if it isn't this it's next year or the year after that. Why? Because they have a financial policy that dictates *sorry you got to go*. Our predecessors played the cards poorly and didn't actually do anything to develop an economy so now you have to pay the piper and that's problematic.

Sharpening our pencils now to get our messaging and get our communication right to voice our opinions is needed now because this train could already have left the station, and we need to try to catch the next one. The idea of closing a facility like this if this, is the kind of budget cuts that we're going to be facing. Chris brought up that he sees it two ways, either a) this has been planned for numerous years and has just been pushed along which is why the policies and decisions that saw the population of the inmates reduced was a long-term strategy to ensure low population so that they could close the facility with rationale. This means that you're talking years of potential planning at upper levels of government that no one was known to except for a few people sounds very conspiratorial when you frame it that way. Or is it b) a knee-jerk reaction to find money fast and cut 30 people from the community which is equally terrible because there's no consultation, there's no plan, there's no talk about how it's going to affect not just our community but their own justice system, their own inmates and other facilities um going from the facility here that has a percentage of Correctional workers to inmates to North Slave facility is a drastic level of changes. That is something that needs to be consulted on and should be consulted on. What we're seeing here is, none of that and he is even more confused because of either misinformation or lack of communication over who knew what coming up to this budget announcement let alone the week after the budget has been announced.

Chris Westwell thanked Council for their time.

Cr. Couvrette thanked Mr. Westwell stating that there were some very good points that were brought up. Cr. Couvrette commented in regards to the Leadership being informed, as a Councilor he considers himself to be a part of the Community Leadership and the way he heard about this was on Facebook which was extremely disappointing. Cr. Couvrette stated he did not know who the consultations were from the GNWT with Community Leadership and it would be endeavors to get to the bottom of that and find out exactly who was representing our community during these Leadership discussions.

Mayor Daniels agreed with Cr. Couvrette, he is not sure who was at that Leadership meeting. Mayor Daniels mentioned that just learned about it recently and wants to do a letter stating that he is behind Chris and willing to fight.

Cr. Couvrette added as a note for himself, he believed at the last Council meeting back on May 21st, this was already rumbling around a bit. The budget had been introduced and he did one of his rants on fairness when we look at Fort Smith with public employment of about 500 employees and we're looking at 17 full-time and 15 part-time positions and across the territories are saying there's going to be 58 well when 32 of them are coming from Fort Smith that doesn't seem fair when you have a the megaverse of Yellowknife which has over 3,000 employees. Yes, headquarters is losing upwards of 10 -11 positions but the North Slave is gaining six positions. So they are taking money from Peter to give to Paul to keep their purse full. Cr. Couvrette gave a final comment on this is stating that he is extremely disappointed with our new government they've shown a total lack of compassion.

Chris Westwell asked if he could speak further as this just brings it back discussion from that Cr. Couvrette is well familiar with. Chris spoke to just how distrustful he is towards

government data. Once Upon a Time something as simple as our Airport runway was presented to us as being reduced in size. They presented all of the information and we did public consultation so everyone seemed like they were on board with this only until we realized as we were being told that everyone's being reduced, except actually, it was only Fort Smith. Inuvik was getting the same runway, Hay River's getting a second runway, and Yellowknife's being resurfaced and it's going to be wide. This was uncovered via a document that accidentally relabeled our community as an auxiliary community. We had to show Government no you can't run a 737 on that runway here's the here like in that level of local government involvement in telling the GNWT how to do their job right is unfortunate and necessary and it's exhausting.

Cr. Couvrette thanked Chirs Westwell, saying it was appreciated and hopefully he will invigorate people into action. If nothing else, at least the press release going.

b. Review

- a. Agenda –The agenda was reviewed.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: Cr. Pischinger

Seconded by: Cr. Beaulieu

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

- b. Minutes – The Protective Services Standing Committee Minutes of May 7th, 2024, were reviewed and adopted at the Regular Meeting of Council on May 21st, 2024.

- c. Vision and Values – The Vision and Values were reviewed.

c. Director's Report

The Director of Community Services stated that there is still no Director of Protective Services, so it is with the SAO. Most of that work is tied into Emergency Preparedness for the season and our ongoing protective services reports.

d. Protective Services Statistics

- a. Fire/EMS Training Report May 2024 – The Fire/EMS Training Report was reviewed.

Training is ongoing, Wildland Urban Interface training took place in Hay River and we had a couple of crew members able to attend. That was one of the goals set out in our After-Action Review.

Cr. Couvrette noticed in Yellowknife, that they just put out an advertisement to contact the City/ EMS department to have their properties evaluated for FireSmart. Our department has done training and questioned if our department will be offering a similar service to residents to have their properties looked at.

Director of Community Services mentioned that it has been discussed, we are just trying to work out the details around it.

Cr. Tuckey brought up that the question is answered in the Directors Report - Once they have finished the training they have gone through they will have a sign-up process where members will make an appointment to evaluate properties.

Cr. Tuckey stated that there seems to be a lot of focus and assistants being provided to the community around FireSmarting properties, when does the GNWT be held accountable for the ground property around town to do their own FireSmarting and set an example to the communities.

Cr. Couvrette believed that since it is in the interest of our community, he suggested that our Mayor and other Leadership groups look at contacting the Minister responsible for the lands and the Premier and put that question forward. It is in their best interest to look after their lands and to provide protection to the community that they are a part of.

Mayor Daniels asked if that question be better off coming from the Fire Department. Mayor Daniels stated that he could get a letter done.

Director of Community Services in regards to the Mayor's comment, in speaking to the Lands Department and/ or Bylaw Officer they would have been handling it if the property was unsightly or other issues, they would be going down that avenue. Trying to use the standing as the Mayor to go directly to the Minister of ECE and work towards how lands are managed in urban areas and whether or not FireSmarting is a priority for them around protecting communities. We will do what we can around the administration.

- b. Fire Department Statistics May 2024 – The Fire Department Statistics were reviewed.
- c. Ambulance Department Statistics May 2024 – The Ambulance Department Statistics were reviewed.
- d. Fire/EMS Graphs May 2024 – The Fire/EMS Graphs were reviewed.
- e. Land and Development Report May 2024 – The Land and Development Report was reviewed.
- f. Bylaw Report May 2024 – The Bylaw Report was reviewed.
- e. Advisory Boards
 - a. Sustainable Development Advisory Board

Cr. Couvrette stated that the Advisory Board met on May 8th and he found that it is a very engaging board, who are at this point feeling frustrated. They are asking what is the purpose of the sustainable development advisory board and what does Council seeks from them. Many of the members of the board have been on the board for a while and they have been involved in things like the Housing Assessment report on affordable housing within the community. They have developed quite a few very good reports that have actually led to strategic direction by the government for our local governance. Cr. Couvrette believes they feel under-engaged. They are volunteers and they would like to feel like they do assist Mayor and Council in sustainable development issues. They would like to see Council use their resources more.

f. Bylaw/Policy Review and Development

g. Administration

- a. Briefing Note – Emergency Preparedness Update

Director of Community Services started by saying that this Briefing Note is one that is constantly being updated as we go tying back into the After-Action Review and what the outcomes were from that. The next step that we are working towards starts next week with our ICS. We have 95% of our staff having completed ICS100, we are working to ensure our Directors and Supervisors are all up to the 200 level and the Directors and other identified staff that will be critical in an emergency will be taking the ICS300 level as well. Our next LEMO meeting is scheduled for June 20th, 2024. We will keep up with our regular scheduled meetings throughout the season. Some of our FireSmart tenders have been awarded and actioned, and the contractors who were successful in those tenders are almost all completed. If there is any budget left over from that we will continue to issue more tenders. This only includes what we have budgeted as our community, not the funding that was Territory-wide through the NWTAC. We are still working on the updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan before we can access that funding and that is something that the SAO has been continuing to work on. Our SPU Pumps have been shipped and are arriving soon. 3 of our members took the WUI training. Those are the biggest updates that we have and the SAO will continue to update this Briefing Note throughout the season.

Cr. Beaulieu questioned, when we are talking about FireSmarting, what is happening with the wood lot. She has not seen anything happen with it.

Director of Community Services, asked that Cr. Beaulieu clarify if she was speaking about the wood lot that we have been issuing permits for. Cr. Beaulieu agreed, it was that wood lot. The Director of Community Services stated that there have been lots of people out there and she has been doing regular checks. People have been harvesting wood, there is a lot of wood there. The deadline has been extended to try and encourage and to give people a chance to pull wood out. We have contractors in there pulling out for commercial use. People have already put a good dent in it.

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: Cr. Pischinger

Seconded by: Cr. Beaulieu

That Council takes this as an information update.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

b. Briefing Note – DPA- 022-24 Home Occupation

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: Cr. Pischinger

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That DPA-022-24, submitted by Miles Barry, to operate a home occupation, Miles Barry, from Lot 381, Plan 207, 10 Polar Crescent, in Fort Smith is approved.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Director of Community Services spoke on this stating that if you look on the front page they do try to outline only administrative work will be done through this location as they have another property outside of the town limits that would hold all of their equipment. There will be no increase in foot traffic, no construction, no signs, no exterior alterations. The Development Officer has made a recommendation that this seems like a business that would not have an impact on the neighbors.

h. Other Business

i. Excusing of Councillors

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: Cr. Pischinger

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That Cr. Fergusson, D/M Korol, Cr. Campbell be excused from the Protective Services Standing Committee meeting on June 4th, 2024.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

j. Date of Next Meeting

The next Protective Services Standing Committee meeting will be on July 9th, 2024.

k. Adjournment

RECOMMENDATION

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey

Seconded by: Cr. Beaulieu

That the meeting be adjourned at 8:32pm.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY