



MINUTES

The Regular meeting of the Council 01-25 was held on
Tuesday, January 21st, 2025 @ 7 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present: Cr. Bathe, Cr. Benwell, Cr. Couvrette, Cr. Cox, Mayor Fergusson, Cr. Karasiuk,
D/M Keizer, and Cr. Tuckey
Regrets: Cr. Heaton
Staff Present: Emily Colucci, Director of Community Services (Acting SAO)
Raveena Brown, Executive Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fergusson called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Mayor Fergusson confirmed the quorum and read the acknowledgment of First Nations.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

25-001 **Moved by: Cr. Cox**
Seconded by: Cr. Bathe

That the agenda be adopted as amended to add Standing Committee start times.

PASSED

3. DELEGATIONS

a. Fort Smith Policing Report December 2024 – presented by Corporal Doucet.

Corporal Doucet reported ongoing challenges at the health center, where the secure room remains unusable despite renovations last summer. He detailed recent incidents, including multiple suicides and one attempted suicide by an individual detained under the Mental Health Act. Without access to the secure room, staff have relied on sedation and temporary holding until transfer to Yellowknife, which has led to issues, including two cases in the past 16 months where individuals left the center, one during last year's wildfires and another resulting in a second suicide attempt. Doucet stressed the need for urgent action to address these gaps, highlighting delays in response times and the significant risks posed to individuals and the community.

Mayor Fergusson addressed the issue on behalf of the Leadership Group, explaining that Thebacha Leadership Committee (TLC) met with the health center's CEO on January 16th. They were informed that the delay in the secure room's readiness lies with Infrastructure, not Health and Social Services. She assured the group that she would follow up on this matter to ensure action is taken. Doucet emphasized the importance of resolving this issue promptly to prevent future tragedies, noting the toll it takes on families, RCMP, and healthcare staff.

Corporal Doucet also provided updates on law enforcement initiatives. He announced that all detachment members would begin using body cameras in early February, with notices already posted in multiple languages around the community. He also discussed challenges in addressing known bootlegging operations due to limited resources and community familiarity with officers. However, a new Crime Reduction Unit (CRU), funded by the Territorial Government, is being established to support local detachments in targeted operations. Expected to be operational by May or June, the CRU will focus on drug and bootlegging activities, leveraging territorial and cross-border intelligence.



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Cr. Cox shifted the discussion to search and rescue operations, noting the RCMP's reduced involvement in such efforts. Doucet explained that while the RCMP remains the primary point of contact for incidents like plane crashes, they have stepped back from leading search and rescue operations, which are now typically managed by Yellowknife Search and Rescue. The RCMP's role is more focused on securing scenes and assisting other emergency services as needed.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting of Council 12-24

25-002

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That the minutes from the Regular Meeting 12-24 on December 17th, 2024, be adopted as presented.

PASSED

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

#25-003

Moved by: Cr. Bathe

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That Council determine the following in relation to the call for resolutions for the NWTAC AGM – February 2025

1. Identify topics or priorities for resolutions
2. Work with Administration to draft and finalize the resolution(s)
3. Submit the approved resolutions by the January 24th, 2025 deadline

Cr. Couvrette raised concerns about the governance and operation of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC), criticizing its board structure, which consists entirely of ministers or deputy ministers, making it an extension of ministerial authority. He highlighted a resolution titled "NTPC Governance Model Reform," advocating for NTPC to be managed directly by a government department accountable to the public. Couvrette argued that electrical power, being critical to the survival, economic development, and health of NWT communities, should not remain under the current Crown Corporation model, which has struggled to provide affordable and reliable services. He called for an independent review of NTPC's structure, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness before implementing any major changes or rate increases.

D/M Keizer reflected on broader concerns about the centralization of services in Yellowknife, which he argued disadvantages smaller communities like Fort Smith. He questioned whether this trend is inevitable or if a deliberate effort should be made to maintain decentralized services across the territory. Suggesting that the NWT Association of Communities (NWTAC) might be best suited to study this issue, Keizer proposed exploring a long-term vision for the territory's development. He invited council members to provide feedback on whether this idea warranted further action.

6. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST

None.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS

a. Council Business



Regular Meeting of Council 01-25

i. Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting on December 3rd, 2024

PROTECTIVE

25-004

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That the Protective Services Standing Committee minutes from December 3rd, 2024, be adopted as presented.

PASSED

i. Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting on January 7th, 2025

PROTECTIVE

25-005

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That the Protective Services Standing Committee minutes from January 7th 2025, be adopted as presented.

PASSED

PROTECTIVE

25-006

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Benwell

That the Mayor immediately contact NTPC seeking a full clarification and disclosure of the cause(s) of the prolonged power outage in Fort Smith on January 3, 2025. In addition, the ToFS seeks an update regarding the timelines for the recommissioning process for the Taltson hydro plant upgrade project, including an approximate date of when the hydro facility will return to its full function capacity.

Furthermore, if the primary cause(s) of the prolonged outage were related to "distribution issues", what immediate steps will NTPC undertake to rectify those conditions and, will NTPC consider moving their investment in the local distribution system upgrade project for completion of no later than 2027.

This correspondence is to be copied to the Minister responsible for NTPC (Wawzonek), NWT Public Utilities Board

PASSED

ii. Corporate Services Standing Committee Meeting on January 7th, 2025

CORPORATE

25-007

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: Cr. Bathe

That the minutes from the Corporate Services Standing Committee Meeting on January 7th, 2025, be adopted as presented.

PASSED

Cr. Couvrette referred to a discussion from the Director's report on the budgeting process, noting it has been a learning experience for much of the council. He highlighted a suggestion to have a budget document ready in the August-September period for next year's budget cycle. Couvrette proposed that administration commit to providing a draft budget for the 2026 fiscal year no later than the first week of October to allow sufficient time for deliberation and informed decision-making. He expressed concern over past delays, where drafts were only available by mid-November, which created unnecessary pressures on both council and administration to address questions and provide timely responses.



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CORPORATE

25-008

Moved by: Cr. Cox
Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That Council Direct Administration to provide a briefing note on the implications and considerations regarding the TLC assuming ownership of the NLMCC.

PASSED

* Cr. Couvrette excused himself from this discussion and returned after it was completed.

iii. Community Services Standing Committee Meeting on January 14th, 2025

COMMUNITY

25-009

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey
Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That the Community Services Standing Committee minutes from January 14th, 2025 be adopted as presented.

PASSED

COMMUNITY

25-010

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey
Seconded by: Cr. Cox

AMENDED: That Council approve the following actions with regards to the NLMCC in relation to the TLC Assembly:

1. Engage with TLC Partners:
2. Form a Working Group:
If the TLC partners express support for the proposal, establish a working group consisting of Administrative representatives from the Town of Fort Smith and the TLC partners.

PASSED

* Cr. Couvrette excused himself from this discussion and returned after it was completed.

iv. Municipal Services Standing Committee Meeting January 14th, 2025

MUNICIPAL

25-011

Moved by: Cr. Bathe
Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

The minutes from the Municipal Services Standing Committee Meeting on January 14th, 2025, be adopted as presented.

MUNICIPAL

25-012

Moved by: Cr. Cox
Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That Council approve the award of the contract to AAG Landscaping for the supply of chain link fence materials in the amount of \$29,387.37.

In Favor: Cr. Bathe, Cr. Benwell, Cr. Couvrette, Cr. Cox, Cr. Karasiuk, and D/M Keizer

Abstained: Cr. Tuckey

PASSED

MUNICIPAL

25-013

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette
Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council move in-camera in accordance with the Cities, Towns, and Villages Act, Section 23(3)(e) a matter still under consideration and on which Council has not yet publicly announced a decision if discussion in public would likely prejudice the municipal corporation's ability to carry out its activities or negotiations.

PASSED



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MUNICIPAL

25-014

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Bathe

That Mayor and Council move out of an in-camera session

PASSED

b. Administration

- i. Briefing Note – Appointment of Acting Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) Andrew Grenier – January 27th to January 31st, 2025

#25-015

Moved by: Cr. Bathe

Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That Council, by motion, appoint Andrew Grenier, Director of Municipal Services, as acting SAO for the period of January 27th to 31st, 2025.

PASSED

- ii. Briefing Note – Donation Request Thebacha Dog Musher's Association

#25-016

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council formally approve the \$2,500 funding allocation for the 2025 Dog Races in alignment with the January 2024 motion and direct Administration to proceed with processing the donation

PASSED

- iii. Standing Committee Start Times

#25-017

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council adjust the starting time for Standing Committee meetings to begin at 6:30 p.m., with the second committee meeting commencing immediately after the conclusion of the first, following a 5-minute break.

PASSED

c. Bylaws and Policies

d. Appointments

e. Mayor and Council/Board Representative

- i. Cr. Tuckey

Cr. Tuckey noted that this has been a tough month for Fort Smith losing people. Like to give my condolences to the Gordon Mercredi family, Jeremy Biscaye Evans family, Patrick Abraham's family and Roberta McKinnon who was actually a citizen for Yellowknife who resided in the senior citizens home for the last 10 years. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims and the families as the town force Smith gathers tonight to commemorate one year anniversary of the fatal crash of Northwestern air lease one year ago today. And that has taken place at Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre this evening. Definitely a sad day for Fort Smith and an event that no one should forget about

- ii. Cr. Cox



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Cr. Cox expressed condolences for recent hardships but highlighted a positive note from attending the final swim at the pool on Saturday, which was well-attended and filled with appreciation for the facility. He remarked on the community's anticipation of its reopening, improved and expanded. Cox also noted an interview discussing Fort Smith being ranked among the top five communities for fire risk. He emphasized the importance of remaining vigilant, as much of the surrounding area remains unburnt despite the 2023 wildfires. Cox underscored the need for proactive efforts at both the town and GNWT levels to mitigate fire risks and address potential challenges, particularly as insurance companies may begin factoring such risks into policies.

iii. Cr. Couvrette

Cr. Couvrette expressed condolences to families who have lost loved ones recently and suggested showing appreciation or lighting a candle in memory of last year's tragedies. Regarding council business, the councillor noted that none of the committees they participate in met over the past month, leaving nothing to report.

iv. Cr. Benwell

Cr. Benwell expressed heartfelt condolences and prayers for those grieving the loss of loved ones and for families still affected by last year's plane crash. She noted that a meeting with the museum is scheduled for tomorrow, so there is nothing to report at this time.

v. Cr. Heaton - excused

vi. Cr. Karasiuk

Cr. Karasiuk expressed condolences to those grieving recent losses and reflected on the one-year anniversary of the plane crash. He raised concerns about the replacement of the Health Leadership Council with a public administrator, emphasizing worries that this change could lead to the downgrading of Fort Smith's health center into a nursing station. He also noted the lack of updates on the proposed 24-bed long-term and assisted living facility, suggesting that centralization efforts in Yellowknife may be undermining local health services. Karasiuk recommended that the Tabacha Leadership Council advocate for reinstating a community-based health board to ensure Fort Smith has a stronger voice in health governance, rather than being part of a centralized "super board."

vii. Cr. Bathe

Cr. Bathe extended thoughts to first responders, particularly the Canadian Rangers, who were among the first on the scene of last year's tragedy. He acknowledged the ongoing impact on some individuals and emphasized the importance of ensuring support is available for those who may need someone to talk to.

viii. Deputy Mayor Keizer

D/M Keizer shared a lighthearted observation about adjusting to his role. He noted that after commenting on the tall snowbanks on McDougal Road, they were cleared the very next day. While emphasizing it was purely coincidental and not tied to his position, he praised the town's maintenance team for their proactive work in keeping the roads safe. He commended their efforts, noting the road now feels much safer.



ix. Mayor Fergusson

Mayor Fergusson provided updates on several topics raised by council and community members. On January 16, the TLC met with the COO of the local health center to discuss concerns about the regional wellness committee and its representation within the territorial super board, now managed by a public administrator. The COO committed to following up on whether local and regional voices are being effectively heard. Additionally, the bylaw review board convened on January 9 but chose to wait for guidance from the upcoming strategic planning session to align priorities better. Mayor Fergusson also reminded council of the upcoming one-year anniversary of the plane crash on January 23. A memorial service, including prayers, songs, and a candlelight vigil, will be held at the Anglican Church at 6:30 p.m., with the church bell ringing at 6:42 p.m. to honor those who passed.

On a positive note, Mayor Fergusson highlighted several community achievements. The snowboard hill is operational again, and residents are encouraged to respect the groomed tracks maintained by volunteers. The Fort Smith Skating Club sent 14 skaters to Yellowknife for the Territorials, achieving significant success. Hockey also had an active season with local events and successful participation in external tournaments. Mayor Fergusson commended the dedication of community organizations for their contributions to the well-being and engagement of residents.

8. PROCLAMATIONS

None.

9. ABSENCE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

PROTECTIVE	# 25-017	Moved by: Cr. Tuckey Seconded by: Cr. Karasiuk	
	That Mayor Fergusson and Cr. Bathe be excused from the Protective Services Standing Committee meeting on January 7 th , 2025.		PASSED
CORPORATE	# 25-018	Moved by: Cr. Bathe Seconded by: D/M Keizer	
	That Mayor Fergusson and Cr. Karasiuk be excused from the Corporate Services Standing Committee meeting on December 3 rd , 2024.		PASSED
COMMUNITY	# 25-019	Moved by: Cr. Cox Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette	
	That Cr. Karasiuk, D/M Keizer and Cr. Tuckey be excused from the Community Services Standing Committee meeting on December 10 th , 2024.		PASSED
MUNICIPAL	# 25-020	Moved by: Cr. Couvrette Seconded by: Cr. Cox	
	That Cr. Benwell and Cr. Bathe be excused from the Municipal Services Standing Committee meeting on January 14 th , 2025.		PASSED



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25-021

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey

Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That Cr. Heaton be excused from the Regular Meeting of Council on January 21st, 2025.

PASSED

10. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Protective Services Standing Committee	February 4 th , 2025, at 6:30 pm
Corporate Services Standing Committee	February 4 th , 2025, to follow the Protective Services Meeting with a 5-minute break
Community Services Standing Committee	February 11 th , 2025, at 6:30 pm
Municipal Services Standing Committee	February 11 th , 2025, to follow the Community Services Meeting with a 5-minute break
Regular Meeting of Council	February 18 th , 2025, at 7 pm

11. ADJOURNMENT

25-022

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That the meeting be adjourned at 8:25 pm.

PASSED

12. QUESTION PERIOD

A question period was offered in accordance with policy.

Minutes adopted this 18th day of February 2025

Dana Fergusson
Mayor

Emily Colucci
Acting Senior Administrative Officer