



**MINUTES**

The Regular meeting of the Council 02-25 was held on Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 7 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present: Cr. Heaton, Cr. Karasiuk, Cr. Bathe, D/M Keizer, Mayor Fergusson, Cr. Tuckey, Cr. Cox, and Cr. Couvrette  
Regrets: Cr. Benwell  
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 7:00 pm.

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

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**# 25-024** **Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**  
**Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey**  
That the agenda be adopted as presented. **PASSED**

**3. DELEGATIONS**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. Regular Meeting of Council 01-25

**# 25-025** **Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk**  
**Seconded by: Cr. Cox**  
That the minutes from the Regular Meeting 01-25 on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, be adopted as presented. **PASSED**

**5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**6. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST**

**7. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

a. Council Business

i. Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**PROTECTIVE** **# 25-026** **Moved by: Cr. Cox**  
**Seconded by: D/M Keizer**  
That the Protective Services Standing Committee minutes from February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, be adopted as presented. **PASSED**



## Regular Meeting of Council 02-25

---

PROTECTIVE

# 25-027

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

That DPA-001-25, submitted by Wisdom Eji, to operate a personal device repair business, ThatGuy-Tech Solutions, from Lot 1644, Plan 2922, 7-24 Wood Bison Ave., Fort Smith be approved.

**PASSED**

**i. Corporate Services Standing Committee Meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

CORPORATE

# 25-028

**Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**  
**Seconded by: D/M Keizer**

That the minutes from the Corporate Services Standing Committee Meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, be adopted as presented.

**PASSED**

CORPORATE

# 25-029

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

That Council formally approve the amount of \$5000.00 as a contribution to the Northern Arts and Culture Centre.

**PASSED**

**ii. Community Services Standing Committee Meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

COMMUNITY

# 25-030

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

That the Community Services Standing Committee minutes from February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 be adopted as presented.

**PASSED**

COMMUNITY

# 25-031

**Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**  
**Seconded by: D/M Keizer**

That the public meeting regarding the Community Plan be scheduled for Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM, and that Council proceed with final edits and a second reading thereafter.

**PASSED**

COMMUNITY

# 25-032

**Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk**  
**Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey**

That Council approve the following road closure;

That Marine Drive, between Mills Street and Wapiti Street, be closed to vehicle traffic from 12:00 pm to 5:30 pm March 14, and 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on March 15 and 16, 2025 for the Big Fun and Frolics events.

**PASSED**



## Regular Meeting of Council 02-25

---

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b># 25-033</b>	<b>Moved by: Cr. Tuckey</b> <b>Seconded by: Cr. Cox</b>
	That Council approve the 2025 Operations & Maintenance Budget, including a 6.5% increase in the property tax revenue to ensure fiscal sustainability.	
	<b>In Favour: Cr. Karasiuk, Cr. Bathe, D/M Keizer, Mayor Fergusson, Cr. Tuckey, Cr. Cox, and Cr. Couvrette</b> <b>Opposed: Cr. Heaton</b>	
	<b>PASSED</b>	

Cr. Couvrette expressed his disappointment with the 6.5% increase, stating that it was higher than he had anticipated.

Cr. Cox stated that the current adjustment primarily serves to catch up with inflation and align with rising costs. He expressed support for the measure but emphasized the importance of maintaining a more consistent approach in the future. Looking ahead to next year, he hopes any adjustments will be more in line with a 1% or 2% increase or whatever is necessary to keep pace with inflation.

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b># 25-034</b>	<b>Moved by: Cr. Tuckey</b> <b>Seconded by: Cr. Cox</b>
	That Council accept the variance request submitted by John Lepine for a manufactured home to be used as a caretaker's unit on 58 Highway 5, Lot 1044, Plan 1397 Sundog Maintenance Services.	
	<b>PASSED</b>	

### iii. Municipal Services Standing Committee Meeting February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

<b>MUNICIPAL</b>	<b># 25-035</b>	<b>Moved by: Cr. Cox</b> <b>Seconded by: D/M Keizer</b>
	The minutes from the Municipal Services Standing Committee Meeting on February 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, be adopted as presented.	
	<b>PASSED</b>	

<b>MUNICIPAL</b>	<b># 25-036</b>	<b>MOTION TABLED</b>
	<b>Recommendation:</b>	
	That Mayor and Council provide direction on how to proceed with the proposed trade of Town-owned lands in the Westgrove subdivision and adjacent to the Arena with the Fort Smith Métis Council for the properties adjacent to the Town of Fort Smith Water Treatment Plant, supporting future municipal drinking water infrastructure expansion.	
	<b>Status:</b> Motion #25-036 was tabled pending further information on the impacts of timing changes.	

### b. Bylaws and Policies

Cr. Karasiuk sought clarification to the timeline when they are actually going to start the Bylaw and policy review process.

Mayor Fergusson stated that the proposal for which funding was secured would move forward with a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Someone will be hired to take charge of the initiative and oversee its progress. She emphasized that once this individual is in place,



## Regular Meeting of Council 02-25

---

they should be brought before the council to ensure that the process advances more efficiently. This would facilitate a timely discussion on the bylaw and policy that has been tabled.

Cr. Couvrette supported the progress on hiring a contractor for the bylaw review but stressed the urgency of addressing time-sensitive bylaws. He was particularly concerned about the delayed review of an employment-related bylaw that should have been updated after the 2021 collective agreement. He called the delay disrespectful to excluded employees and urged council to address it immediately rather than waiting for the contractor's process, which may not begin until June.

Mayor Fergusson informed council that she will follow up and that it will be brought up during the next meeting.

### **c. Appointments**

### **d. Administration**

#### **i. Briefing Note – Briefing Note – Confirming the date for the Wood Buffalo Frolics Half Day Civic Holiday – March 14th, 2025**

**#25-037**

**Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk**

**Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey**

That Council pass the following motion:

Confirm Friday, March 14, 2025, from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. (Mountain Time) as the half-day civic holiday for the Wood Buffalo Frolics, in accordance with Bylaw 1004.

**PASSED**

Cr. Couvrette acknowledged the significant efforts of volunteers in supporting community events and emphasized the crucial role they play in their success. He noted that volunteer participation has declined over time, particularly due to the impacts of COVID-19 and changing lifestyles. He encouraged residents to reflect on the value these events bring to the community, including cultural celebration and overall well-being. He urged people to move away from a self-focused mindset and instead embrace volunteerism and community cooperation, as these organizations rely on public support to thrive.

Cr. Karasiuk thanked volunteers for their contributions to community events and suggested that the local newsletter could include a section listing volunteer opportunities. This would provide free advertising for organizations in need of support.

#### **ii. Briefing Note – Draft Municipal Service Agreement with Salt River First Nation**

**#25-038**

**Moved by: Cr. Cox**

**Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette**

That Council approve the formation of an MSA Review Committee with at least two Council representatives to participate in the review process with the SMC.

**PASSED**

D/M Keizer, Mayor Fergusson, Cr. Cox, and Cr. Bathe volunteered to be Council representatives and participate in the MSA review committee working group.

### **e. Mayor and Council/Board Representative**

- i. Cr. Tuckey - extended condolences on behalf of the council to families who lost loved ones this month. He provided an update from the HR Committee, stating that while they had identified a promising candidate for the Director of Corporate Services position, the interview did not take place. As a result, the hiring process will need to be restarted, and the position will be re-advertised.



- ii. Cr. Cox -provided updates on upcoming events and local conditions. He noted that work on the Thebacha Loppet and trail is progressing well and should be in good shape if the weather cooperates. He also mentioned an upcoming fire meeting at Roaring Rapids Hall and encouraged community participation. Additionally, he commented on improving road conditions, highlighting the clear roads, clean multi-use trails, and emptying ditches, which indicate good preparation for spring.
- iii. Cr. Couvrette - extended condolences to families who have recently lost loved ones and encouraged anyone in need of support to reach out to available mental health resources. He also noted the absence of the RCMP delegation at the meeting but reiterated their frequent message about community safety. He emphasized that ongoing concerns in town often stem from individuals not following laws and urged residents to report suspicious activities to the RCMP. Providing credible information, he stressed, is essential for law enforcement to take action and address threats to the community
- iv. Cr. Benwell - excused
- v. Cr. Heaton - expressed condolences to the families of Shane Manderville and Pat Abraham, acknowledging the deep impact of their losses on the community. She emphasized the need for leadership discussions on the future of local youth, questioning whether they have hope and the necessary support to succeed. She highlighted the importance of addressing barriers they face within the community. Additionally, she reflected on the January 2024 plane crash and shared her personal grief over the loss of Howie, while also looking forward to the upcoming Joel Tetso Memorial Hockey Tournament.
- vi. Cr. Karasiuk welcomed Cr. Heaton back and echoed Cr. Cox's praise for the town's snow removal efforts, noting significant improvements at major intersections. He also addressed concerns about youth mental health, highlighting his involvement through the school board. Additionally, he has requested that the regional wellness committee discuss the removal of youth counselors from schools. A meeting on this topic is scheduled for Wednesday, the 26th, at 2 PM at the health center, where he encouraged community members to hold health services accountable for their commitments.
- vii. Cr. Bathe
- viii. Deputy Mayor Keizer highlighted two key updates. First, he addressed the NWT tourism plan, noting that Fort Smith was initially missing from the list but has now been included for a meeting on May 6. He credited Mayor Fergusson for initiating the discussion and ensuring Fort Smith's inclusion, emphasizing the importance of attending to promote local tourism and integrate it into the strategic plan. Secondly, he mentioned the upcoming NWT Association of Communities (NWTAC) Annual General Meeting, noting that he has shared relevant information with council members. He encouraged the community to visit the NWTAC website to learn about longstanding and new resolutions addressing major northern issues. He assured that efforts are being made to bring important local concerns to the organization, which represents communities across the North.
- ix. Mayor Fergusson highlighted key updates, including economic opportunities from the Pine Point Mining Company, ongoing advocacy efforts through a letter campaign on community concerns, and strategic planning sessions to set long-term priorities. She noted the approval of the operating budget with a 6.5% tax



## Regular Meeting of Council 02-25

increase, emphasizing the need to address aging infrastructure. Upcoming events in March include the Loppet, territorial snowboarding trials, dog races, the Wood Buffalo Frolics, and a fishing derby. She also provided a positive update on the pool's maintenance progress.

### 8. PROCLAMATIONS

None.

### 9. ABSENCE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

PROTECTIVE

# 25-039

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

That Cr. Heaton be excused from the Protective Services Standing Committee meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**PASSED**

CORPORATE

# 25-040

Moved by: D/M Keizer  
Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That Cr. Heaton be excused from the Corporate Services Standing Committee meeting on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**PASSED**

COMMUNITY

# 25-041

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

That Cr. Heaton be excused from the Community Services Standing Committee meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**PASSED**

MUNICIPAL

# 25-042

Moved by: Cr. Cox  
Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That Cr. Heaton be excused from the Municipal Services Standing Committee meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**PASSED**

# 25-043

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

That Cr. Benwell be excused from the Regular Meeting of Council on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**PASSED**

### 10. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

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

### 11. ADJOURNMENT



## Regular Meeting of Council 02-25

---

# 25-044

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by:

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:41 pm.

**PASSED**

### 12. QUESTION PERIOD

A question period was offered in accordance with policy.