



Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting April 1st, 2025

MINUTES

The Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 @ 6:30 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

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

Regrets:

Staff Present: Tracy Thomas, Senior Administrative Officer
Raveena Brown, Executive Secretary
Adam McNab, Director of Protective Services

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fergusson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, confirmed quorum and handed the Chair to Cr. Couvrette. Cr. Couvrette read the acknowledgment of First Nations.

B. REVIEW

a. Agenda

Moved by: Mayor Fergusson

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That the agenda be adopted as amended to add a delegation.

PASSED

b. Minutes

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Benwell

The minutes from the Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting on March 4th, 2025, be adopted as presented.

PASSED

c. Vision and Values

d. Delegation – Chris Westwell Thebacha Chamber of Commerce

Topic: Local Business Engagement, Supports, Messaging, and Chamber Engagement

Chris Westwell addressed the audience, acknowledging that most attendees were likely familiar with him. He reflected on his past experiences in council and noted the lack of engagement he had wished for during his tenure. He emphasized his intention to foster collaboration between the Chamber of Commerce and local government rather than to criticize anyone. Westwell highlighted the economic hardships facing Fort Smith, including rising costs, business closures, job losses, and reduced government spending, which had severely impacted consumer confidence and local businesses. He noted that the first quarter of 2025 had been the worst he had ever seen for local businesses, with many long-standing establishments struggling to survive.

He discussed systemic economic challenges beyond local control, such as government cutbacks and increasing regulations, which made it difficult for small businesses to compete with large corporations. Despite these difficulties, he stressed the importance of supporting local businesses, adapting to economic realities, and finding ways to retain money and jobs within the community. Westwell urged the town's leadership to champion local businesses, advocate for fair regulations, and work together to create a more resilient local economy. He concluded by reaffirming his belief in Fort Smith's perseverance and the potential for collective efforts to strengthen the business sector and improve the town's economic future.



Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting April 1st, 2025

C. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. The Protective Services Director Report for March

Director McNab provided an update on fire and EMS activities, noting a significant structure fire in the community over the past month. He commended the volunteer firefighters for their efforts in containing the fire to the structure and preventing damage to a nearby building. Despite the fire's intensity, property loss was minimal. He mentioned that fire and ambulance responses had been in line with the monthly average.

Additionally, under land and development, Director McNab highlighted five structures in the community that had been affected by large-scale fires and remained in varying states of disrepair. While a fire prevention bylaw requires fire remnants to be cleaned up within 48 hours, this is not always feasible. The town has sent letters to the property owners, requesting that they submit a plan within 30 days for either repair or demolition, along with a development permit. These structures pose health and safety risks to neighbors and could become targets for arson, making timely action essential.

D. ADMINISTRATION

a. Briefing Note – Town-Owned Residential Lots – Public Sale

Moved by: Mayor Fergusson

Seconded by: Cr. Karasiuk

That Council directs Administration to proceed with the sale of three Town-owned lots:

1. Lot 415 Plan 207 – 68 Pine Crescent
2. Lot 1367 Plan 1788 – 57 Caribou Crescent
3. Lot 646 Plan 319 – 27 Whooping Crane Crescent

PASSED

Mayor Fergusson asked whether some of the properties were remediated or if some of those issues were part of what prompted the decision to sell the properties.

Director McNab explained that the property in question, 27 Whooping Crane Crescent, appears to have a structure on it. He clarified that it was a Town-owned lot with a derelict house, which has since been remediated.

In regard to why the Town is selling these lots, Director McNab stated that they are pre-serviced, residentially zoned lots. He noted that the Town has received feedback from community members indicating there is a shortage of available and easily developable lots. Given that the Town relies on tax revenue as a tax-based community, Director McNab felt it would be worthwhile to at least present the sale of these lots as an option for Council's consideration.

Cr. Karasiuk inquired as to what percentage of Town-owned residential lots these 3 lots indicate. Director McNab explained that these 3 lots make up for 100% of town-owned residential lots. Mayor Fergusson inquired about how many lots were still available for purchase in the West Grove area and why they are not selling. Director McNab noted that there were approximately 12 available, but he is not currently able to speak as to why they are not selling.



Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting April 1st, 2025

b. Briefing Note – Urgent Policy Review – Municipal Pelican Management Strategy

Moved by: Mayor Fergusson

Seconded by: Cr. Bathe

That Council direct Administration to:

1. Proceed with the Pelican Traffic Control Initiative
2. Declare a provisional Pelican No-Fly Zone over municipal events pending further review
3. Engage in meaningful dialogue with pelican representatives, pending confirmation that at least one of them speaks English

Note: Early attempts at diplomacy have been unproductive. Pelican representatives arrived 45 minutes late, knocked over a pitcher of water, and then stormed out dramatically when asked to follow the agenda.

Happy April 1st, 2025.

DEFEATED

E. OTHER BUSINESS

F. EXCUSING OF COUNCILLORS

G. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Protective Services Standing Committee Meeting will be on May 6th, 2025.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:30 pm.

PASSED