



Community Services Standing Committee Meeting

MINUTES

The Community Services Standing Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, May 13th, 2025 @ 6:30 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present: Cr. Heaton, Cr. Karasiuk, Cr. Bathe, Mayor Fergusson, Cr. Tuckey, Cr. Cox, and Cr. Couvrette

Regrets: D/M Keizer and Cr. Benwell

Staff Present: Tracy Thomas, Senior Administrative Officer
Shanna Schaefer, Reception (Acting Recording Secretary)
Emily Colucci, Director of Community Services

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fergusson called the meeting to order at 630 pm and handed the chair to Cr. Heaton. Cr. Heaton read the acknowledgment of First Nations.

B. REVIEW

a. Agenda

Moved by: Mayor Fergusson

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That the agenda be adopted as amended to include a Delegation and, under F. Other Business, a discussion on a Communications Strategy

PASSED

b. Minutes

Moved by: Mayor Fergusson

Seconded by: Cr. Karasiuk

That the minutes from the Community Services Standing Committee Meeting on April 8th, 2025, be adopted as presented.

PASSED

c. Vision and Values

d. Declaration of Financial Interest

C. DELEGATION

Daniel Wiltzen, representing Fort Smith Pride (FSP), presented to Council along with Maxim Smith (Treasurer) and Alex James (member). Wiltzen outlined that FSP was established in 2024 and held the first Frank Gruben Pride Festival, with a second event planned for June 13–15, 2025. Three requests were presented: use of the arena on June 14th for a free community event, road closures for a Pride Parade, and additional road closures for painting a walkway, with a rain date requested for July if needed.

The delegation emphasized the importance of Pride events in supporting and raising awareness for Missing, Murdered, and Indigenous Women and Girls and 2-Spirit People, noting that Frank Gruben remains a missing person from this group. They stressed the need for visible representation to foster an inclusive and welcoming community for future generations.



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Mayor Fergusson thanked the group, expressed her support, and inquired about any security concerns from the previous year's event, which Wiltzen confirmed there were none. The delegation was then thanked and departed.

D. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Community Services Director's Report for April

Director Emily Colucci presented the April Community Services Report, highlighting staffing challenges at the pool. Efforts are underway to hire and train staff, with training taking priority once the pool reopens before public access resumes. Colucci also recognized her team for their excellent work during her recent vacation and encouraged everyone to view the new mural at the Mary Kaeser Library by local artist Melanie Jewell.

Mayor Fergusson suggested exploring incentives or bonuses to attract more pool staff and inquired about signage at the Arena. Colucci confirmed a Work Order is in place and agreed to reach out to user groups regarding banner placements.

Cr. Karasiuk recommended connecting with the high school to explore options for offering school credits or volunteer hours as incentives for students to work at the pool.

Cr. Heaton asked about ECE funding for childcare. Colucci noted that new wage grid funding was announced on March 1, with implementation expected by April 1, but further clarification is pending a meeting with funders on May 16 due to challenges in funding related to varied program demographics.

Mayor Fergusson again encouraged visiting the library to view the new mural.

E. ADMINISTRATION

a. Briefing Note – Donation Request: Frank Gruben Pride Parade

Moved by: Mayor Fergusson

Seconded by: Cr. Bathe

That Mayor and Council approve the donation of \$1500.00 to Fort Smith Pride towards the rental of the Centennial Arena.

PASSED

Council discussed concerns regarding the nature of donations, with Cr. Karasiuk seeking clarification on whether the request involved a \$1,500 cash donation. SAO Thomas clarified that "in kind" typically refers to non-monetary contributions. Cr. Karasiuk also inquired about the Discretionary Budget balance, and Mayor Fergusson confirmed that approving this request would leave \$2,400 remaining.

Cr. Couvrette suggested that Council could waive the arena rental fee instead of providing a cash donation. Mayor Fergusson proposed a motion to waive the fee, while Cr. Karasiuk questioned which approach—waiving the fee or providing funds—was better for accounting purposes.

Dir. Colucci noted that events held outside normal working hours impact the budget due to staffing costs. SAO Thomas provided further clarification on the request, and Cr. Cox added that setting limits on donations could help maintain accountability.

Council agreed to remove the term "in kind" from the request's wording, and the motion passed unanimously.



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b. Briefing Note – Road Closure: Frank Gruben Pride Parade

Moved by: Cr. Bathe
Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council approve the following road closure:
That King St. from the Community and Recreation Centre Parking Lot to McDougal Rd., McDougal Rd. from King St. to Breynat St., Breynat St., from McDougal Rd., to Rupert Ave., and Rupert Ave. from Breynat St. to the Fort Smith Centennial Arena Parking Lot be closed on June 13, 2025 from 12:30pm to 1:00pm for the Frank Gruben Pride Festival Parade.

PASSED

Cr. Karasiuk raised concerns about potential increased costs related to staff wages if Town employees are required for the event. SAO Thomas clarified that the motion only covers the road closures and does not include staff support. Dir. Colucci added that if staff are needed, she would simply require advance notice to adjust schedules accordingly. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Briefing Note – Road Closure: Frank Gruden Pride Parade – Sidewalk Painting

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey
Seconded by: Mayor Fergusson

That Council approve the following road closure;
That the McDougal Rd. crosswalk between St. Joseph's Cathedral and the undeveloped lot be closed on June 1, 2025, or if the weather is inclement, June 7, 2025 from 8:00 to 12:00pm for the painting of the crosswalk.

PASSED

Cr. Karasiuk questioned whether both road closures could be scheduled for Sundays. Director Colucci responded that the dates were selected based on the requesting organization's preferences and what worked best for their plans.

d. Briefing Note – Donation Request: PWK

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

For consideration: no specific amount requested.

That Mayor and Council approve the donation of _____ to PWK for students to attend the Annual Peace River Pow-Wow.

OPPOSED

Cr. Karasiuk suggested that a dollar amount should be established when funding requests are made. Mayor Fergusson noted the open amount may have been intended to allow Council to decide what they were comfortable giving and suggested determining whether the request would be approved before discussing the amount.

Council discussed how similar requests had been denied in the past and whether motions without specific funding amounts should be approved. Cr. Couvrette proposed tabling the motion to get more details from the school on the exact funding needed, their efforts to secure other funds, and how the travel benefits the community.

SAO Thomas advised that no Standing Committee meetings would occur before the June 6th travel date. Mayor Fergusson raised questions about how broadly accessible the program and funding are. Cr. Karasiuk stated he did not want to table the motion but intended to oppose it.



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e. Briefing Note – Donation Request: Bomber’s Aboriginal Day Slo-Pitch Tournament

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: Mayor Fergusson

That Mayor and Council approve the in-kind donations of \$330.00 to Theresa Bourke for the Bomber’s Aboriginal Day Weekend Slo-Pitch Tournament towards the rental of the Harry Sudom Ball Diamond.

PASSED

Mayor Fergusson expressed support for the donation request, noting that the tournament could bring increased travel to the community, boost local business revenues, and provide a general economic benefit.

f. Briefing Note – Donation Request: Trek for Tourette

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey

Seconded by: Mayor Fergusson

For consideration: no specific amount of money, in-kind, or items were requested. That Mayor and Council approve the donation of ____ to Fort Smith Trek for Tourette.

Amended and PASSED

SAO Thomas raised the ongoing discussion from previous Briefing Notes, noting the need to establish a new process for handling donation requests. Director Colucci advised that even when no monetary amount is specified, donations could be offered in the form of recreation passes. Mayor Fergusson suggested a Family Punch Pass as a prize option.

Council discussed setting a standard approach, with Cr. Couvrette recommending that a formal Donation Policy be created. Cr. Karasiuk proposed including a monetary value on all requests, with a default amount of \$100 if none is specified. He then moved to amend the current request to provide the Trek with Recreation Center passes valued at \$250.

g. Briefing Note – Lottery License Fee Proposal

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That Council acknowledge the need to review the Town’s lottery licensing fee structure and include this matter in the full Rates and Fees Bylaw review scheduled for later in 2025.

That Council approve the implementation of a temporary flat-rate fee structure for lottery licensing, as outlined, until the full Rates and Fees Bylaw review in 2025. This structure will enhance fairness, encourage local fundraising, and simplify administration, while maintaining an appropriate level of cost recovery.

PASSED

Mayor Fergusson opened the discussion by noting public feedback requesting changes to the lottery fee structure, including the introduction of flat rate or reduced fees, and suggested that these changes be implemented. Cr. Karasiuk agreed, citing similar feedback and noting that the last meeting indicated this issue required immediate attention. He moved to vote against the current motion and introduce a new motion to incorporate flat rate fees into the bylaws.

Mayor Fergusson proposed amending the motion by removing its second paragraph.

Cr. Karasiuk asked how the flat rate fee tiers had been determined. SAO Thomas explained that larger lotteries require more administrative work and attention, which influenced the



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proposed fee structure. SAO Thomas clarified that this was a recommendation and would be brought back at the next Regular Meeting for further consideration.

Cr. Cox asked about the administrative impact of these changes, and SAO Thomas confirmed that adjusting fees and forms would require additional administrative time and that retroactive fee changes could not be applied to applications submitted more than a week prior.

The motion passed as amended, with the second paragraph removed.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

a) Communication Strategy – New Item Added by Cr Couvrette

Cr. Couvrette requested an update on the development of a Communications Strategy and suggested scheduling meetings for the Communications Committee. He expressed concern that during the recent fire event, information was only available through Cabin Radio and that communication processes need improvement.

SAO Thomas advised that there is currently no formal Communications Strategy in place. She further clarified that staff are unable to provide an update on a project that is not currently underway, noting that the Communications Strategy is not included in this year's project list and there is no current capacity to take it on. She expressed confusion about the expectation for updates on a project that has not been formally initiated and emphasized that Council direction and resource allocation would be required to proceed.

Cr. Couvrette noted that the previous Mayor and Council had discussed the matter, and Mayor Fergusson added that responsibilities from those earlier discussions have since been distributed among the expanded staff team.

Cr. Couvrette reiterated the importance of a Communications Strategy for effective internal and external communication and suggested that a previously drafted version should be reviewed, even though it was never formally adopted.

Cr. Cox stated that recent communications during the emergency appeared to be very well done, with the Town, Cabin Radio, and the Alertable app all providing timely and relevant updates.

Cr. Karasiuk inquired about the location of the draft strategy, and SAO Thomas confirmed that it could be brought forward by adding it to the next Community Services Committee agenda.

Cr. Couvrette reiterated his request for a status update and asked that the Communications Committee review the draft with the intention of potentially including it as a budget item for 2026.

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That the draft Communications Strategy be brought forward for review at the next Community Services Committee meeting, and that the Communications Committee be requested to assess the draft for consideration as a potential budget item in 2026.

PASSED

G. EXCUSING OF COUNCILLORS

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey



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That D/M Keizer and Cr. Benwell be excused from the Community Services Standing Committee Meeting on May 13th.

PASSED

H. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Community Services Standing Committee Meeting will be on June 10th, 2025.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That the meeting be adjourned at 739 pm.