



Council of the Town of Fort Smith
September 9, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

MINUTES

The Regular meeting of the Council on 10-25 was held on
Tuesday, September 9 2025, @ 7 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

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

Regrets:

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Mayor Fergusson confirms quorum and reads the Acknowledgment of First Nations.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

# 25-199	Moved by: Cr. Couvrette Seconded by: Cr. Cox
That the agenda be adopted as presented.	
PASSED	

3. DELEGATIONS

- a. RCMP Monthly Policing Report for July 2025 – unable to attend

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting of Council 09-25	
# 25-200	Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk Seconded by: Cr. Cox
That the minutes of the Regular Meeting 09-25 of August 19th, 2025, be adopted as presented.	
PASSED	

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST

7. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Protective Services
 - i. Director's Report
 - ii. DPA-038-25 Home Occupation Luke Le Clair

# 25-201	Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk Seconded by: Cr. Cox
That DPA-038-25, submitted by Luke LeClair, to operate a residential renovation business, from Lot 1323, Plan 1788, 7 Caribou Court, Fort Smith, be approved.	
PASSED	



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iii. DPA-040-25 Home Occupation Artivex Solutions

25-202

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Heaton

That DPA-040-25, submitted by Mathieu Doucet, to operate office and bookkeeping operations for Lifeguard and First Aid Training, from Lot 730A, Plan 601, 28 St. Mary's St., Fort Smith, be approved.

PASSED

iv. DPA-045-25 Home Occupation Executive Administrative Services

25-203

Moved by: Cr. Tuckey

Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That DPA-045-25, submitted by Katie Reid, to operate an administrative and consulting business, from Lot 1710, Plan 4090, 28 Wandering Spirit St., Fort Smith, be approved.

PASSED

v. DPA-046-25 Home Occupation Michelle / Sensual Awakening

25-204

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That DPA-046-25, submitted by Michelle Lambert, to operate an online meditation and counselling business, from Lot 53, Plan 404, 289 McDougal Road, Fort Smith, be approved.

PASSED

vi. Briefing Note – Land Disposal to Housing NWT

25-205

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That Council directs Administration to begin the process of land disposal of LOT: 415 PLAN: 207 for \$38,270.00 to Housing NWT in accordance with the Town of Fort Smith Land Administration Bylaw.

TABLED

Director McNab explained that all of the lots currently being applied for by Housing NWT are intended for the construction of duplexes. These duplexes will serve as additional housing stock for Housing NWT, which is the proposed use of the land.

D/M Keizer noted that during the previous night's meeting there were concerns raised about burned houses that have not been torn down, while at the same time new lots are being allocated for housing. He acknowledged that the issues may be unrelated but emphasized that the concern is valid, as it relates to the importance of encouraging property owners to address and repair existing structures.

Director McNab explained that decisions on land disposal rest with the Mayor and Council. He noted that while there is funding available for new builds, the process for addressing existing housing does not move at the same pace. As a result, placing a new house on the proposed lot would not necessarily prevent the replacement of current houses, though it could affect the overall financial considerations.

Cr. Bathe expressed support for efforts to increase housing in the community but asked whether there are any stipulations regarding aesthetics. He noted that there had been many comments about the building on Field Street not fitting in with the community and questioned whether a similar type of building is planned, or if there will be an opportunity for input on what is placed on the new lots.



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Director McNab clarified that, to his understanding, the specific design used on Field Street will not be applied in this case, though confirmation will only come once a development permit is submitted. He explained that decisions regarding aesthetics or how a lot is developed fall under bylaw review, which provides Mayor and Council the opportunity to give input, particularly when it comes to modular homes. Outside of this process, however, there is no authority to select or reject individual applications based on design.

Cr. Couvrette echoed Cr. Bathe's concerns regarding aesthetics, noting that the previous development received significant feedback for appearing industrial within a residential area. He stressed that Mayor and Council need to be mindful of how such developments may affect nearby residents, including potential impacts on property values and, in turn, future tax revenues.

Cr. Cox stated that while he supports development and the goal of increasing housing in town, he has concerns about the suitability of the proposed lot for a duplex. After accounting for easements, the available width would be about 24 feet per side, which he felt would be quite tight. He also raised broader concerns shared by residents, questioning why Housing NWT continues to build new homes without first addressing existing burned, damaged, or undeveloped properties. He suggested that unless pressure is applied, funding will remain focused on new builds rather than cleanup or reclamation. Cr. Cox added that while he is conflicted, as he wants to support more housing, the recent modular homes built in town have not always fit with the community's character and do little to support local businesses or build capacity within Fort Smith.

SAO Thomas suggested that if Council would like more information on the lots, including which are in need of repairs and which should be torn down, Administration can provide it. She noted there is no urgency, but the information can certainly be prepared for Council's review.

Director McNab explained that the valuation of the lot was based on the same method used for the West Grove lots. He calculated the average lot value per square meter and applied that to this property. Since the lot is smaller in size, the resulting value is about half the price, which reflects the consistent metric he used.

Cr. Cox observed that the lots were only recently approved for disposal and suggested considering a bidding process, similar to West Grove, since the location is desirable. He cautioned that giving the lot directly to Housing NWT might overlook other community interest.

#25-206

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That Council request a briefing note from Administration on the current status of Housing NWT properties, including which properties are available and which require renovations or remediation.

PASSED

#25-207

Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk

Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That Council direct Administration to list Lot 415, Plan 207 for sale at a price of \$38,270.00, in accordance with the Land Administration Bylaw.

PASSED



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vii. Briefing Note – Land Swap with Housing NWT

25-208

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council directs Administration to begin the process of land disposal of LOT: 646 PLAN: 319 for a nominal fee to Housing NWT and further that Administration begin the process of land acquisition of LOT: 720A PLAN: 601 from Housing NWT for a nominal fee.

PASSED

****Footnote: Following the meeting, Administration identified that the lot number stated in the motion was incorrect. The correct legal description is LOT 415, PLAN 207 (not LOT 649, PLAN 319). This correction is a clerical/typographical amendment only and does not alter the substance or intent of the motion.*

Cr. Karasiuk requested clarification as to whether both lots were equivalent in size. Director McNab stated that he could not provide an exact number but noted that the lot in question is smaller.

viii. Briefing Note – Wildland Urban Interface

25-209

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council supports the Fort Smith Fire Department building capacity locally to respond to wildfire threats and further works with Territorial partners and the Fire Chiefs Association to build a mutual aid program.

Further, that Council supports the Fire Department in deploying to provide such mutual aid, provided the Town of Fort Smith maintains cost recovery or revenue from this service and that the Emergency Services expected in the Town of Fort Smith can be maintained during such deployments.

PASSED

Cr. Cox noted the strong benefits of Alberta's mutual aid system, where resources such as trucks and personnel are shared across communities, citing Slave Lake as an example. He expressed support for developing a similar system in the NWT, emphasizing that it would improve response capacity. He added that as the community grows, having clear standards would also help guide decisions on when local resources can be shared and when they must be reserved for local emergencies.

b. Corporate Services

- i. Director's Report
- ii. Accounts Paid List
- iii. Correspondences

D/M Keizer expressed disappointment with the Minister's response (re NTPC reimbursing costs incurred during brown/blackouts) . He acknowledged that while the clause states the Town is not considered a customer and must be accountable for its own services, the community had been heavily impacted by what he described as NTPC's inability to effectively manage their service. He found the response to be dismissive and more administrative than helpful, adding that it felt like a way of saying "thank you very much, but please leave us alone."

Cr. Couvrette stated that while there is a process that needs to unfold, he anticipates that in the near future Council may need to take a stronger stance. He suggested that the Town is not doing anything extraordinary beyond responding to the limitations placed on cost recovery due to the provider's inability to effectively deliver power.



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D/M Keizer asked Administration, based on the response received, whether a list would still be compiled outlining what occurred regarding compensation. He questioned if the matter was effectively ended or if this was simply a temporary setback.

SAO Thomas confirmed that the Town will continue documenting all costs related to the damages, including overtime and callout expenses, a process that Jim had already begun prior to his leave. She explained that once the full submission is prepared, it will be presented to the Council for support. She noted that her discussions with the NTPC representative indicated they were not outright rejecting the claims, but were required to word their responses cautiously. She emphasized that the Town would continue the process of submitting the information despite the wording used in the replies.

Cr. Cox expressed frustration with the letter, noting that while it appears supportive on one hand, it also seems to set the stage for a denial within 60 days. He stated that this approach is frustrating and does little to resolve the ongoing challenges, such as delays in receiving pool parts and the lack of a generator. He pointed out that despite having two years to address these issues, the provider is now citing problems with the surge tank, leaving no clear timeline for resolution. He warned that the Town is quickly approaching the same difficulties with the pool as last year, through no fault of its own.

c. Briefing Note: Donation Request Salt River First Nation

25-210

Moved by: Cr. Heaton

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council approve a \$1,000 donation from the remaining 2025 donation budget to provide the stage for the SRFN TLE celebration, and further approve the provision of equipment and operational support as outlined above, including closure of Marine Drive on September 13, in partnership with SRFN to support this significant community event.

PASSED

D/M Keizer pointed out that the proposal indicates \$1,000 will be allocated to offset the cost of the stage, along with other equipment, operational support, and additional donation requests. He questioned whether those other costs had also been calculated and charged to the donation budget.

SAO Thomas explained that because this is a large community event with many benefits, Administration viewed it as an opportunity to partner, similar to how the Town collaborates on events such as Frolics and Aboriginal Day. She emphasized that it was approached as a partnership rather than simply a donation.

8. COUNCIL BUSINESS

a. Bylaws and Policies

i. Third reading of the Community Plan Bylaw 1060

25-211

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That Bylaw 1060 the Community Plan bylaw, be given Third reading by title only.

PASSED

b. Appointments



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c. Mayor and Council / Board Representatives

- i. Cr. Tuckey noted that from what he had heard, all of the Town's festivals were very successful and well attended. He also offered his condolences to the Beaver and Beaulieu families, as well as all who have lost a loved one recently.
- ii. Cr. Cox reported that there had been an HAF meeting with no major changes, but highlighted that grants and funding opportunities are now available online and encouraged residents to review them. He shared community feedback, passing along kudos to the Town for installing a staircase between Pine Crest and Primrose to address erosion issues caused by quads along the summer water line. He also noted that a zoning bylaw consultation meeting had taken place the previous evening, describing it as a fairly heated discussion, and extended thanks to all who took the time to review the material and provide input.
- iii. Cr. Couvrette reported that he spoke with CBC Radio about the Town's role in the NTPC intervention processes. He explained that the Town steps in to protect residents' interests, since the process is too complex for most individuals, and also because electricity rate increases directly affect the Town's budget and services. He emphasized that the Town has a responsibility to represent the community in these matters.
- iv. Cr. Benwell noted that the Salt River First Nation's Treaty Land Entitlement event is taking place this weekend and expressed hope that everyone will be able to attend and enjoy some part of it.
- v. Cr. Heaton highlighted the urgent need for volunteers in the community, noting that the animal shelter and the Food Bank are both struggling with limited support. She encouraged residents with spare time to help, stressing how essential these services are, especially with increased demand. She also gave recognition to Maureen Mercredi for her dedicated work running the Sister Southern Thrift Store almost entirely on her own, pointing out it as a good opportunity for students to earn volunteer hours. Cr. Heaton emphasized that many vital community services rely on volunteers, and with burnout on the rise, she urged everyone to give whatever time or support they can.
- vi. Cr. Karasiuk reflected on the recent bylaw open house, noting it was one of the better-attended sessions in some time and describing the discussion as passionate rather than heated. He highlighted key takeaways, including a level of community distrust toward Town operations and decisions, which he said underscores the need for improved communication and education from Council. He also observed strong interest in broader bylaw reviews beyond zoning. Cr. Karasiuk thanked participants for their input and emphasized the importance of continuing to engage with residents. Separately, he suggested that with the new meeting format only the Mayor chairs, Council could consider calling for a volunteer co-chair at the end of each meeting to share responsibility and provide experience.
- vii. Cr. Bathe reported that he attended the HAF meeting and shared similar observations to those of Cr. Cox, noting it was encouraging to see interest and uptake. He expressed optimism about communications helping to further promote housing development in the community. He also emphasized the importance of Council taking responsibility for clear communication,



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particularly in light of recent issues with the draft bylaw. He noted that staff unfairly bore the brunt of the miscommunication and stressed that it is Council's responsibility to ensure documents are properly prepared and aligned with community expectations. He added that throughout this process, he has been mindful of how Council's words and actions can significantly impact staff.

- viii. D/M Keizer reported that as part of the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, he will be in Ottawa from October 19 to 29 to meet with MPs and advocate for northern funding and opportunities, alongside mayors from other communities. He invited Council members to share any issues they would like raised with federal ministers before his departure, noting that topics could include housing or other funding priorities. On a lighter note, he mentioned that the Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre has started a ukulele club and, as a former player, he may attend.
- ix. Mayor Fergusson reported that the TLC group met this week to discuss several matters, including the graveyard fences. She noted that after the TLE event and the busy weekend, coordination will begin on installing fences at both the Anglican and Catholic churches, and Administration can expect to be contacted regarding materials. She also shared that TLC met with the Board of Governors Chair and the College President. While the meeting began on a difficult note, she felt it ended more positively, and a follow-up in-person meeting is tentatively scheduled for the 15th to further discuss the future of the college.

She added that while the college does have students attending in-person and online programming in Fort Smith, her main takeaway from the recent public meeting was how encouraging it was to see residents who do not usually attend stepping forward to share their views. Although the discussion went off topic at times, she valued the input and noted one comment about reinstating an annual ratepayer meeting. She suggested this could be an opportunity for better communication with the public and thanked everyone who participated.

9. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Regular Meeting of Council (Community & Municipal)	September 23rd, 2025 @ 7 pm
Regular Meeting of Council (Protective & Corporate)	October 7th, 2025 @ 7 pm

10. EXCUSING OF COUNCILLORS

11. ADJOURNMENT

25-212 Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk
 Seconded by: Cr. Heaton

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:55 pm.

PASSED

12. QUESTION PERIOD



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Minutes adopted this 23rd day of September 2025.


Dana Fergusson
Mayor


Certified Correct by Tracy Thomas
Senior Administrative Officer