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**Council of the Town of Fort Smith**  
**May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

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The department has filled the Protective Services Coordinator position, welcoming Spencer Porter, whose background in wildfire and emergency management is expected to strengthen operations and provide additional stability.

On the administrative side, work continues on business license renewals and development permits ahead of the busy construction season. Bylaw enforcement opened 28 files, with the majority related to animal control, which is typical for spring.

The emergency management plan review has been completed and adopted, with distribution to local partners and plans to share it publicly. Ongoing efforts will focus on emergency preparedness messaging in advance of wildfire season.

Cr. Benwell noted that a resident has been waiting for some time for a business licence related to a baking. She was unsure of the circumstances causing the delay, but emphasized that the individual is still waiting and is hoping for a response as soon as possible.

Director McNab advised that he will follow up with the Lands and Development Officer to determine the status and confirm whether there are any outstanding home-based food business applications.

Cr. Cox noted that he has reviewed the 2025 Wildfire Protection Plan and asked whether a 2026 version is currently being developed.

Director McNab explained that the Community Wildfire Protection Plan follows a five-year cycle and was most recently completed in 2024, with the next full update scheduled for 2029. In the meantime, the plan is reviewed periodically, and recommendations are made as needed.

Cr. Bathe shared that he happened to be present at an EMS scene earlier in the day and commended the crew for their professionalism. He noted that their conduct clearly reflects the value of the training being provided.

Cr. Couvrette referred to the Capital Report and his previous concerns regarding GNWT's delays in transferring land for the fire training grounds. He noted that while progress is being made, the report also mentions exploring an alternate site, which he expressed disappointment about, as he believes there should be stronger support to enhance community safety.

He asked whether there are plans to return to the originally proposed site in the future, and if so, what costs might be associated with relocating equipment and infrastructure.

Director McNab advised that Administration recently received a follow-up from GNWT ECC Lands regarding the application. He noted that the proposed training site is subject to consultation requirements, and that this process, rather than GNWT Lands itself, is what is currently causing delays. He added that ECC Lands has been responsive, and Administration will continue working through the consultation process.

With respect to the alternate site, Director McNab indicated there is a strong opportunity to partner with Aurora College, which has expressed interest in collaboration. He also noted that the training facilities are relatively mobile and require minimal site preparation, so while there would be some costs associated with relocating, they would not be significant. He added that, upon further consideration, he prefers the alternate site option.



**Council of the Town of Fort Smith**  
**May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

Cr. Karasiuk noted that the Council passed a motion last year regarding parking changes on Simpson Street. With the snow now nearly melted, he asked for an update on the status of implementing parallel parking.

Director McNab advised that he recently spoke with Director Grenier and confirmed that all signage and required equipment are in place. He noted that installation is pending ground conditions softening enough to allow for drilling, and the work is expected to be completed within the next couple of weeks.

b. Corporate Services

- i. Director's Report
- ii. Account's Paid List
- iii. Correspondence

c. Briefing Note: Updated Fireweed Festival Donation Request

**# 26-086**

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

That the Council approve a \$2,500.00 cash donation and in-kind support with an estimated value of up to \$2,500.00 to Fireweed Festival NT, including event services, facility use, and Riverside camping access, subject to operational capacity, and that all activities comply with applicable bylaws and policies.

**PASSED**

d. Briefing Note: Update to Signing Authorities

**# 26-087**

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

That the Council approve the signing authority records be updated to add David Henderson as of May 5th, 2026.

**PASSED**

**8. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

a. Bylaws and Policies

i. Briefing Note: 2026 Mill Rate Bylaw No. 1084

**# 26-088**

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

That Council select the Mill Rate calculation and associated property class weighting to be used in the preparation of the 2026 Mill Rate Bylaw No. 1084.

**TABLED**

**# 26-089**

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

That Council hold a Special Meeting on May 7, 2026 to discuss the 2026 Mill Rate Bylaw.

**PASSED**

ii. SAO Employment Bylaw No. 1077



**Council of the Town of Fort Smith**  
**May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

**# 26-090**

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

That the SAO Employment Bylaw No. 1077 be given third and final reading by title only.

**PASSED**

iii. Land Disposal Bylaw No. 1080

**# 26-091**

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

That the Land Disposal of Lot 1752 Plan 4330 23 Whitford Rd. Bylaw No. 1080 is to be given third and final reading by title only.

**PASSED**

iv. Land Disposal Bylaw No. 1081

**# 26-092**

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

That the Land Disposal of Lot 1759 Plan 4330 7 Whitford Rd. Bylaw No. 108 be given third and final reading by title only.

**PASSED**

v. Land Disposal Bylaw No. 1082

**# 26-093**

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

That the Land Disposal of Lot 1739 Plan 4330 446 Calder Ave. Bylaw No. 1082 be given third and final reading by title only.

**PASSED**

vi. Land Disposal Bylaw No. 1083

**# 26-094**

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

That the Land Disposal of Lot 1763 Plan 4330 14 Whitford Rd. Bylaw No. 1083 be given third and final reading by title only.

**PASSED**

b. Mayor and Council Round Table

- i. Cr. Bathe noted he had not attended any meetings since the last Council meeting, but raised concerns about potential school cuts discussed in the community. He highlighted the broader impacts of reductions related to programs such as Jordan's Principle, noting potential economic and educational effects, including the loss of teachers and support staff.

He encouraged residents to advocate to their MLA and MP, and suggested Council consider supporting efforts to secure additional funding for schools. He also expressed interest in hearing more from the District Education Authority on the situation and how Council can assist.

- ii. D/M Keizer reported that he had not attended other meetings since the last Council meeting, but did attend the Red Dress Day ceremony in Fort Smith on behalf of the Town. He noted that Cr. Benwell also attended and spoke, and that Cr. Heaton was present in her role with the board.



**Council of the Town of Fort Smith**  
**May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

He described the event as moving and acknowledged the community's efforts, including the red dresses displayed throughout town, which served as a reminder of the importance of the day.

- iii. Mayor Fergusson was excused.
- iv. Cr. Tuckey noted concerns regarding the placement of some of the red dresses displayed around town. He advised that he received a few calls from residents who were unhappy with certain locations. Drawing on past discussions about appropriate placement, he suggested that more care be taken in selecting locations in the future to avoid similar concerns.
- v. Cr. Cox noted that with the snow quickly disappearing, conditions are expected to become very dry in the coming weeks. He encouraged residents to begin thinking about emergency preparedness, including reviewing their insurance coverage and taking steps around their properties, such as clearing leaves, to reduce fire risk.
- vi. Cr. Couvrette acknowledged the Red Dress event and noted it was good to see several Councillors and the Deputy Mayor representing the community, along with strong participation from residents.
- vii. Cr. Benwell thanked everyone who participated in the Red Dress walks, including the Aurora College event, noting the strong turnout and community engagement on an important day. She also shared a personal reflection on the meaning behind a red dress displayed near the lagoon, suggesting it may symbolize that loved ones are found in many places, and spoke to her own experience to underscore that point.
- viii. Cr. Heaton was excused.
- ix. Cr. Karasiuk acknowledged Red Dress Day and thanked those who participated and helped organize the events. He also commented on the recent audit presentation, noting that he found it difficult to follow and not particularly useful, especially when viewed online. He suggested that the format and delivery of future presentations be reviewed to improve clarity and value for Council.

**9. PROCLAMATIONS**

Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS) Awareness Day

<b># 26-095</b>	<b>Moved by: D/M Keizer</b> <b>Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey</b>
That the Mayor and Council approve the proclamation as stated:	
WHEREAS Environmental Sensitivities (ES), including Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), can substantially limit function and significantly impact quality of life; and	
WHEREAS the Canadian Human Rights Commission recognizes Environmental Sensitivities [1]; and	
WHEREAS it is estimated that more than one million people in Canada have been diagnosed with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity [2]; and	
WHEREAS a subset of these individuals has been identified as experiencing	



**Council of the Town of Fort Smith**  
**May 5, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity [3]; and

WHEREAS symptoms can range from mild to severely debilitating; and

WHEREAS Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS) Awareness Month is observed in May, with May 12 recognized as Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS) Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS to achieve a better quality of life, individuals with Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS) require access to safe housing and appropriate healthcare; and

WHEREAS community efforts by organizations and individuals raise awareness, offer hope, and support research through advocacy and fundraising;

NOW THEREFORE I, D/M Keizer, on behalf of Fort Smith Town Council, do hereby proclaim May 12, 2026, as "Environmental Sensitivities / Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS) Awareness Day" in the Town of Fort Smith.

**5 for, 1 abstained. PASSED**

**10. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

Regular Meeting of Council (Community & Municipal)	May 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2026, @ 7 pm to be chaired by Cr. Cox
Regular Meeting of Council (Protective & Corporate)	June 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2026, @ 7 pm to be chaired by Cr. Tuckey

**11. EXCUSING OF COUNCILLORS**

**# 26-096**                      **Moved by: Cr. Couvrette**  
   **Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey**

That Mayor Fergusson and Cr. Heaton be excused from the Regular Meeting of Council on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**PASSED**

**12. QUESTION PERIOD**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**# 26-097**                      **Moved by: D/M Keizer**  
   **Seconded by: Cr. Cox**

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:40 pm.

**PASSED**

Minutes adopted this 19th day of May 2026.

Dana Fergusson  
Mayor

Certified Correct by David Henderson  
Senior Administrative Officer

