



Council of the Town of Fort Smith
July 21, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

MINUTES

The Regular meeting of Council was held on
Tuesday, July 21, @ 7 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present: D/M Keizer, Cr. Benwell, Cr. Heaton, Cr. Karasiuk, Cr. Bathe, Cr. Tuckey,
Cr. Cox, and Cr. Couvrette
Regrets: Mayor Fergusson
Staff Present: David Henderson, Senior Administrative Officer
Raveena Brown, Executive Secretary
Lauren Howes, Director of Community Services
Andrew Grenier, Director of Municipal Services

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. D/M Keizer confirms quorum, reads the Acknowledgment of First Nations and hands the chair to Cr. Benwell.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

26-155

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That the agenda be adopted as amended to add a briefing note to 7 Administration iii.
Briefing Note: Landfill Shredding 2026

PASSED

3. DELEGATIONS

- a. Stewardship of the Thebacha Leadership Council (TLC) MLA Jay MacDonald and Michael Miltenberger

MLA MacDonald presented an overview of the proposed agreement between the Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre and the Thebacha Leadership Council, explaining its importance for the museum, the community, and Treaty 8 Nations. He noted that the museum is located on Treaty 8 territory and that the agreement recognizes Indigenous stewardship of the stories, artifacts, and history connected to those lands. He emphasized that it creates opportunities for Treaty 8 Nations to share their history, language, oral traditions, and cultural knowledge from their own perspectives while strengthening relationships between the museum and the traditional governments whose ancestors have cared for the region for generations.

He explained that the agreement is intended to establish a long-term foundation for collaboration, shared governance, and cultural stewardship. The framework would support future partnerships on cultural protocols, educational programming, and initiatives that reflect Indigenous priorities and community aspirations. It would also strengthen public understanding of Treaty 8 history, Indigenous rights, and northern cultures while supporting the preservation, repatriation, and respectful care of culturally significant artifacts, oral histories, language resources, and archival materials.

MacDonald highlighted the opportunities the agreement creates for the museum and the broader community. He said it would improve access to territorial, federal, philanthropic, and private sector funding, increase cultural tourism, and create employment, mentorship, and youth engagement opportunities. He added that the agreement would foster economic development by supporting business opportunities and revenue-generating initiatives while



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establishing a governance model grounded in mutual respect, shared decision-making, and recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems.

He said the museum has the potential to become a premier cultural and historical centre within the Treaty 8 region, serving as a destination for cultural tourism, education, and the preservation of Indigenous history. MacDonald also suggested that the agreement could position Fort Smith as a model for collaboration between Indigenous governments, municipalities, and cultural institutions, demonstrating what can be achieved when communities work together toward shared goals.

MacDonald concluded by expressing his strong support for the agreement and noting that both he and the museum's leadership are fully committed to moving the initiative forward. He advised that the draft agreement is currently being reviewed by the Town's legal counsel and that the intent is to finalize and sign the agreement by the end of the month. Doing so would allow plans to proceed for a grand opening and fundraising event at the museum in October.

Mr. Miltenberger, Chair of the Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre Board, reflected on the historical development of Fort Smith and the evolution of governance in the region. He described how, following the signing of Treaty 8 in 1899, the federal government, the church, and the Hudson's Bay Company played dominant roles in shaping the community, while Indigenous peoples were largely excluded from decision-making despite being the original inhabitants of the land. He noted that over time the federal government, territorial government, and church gradually shifted their focus away from Fort Smith, leaving behind significant infrastructure and cultural assets, including the museum.

He explained that when the museum was established in 1972 as the first museum in the Northwest Territories, it was entrusted with preserving the shared history of the region through a volunteer board, a modest operating budget, and a collection of approximately 18,000 artifacts. He described the museum as the physical embodiment of the shared history of Treaty 8 peoples and all those who have lived in the region, emphasizing that its significance extends well beyond Fort Smith to the entire Treaty 8 territory.

Miltenberger highlighted the importance of the 2024 agreement between the Town of Fort Smith, Salt River First Nation, Smith's Landing First Nation, and the Fort Smith Métis Council, stating that without this partnership the current opportunity would not exist. He said the agreement represents a new governance model that brings together the region's governments to collectively steward their shared history through the museum. He described the museum as the missing piece that connects the four governments and creates a complete governance structure centered on preserving the region's cultural and historical heritage.

He expressed his belief that the agreement represents an important milestone for both the museum and the Northwest Territories. He said the partnership has the potential to transform the museum into a stronger cultural, educational, and economic asset while attracting broader community, business, and visitor support. Miltenberger encouraged Council to move forward with signing the agreement, describing it as a leadership decision that would establish a precedent for collaborative governance and create new opportunities for future generations.

Looking ahead, Miltenberger advised that the goal is to formally sign the agreement, hold an official museum opening in October, and celebrate the beginning of a new chapter for the community. He expressed confidence that the partnership would inspire support from across the region and demonstrate what can be achieved when governments work together to preserve and celebrate their shared history.



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D/M Keizer noted that he served on the museum board for nearly 20 years and is very familiar with its history. He admitted that when the proposed agreement was first introduced, he was opposed to the idea. However, after several years of discussions and explanations from Mr. Miltenberger, he said he had come to fully support the proposal and now believes it is an excellent initiative.

While acknowledging the long-term vision and broader benefits of the agreement, D/M Keizer said his primary concern is understanding the financial risks and responsibilities for the Town and its taxpayers. He asked for a concise explanation of the Town's potential liabilities under the agreement, including whether the Town would be responsible for maintaining or repairing the museum building, whether those responsibilities would be shared among the partners, and what the agreement would ultimately mean for local taxpayers and their tax bills.

Mr. Miltenberger explained that the Town would be one of four equal partners in the agreement, each holding a 25 percent share in the partnership. He noted that the four governments collectively represent significant resources and capacity, but emphasized that Fort Smith cannot rely on outside governments to secure the community's future. He suggested that the more important question is not the risk of entering into the agreement, but the risk of choosing not to proceed.

He acknowledged that every decision carries some level of risk but argued that the agreement should be viewed as an investment rather than a liability. He said that concerns about risk, competing priorities, or limited staff capacity are understandable from an administrative perspective, but leaders must focus on the community's long-term future. In his view, the greatest risk would be failing to act and missing the opportunity to strengthen the museum, preserve the region's shared history, and create new opportunities for Fort Smith.

Cr. Cox said he shared many of the same initial concerns that had been raised about the proposed agreement. However, after reviewing the draft agreement, he said many of those concerns had been addressed and that he now sees significant potential in the partnership.

Focusing on the practical implications for the Town, Cr. Cox asked whether the agreement would result in any additional administrative responsibilities or burdens for Town staff. He noted that, based on his reading of the agreement, it appeared the Town's role would remain largely the same, with the municipality continuing to support and help facilitate the museum's work rather than taking on substantially new responsibilities.

Mr. Miltenberger used an example from Fort Smith to illustrate the value of ownership and shared responsibility. He recalled that when the GNWT sold a number of deteriorating government houses on Field Street, the properties were purchased almost immediately, and new owners quickly began maintaining and improving them. He said this demonstrated how ownership creates pride, responsibility, and a commitment to invest in the future.

Applying that principle to the museum, Mr. Miltenberger said signing the agreement would create a similar shift in mindset. He explained that Indigenous governments, whose history is represented by the museum, would no longer feel like observers but equal partners with a shared responsibility for its future. He believes this sense of ownership would encourage all four partners to combine their resources, expertise, and capacity to achieve more together than they could individually.

Mr. Miltenberger added that the partnership has the potential to improve efficiency by encouraging collaboration among the four governments rather than having each organization work independently. He suggested establishing this governance model.



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would also position the partners to pursue larger opportunities in the future, including expanding their role in preserving and celebrating the region's history and heritage.

Mr. Miltenberger explained that the proposed coordinator position would work on behalf of the Treaty Leadership Council (TLC) and all four partner governments, rather than representing a single organization. He noted that the coordinator would initially be the only dedicated TLC staff member supporting the partnership.

He further explained that the museum board would remain in place as an independent board, operating as a registered charitable organization at arm's length from the TLC while receiving strategic direction through the partnership. The board would be restructured to reflect the participating governments and their shared priorities, allowing it to continue managing museum operations and pursue funding opportunities from a wide range of external sources.

Mr. Miltenberger added that the reporting structure would involve the museum board chair communicating with the leadership of the TLC, while the coordinator would work directly with managers and staff from the partner organizations. He acknowledged that the partnership would continue to evolve after the agreement is signed as discussions take place on future initiatives and opportunities.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting of Council July 7, 2026

# 26-156	Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk Seconded by: Cr. Bathe
That the minutes of the Regular Meeting of July 7 th , 2026, be adopted as amended.	
PASSED	

Cr. Couvrette noted that the meeting minutes should include a motion indicating that Council returned to the public meeting after the in-camera session. He explained that the current minutes show Council entering an in-camera session and then proceeding directly to a decision, but do not record that Council came out of the closed session. He stated that, in accordance with Council's procedures, decisions cannot be made while in camera, and including the motion would provide clarity and accurately reflect the meeting process.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Cr. Couvrette referred to the earlier discussion regarding battery storage, during which a request was made for a briefing note on the status of the franchise agreement. He recalled that this issue had been raised through motions under previous councils and administrations. He explained that during his earlier term on Council, Corporate Services maintained a motion registry that tracked motions passed by Council and whether they had been acted upon. He said the registry was introduced to ensure accountability and to allow Council to monitor the implementation of its decisions.

Cr. Couvrette advised that he wanted to raise the matter for consideration and informed Council that he intends to bring forward a motion at the next Corporate Services Committee meeting to reintroduce a motion registry.

6. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST



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7. ADMINISTRATION

a. Community Services

i. Director's Report

Director Howes reported that June marked the beginning of the Community Services department's summer event season. The department supported the third annual Fort Smith Pride Festival, thanking everyone in the community who participated. Community Services also helped organize the National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations on June 21, which saw an excellent community turnout. Director Howes highlighted the success of the fish fry and thanked the participating Indigenous governments, as well as the Municipal Services department, for their support in setting up the event. She noted that hosting successful community events requires a collaborative effort and said the positive feedback received from residents was greatly appreciated.

In Child Care Services, Director Howes advised that summer camp programming was finalized in June in preparation for its July launch. She thanked Parks Canada for providing educational presentations for the children and Fair Friends for delivering a well-received animal presentation.

Director Howes also recognized the Economic and Tourism Development Officer for their work coordinating the community's summer festivals and events.

She concluded by noting that on June 29, Fort Smith became the host community for evacuees from Wrigley due to wildfire activity. Community Services has dedicated significant resources to supporting evacuees, with the arena being converted into the community's evacuation centre. She advised that assisting evacuees has become a major focus of the department's operations and concluded that these activities represented the department's primary work throughout June.

Cr. Couvrette expressed his appreciation to Community Services, Administration and all departments involved in supporting the Wrigley evacuation. He commended staff for their efforts in delivering evacuation services and noted that the feedback from evacuees and others had been overwhelmingly positive. He thanked everyone involved for their outstanding work.

ii. Briefing Note: Donation Request – 1st Annual Peyakoshan Youth Sports Camp

26-157

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That Council approve support for the 1st Annual Peyakoshan Youth Sports Camp, including:

- The use of the Town's mobile stage for use on August 15, 2026, subject to
- operational requirements;
- The donation of the Community Recreation Centre gymnasium for the HoopLife Basketball Camp on August 15 and 16, 2026, at the youth sport rental rate;
- Authorization for Administration to coordinate the use of the requested facilities and
- equipment with the event organizers, subject to operational requirements.
- For a total in-kind donation of \$1,731.00

PASSED

Cr. Karasiuk asked for clarification on the proposed location of the mobile stage. He noted that the request indicates it would be placed at the four-way intersection and asked



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whether that means it would be located on the band lot at the corner. Director Howes confirmed.

D/M Keizer sought clarification on who was leading the proposed event. He asked whether Salt River First Nation was the organizing group or whether it was simply providing the use of its land for the stage, and requested confirmation of which organization was taking the lead on the initiative.

Director Howes advised that Magoo Crew Entertainment is organizing the event. She explained that, to her understanding, the group had partnered with or reached out to Salt River First Nation regarding the event, but noted that she could not confirm the specifics of that arrangement.

Cr. Couvrette asked when Council could expect to see a draft donation policy, noting the topic has been discussed for several years and that he would like the opportunity to provide input. He said he supports requests such as this one but believes clearer guidelines are needed to distinguish between support for benevolent organizations and competition-related requests. He suggested that, with a well-defined policy in place, lower-value requests, such as those under \$2,500, could be approved administratively unless there was a specific concern requiring Council's consideration.

SAO Henderson said Administration has not yet had that discussion during his time with the Town but would certainly consider the suggestion and include it in future discussions.

Cr. Heaton asked whether the event was free for all youth participants and sought confirmation that there was no cost to attend. Director Howes confirmed that, to the best of her knowledge, it was a free event.

Cr. Bathe said he supported the event but asked for clarification on who was organizing it. He noted the report did not clearly explain the organization's background or identify who was bringing the group to the community.

D/M Keizer said he supported the concept of the event but would like more background information on the organization before approving a partnership. He noted that Council should understand who the group is, what experience they bring, and what responsibilities they assume, including matters such as insurance coverage. He emphasized that partnering with an organization lends it credibility within the community, and Council should have sufficient information to make an informed decision.

Cr. Tuckey said he believed the organization had previously run a similar camp and noted that this year's event was being promoted as the first annual, suggesting it was growing and expanding to other northern communities. He said the program appears to have been successful and beneficial for northern youth and, with that in mind, expressed his support for the request.

Cr. Bathe said he believed Council was generally supportive of the request but felt additional information should be provided, such as whether the organization is a for-profit or not-for-profit entity. He said this highlighted the need for a donation policy that clearly outlines the information required for Council's consideration. While he supported the request given the timeline, he noted that details about an organization's structure should be included in future requests, as they may influence how donation requests are evaluated.

Cr. Tuckey noted that the organization had previously approached the Town to deliver a similar program and said this request reflected the growth of an initiative that had already proven successful. He agreed that a donation policy would be beneficial but pointed out that Council has approved similar requests in the past without one. He said the camp filled



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an important gap in youth programming in Fort Smith, was well attended, and received positive feedback, adding that he believed supporting it would provide a valuable opportunity for local youth.

D/M Keizer said he did not believe Council was opposed to supporting the request, but rather wanted to ensure it had sufficient information about the organization before providing additional support. He noted that as the organization expands its requests and presence, it is reasonable for the Town to seek more background information, including its structure, mission, and whether it operates as a for-profit or not-for-profit organization. He suggested that future requests include a brief organizational profile so Council can make informed decisions and confidently partner with the group.

Cr. Couvrette expressed support for the request but said his approval would be contingent on the organization providing additional background information by a specified date. He recommended confirming the organization's legal status, whether it is a registered business or not-for-profit, and requested clarification on liability insurance to ensure the Town's risk management requirements are being met.

SAO Henderson cautioned that requiring additional information by August 1 could present timing challenges, as the organization would likely need confirmation before then to proceed with facility bookings and equipment arrangements. He noted that if Council wished to delegate the decision to Administration based on specific criteria, those expectations would need to be clearly outlined. He added that Administration would review the organization's insurance coverage and liability requirements to ensure they meet the Town's existing standards.

iii. Briefing Note: 2026 Salt River First Nation Annual Treaty Land Entitlement Celebration

26-158

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

That Council approve support for the 2026 Salt River First Nation Annual Treaty Land Entitlement Celebration, including:

- Permission for Salt River First Nation to utilize the Centennial Arena grounds on August 1, 2026;
- The use of the Town's mobile stage;
- The use of the Town's bouncy castle, subject to staff availability and operational requirements;
- The use of twenty-four (24) tables and the requested number of chairs;
- Placement of one (1) additional garbage bin at the rear of the arena;
- Town staff assistance to provide access to the arena, washrooms, water fountains,
- and first aid services during the event, subject to operational requirements; and
- Authorization for Administration to coordinate equipment delivery, setup, and removal with Salt River First Nation.
- For a total in-kind contribution of \$2,800.00

PASSED

b. Municipal Services

i. Director's Report

Director Grenier advised residents to use caution around municipal crews, as road work activities such as pothole repairs, sewer flushing, ditch maintenance, and signage installation are taking place throughout the community. He noted that new traffic signs



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related to the Transportation Master Plan are being installed and reminded residents that enforcement of the 40 km/h speed limit, unless otherwise posted, is now in effect.

He also reported that recent storm damage to the landfill's electric bear fence has required significant staff time and resources, contributing to increased bear activity around the community. He encouraged residents to remain bear aware.

In response to a question about grass-cutting resources, Director Grenier explained that three Facility Maintenance staff are dedicated to mowing operations, providing approximately 90 labour hours per week across parks, playgrounds, sports fields, ditches, sidewalks, trails, cemeteries, and other municipal green spaces. Public Works also supports these efforts with specialized equipment when available. He noted that mowing hours may be reduced when staff are reassigned to community events, operational priorities, staff shortages, or other special projects.

D/M Keizer asked for an update on the water meter replacement project and sought confirmation that the project remains underway.

Director Grenier advised that the water meter replacement project has been completed. He noted that a small number of meters have since been identified as having issues, and those are being addressed individually as they arise.

Cr. Karasiuk requested additional details regarding the broken glass incident at the pool, including the source of the glass and any other relevant information about what occurred.

Director Howes explained that staff were notified after a pair of tempered glass swimming goggles shattered at the pool. It is unclear when or how the goggles broke, as they had been hidden behind a bench and were discovered by another patron. She said it is believed the goggles may have been broken earlier and not reported. Approximately half of the broken glass was recovered, with some fragments found on the pool deck and in the water, resulting in the temporary pool closure for safety reasons.

Cr. Karasiuk asked whether signage is posted advising that glass items of any kind are prohibited in the pool area.

Director Howes confirmed that signage prohibiting glass is already in place. She added that staff will be enforcing a stricter no-glass policy going forward, including items such as phones, smartwatches, cologne bottles, and other glass containers. She also noted that some plastic bottles can shatter and that lifeguards will be monitoring prohibited items more closely to help prevent similar incidents.

D/M Keizer asked whether the stricter no-glass policy would also apply to prescription eyeglasses. He noted that some residents have expressed concerns that, without their glasses, they would be unable to properly supervise or see their children while at the pool.

Director Howes advised that prescription swimming goggles designed for pool use are available and do not pose the same shattering risk. She encouraged individuals who require vision correction while swimming to consider using those alternatives.

Cr. Tuckey complimented Administration on the improvements at the cemetery, noting that the site is looking much better following the tree removal. He then asked when work is expected to begin on replacing the cemetery fence.

Director Grenier advised that Administration has been working with TDN on the cemetery fence replacement. He said TDN expects to have the necessary resources available in early August, with work on the main cemetery fence scheduled to begin then and be completed



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by the end of the month. He added that, due to the amount of tree clearing and related work required, the Anglican cemetery fence will likely be addressed next year. He noted that planning has been completed with TDN and Public Works to ensure the project is ready to proceed.

Cr. Benwell raised concerns about garbage collection, noting that with once-weekly pickup, some residents are packing their bins so tightly that the contents do not empty when the automated truck lifts and tips the cart. She asked what happens in those situations when the garbage remains in the bin.

Director Grenier explained that the garbage trucks are equipped with cameras, allowing operators to see whether a bin has emptied. If material remains in the cart, the operator can shake the bin to help dislodge the contents.

ii. Briefing Note: Sidewalks and Concrete Works 2026 Negotiated Scope Update

26-159

Moved by: Cr. Couvrette

Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That Council approve proceeding with the negotiated priority scope submitted by Delta. Contracting in the amount of \$451,987.55 including contingency and GST, and authorize Administration to complete the necessary steps to award and implement the work.

It is further recommended that the Town continue with a phased sidewalk improvement program in future years, bringing forward additional work annually as funding can be allocated through the capital budgeting process.

PASSED

Cr. Couvrette referred to a previous discussion about exploring alternatives to concrete sidewalks, noting the significant increase in concrete costs in recent years. He requested background information on other sidewalk materials, such as asphalt, and suggested comparing costs and suitability. He cited the museum sidewalk project as an example where using asphalt instead of concrete resulted in substantially lower costs.

Director Grenier said a meaningful comparison between concrete and asphalt would be more practical when paving contractors are next available in the community, which is expected to be next year. He noted that Administration could then obtain updated pricing and evaluate potential alternatives. He added that while concrete generally has a longer lifespan, asphalt is easier and less costly to repair. He also noted that considerations such as maintenance requirements, intended use, and the desired appearance of the community should all factor into decisions about future sidewalk materials.

Cr. Tuckey said several residents had asked about the condition of Riverside Road and inquired whether there are plans to grade and water the road.

Director Grenier said Riverside Road is graded when conditions are suitable, typically following rainfall. He noted that the Town does not have the equipment or budget to water the road for dust control, as funding for dust suppression was removed from the budget. He added that he would follow up with the Public Works Supervisor to determine when the next grading of Riverside Road is scheduled.

SAO Henderson provided a brief update on the raw water intake and main lift station project, noting that while some discussion had occurred during an in camera session, the project remains on schedule. He said Administration expects the work to be completed before freeze-up, which remains a key priority. While acknowledging that the project presents challenges, he said Administration is monitoring it closely and is not overly concerned at this time, as it is the Town's largest capital project currently underway.



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Cr. Cox clarified that his question related specifically to the main lift station project, noting that work at the site appeared to have stalled. He asked whether the delay was due to waiting on a particular part or another project-related issue.

Director Grenier explained that progress on the main lift station project is currently dependent on coordination between the contractor and the Power Corporation. He said the next step is for the 600-volt electrical service to be connected. Once that work is complete, the contractor will proceed with commissioning the new pumps and control systems. He noted that the project involves multiple organizations, which has affected the timeline.

iii. Briefing Note: Landfill Shredding 2026

26-160

Moved by: Cr. Cox

Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That Mayor and Council award Tender TFS 26-004, Non-Metal Refuse Processing Services, to Western Waste Solutions Inc. in the amount of \$59,440.50 including GST, with funding to be provided from the Landfill O&M budget.

PASSED

Cr. Couvrette expressed appreciation for the work being done to address issues at the landfill and asked whether Administration has a timeline or plans in place to deal with the large accumulation of scrap metal at the site.

Director Grenier advised that Administration is actively seeking funding opportunities to support scrap metal removal, including exploring participation in territorial metal cleanup initiatives. He said the goal is not only to remove the existing stockpile but also to establish a long-term metal management program to prevent similar accumulations in the future. He added that the current shredding initiative will help determine future processing costs, inform tipping fees, and support the development of a more sustainable waste management system as the Town transitions toward a transfer station model.

Cr. Cox asked whether the shredded landfill material would be used solely as cover material at the landfill.

Director Grenier explained that the intended use of shredded material will depend on its composition. Materials such as concrete and asphalt could be reused for applications like landfill roads and dust suppression, while wood, mattresses, couches, and similar materials would be used as landfill cover. He noted that mixing these materials with soil reduces the amount of dirt required, resulting in cost savings for the community.

8. COUNCIL BUSINESS

a. Bylaws and Policies

i. Briefing Note: Unattended Children and Youth Supervision Policy

Director Howes explained that the proposed policy was developed in response to an increasing number of young children attending the facility without supervision and the need to clearly define staff responsibilities. She said that while children aged nine and under are required to be accompanied by an adult, staff regularly encounter younger children entering the facility unsupervised. The policy is intended to provide clear written direction and authority for staff, including in areas immediately outside the Recreation Centre such as the playground. She noted that the absence of a formal policy has created uncertainty regarding staff responsibilities and emphasized that staff should not be placed in the role of supervising or caring for unattended children while attempting to locate their



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parents or guardians. The policy would provide the guidance needed to support staff in managing these situations consistently.

Cr. Benwell sought clarification on how the policy would be applied, asking whether children who are found at the facility unsupervised would be instructed to leave.

Director Howes explained that the policy includes provisions for extreme weather, allowing children to remain inside the facility when conditions make it unsafe to leave immediately. However, she emphasized that staff cannot assume responsibility for supervising unattended children and, in general, unsupervised children must be directed to leave the facility unless exceptional circumstances apply.

D/M Keizer noted that he understood the challenges staff face with unattended children and agreed that Recreation Centre staff are not responsible for providing childcare. He sought confirmation that the proposed policy establishes a formal process for staff to follow, including attempting to contact a parent or guardian and, if necessary, involving Social Services or the RCMP so that responsibility for the child can be transferred appropriately and staff can return to their regular duties. Director Howes confirmed.

Cr. Heaton acknowledged the concerns raised about unsupervised children but suggested additional discussion may be warranted. She questioned how the policy would apply once children are directed to leave the facility, including whether it extends to areas such as the parking lot or playground on Town property. She also suggested Council consider whether the age threshold should be increased to align with other youth programming in the community. She noted that she was neither in favour nor opposed to the policy at this stage but believed further consideration was needed.

Cr. Tuckey questioned whether the proposed policy was consistent with children's rights legislation, noting that minors are generally afforded the same fundamental rights regardless of age. He expressed concern that the policy is too broad and may be difficult to apply consistently. He also pointed to provisions requiring children under eight to be supervised, observing that existing Town programs, such as daycare and after-school care, do not require parents to remain on site, and suggested the policy should be reviewed to ensure its requirements are practical and consistent across municipal services.

D/M Keizer clarified that children attending Town daycare and after-school programs are supervised by designated staff as part of registered programs, and therefore are not comparable to children who enter the Recreation Centre without supervision. He emphasized that Recreation Centre staff are not responsible for providing childcare to children who are not enrolled in a program and noted that existing childcare programs already operate under established staffing requirements and supervision standards.

Cr. Tuckey referred to Section 5.1 of the proposed policy, noting that it states children eight years of age and under must be under the direct supervision of a responsible caregiver while in Town facilities or participating in Town programs. He sought clarification on how this provision would apply in practice.

D/M Keizer clarified that children enrolled in Town daycare or after-school programs are under the supervision of designated staff. He emphasized that the policy is intended to address children who attend the Recreation Centre without being enrolled in a program or accompanied by a responsible caregiver.

SAO Henderson clarified that the policy is an operational policy rather than a governance policy, which is why it was presented for information purposes. He explained that Council is invited to provide feedback and discuss any concerns, but operational policies provide



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direction to staff and fall under the authority of the SAO. While Council's input is welcomed, responsibility for the policy rests with the SAO.

D/M Keizer asked that the policy be shared with the Leadership Council for input, recognizing the diverse cultural backgrounds of children in the community, including First Nations, Métis, and non-Indigenous families. He suggested exploring whether there are more culturally appropriate approaches to supporting unattended children before involving the RCMP or social services, such as contacting the appropriate Indigenous government or community organization where appropriate. He emphasized the importance of considering culturally respectful alternatives before finalizing the policy.

Cr. Bathe asked why the policy sets the age at eight, noting that other facilities, such as the Yellowknife pool, allow children who have passed a swim test to be unsupervised. Administration explained that the age of eight aligns with guidance from the Lifesaving Society and is a commonly recognized national standard for aquatic supervision.

Director Howes explained that while some facilities allow seven-year-olds to be unsupervised after passing a swim test, that decision is made by the individual pool operator. At this time, the Town does not have the capacity to administer swim tests, although it may be explored in the future as lifeguards complete their certifications. She noted that age eight is a widely accepted standard in aquatic facilities, based on Lifesaving Society guidance, and was applied consistently throughout the policy to avoid having different age requirements for different areas of the facility.

Cr. Heaton noted that after-school programs are often full, leaving many children without access to supervised care. She expressed the view that the Recreation Centre should remain a safe place for youth, particularly for families where both parents work, and child care is limited or unaffordable. She also questioned why a formal policy is needed, observing that staff have previously addressed behavioural issues by restricting access when necessary. Finally, she asked whether administration tracks incidents involving unsupervised children, including how often staff have had to contact parents, guardians, or social services.

Director Howes confirmed that incidents involving unsupervised children are documented, particularly when behaviour escalates. She explained that the policy was prompted by recurring situations where unattended children disrupted other patrons, such as interfering with organized activities, leaving staff without clear authority to intervene beyond enforcing facility rules. She noted that staff regularly encounter underage children in the Recreation Centre, library, and common areas, with a few frequent repeat cases. While staff work hard to provide a safe environment, supervising unattended children takes them away from their primary responsibilities and creates challenges in safely operating the facility.

Cr. Heaton asked how the process currently works when an unattended child remains at the Recreation Centre. She questioned whether staff supervise the child until a parent or guardian arrives and then discuss the situation with them. She also noted that older youth have previously been banned from the facility for behavioural issues and asked why a similar approach is not used for younger children instead of introducing the new policy.

Director Howes explained that the Town already has a behaviour and banning policy, approved by Council more than 10 years ago, which outlines a progressive process of warnings and escalating consequences before anyone is banned from the facility. She emphasized that children are not banned without repeated behavioural issues.

She noted that staff often go well beyond their normal duties to care for unattended children, keeping them occupied and safe while attempting to contact parents or guardians. In some cases, staff have no reliable contact information, making it difficult to



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reach a caregiver. When children refuse to leave or remain in the facility, staff continue to supervise them, but this places a significant strain on their ability to operate the facility, conduct routine checks, and serve patrons. She said the proposed policy is intended to provide staff with clearer direction and support in managing these situations.

D/M Keizer acknowledged the challenges staff are facing, noting that front desk employees are not trained child care workers and should not be expected to perform the role of daycare staff. He recognized the distinction between children enrolled in supervised programs and those who arrive without supervision, emphasizing that the Recreation Centre is not intended to provide informal child care. While he felt the number of incidents may not be large, he agreed they are significant enough to create stress for staff. Drawing on similar experiences from his time at the park visitor centre, he said he understood the difficulty of finding an effective solution and supported moving forward with the proposed policy to see how it works.

- b. Appointments
- c. Mayor and Council Round Table
 - i. Cr. Heaton shared that she recently spoke with Prescott and Wiltzen about supporting preparations for the rescheduled Whoop and Cream Festival and expressed hope that she will be able to return home as soon as possible to assist.
 - ii. Cr. Karasiuk did not have anything to add.
 - iii. Cr. Bathe thanked everyone who has supported evacuees from Wrigley, commending Town staff for providing a high level of service during a difficult time. He noted that, after speaking with evacuees and observing the increased use of the Recreation Centre, it was clear the community's efforts have made a positive difference for families displaced by the wildfire.
 - iv. D/M Keizer encouraged Council and administration to review his detailed report from the recent FCM conference, noting it includes useful information, resources, and links to trade show exhibitors. He also advised that planning is underway for the NWT Association of Communities AGM in Inuvik next February and that accommodations should be booked early due to limited availability. Finally, he shared a positive story about meeting a Wrigley evacuee purchasing supplies to repair her home upon returning, saying her optimism reflected the resilience of the community and expressing hope that residents will be able to return home soon.
 - v. Mayor Fergusson – excused
 - vi. Cr. Tuckey thanked D/M Keizer for his FCM conference report, noting that although it was lengthy, he found it informative and interesting
 - vii. Cr. Cox noted that he had been out of town for the past week but was pleased to see work progressing at the cemetery and ongoing grass cutting throughout the community. He also welcomed the release of the FireSmart tenders and said it was encouraging to see those projects moving forward.



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- viii. Cr. Couvrette did not have anything to add.
- ix. Cr. Benwell congratulated TDN on a successful Treaty Day celebration, praising the event, food, and activities. She also complimented the recent exterior improvements to Town Hall, saying she was very pleased with its new appearance. Finally, she reminded residents to be bear aware, encouraging them to secure attractants such as garbage, stay alert while walking or biking, and keep a close watch on children and pets due to increased bear activity in the community.

9. PROCLAMATIONS

10. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Regular Meeting of Council (Protective & Corporate)	August 11 th , 2026, @ 7 pm to be chaired by Cr. Tuckey
Regular Meeting of Council (Community & Municipal)	August 25 th , 2026, @ 7 pm to be chaired by Mayor Fergusson

11. EXCUSING OF COUNCILLORS

26-161 **Moved by: Cr. Cox**
 Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That Mayor Fergusson be excused from the regular meeting of Council on July 21st, 2026.

PASSED

12. IN-CAMERA

13. QUESTION PERIOD

14. ADJOURNMENT

26-162 **Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk**
 Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That the meeting be adjourned at 8:38 pm.

PASSED

Minutes adopted this 11th day of August 2026.

Dana Fergusson
Mayor

Certified Correct by David Henderson
Senior Administrative Officer

