Council of the Town of Fort Smith
November 3, 2026 @ 7:00 PM

MINUTES

The Regular meeting of Council was held on
Tuesday, November 3, @ 7 pm within the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present:	Mayor Fergusson, D/M Keizer, Cr. Benwell, Cr. Heaton, Cr. Karasiuk, Cr. Tuckey, and Cr. Couvrette
Regrets:	Cr. Bathe and Cr. Cox
Staff Present:	Adam McNab, Director of Protective Services Raveena Brown, Executive Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

a. Mayor Fergusson confirms quorum, reads the Acknowledgment of First Nations. Mayor Fergusson hands the chair to Cr. Benwell

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

# 26-208	**Moved by: Mayor Fergusson** **Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette**

That the agenda be adopted as amended to add a briefing note: Remembrance Day Procession Request under 7 Administration (c).

PASSED

3. DELEGATIONS

a. Monthly Policing Report – RCMP

The RCMP reported a significant decrease in call volume over the past month, with approximately 50 fewer calls compared to September. While the reason for the reduction remains unclear, increased police presence and additional weekend shifts may be contributing factors. Staffing levels remain stable, with one member transferring out and a replacement expected to arrive in January.

The RCMP responded to five mental health-related incidents requiring officers to remain with individuals at the Health Centre. Discussions with Health Centre staff are ongoing regarding the status of the secure room, which is expected to reduce the need for officers to remain on-site for extended periods. It was noted that officers may currently be required to stay for several hours until a physician determines the individual no longer poses a risk or until a medical evacuation can be completed.

In response to Council's questions regarding increased drug trafficking statistics, the RCMP advised that information and tips from the community continue to be received; however, gathering sufficient evidence to support enforcement action remains challenging. The RCMP also expressed optimism regarding the proposed Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation, which could provide additional enforcement tools once enacted and implemented.

The RCMP confirmed that increased roadside enforcement initiatives have continued, with no impaired driving failures recorded during recent weekend check stops. Council acknowledged the positive results, commended the RCMP for its increased visibility in the community, and noted the reported absence of significant incidents over Halloween. Appreciation was also expressed to residents for their responsible driving and contribution to community safety.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting of Council October 20, 2026

# 26-209	Moved by: Cr. Couvrette Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey
That the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 20th, 2026, be adopted as presented.	
	PASSED

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

- None reported

6. DECLARATION OF FINANCIAL INTEREST

- None reported

7. ADMINISTRATION

a. Protective Services

i. Director's Report

Director McNab introduced Jami Short as the new Deputy Fire Chief, noting that he will also serve as Acting Director during his absence. He reported that community partner feedback on the Animal Control Bylaw has been consolidated, with a revised draft to be forwarded to the Bylaw Review Committee for consideration. Protective Services assumed responsibility for operating the animal shelter effective November 1, 2026, pending budget discussions

and Council's direction regarding future operations. Appreciation was expressed to community volunteers assisting with the transition. The shelter currently has

no animals in its care, and regular bylaw enforcement services will continue. Director McNab also advised that Bylaw Officer Dane Wright is on paternity leave and that recruitment is underway for a temporary replacement, with a possible reduction in proactive enforcement during his absence.

Director McNab highlighted a significant decrease in EMS calls during October, alongside a slight increase in fire responses. He also outlined changes to departmental reporting, including more concise business licensing and development permit statistics, three-year comparisons, and expanded occupational health and safety reporting to provide Council with clearer year-over-year trends. Capital project updates remain largely unchanged from the previous month.

During discussions, Council raised concerns regarding preliminary weather forecasts suggesting above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation, potentially increasing wildfire risks for the 2027 season. The importance of early emergency preparedness and distributing public information packages by April 2027 was emphasized. In response to questions regarding volunteer recruitment, Director McNab advised that approximately five positions were available, with two applicants progressing through the recruitment process. Despite the remaining vacancies, overall staffing levels remain adequate, and another recruitment campaign is anticipated in the spring.

Director McNab also provided an update on the department's 18-day wildfire deployment, noting that the crew received positive feedback for its contributions. An equipment inventory has been completed, and reimbursement for missing or damaged equipment is anticipated through the Department of Environment and Climate Change (ECC). The

deployment was considered successful and generated revenue exceeding associated costs, resulting in a positive financial outcome for the Town.

ii. Briefing Note: Housing NWT – Proposed Duplex Developments

# 26-210	Moved by: Mayor Fergusson Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette
That Council review the five proposed Housing NWT duplex developments and approve or reject the proposed building designs based on their aesthetic appearance and compatibility with the surrounding residential neighbourhood.	
	PASSED

D/M Keizer presented concerns submitted by Cr. Cox regarding the proposed trailer developments. Cr. Cox raised concerns about the size of the units, approximately

14 by 75 feet, and the potential for minimal side-yard setbacks, restricted access to rear yards, and the placement of propane tanks near the buildings. He also questioned whether the current Zoning Bylaw adequately addresses these concerns, particularly regarding setbacks and property access. Additional concerns were noted regarding fire safety, specifically the potential accumulation of combustible materials beneath the units if gaps remain between the skirting and the ground. D/M Keizer noted that some of these concerns were not evident in the submitted proposal and that Cr. Cox had provided photographs for Council's reference. He clarified that he had no personal objections to the proposed developments but wished to ensure Cr. Cox's concerns were formally recorded in his absence.

b. Corporate Services

i. Accounts Paid List

ii. Correspondence

c. Briefing Note: Remembrance Day Procession Request

# 26-211	Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey
That Council approve the temporary road closure on November 11, 2026, between approximately 11:15 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., to accommodate the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 239 Remembrance Day Parade, along the designated route from the Salt River First Nation Office to King Street, onto McDougal Road, through the intersection of McDougal Road and Breynat Street, and north along Breynat Street to the Royal Canadian Legion.	
	PASSED

8. COUNCIL BUSINESS

a. Bylaws and Policies

i. 2nd Reading of Bylaw 1084 Land Disposal Bylaw

# 26-212	Moved by: Cr. Couvrette Seconded by: Mayor Fergusson
That Bylaw No. 1084, the Land Disposal Bylaw of 22 Whitford Road, be given 2nd reading by title only.	
	PASSED

ii. 3rd Reading of Bylaw 1084 Land Disposal Bylaw

# 26-213	**Moved by: Cr. Couvrette** **Seconded by: Mayor Fergusson**
That Bylaw No. 1084, the Land Disposal Bylaw of 22 Whitford Road, be given 3rd and final reading by title only.	
	PASSED

b. Appointments

c. Mayor and Council Round Table

i. Cr. Heaton reported attending the ACT Human Trafficking Training and Open House, highlighting concerns regarding the vulnerability of remote communities to human trafficking. She advised that efforts are underway to collaborate with the organization to provide public education and awareness materials to help residents recognize warning signs and identify vulnerable individuals. She also provided an update on the Thrift Store and Food Bank, noting continued high demand for services and the ongoing need for volunteers. Residents were reminded to ensure donated clothing is washed and folded, respect donation restrictions due to limited storage space, and recognize the important contributions of volunteers. Cr. Heaton emphasized that food insecurity affects individuals across all sectors of the community and encouraged residents to support upcoming donation initiatives, particularly during the holiday season.

ii. Cr. Karasiuk cautioned residents about slippery road conditions resulting from daytime thawing and overnight freezing and acknowledged Town staff for their proactive sanding efforts. He advised that the monthly seniors' meeting has been rescheduled to Saturday at 1:30 p.m. in the Seniors' Room at the Recreation Centre due to a scheduling conflict. Cr. Karasiuk also expressed concerns regarding the use of in-camera sessions, encouraging Council and Administration to carefully consider which matters require confidential discussion to ensure transparency and accountability to the community.

iii. D/M Keizer reported on his experience participating in Council meetings remotely while travelling, noting significant improvements in audio quality and expressing appreciation to staff for their efforts. He encouraged Council members to remain attentive to those attending virtually to ensure they have opportunities to participate in discussions and motions. He also commended the Town's recent public communication regarding the animal shelter transition, noting that the information was clear and well presented. Additionally, he acknowledged the Mayor's recent video regarding Aurora College, expressing appreciation for her efforts in communicating important community matters.

iv. Mayor Fergusson provided an update on recent community engagement initiatives, including the October 26th Word on the Street session, which provided an opportunity to gather feedback from residents. She noted plans to continue these sessions in November and adjust scheduling to encourage greater participation. She also reported that the newly amalgamated Advisory Board held its first meeting with quorum and identified approximately four key priorities. Administration will

gather additional information for further Board consideration and potential community engagement.

Mayor Fergusson also attended the recent Thebacha Leadership Council (TLC) All Leaders meeting, where discussions focused on community wellness, addressing the impacts of illicit drugs, and advancing plans for a community wellness summit. She emphasized the importance of collaborating with local organizations, including Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre, to strengthen outreach services and explore additional funding and resources. Discussions also included concerns regarding treated water releases, with the MLA reaffirming his opposition to any release without sufficient scientific evidence demonstrating its safety and emphasizing the importance of Indigenous consultation.

Mayor Fergusson highlighted the Town's ongoing public engagement regarding the animal shelter, reporting that 122 responses had been received through the online survey. She encouraged further participation to help inform Council's future decisions regarding shelter operations. She also advised that additional informational videos addressing community matters would be released in the coming weeks.

v. Cr. Tuckey expressed appreciation to the community of Fort Smith for a safe and enjoyable Halloween, noting that the evening was noticeably quieter than in previous years. He also acknowledged the generosity of residents who contributed to the festivities by providing food and creating a welcoming atmosphere for the community.

vi. Cr. Couvrette encouraged residents to take a moment on November 11 at 11:00 a.m. to honour and remember those who have served our country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the freedoms we enjoy today.

vii. Cr. Benwell expressed appreciation to Salt River First Nation and the Laviolette families for organizing Halloween haunted houses, noting the enjoyment they brought to local children and the generous prizes provided. He also congratulated the apprentices who received awards in recognition of Skills Awareness Week and reminded residents to exercise caution and stay safe.

9. PROCLAMATIONS

- None Reported

10. IN CAMERA

- n/a

11. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Regular Meeting of Council (Community & Municipal)	November 17th, 2026, @7 pm, chaired by Mayor Fergusson
Regular Meeting of Council (Protective & Corporate)	December 1st, 2026, @ 7 pm, chaired by Cr. Couvrette

12. EXCUSING OF COUNCILLORS

 # 26-214 **Moved by: Mayor Fergusson**
Seconded by: D/M Keizer

That Cr. Bathe and Cr. Cox be excused from the regular meeting of Council on November 3, 2026.

PASSED

13. QUESTION PERIOD

14. ADJOURNMENT

 # 26-215 **Moved by: Cr. Karasiuk**
Seconded by: Cr. Tuckey

That the meeting be adjourned at 7:51 pm.

PASSED

Minutes adopted this 17th day of November 2026.

Dana Fergusson
Mayor

Certified Correct by David Henderson
Senior Administrative Officer

SEAL