

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Monday, November 20, 2023 @ 6:00 PM
In the City Hall Council Chambers & Via Video-Conference
4850 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC

Present: Mayor S. Minions
Councillor D. Dame
Councillor J. Douglas
Councillor C. Mealey
Councillor C. Solda

Absent: Councillor T. Patola
Councillor D. Haggard

Staff: M. Fox, Chief Administrative Officer
W. Thorpe, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture
M. Owens, Fire Chief
J. Pelech, Manager of Information Technology
S. Darling, Deputy Director of Corporate Services/Recording Secretary

Gallery: 8

A. CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the agenda be amended to include items under 'New Business' H.4 | Roads and Streets, H.5 | Vacant Buildings and H.6 | Aquatic Centre Operations and Staffing. The agenda was then approved, as amended.

CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the minutes of the meeting held at 6:00 pm on October 16, 2023, be adopted, as presented.

CARRIED

C. PUBLIC INPUT PERIOD

N. Anderson, M. Fraser and Charlane

Each individually spoke against Council direction given at the October 23rd Regular meeting that the Action4Canada organization event proposed for October, not be permitted to occur in City facilities and that staff prepare a report outlining actions to keep City facilities free of hate and inclusive of all groups.

D. DELEGATIONS

1. Alberni Valley Community Foundation | Vital Signs Report

President, Hugh Grist and Director, Ken Watson presented the 2023 Vital Signs Report. For more information and to view the report, visit www.communityfoundations.ca

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

F. STAFF REPORTS

G. CORRESPONDENCE

H. NEW BUSINESS

1. Ministry of Housing | Point in Time Homeless Count

The Committee received correspondence from the Ministry of Housing providing final results from the Point in Time homeless count conducted in Port Alberni on May 2, 2023 initially received by Council at the October 10th Regular meeting and requested to bring forward to a Committee of the Whole for further discussion.

Members of the Committee commented/questioned as follows [*responses, if provided, are reflected below*]:

- What is the City doing to support a reduction in the number of unhoused individuals in the community?
The provincial government is primarily responsible for housing however, the City endeavours to support housing initiatives wherever possible through the provision of land or services such as the two most recent housing initiatives, the Wālyaqit - Tiny Home Village on 4th Avenue housing the communities most vulnerable population and the BC Housing and Sage Haven Society second stage housing on Vimy Street to help transition women and families to independent living. The City has contributed to six [6] different housing initiatives during 2023. There is still much to do, particularly related to filling the gap on youth housing.
- The Point in Time Homeless Count is one tool that provides information into a very complex issue that requires all levels of government in finding solutions. Progress based on previous Council decisions has proven successful and continues to support a reduction in the number of unhoused in the community.

2. Public Use of Municipal Venues

MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend Council direct staff to draft an administrative policy regarding appropriate conduct at municipal venues that includes the following language:

- *We understand that this venue includes children, youth, adults and seniors of all races, all religions, all cultures, all abilities, all economic levels, all gender identities and all sexual orientations, and we will conduct ourselves in a manner that is respectful of this diverse community.*
- *We will comply with all applicable City of Port Alberni bylaws and federal and provincial legislation, including the British Columbia Human Rights Code and Canadian Human Rights Act, which prohibit discriminatory conduct including conduct that would expose persons or groups to hatred or contempt.*
- *We understand that City staff and their representatives have the authority to ask an individual or group to leave a City-owned or City-managed venue when that person or group is displaying inappropriate, disruptive, or aggressive behavior that threatens the security and safety of staff, guests, residents, themselves and/or property. Depending on the seriousness of the circumstances and behaviour, the City representative may choose to suspend, ban, or issue a Trespass Notice to the corresponding individual or group.*

CARRIED

Members of the Committee commented/questioned as follows *[responses, if provided, are reflected below]*:

- Have other communities created policies of this nature?
Yes, the staff report outlines a number of different community policies including excerpts that may be applicable in the drafting of a policy for the City of Port Alberni.
- Is the intent of the policy to vet organizations ahead of time or to be reactive for when an issue may arise?
The option recommended by staff is intended to be preventative in nature.
- The recommended option aligns with what is already the current City process.
This would serve to formalize that process.
- Would the policy cover all City facilities both interior and exterior?
The policy would cover all City owned municipal facilities including parks, etc. This would not prohibit individuals' rights to a peaceful protest.

3. **Firefighter Resource Planning and Succession**

MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend Council authorize early budget approval in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan in the amount of \$37,854 [Line 24421] to hire a probationary firefighter for a period of three months to facilitate orientation and training.

CARRIED

Members of the Committee commented/questioned as follows *[responses, if provided, are reflected below]*:

- Does the Fire Department have a current vacancy?
No, this is an additional firefighter hired to facilitate orientation and training in support of firefighter resource and succession planning.
- What would happen with the position following the three (3) month term?
The firefighter will act as a 'swing' firefighter during the three (3) month term, followed by a period of recall with potential to move in to a vacancy when it occurs.
- Is the Fire Department able to accommodate all genders?
Yes, it is presently able to adequately accommodate different genders with plans for future improvements.

4. **Road and Streets**

The Chief Administrative Officer provided an update on the maintenance and repair of streets and roads as it pertains to potholes, noting that staff determine areas for repair based on severity. Public reports are always investigated. Please continue to report potholes or other issues [Public Works 250.720.2840 cityservice@portalberni.ca]. Evaluations for the 5-10-year capital plan are underway which will be supported through the establishment of a Master Plan to inform future decisions.

5. **Vacant Buildings**

The Chief Administrative Officer provided an update in relation to the management of vacant buildings and the vacant building bylaw, noting that staff are presently researching neighbouring communities in B.C. to identify solutions and best practices. A report will be brought forward for Council consideration and will include enforcement options as well as incentives to gain compliance. Council requested that information related to building operations that are non-compliant with the Zoning Bylaw also be included.

6. **Echo Aquatic Centre Operations and Staffing**

The Chief Administrative Officer provided an update regarding Echo Aquatic Centre operations and staffing, noting that staff are working to update the Q&A on the www.playinpa.ca website. A report will be brought to the January Committee of the Whole providing additional information related to operations, potential staffing solutions and timelines.

I. **QUESTION PERIOD**

M. Fraser

Questioned Council direction of October 23rd related to not permitting the Action4Canada event in City facilities and provided background information related to Action4Canada.

N. Anderson

Inquired about the question period process, the building permit process at 3123 3rd Avenue and requested clarity on the proposed public use of municipal venues policy.

Charlane

Requested that Council acknowledge that an error was made stemming from the October 23rd Regular meeting direction to not permit Action4Canada's planned event in City facilities and that Council extend an apology to Action4Canada.

J. **ADJOURNMENT**

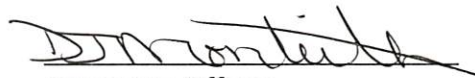
MOVED and SECONDED, THAT the meeting adjourn at 7:26 pm.

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT



Mayor



Corporate Officer