

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
SHAW AUDITORIUM, VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CENTRE,
80 COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, BC
WEDNESDAY, 2020-APR-01, AT 12:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor L. Krog, Chair
Councillor S. D. Armstrong
Councillor D. Bonner
Councillor T. Brown
Councillor B. Geselbracht
Councillor E. Hemmens
Councillor Z. Maartman
Councillor I. W. Thorpe
Councillor J. Turley (joined by teleconference 11:55 a.m.)

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer
R. Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works (vacated 4:05 p.m.)
S. Legin, General Manager, Corporate Services (vacated 3:09 p.m.)
J. Van Horne, Director, Human Resources
Supt. C. Miller, OIC, Nanaimo Detachment RCMP
K. Fry, Fire Chief (vacated 3:58 p.m.)
L. Mercer, Director, Finance (vacated 3:14 p.m.)
B. Corsan, Director, Community Development
D. LaBerge, Manager, Bylaw Services
L. Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning (arrived 3:09 p.m.)
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
K. Gerard, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE SPECIAL MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Council Meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

2. PROCEDURAL MOTION:

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be closed to the public in order to deal with agenda items under the *Community Charter*:

Section 90(1) A part of a Council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to or is one or more of the following:

- (c) labour relations or other employee relations; and,
- (n) the consideration of whether a Council meeting should be closed under a provision of this subsection or subsection (2).

The motion carried unanimously.

Council moved “In Camera” at 12:05 p.m.
Council recessed the Special “In Camera” meeting at 12:55 p.m.

Council recessed the Special Open Council meeting at 12:55 p.m.
Council reconvened the Special Open Meeting 1:04 p.m. in the Shaw Auditorium.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda, be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. MAYOR’S REPORT

Mayor Krog spoke regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and stated:

- All City facilities, playgrounds and outdoor sport courts have been closed and requested that the public abide by these orders for health and safety purposes
- The City’s recreation coordinators have been posting isolation recreation tips daily on the Nanaimo Parks and Rec Instagram account
- Please ensure you are following social distancing guidelines especially at Westwood Lake Park and Blueback Stairs
- Requested that the public do their part in keeping City services running by practising safe waste and recycling disposal and cleaning all recycling containers
- The following items should be securely bagged and thrown in the garbage:
 - Cleaning cloths and disposable wipes
 - Used Kleenexes
 - Personal hygiene products
 - Face masks and gloves
 - Any similar items
- Please do not flush wipes down the toilet
- Thanked the community for the outpouring of community spirit during the difficult time including hearts in windows and nightly cheers of support for health care workers at 7 p.m.
- Encouraged all residences, businesses and the community to follow the guidelines by the Provincial Health Authority
- A special thank you to all who provide health and essential services such as child care

The Special Council Meeting recessed at 1:13 p.m.
The Special Council Meeting reconvened at 1:43 p.m.

5. REPORTS:

(a) COVID-19 Response – Operations Updates

Each member of the City of Nanaimo Senior Leadership Team provided Council with an update regarding steps implemented to reduce the spread of COVID 19 and to protect Staff and the Public, which included the following information:

1. Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer:

- On March 11th a emergency response meeting was called and Staff have been updating processes as changes are reported from the Province of BC and the Federal government
- Taking steps to ensure Staff are protected and remain healthy and encouraging Staff who can work from home to do so
- Ensuring that the City of Nanaimo (CoN) is considering long-term initiatives to maintain service levels and fiscal prudence
- Non-essential expenditures have been suspended, staffing vacancies are being filled on a case by case basis and the 2020 Business Plan and Capital Project Plans have been suspended

2. Supt. C. Miller, OIC, RCMP, Nanaimo Detachment:

- Maintaining 24 hour per day, seven days a week police operations
- Provided Council with statistics showing a decrease in shoplifting and drug use and an increase in public intoxication and break and enters
- Initiated new procedures regarding cleaning of cells, custodial staff being borrowed from other departments, new disposal suits when dealing with an expected death to protect officers and public service messages to the community
- Greatest challenge is ensuring the needs of the community are met while keeping officers and members safe and healthy

3. Chief Karen Fry, Nanaimo Fire Rescue Department:

- Fire Rescue is operating 24 hours per day, 7 days a week and are following the business continuity plan
- Enacted an operation centre to manage daily operations and daily directives from the Province of BC and Federal government
- Effective today, 2020-APR-01, Fire Rescue has initiated a reduction in medical responses and will respond to most critical and/or direct threat to life calls only
- A ban has been placed on burning for all residences in Nanaimo and Protection Island
- The front counter at Fire Headquarters is closed but switchboard is operating 24 hours per day, 7 days per week
- Fire Rescue Staff are installing smoke alarms as this is deemed an essential service, limited in person training to essential training only and initiated an online training model

4. Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works:

- Ensuring that critical services are operating including drinking water, sanitary sewer, sanitation, garbage and recycling, storm drain and Public Works dispatch
- Implemented measures to ensure social distancing guidelines are being followed with some Staff working from home
- Focusing on critical projects while other projects have been suspended
- Greatest challenge is monitoring and supporting Staff who are in the public each day

5. Richard Harding, General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture:

- All Parks and Recreation facilities were closed on March 16th and all rentals, events, programs have been cancelled
- Suggestions for at home recreational activities have been posted online
- Some essential services are still taking place including the Blood Donor Clinic from March 31st to April 2nd, 2020
- Working with child care providers to offer child care for essential service workers including the Boys and Girls Club and Beban House which is currently open 2 days per week
- Some large parks and trails are open such as Westwood Lake, with new signage to ensure users are following social distancing guidelines

6. Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services:

- The Service and Resource Centre is closed but building and permit Staff are available by phone or online
- Building applications are being accepted and the CoN has digital online plan checking capabilities
- Staff are able to meet with developers/applicants using online, virtual meeting software
- Small projects are proceeding as planned while some larger projects have been suspended by developers
- Construction value to date is \$35 million with \$28 million in projects in the approval process
- Looking into options for Public Hearings and will be bringing these options forward to Council at a future meeting

7. Dave Laberge, Manager, Bylaw Services:

- Bylaw Services is reporting health contraventions to the Vancouver Island Health Officer
- Priorities include enforcing Provincial Health Orders, assisting health emergencies and working closely with the RCMP
- Bylaw Services clerks are working from home and Officers are exercising caution; not entering private property or residences unless it is a matter of personal safety
- Homeless population are gathering at closed facilities and parkades

- Greatest challenge includes maintaining a high level of service and being out in public and dealing with the public in these stressful times

8. Shelley Legin, General Manager, Corporate Services

- Activated the Emergency Command Centre who's primary role is to access essential services, ensuring Staff levels remain consistent, following daily changes in guideline from the Provincial Health Authority, expense tracking for recovery through emergency management BC and implementing a teleconference, 3 days per week, with key stakeholders and the Vancouver Island Health Officer
- Some Information Technology (IT) Staff are working from home and IT Staff have installed and implemented new application and software to ensure Staff can work from home, added additional hardware and licenses and initiated a virtual switchboard
- Supporting RCMP services and have increased casual shifts for custodial services to the RCMP building and cell block
- Greatest challenge is the uncertainty of the effects of COVID-19 and making good decisions in a long-term framework

9. John Van Horne, Director, Human Resources:

- Some Staff are working from home and the Human Resources (HR) department is conducting a Staff video meeting every other day
- Safety concerns are being brought forward by Staff daily and HR is developing new protocols to address these concerns, in accordance with provincial health guidelines
- Initiated an increase in respirator fit testing
- Providing assistance to other departments and collaborating with union regarding staggering shifts and changing schedules so social distancing guidelines can be met
- Biggest challenge is problem solving to develop consistent answers to unusual questions from staff regarding unusual work situations

10. Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services:

- Provided Council with an update regarding Communications including frequency of news releases, video messaging from the Mayor, press conferences and sharing of information on all CoN media sources including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- Record number of visits since March on our website, Facebook page, Twitter account and Instagram
- Communications will continue to release up-to-date news releases, messages from the Mayor and information on our media platforms
- The upcoming My Nanaimo newsletter will be a special edition relating to COVID-19 and the community

11. Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services:

- Legislative Services looks after Freedom of Information requests and that work is legislated and therefore must continue

- There have been exceptions and extensions provided for by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of BC for requests received after March 1st
- Currently at 84 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy requests putting us on course for over 330 requests this year
- Liability claims and insurance work continues
- Meeting support for council continues, however the postponement of committees and task forces has helped with the additional pressures of the pandemic and crisis management.
- Records management work must continue and keeping accurate corporate records, pursuant to the *Community Charter* is required.
- Reviewed changes to meetings because of the Minister Order #M082, which covers Bylaw Enforcement Officer (COVID-19)
- Reviewed Ministerial Order #M083 which outlines how meetings can be conducted during this pandemic and guidelines came out earlier this week
- Options for Council to consider include:
 - Regularly scheduled meetings take place at the Shaw Auditorium
 - Council suspend delegations not related to matters on the agenda but continue delegations speaking to a specific matter on the agenda
 - Special Council meetings could be held in the Service Resource Centre Boardroom with Council attending virtually and the public would not be allowed to attend in person

L. Bhopalsingh entered the Shaw Auditorium at 3:09 p.m.

(b) COVID-19 Response – Homeless/Vulnerable Population

Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services, provided Council with an update regarding the Homeless/Vulnerable Population during the COVID-19 pandemic, which included the following information:

- The Province of BC has been consistent and clear that the responsibility for this population under Health and Housing lies with the Province of BC
- Ministerial Order #084 contains a number of items regarding statements on vulnerable population including that local governments should remove any regulatory barriers that could assist in finding and keeping shelters open to the homeless population

L. Mercer and S. Legin vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 3:14 p.m.

- BC Housing has asked some communities including Nanaimo, to provide a list of buildings and/or locations that could be used for temporary housing or isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic including hotels, motels and campgrounds
- There has been a reduction of service levels, some temporary shelters are closed and the only shower program operating is the City of Nanaimo program

- The City will continue to provide the shower program, washrooms are operating in parks downtown and Staff are looking at additional and locations where homeless can isolate, get clean and use the washroom
- Staff moving forward with opening of the washroom at Diana Krall plaza 24 hours per day
- Staff are proposing three additional portable washrooms being installed in the downtown area with hand washing stations at each

It was moved and seconded that council:

- Endorse the plan to provide additional temporary washrooms and hand sanitizing facilities in the downtown
- Exempt the health and housing task force from the current suspension of committees in order to assist in the facilitation of planning for the vulnerable populations during the pandemic, and to make further recommendations to council as necessary.

The motion carried unanimously.

It was moved and seconded that the City of Nanaimo coordinate with the Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition, BC Housing and Island Health to sanction and resource a coordinated emergency response for individuals experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo.

The motion carried.

Opposed: Mayor Krog, Councillors Armstrong, Thorpe and Turley

K. Fry vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 3:58 p.m.

B. Sims vacated the Shaw Auditorium at 4:05 p.m.

It was moved and seconded that Council direct the Health and Housing Task Force to develop a food security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent meals for individuals experiencing homelessness and the vulnerable population.

The motion carried.

Opposed: Councillors Armstrong, Thorpe and Turley

It was moved and seconded that the following motions be deferred to the 2020-APR-06, Regular Council Meeting:

“That the City of Nanaimo send updates two times each week to the Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition regarding the latest developments around solutions and ask Island Health and BC Housing to participate in those updates via the City of Nanaimo.”

“That correspondence be sent to the Hon. Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, reiterating the City of Nanaimo’s willingness to be a test site for innovative approaches to addressing mental health and addiction challenges.”

The motion carried.

Opposed: Councillor Geselbracht

The Special Council meeting recessed at 4:22 p.m.

The Special Council meeting reconvened at 4:25 p.m.

6. PROCEDURAL MOTION:

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be closed to the public in order to deal with agenda items under the *Community Charter*:

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The motion carried unanimously.

The Special “In Camera” meeting reconvened at 5:04 p.m.
Council moved out of “In Camera” at 5:05 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:05 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

C H A I R

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER