

MINUTES

SPECIAL MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE MEETING
BOARDROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE,
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
FRIDAY, 2020-JUL-17, AT 9:01 A.M.

Present: Mayor Krog, Chair
Councillor T. Brown
D. Hais, Board Chair, Nanaimo Port Authority
D. Saucier, President and Vice-Chancellor, Vancouver Island University
S. Madden, Executive Director, United Way
I. Simpson, Chief Executive Officer, Petroglyph Development Group, Snuneymuxw First Nation

Absent: J. Byrne, Regional Managing Partner, Vancouver Island, MNP

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
S. Legin, General Manager, Corporate Services
D. Blackwood, Client Support Specialist
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
N. Sponaugle, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE SPECIAL MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Mayor's Task Force on Recovery and Resilience Meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

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

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Special Mayor's Task Force on Recovery and Resilience Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC on Friday, 2020-JUL-03 at 9:00 a.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that staff had sent invitations to key stakeholders in the community to make presentations to the Task Force.

(a) Dr. Mike Flesher, Emergency Physician, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, and Damian Lange, Director of Clinical Operations, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, provided a presentation regarding healthcare & COVID-19. Highlights included:

- COVID-19 is a complex disease with the ability to transmit among people easily, has a mortality rate associated with it, it causes multi-organ problems which are difficult to treat and difficult to create a vaccine for
- Public Health’s goal is to deal with localized outbreaks
- COVID-19 does not behave like the flu as there is no seasonal pattern and no improvement with exposure to heat and light
- Cellphone data use shows that social interactions are currently around 87% of normal rates, which is a much higher figure than health authorities recommend
- Provided an overview of the health system response which included a decrease in elective care with surgeries that were not urgent being deferred
- Psychological impact when people haven’t seen or know anyone that has been impacted by COVID-19 and as a result do not realize/respect the severity of the disease
- False concept in media of “post” pandemic though COVID-19 is still an active threat
- Healthcare response will aim to preserve services such as elective care by ensuring a separate space for those with COVID-19 and maintaining diversity of primary care
- Likelihood of COVID-19 returning during flu and cold season is a serious concern for healthcare providers as it will be difficult to differentiate between illnesses
- Provided an overview of coordination with healthcare:
 - Using “buildings of opportunity” to provide programs in certain buildings that suit the community’s needs
 - Screening centres and drive-thru’s
 - Clinical assessment centres
 - Supporting primary care as some doctors offices are not designed to support vulnerable patients
 - Supporting alternate care sites to create more space in hospitals
- Coordination of organizations through joint planning groups that include consideration of skills and resources such as patient/staff flow, facilities/tents/structures, cleaning services, infection prevention/control and IT/clerical staff support

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Working from home versus encouraging people to come back to work
- Socialization and the “new normal”
- Availability of education and training for non-profits, and how that can be accessed while so many health programs are put on hold
- Steps needed to implement “buildings of opportunity” and provide care outside of the hospital
- Beban Park Social Centre as a potential acute care space
- Island Health plan to open dedicated COVID-19 long-term care facility

- (b) Dave Devana, President and Chief Executive Officer, Nanaimo Airport Commission, provided a presentation regarding the Nanaimo Airport. Highlights included:
- Nanaimo Airport owns approximately 511 acres of property – transferred from the federal government to the Nanaimo Airport Commission in 1996
 - Primary catchment area of 400,000 people
 - Airport has had great success over the past 8-10 years with 199% growth and 57% growth in number of annual passengers in 5 years
 - Potential of route development for growth to an international level
 - 99.2% reliability, which is a great improvement from the past when factors such as fog would impact operations
 - Impacts due to COVID-19 have been extreme when reviewing the number of monthly passengers – an optimistic projection would be regaining 50% of passenger by end of the year
 - Provided an overview of impacts to the two major airlines servicing the Nanaimo Airport
 - Airport has 26 staff, and to date no staff have been laid off
 - Board had approved a surplus of over \$2.5M in 2020 but are now projecting a loss of \$1.73 million with a cash flow deficit of \$560,000
 - Pre-COVID projections estimated 510,516 passengers in 2020 but are now forecasting 208,840 passengers
 - Airport's COVID-19 response to date has included:
 - Implementing the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program, which has been key to keeping things going
 - Deferred all new hiring, all non-essential maintenance and non-essential training
 - Deferred Route Development Marketing
 - Reduced contracted services
 - Challenges moving forward:
 - Rebuilding the public's confidence in travelling
 - Regional District of Nanaimo's Official Community Plan and Land Use Bylaw requirements
 - Need for local political champions
 - No current debt, with a goal to break even and survive the pandemic until the airline sector recovers

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Increase in cargo shipments
- Pre-pandemic, 70% of flights were leisure oriented and 30% business oriented but now travel is mostly for business purposes
- In order to maintain Category 6 status, which allows the airport to receive 700 movements of major aircraft in 3 months, no staff can be laid off or the airport would be reduced to Category 5 status and would have to cancel flights
- 300,000 passengers at Category 6 status would allow the Nanaimo Airport to break even
- If wage subsidy program is still in place in December, and numbers don't improve, the airport predicts it will run out of money by July 2021

- Need for greater support at the provincial and federal level to ensure airports don't close – currently wage subsidy program is the only program in place to support airlines
 - 14-day quarantine travel requirements a major problem for airlines, particularly in places that are perceived to be safe
 - Challenge of flights being moved to the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) and the need for more direct international flights once things return to normal
- (c) Ian Marr, President and Chief Executive Officer, Port of Nanaimo, provided a presentation regarding the strategic direction of the Port of Nanaimo. Highlights included:
- The Port of Nanaimo is responsible for navigation and safety of the waters surrounding Nanaimo harbour
 - Areas of responsibility on land include: Duke Point, Newcastle Channel, assembly areas near shipyard, and terminals and marinas
 - Current focus on economic drivers and initiatives being taken to create growth in the business and community
 - Duke Point deep sea facility needs to be expanded to accommodate different uses
 - Diversification a key component of the Port of Nanaimo's growth strategy
 - Port of Nanaimo has had the highest increase in tonnages for Ports across Canada from 2010 to 2019, showing significant growth largely due to diversifying types of cargo and has also had the biggest drop between 2018-2019, largely due to impacts to the forestry industry
 - Well positioned for Short Sea Shipping Connections with links to Vancouver and Fraser River terminals creating connections to global markets
 - Working on a study with Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, federal and provincial governments to develop a system to provide areas in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland that are available for shipping and unloading
 - Barge expansion took place approximately 5 years ago, now looking to expand further
 - Expansion project planned that would allow bigger ships to come into the facility, and includes two more cranes
 - Cost of expansion project estimated at over \$100M with \$46M in funding received from federal government last year and currently negotiating a deal with DP World to partner for additional funds
 - Assembly wharf an important cargo facility but limited storage causes challenges
 - Helijet is an important part of shipping industry
 - In talks with additional car manufacturers about bringing in vehicles from Europe
 - Cruise facility has not had a lot of cruise development; however, the level of passenger satisfaction has been high
 - The cruise industry in Nanaimo has no identity – Port of Nanaimo undertook their own initiatives and have been working with tourism industry on developing identities such as Sip & Savour, Eco-Immersion, Cultural Exploration and Adventure & Adrenaline
 - Going forward, there will be fewer ships but bigger opportunities for markets, especially smaller markets and local (BC) tourism

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Composition of goods hasn’t changed, but volumes have
 - Port of Nanaimo does not receive federal funding, or qualify for subsidies, including access to the federal wage subsidy program
 - Have asked for relief from the federal government due to COVID-19 in regards to an annual stipend paid annually, but were denied and given no extension
 - No employees have been laid off
 - Importance of diversification
 - Conversations with the Province on hold due to COVID-19 regarding the urgent need for \$20M in funding for the expansion project
- (d) Dr. Deborah Saucier, President and Vice-Chancellor, Vancouver Island University, provided a presentation regarding Vancouver Island University. Highlights included:
- Vancouver Island University (VIU) does not qualify for any federal subsidies
 - Recently retitled their University Relations department to Community Partnerships, with a focus on connecting communities with expertise during the pandemic and helping build valuable work experiences for students
 - Number of people considering post-secondary education has increased due to job loss and increased online learning opportunities
 - Anticipate 85%-90% of learning will be done online for the foreseeable future
 - Currently undergoing an overarching Strategic Plan process, to knit existing plans together in a cohesive way, engaging with the external community through this process
 - Areas of focus include: deepening community engagement, advancing truth and reconciliation and meeting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - Importance of ensuring the university is inclusive and accessible
 - More than 1000 people have contributed to the strategic plan conversations so far, and a draft strategic plan is now being developed
 - VIU has been adapting since February and closed its on-site classes in March
 - Most of the fall semester will be online or through technology solutions, with a possibility of that continuing into January
 - Most classes have less than 50 students but with 12,000 students on campus there is a need to restrict access to the campus to keep students safe
 - Post secondary institutions will be delayed in returning to in-person instruction due to increased risk factors as one student attending four classes could have up to 6,000 interactions in one day
 - The long-term financial impact is unsure; however, March 2020 cost the university one million dollars
 - VIU has smaller reserves in place than larger institutions
 - Post secondary education key to economic recovery
 - Three-quarters of students surveyed believe that online learning can be equivalent or better than in person
 - Enrolment up slightly in domestic numbers, particularly students on Vancouver Island whereas international student numbers decreased by almost 50%
 - Deficit could be as high as \$12M this year

- Online learning has opened up opportunities for those working full-time
- Plan to continue with hybrid model once university opens up again as it allows for a better balance between home time and work time
- Online learning model can accommodate students learning where they live and help build those communities, particularly in remote places and First Nation communities where the need for students to leave home to attend university has been challenging
- Plan for more community-based programming and community service
- Support for local businesses through the launch of the Vancouver Island Economic Resilience Initiative
 - Connects businesses with skilled Master of Business Administration (MBA) interns
 - Organization only pays 25% of interns salary, VIU covers the rest
 - \$450,000 worth of funding, for up to 90 students
 - 14 students placed so far to help people and businesses recover
 - Coast Capital Credit Union funded 10 students
- The Province of BC is the only province that made advanced education an essential service

Task Force discussion took place regarding:

- Importance of international students’ ability to take classes primarily online being extended for another year to avoid compromising their visas
- Significance of the financial contribution that international students have on the local economy
- Faculty of International Education working on a 14-day residency plan to house international students upon their arrival
- Many international students rely on homestays
- Athletics postponed until at least January due to high-contact nature

5. 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 the Council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to or is one or more of the following:

- (k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the Council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public; and,

Section 90(2):

- (b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

The motion carried unanimously.

The Task Force moved In Camera at 11:40 a.m.
The Task Force moved out of In Camera at 12:01 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 12:01 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

C H A I R

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER