

DATE OF MEETING | September 19, 2022 |

AUTHORED BY | CHRISTY WOOD, SOCIAL PLANNER
LISA BRINKMAN, MANAGER, COMMUNITY PLANNING |

SUBJECT NANAIMO COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD ON HOMELESSNESS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

[To provide Council with options to consider for involvement in the Nanaimo Community Advisory Board on Homelessness.]

Recommendation

That a Council representative be appointed as a non-voting member to the Nanaimo Reaching Home Community Advisory Board.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular Meeting held on 2022-JUN-20, Council received a delegation from the Nanaimo Community Advisory Board (CAB) who provided information regarding the role of the Nanaimo CAB, and requested that a Council member participate on the CAB as a voting or non-voting member.

At the Regular 2022-JUN-20 Council Meeting, the following motion was passed:

“That Council direct Staff to return to a future Regular Council meeting with a report regarding Agenda Item 11(b) – Deborah Hollins and Jason Harrison, Nanaimo Community Advisory Board that includes options and implications for Council’s involvement in the Community Advisory Board.”

DISCUSSION

The Nanaimo Community Advisory Board on Homelessness (CAB) was formed to align community leadership, and to oversee investments made in the Nanaimo region to prevent and address homelessness through the Government of Canada’s Reaching Home Homelessness Strategy. The Nanaimo CAB receives funding from Reaching Home to invest in solutions to end homelessness. The Nanaimo CAB reports to the Community Entity, which is currently the United Way. Reaching Home investments are guided by the *Reaching Home: Nanaimo Community Homelessness Plan 2019-2024*.

A CAB may have representation from all levels of government, non-profit agencies, and the private sector. The Nanaimo CAB currently has 21 voting members and four non-voting members. The following organizations are represented as voting members of the Nanaimo CAB:

- Island Health
- Haven Society
- Nanaimo Family Life Association
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Nanaimo and Area Resource Services for Families
- Nanaimo 7-10 Club Society
- Mid-Island Metis Nation
- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- Canadian Mental Health Association Mid-Island
- Nanaimo Region John Howard Society
- Nanaimo Youth Services Association
- Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Unitarian Shelter
- Pacifica Housing
- Vancouver Island Mental Health Society
- Kw'umut Lelum
- Island Crisis Care Society
- The Men's Centre
- Salvation Army

The United Way and Service Canada representatives are non-voting members. City of Nanaimo Staff attend the Nanaimo CAB meetings as a community resource.

Other Reaching Home CABs in BC

All designated communities receiving Reaching Home funding are required to establish a CAB. There are at least 11 designated communities with a variety of governance structures. Seven communities do not have Council members on the CAB, and four communities do have a Council member on the CAB. Of the four communities with a Council member on the CAB, two are voting, one is non-voting, and one votes only to break a tie vote. See Attachment A: Council Status on CABs in British Columbia. Staff consulted members of other CABs in BC and received the following comments regarding Council members as a CAB:

- CABs are intended to be community led boards and having Councillors involved may influence projects in a political way.
- Assigning a Councillor to a CAB with voting privileges implies that voting is done on behalf of Council, however, the structure of the CAB does not allow a Councillor the ability to consult with Council prior to voting.

Nanaimo CAB and the Systems Planning Organization (SPO)

The primary purpose of the Nanaimo CAB is to set the direction for investment of the Reaching Home funds, which are geared to preventing and addressing homelessness through the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Homelessness Strategy. The SPO has a broader mandate including:

- Generate and share knowledge to support strategic decision-making, funding decisions, and a planned approach to proactively prevent and respond to homelessness, health, and housing needs in Nanaimo;
- Produce communications material to help educate the general public about the challenges and actions being taken to address homelessness;
- Steward the Health and Housing Action Plan;
- Work with service providers to prioritize Indigenous homelessness needs in a culturally-safe and trauma-informed approach to address systemic racism;

- Provide Local Government with data to effectively advocate and address issues related to the homelessness population with the Federal and Provincial Government;
- Support the community initiative to establish coordinated access in Nanaimo;
- Support education and community development efforts to prevent homelessness (Nanaimo Health & Wellness Network);
- Collaborate with the Community Advisory Board (CAB);
- Ensure transparent and consistent evaluation and systems-level outcome measurement; and
- Provide a report on a semi-annual basis to all governments in the region, the community, and the funders on the progress.

Given the similar objectives of both organizations, it would be beneficial for a SPO and/or City representative to participate in the Nanaimo CAB as a non-voting member for the purposes of information sharing, cooperation, and collaboration.

OPTIONS

1. That a Council representative be appointed as a non-voting member to the Nanaimo Reaching Home Community Advisory Board.
 - The advantages of this option: Council could be more actively informed of the Nanaimo CAB initiatives, and implementation of the *Reaching Home: Nanaimo Community Homelessness Plan 2019-2024*; as well as ensure cooperation with the SPO initiatives.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Participating in the Nanaimo CAB would be a time commitment for one Council member. The Nanaimo CAB meets a minimum of five times annually.
 - Financial Implications: None identified.
2. That a Council representative be appointed as a voting member to the Nanaimo Reaching Home Community Advisory Board.
 - The advantages of this option: One Council member would be able to vote on how Reaching Home funds are allocated in the community. In addition, Council could be more actively informed of the Nanaimo CAB initiatives, and implementation of the *Reaching Home: Nanaimo Community Homelessness Plan 2019-2024*.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Assigning a Councillor to a CAB with voting privileges implies that voting is done on behalf of Council, however, the structure of the CAB generally does not allow a Councillor the ability to consult with Council prior to voting.
 - Financial Implications: None
3. That a Council representative not be appointed to the Nanaimo Community Advisory Board.
 - The advantages of this option: Nanaimo CAB could instead consider having a representative of the SPO on their Board to ensure cooperation and collaboration of both organizations.

- The disadvantages of this option: A Council representative will not be directly involved in the CAB meetings and discussions.
- Financial Implications: None

SUMMARY POINTS

- At its regular meeting held on 2022-JUN-20, Council directed Staff to prepare a report that includes options and implications for Council's involvement in the Nanaimo's Reaching Home Community Advisory Board (CAB).
- There are at least 11 designated communities in BC, 7 communities do not have Council members on the CAB, and 4 communities do have a Council member on the CAB.
- Although the SPO has a broader mandate, given their similar objectives, it would be beneficial for a SPO and/or City representative to participate in the Nanaimo CAB as a non-voting member for the purposes of information sharing, cooperation, and collaboration.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Council Status on CABs in British Columbia

Submitted by:

Lisa Brinkman
Manager, Community Planning

Concurrence by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Director, Community Development

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services
/Deputy CAO