



## MINUTES

### SPECIAL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 4, 2024, 3:00 P.M.  
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre  
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

- Members:
- Councillor S. Armstrong, Chair
  - Councillor H. Eastmure
  - J. Bowen, At Large Member
  - S. Brodie, At Large Member
  - K. Coulthard, At Large Member
  - D. Cowling, At Large Member
  - D. Herman, At Large Member
  - K. Lambert, At Large Member
  - C. Middleton, At Large Member (entered 3:02 p.m.)
  - J. Millbank, At Large Member
  - R. Taylor, At Large Member\* (joined 3:03 p.m., disconnected 4:01 p.m., entered 4:46 p.m.)
- Staff:
- Inspector E. Rochette, Nanaimo RCMP
  - T. Doyle, Fire Chief
  - S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
  - D. LaBerge, Director, Public Safety
  - C. Wood, Manager, Social Planning
  - N. Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer
  - N. Sponaule, Communications Advisor
  - A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

#### 1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Public Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

\* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

## 2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

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

## 3. **REPORTS:**

### a. Draft Public Safety Committee Term Work Plan

Introduced by Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services.

Collen Middleton entered the Boardroom at 3:02 p.m.

The Director, Legislative Services noted that at the 2024-JUN-12 Public Safety Committee Meeting, a roundtable discussion took place regarding the Committee's work plan to identify key priorities and initiatives. Six themes were identified, each with several potential priorities and initiatives which were referred to Staff for review.

Ruth Taylor joined the meeting electronically at 3:03 p.m.

Nikolina Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer, provided an overview of the draft work plan.

Under the "Transportation Safety" theme, the Deputy Corporate Officer noted that not all aspects of transportation safety fall under the City's jurisdiction and some may require action by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The Committee can make a recommendation to Council, which can then be sent to the RDN for consideration if necessary
- Each bus stop location must be considered separately being mindful of the municipal jurisdiction
- The desire to prioritize items following a review of the work plan

The Deputy Corporate Officer continued to review the work plan advising the following in relation to the "Crime Prevention" theme:

- The School Districts, which fall under provincial jurisdiction, are responsible for determining safety measures, and initiatives such as Community Safety Officer patrols in schools are beyond the Committee's scope
- The Committee may identify preferred locations for closed circuit television (CCTV), keeping in mind privacy limitations and legislation

- The Committee may provide recommendations on crime prevention measures, and graffiti and vandalism initiatives

Committee discussion took place regarding the City increasing regulations related to vacant properties.

Dave LaBerge, Director, Public Safety, noted that Staff are preparing a report for Council regarding vacant property bylaw options, and following Council receiving the report, possible recommendations may be requested from the Committee.

The Committee expressed the desire to reflect in the draft work plan that the City empowers neighbourhood associations as partners to raise concerns about the impacts of homelessness on residents and local businesses.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- The City's encouragement of residents to report all incidents related to crime and safety so the RCMP can maintain accurate records
- The RCMP's online reporting tool for non-emergency issues
- The desire to consider ways to encourage residents to report crimes to improve data collection (i.e. use of a mobile application)
- The desire to develop a communication plan on crime reporting

Committee discussion took place regarding potential gaps in crime and safety data and data collection relative to the impacts of BC Housing projects.

Tim Doyle, Fire Chief, provided information regarding data collection from 911 calls.

Committee discussion took place regarding graffiti removal and clean-up. Highlights included:

- The broad nature of the initiative provides opportunity for the Committee to identify clean-up projects in the future
- The Vandalism Relief Fund being currently only available for businesses located in the downtown area
- Community service work included as part of youth and adult probation orders assists with graffiti clean-up throughout the city; however, enforcement is affected due to the lack of resources
- Some cities have allocated certain areas for graffiti art to help promote tourism, as well as deter graffiti in other areas

The Deputy Corporate Officer continued to review the work plan, advising the following in relation to the “Homelessness, Addiction and Community Impacts” theme:

- In relation to the establishment of baselines and implementation of long-term monitoring for the impacts on community safety, the Committee may provide recommendations on residential and business safety based on provided data
- Implementation of the Housing First initiatives and related best practices to address or reduce homelessness is not within the Committee’s scope; however, the City supports several initiatives that provide similar services
- The Committee will be consulted throughout the process for establishing two daytime drop-in hubs to provide input on safety and security elements for the clients and the immediate surrounding neighbourhood

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The challenges of studying impacts of homelessness and addiction and the need for qualified individuals to interpret the data
- The City’s role in providing housing, including considerations such as maintenance and staffing costs, implications for property taxation and competition with private developers
- The City’s funding of the Systems Planning Organization, which has helped implement some recent housing projects
- The City’s provision of land to other levels of government who provide housing
- The desire to update the draft work plan to reflect that the Committee would advocate for rather than implement the Housing First initiatives
- The limits to what the City can do in regard to available funding and property for providing housing

The Deputy Corporate Officer continued to review the work plan, advising the following in relation to the “Health and Wellness” theme:

- Creation of green space is not consistent with the Committee’s mandate, and the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness is responsible for identifying barriers to accessibility, providing feedback on the City’s accessibility actions, and raising awareness on related issues

- The Committee may provide recommendations regarding utilization of public spaces related to public safety concerns
- Implementation of safety improvements for first responders is an occupational health and safety matter beyond the Committee's mandate

Committee discussion took place in relation to reflecting in the work plan the desire to avoid closure or relocation of open public spaces in addition to businesses under the "Crime Prevention" theme.

Committee discussion took place in relation to the "Health and Safety" theme. Highlights included:

- The need for improved communication regarding rationale for closing a public space
- Residents not being comfortable using the City's public assets due to safety concerns
- The desire to identify what changes need to occur, or what enforcement is needed, to make public spaces safer

Ruth Taylor disconnected from the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- The bike valet program and free transit service during events helps encourage people to use alternate modes of transportation
- The desire to reflect in the work plan that the Committee will work towards ensuring safe access to public spaces rather than entice residents to use public spaces

Committee discussion took place regarding provincial safety measures in place to support first responders.

The Deputy Corporate Officer continued to review the work plan, advising the following in relation to the "Advocacy" theme:

- Clarification needed from the Committee in regard to its desire to advocate for addressing root causes of the opioid overdose public health and safety emergency (hereon "the emergency") as social determinants are within provincial jurisdiction
- The Committee through Council may advocate to the Province to raise the awareness of increased costs of the emergency and safety implications

- Clarification needed from the Committee regarding its desire to advocate for a restorative justice program, noting there is a possibility for the Committee to advocate to senior levels of government regarding program funding

In response to a question from the Committee, Christy Wood, Manager, Social Planning, advised that social determinants include housing, education and health, and they provide the foundation to promote a healthy well-being. The Manager, Social Planning suggested the Committee may advocate for how the Social Planning Grant funds are used.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Suggestion that Council ensure public safety items are referred to the Committee as they come up, so the Committee can provide advice and input on initiatives
- Concern regarding the Committee's input being added to a project that has been ongoing for some time potentially resulting in delays
- Ensuring the Committee is made aware of City projects in the works

Committee discussion took place regarding some municipalities sending bills related to the emergency to the Province for reimbursement; however, the upcoming Union of BC Municipalities Convention is the appropriate medium for Council to address the matter.

Tim Doyle, Fire Chief, provided the following information:

- Costs considered for reimbursement include wages, fuel and first responder supplies
- Once patient contact is made by the Fire Department, it must be maintained until paramedics arrive
- The Fire Department is considered an all-hazards responder
- 65% of calls dispatched to the Fire Department are medical calls
- Emergency services are intended to work together

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- Vancouver's restorative justice program being more meaningful and onerous
- The Committee's role in relation to restorative justice focusing on advocacy to senior levels of government for more funding
- The desire to hear from the Municipality of North Cowichan regarding their restorative justice program

The Deputy Corporate Officer continued to review the work plan, advising in relation to the “Education” theme that the Committee may support sharing of information to improve the identified goal of improving perception of public safety.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The need for education regarding safety precautions that residents can take
- Most homicide attacks being targeted, and not posing a threat to the general public

Ruth Taylor entered the Boardroom at 4:46 p.m.

Committee discussion continued. Highlights included:

- The desire to reflect in the work plan the goal to improve the understanding rather than perception of public safety in Nanaimo
- The need to consider both perceived and actual public safety rather than focusing solely on perceptions of safety
- Caution regarding focusing on specific cases rather than trends when assessing public safety risks and the desire for more outward facing communication
- The need for more support from senior levels of government to address public safety issues
- City Staff’s coordination with RCMP to share social media posts on public safety
- The need to advocate for mental health supports
- The possibility and challenges of potentially sharing success stories and the desire to focus on emphasizing care for community members

Arising from discussion, the Committee agreed for Staff to incorporate the Committee’s feedback into the updated work plan, and to prioritise identified initiatives for the Committee’s review at the 2024-OCT-09 meeting.

In response to a question from the Committee, Staff advised that the Committee will have opportunities to raise other matters under the “Other Business” portion of the meetings and during the annual work plan development process.

**4. QUESTION PERIOD:**

The Committee received no questions from the public regarding agenda items.

**5. ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved and seconded at 5:13 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

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CORPORATE OFFICER