



MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 4:00 P.M.
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

Members:	Councillor S. Armstrong Councillor H. Eastmure J. Bowen, At Large Member S. Brodie, At Large Member K. Coulthard, At Large Member D. Cowling, At Large Member K. Lambert, At Large Member J. Millbank, At Large Member R. Taylor, At Large Member
Absent:	C. Middleton, At Large Member D. Herman, At Large Member
Staff:	T. Doyle, Fire Chief D. LaBerge, Director, Public Safety Insp. E. Rochette, Nanaimo Detachment RCMP N. Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer C. Wood, Manager, Social Planning J. Vanderhoef, Zoom Moderator A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Public Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

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

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Public Safety Committee Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2024-DEC-18, at 4:00 p.m. be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:

(a) Nanaimo Restorative Justice Program Overview

Nikolina Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised that during the 2025-JAN-20 Regular Council Meeting, Council adopted the following motion:

“That Council continue to advocate to the Provincial Government for funding for the Nanaimo Restorative Justice Program.”

(b) Newcastle Community Association

Nikolina Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised that during the 2025-JAN-20 Regular Council Meeting, Council adopted the following motion:

“That Council defer consideration of the following Consent Item to a future Council Meeting, until after a discussion at a future Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting regarding possible amendments to “Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272”:

‘That Council invite representatives of the Newcastle Community Association to attend the next Public Safety Committee Meeting to share their concerns regarding the impact of homelessness on residents and other businesses.’”

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Save Our Streets Communities Driving Change Forum Highlights and Overview

Dave LaBerge, Director, Public Safety, introduced the presentation and advised the following:

- The Save Our Streets Community Driving Change Forum took place on 2025-JAN-23 in Vancouver and included topics such as judicial and police reform, addictions and mental illness, continuum of care, and the role of housing

- Speakers included Mayor Krog, representatives of the judiciary prosecution service, police and addiction specialists, housing advocates and academics
- Staff are looking into the possibility of inviting some of the forum organizers to address possible gaps in Nanaimo's community safety initiatives

Presentation:

1. Karen Kuwica and Jess Ketchum, Save Our Streets, provided an on-screen presentation. Highlights included:
 - Save Our Streets (SOS) is a volunteer-driven, non-profit society consisting of a Board of Directors and an oversight committee that provides guidance and input
 - Municipalities and local businesses do not have the resources to mitigate issues resulting from increased crime and violence, and feel that the responsibility is being offloaded from higher levels of government
 - SOS is working on ways to move these issues up the priority ladder for higher levels of government to increase the potential to secure funding
 - The Communities Driving Change forum was conducted to raise the profile and credibility of SOS, and included four panels with various speakers
 - Three main themes emerged from the forum: prevention, agreement of secure involuntary care, where appropriate, and community consultation
 - Panel One (Justice for All) focussed on: Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative's (REVOII) effectiveness, a preference for prosecutors to know their community, a lack of communication between police, Crown and judges, the effectiveness of education and youth intervention, the national bail deposition system, and how secure involuntary care offers stabilized care for individuals that need additional support
 - Panel Two (Policing and Public Safety) focussed on: a national broadband network collaboration, funding for academy seats for RCMP members at the Justice Institute of BC, recent crime reduction through high-visibility policing efforts, a need for secure involuntary care, to stop releasing

people on bail, and the need for legislation to control drug raw materials

- Panel Three (Prescription for a Continuum of Care) focussed on: antecedents to psychosis, the limited number of addiction psychiatrists in BC, and the need for treatment options identified a belief that poverty, a lack of feeling of belonging, access to drugs, illness and violence collectively lead to psychosis
- Panel Four (A Place to Call Home) focussed on: a need to move away from concentrating congregate housing, providing early access to services for families to mitigate youth homelessness, a need for specialized and diverse housing for youth, seniors and women fleeing violence, services with health partners are critical, obstacles to building new congregate housing, and the desire that municipalities be granted authority to produce suitable housing

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Discussions in schools focus on drug addiction treatment and policing and need to focus on drug avoidance
- Considering using a Scared Straight approach to deter youth from using drugs
- The importance of restorative justice and the need for the Province to commit to funding such programs

By unanimous consent, the Committee agreed to reorder Agenda Item 7(b) Community Resilience Early Warning System (CREWS) to precede Agenda Item 6(b) RCMP Nanaimo Detachment Priorities 2024 – 2025, and reorder subsequent agenda items accordingly.

6. REPORTS:

(a) Community Resilience Early Warning System (CREWS)

Dave LaBerge, Director, Public Safety, provided an overview of the report in the agenda package.

Presentation:

1. Adnan Ansari, Executive Director, and Humera Khan, Technical Lead, Muflehun, joined electronically and spoke regarding the CREWS program. Highlights included:

- The objective of CREWS is to enhance understanding of community safety and resilience, and understand the factors impacting safety and vulnerability to violence
- CREWS uses data to gain insight into the vulnerability of a prospective location, and inform primary prevention strategies, policies and legislation to implement changes
- CREWS works with the municipality to identify and prioritize issues within the community

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- It is anticipated that the CREWS Program could provide relevant data within approximately three months of inception
- Data provided from CREWS will identify trends in the community
- Staff hope to work with partners such as the RCMP, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, BC Housing and Island Health to obtain more localized data
- Staff hope to use CREWS to gain data regarding food security in Nanaimo

5. PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED):

(b) RCMP Nanaimo Detachment Priorities 2024 - 2025

Inspector Eric Rochette, Nanaimo RCMP, provided an on-screen presentation and advised the following:

- Consultation with the City, Regional District of Nanaimo and local First Nations is set to begin in March to determine priorities for the next fiscal year
- The Nanaimo RCMP Detachment is the only one in BC that has a full time Special Investigation Targeted Enforcement (SITE) team
- The Nanaimo RCMP sits on the Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative (REVOII) committee and currently have 10 REVOII clients
- Employee wellness will continue to be a priority in the next fiscal year to support members and staff
- Indigenous Policing Services is currently fully staffed, which has allowed for re-engagement with the local First Nations
- Approval has been received from Island Health to have a second nurse on staff, and a second officer will be assigned to assist with mental health calls

By unanimous consent, the Committee agreed to postpone the discussion on potential RCMP priorities to the next Public Safety Committee Meeting.

(c) Nanaimo Fire Rescue Priorities for 2025

Tim Doyle, Fire Chief, provided an on-screen presentation and advised the following:

- Nanaimo Fire Rescue (NFR) is considered an all-hazards responder, as they respond to many different types of emergency calls
- Since 2013, annual call volumes have increased by 67%
- NFR's goal is to respond to an emergency within six minutes; however, larger emergencies such as structure fires and technical rescues have a goal of 10 minutes
- Phase 1 and 2 of the Nanaimo Fire Rescue Master Plan included hiring 20 new firefighters in 2023 and 2025. Additional firefighters are needed due to an increase in call volume, National Fire Protection Agency 1710 staffing requirements, and an increased ability to respond to large-scale instances, such as wildfires
- Phase 3 of the Nanaimo Fire Rescue Master Plan identifies the need for an additional fire station to be staffed. Consultants are recommending the Townsite/Boundary area to ensure the best use of resources
- Next Generation 911 will replace analog 911 services, and will allow texting, video and more accurate coordinates from cellphones
- NFR is the only fire department in the world that runs its own fire academy. The Vancouver Island Emergency Response Academy (VIERA) generates revenue which comes back into the community and helps offset numerous costs

By unanimous consent, the Committee agreed to defer Agenda Item 6(d) Public Safety Department 2024 Overview to the 2025-APR-09 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

6. REPORTS (CONTINUED):

(b) Verbal Update re: Drop-In Hub

Christy Wood, Manager, Social Planning, provided an update on the drop-in hub, including the following:

- The drop-in hub (the Hub) is receiving multi-level government funding to support unsheltered individuals by providing basic need services

- Island Crisis Care Society currently offers daytime services at the Hub between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and Nanaimo Family Life is operating 20 overnight shelter beds, which are funded by BC Housing
- The Hub is required to provide funders with quarterly formal assessments which can be shared with the Committee
- Since opening, the Hub has seen an average of 98 visits per day, with an average of 89 unique visitors daily
- Increased congregation is occurring along Nicol Street during the time between the overnight shelter closing at 8:00 a.m. and the daytime shelter opening at 11:00 a.m. As a result, the operating hours for the Hub will change to 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Services offered at the Hub, such as wound care and Community Outreach Response, may help divert some individuals from attending the emergency department at the hospital
- Community Safety Officers and the RCMP Bike Patrol Unit continue to service the area and mitigate any concerns

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- A concept being trialed in Winnipeg in response to homelessness that provides funding incentives to encourage landlords to create permanent housing, rather than funding temporary shelters
- The HEARTH housing model uses a Housing First model; however, the shelter is temporary
- Consideration of a housing model that separates individuals with substance use disorders on different floors within one building assisting with their integration in the community, as opposed to separating individuals into different buildings

8. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received one question from the public regarding agenda items.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:55 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

DEPUTY CORPORATE OFFICER