

**THE TOWN OF GRANDE CACHE
SPECIAL MEETING
November 21, 2006 at 12:00 noon
Conference Room, Grande Cache Hotel**

Present: Mayor Louise Krewusik
Deputy Mayor Vic Beland
Councillor Paul Bailey
Councillor Terry Coray
Councillor Jackie Dube
Councillor Gordon Frentz
Councillor Tony McCormick
Darren Ottaway, Chief Administrative Officer
Carolyn Ferraby, Chief Financial Officer
Lisa Brown, Executive Assistant

Regrets: None

Inter-Agency Members:

Mary Sibbald, Community Health Council
Marsha Johnson, Family School Liaison – Grande Yellowhead Region Division No.35
Donna Spencer, Grande Cache RCMP Victim Services
John Higgerty, Crown Prosecutor
Art Hopkins, RCMP
Arthur Veitch, Grande Cache Mountaineer Newspaper
Arthur Ding, Grande Cache Institution
Father Marc McGee, Holy Cross Catholic Church
Dorothy Didow, Holy Cross Catholic Church
Kelly Smith, Director - FCSS
Travis Dukelow, Youth Co-Ordinator – FCSS
Kandis Woodward, COPE
Betty Hodnefield, Mental Health – PCH
Maria Howe, Child and Family Services
Margaret Price, Principal – Sheldon Coates Elementary School
Gina Kears, Grande Cache Jobstart
Tracy Peddy, Director of Grande Cache Community Health Complex – PCH
Yvonne Rempel, CALC
Terry Lyn Shea, Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
Donna Bradburn, Grande Cache Transition House
Lauren Morey, Yellowhead Region Educational Consortium
Connie Duquette, Principal – Grande Cache Community High School
Derrick Shaw, Principal – Summitview Middle School
Janet Venema, Mental Health – PCH
Shelley Hauck, Public Health – PCH
Judy Osborne, KASH and Cornerstone Mountain Assembly Church
Pastor Cliff Newbury, Ministerial Association

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Krewusik called the meeting to order at 12:09 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

**Moved by Councillor Frentz and seconded by Councillor Beland
97/06 RESOLVED THAT the agenda is adopted as presented.**

CARRIED

3. BUSINESS OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

3.1 Mayoral Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mayor Krewusik welcomed and thanked the inter-agency members for attending this meeting.

3.2 Introduction of Inter-Agency Members and Council

Mayor Krewusik asked that members introduce themselves and identify the organization they represent.

3.3 Individual Agency Presentations

Mayor Krewusik asked that each member give a brief description of their agency and issues of concern that effect their clients.

Mary Sibbald, Community Health Council

Ms. Sibbald said she recently attended a conference regarding pandemics, the main concern is the flu, but communities should be prepared for any type of pandemic. At the beginning of this year the largest concern was staff shortages, and currently EMS need more staff. Funding for infrastructure is an issue, as the Province is planning on building a new hospital in Grande Prairie, replacing the QE II, but using the existing facility for other services. Accessibility of transportation is an issue for many residents, as they need to attend appointments in Grande Prairie. She suggested that perhaps a bus/shuttle service could be established to meet this need.

Marsha Johnson, Family School Liaison Worker - GYRD

Many families new to our community come from other provinces, and are left with little or no support from family/friends. She suggested establishing a support group, ie. people from the maritime provinces. Affordable housing is a problem. She also noted that youth violence is increasing, with large groups beginning to form. Drugs in the community are becoming a problem as well.

Donna Spencer, RCMP Victim Services

Ms. Spencer stated that services which many organizations in our community offer are not as well known to residents as they could be. Victim Services has three volunteers on staff, which is not enough to respond to the increasing incidents, especially the amount of accidents occurring on Highway 40. The increasing intensity of assaults on victims is a concern, which seems to be a result of the increased consumption of drugs and alcohol in the community. There seems to be a gang mentality growing among our youth and young people. There is also an increase of drug and alcohol related incidents within this age group. Perhaps utilizing the Youth Justice system would help in some instances. The Municipal Disaster Plan needs to be completed and implemented as soon as possible. We need a response plan in place, as this need was demonstrated with the last heavy snowfall leaving several motorists stranded with no place to stay.

John Higgerty, Crown Prosecutor

Mr. Higgerty stated that there are three prosecutors working in this region, which includes Drayton Valley, Jasper and Grande Cache. There are more than 2800 Criminal Code files divided between them, and there has to be a way to deal with the offenders within the communities rather than sending them to jail. Although in some cases jail time is inevitable, it costs approximately \$90,000/year for men, and \$130,000/year for women to be housed in a facility – imagine what non-profit organizations could do with that amount of money. The infrastructure in our Province is in desperate need of help, ie. Communities are implementing photo radar, but the Courts are unable to process the increased workload. More agencies need to get involved in dealing with crime in the communities to relieve some of the stress from the court systems.

Art Hopkins, RCMP

Sgt. Hopkins noted that with the increase of transient workers in the community, the crime and violence has also increased. Although the Town was successful in acquiring one more new police officer, another position will be applied for in the upcoming year.

Arthur Veitch, Grande Cache Mountaineer

Mr. Veitch stated he was attending this meeting as an observer, and invited newcomers to the community to visit the newspaper office.

Arthur Ding, Warden – Grande Cache Institution

Mr. Ding stated that he would like to receive more information from the agencies involved in this group, for example community developments, events, etc. He wants to involve the Institution in these community developments more, and looks forward to continuing their involvement in this group. Mr. Ding also stated that the Institution has difficulty in recruiting staff, as affordable housing is an issue for anyone coming to our community.

Father Marc McGee, Holy Cross Catholic Church

Father McGee stated he is attending this meeting as an observer, and is interested in how the agencies provide their support services in the community. He would like to meet with specific members to offer his assistance, such as the hospital, Victim Services, etc. He asked if the Community Disaster Plan would include the clergy, as they are willing to help with funerals and other assistance. The community needs support and volunteers for our young offenders. With the increase of new families in the community, we need to establish resources and support groups to assist those who cannot afford accommodations, food and utilities.

Dorothy Didow, Holy Cross Catholic Church

Ms. Didow stated there is definitely a need for affordable housing, as costs of living in our community have increased so much it is creating difficulties for people with disabilities and health problems. They are no longer able to afford basic needs, which is causing a lot of stress for them.

Pastor Cliff Newbury, Ministerial Association

Pastor Newbury said that we have to establish a social committee to address the needs within our community, and be able to provide these services to those who need them most. A specific fund set up to receive donations and managed by service providers should be established, as there are people in our community currently living in terrible conditions. Although the Affordable Housing Study has been completed, as community leaders we need to address this situation and decide what to do. There is also a need for assisted living accommodations in our community.

Kelly Smith, Director – FCSS

Ms. Smith said FCSS does not have enough staff to meet the increasing needs in our community. FCSS faces issues with affordable housing, parenting support – clients unable to pay bills, finding childcare to be able to work, etc. The establishment of partnerships with all members to avoid duplication of services and to provide these services and support in the community has to continue.

Travis Dukelow, Youth Co-Ordinator – FCSS

Mr. Dukelow said he is currently working with the schools to determine what type of programs and services are needed. He anticipates that he will have some of the programs starting soon.

Kandis Woodward, COPE

Ms. Woodward stated there seems to be a common theme that support services for youth is lacking in our community, and there are not enough programs available. She also has a concern that not all residents who require assistance know who to contact.

Janet Venema, Mental Health – PCH

Ms. Venema said that many youth today do not have the parental support they need to function in society, and we need to reach out to them to change their outlook, to help them cope with the situations they face, and to establish skills to interact with others. Another concern is affordable housing, there are many people who have difficulty finding a suitable place to live.

Marie Howe, Child Protection Worker – CFSA

Ms. Howe stated that the major concern she deals with is the use of drugs and how it is impacting families, especially children living in a home where drugs are being used. She

also said that transient people cause a concern for her agency, especially where children are involved. Families new to the community are often left in a bad situation when an emergency or crisis occurs, as they have no family support. There is a concern that we are losing local support services due to funding cuts. There has to be more utilization of available services to help residents in need, as there is a lot of poverty in our community. Her major concerns include affordable housing, costs of living and impact of addictions.

Shelley Hauck, Public Health – PCH

Ms. Hauck, speaking on behalf of Public Health and Home Care, said many of their clients have difficulty with transportation, whether it be young mothers bringing children for immunization or seniors and people on AISH needing a ride to an appointment. They also see problems with affordable housing, as many are unable to afford the current rents and cannot buy a home with the high prices. She commended AWN on the job they did in bringing several new homes to the community.

Gina Kearse, Grande Cache Jobstart

Ms. Kearse stated their clients have problems finding affordable accommodations and the high costs of living in our community.

Margaret Price, Principal – Sheldon Coates Elementary School

Ms. Price stated that family basic needs affect children, ie. affordable housing, costs of living, addictions, etc. She said there has been an improvement of availability in special needs services, they now have speech therapy, physio therapy, etc. This year the school has enough involvement from parents to form a school council. There is a shortage of space, as student enrollments have increased. Hopefully the portables they had before will be sent back. They would like to establish an emergency/threat plan for the schools, and involve several of the local agencies. She stated that in the upcoming years they anticipate losing some of their senior staff, and recruiting qualified replacements may be an issue. Ms. Price said that there is an issue with traffic congestion during peak hours, but it has been discussed and the police will be involved in controlling the problem. She said that the recent vandalism could be from the lack of youth programs and activities. She also stated a concern with funding for public education, will money be available to fix buildings, etc.

Tracy Peddy, Grande Cache Community Health Complex – PCH

Ms. Peddy said that Peace Country Health has addressed bullying issues. They are experiencing difficulty attracting staff because of available and affordable housing in the community. There are many positive things happening, with new positions and additional beds in the hospital. PCH is establishing a chronic health management program, with local trainers to be available in the near future. They are also considering a chronic pain support group as well. There was an increase in stats last winter, due mostly to the increase of transient workers. The continuing care (long term care) beds are full, have a few more patients that could use this type of care, but there is no space available for additional beds. The current staff levels are good. The new ambulance building will be located along Shand Avenue, hopefully functional by the end of December. PCH received more money for the region, and our hospital will get approximately \$350,000 for new equipment. The major concerns are affordable housing, costs of living and drugs.

Yvonne Rempel, CALC

Ms. Rempel invited everyone to attend the Inter-Agency meeting next Wednesday, and told everyone that they meet on the last Wednesday of each month. She stated their clients have problems with finding affordable housing, parenting support, transportation issues and available programs/support for youth. She feels the inter-agency members are working well, but could try to work together on more projects and activities. She said more affordable and available childcare is needed in the community. Clients have problems attending programs due to availability of transportation. She said there is a problem in the Province with literacy, almost 48% of our population is illiterate. She said the agencies have to improve on providing information to the people in the community. She said their agency would like one facility to house the various agencies in the community, as available space and rental costs are becoming a cause for concern.

Terry Lyn Shea, AWN

Ms. Shea stated that housing is still a concern for their agency. They received funding from Alberta Seniors and Community Support and bought fifteen mobile homes, set them up and dug wells for each unit. They will recover some of the money, as several residents were able to get mortgages, and a few of the units are being rented. AWN will be receiving fifteen more mobile homes, but there are still several homes without water (approximately 30). A major concern is the loss of the Health Liaison program. The program helped to provide transportation and translators for the people who don't speak English. Ms. Shea said that the provincial government had cut this program, but provided the funds to the health regions and left it to them to decide whether to continue this type of service in their area. She said PCH has to make this a priority and to provide the funds to re-establish this program.

Ms. Peddy stated that to her knowledge, PCH has not received any money from the provincial government for this type of program.

Mayor Krewusik asked whether a Letter of Support from the Town of Grande Cache or lobbying the provincial government would help in getting this program back into our community.

Donna Bradburn, Grande Cache Transition House

Ms. Bradburn read a memo regarding Alberta Women and Children at Risk. She stated that the cost and availability of housing is a huge problem throughout Alberta. We need to address how we can get affordable/low income housing in Grande Cache. The amount of clients they receive has been increasing significantly due to the boom in the area, availability/use of drugs, etc. Their funding is 100% from the provincial government, and are hoping to increase their hours to 24/7 in the near future.

Lauren Morey, Yellowhead Region Educational Consortium

Ms. Morey stated she is attending this meeting as an observer.

Connie Duquette, Principal – Grande Cache Community High School

Ms. Duquette stated her main issue is attracting staff to our community due to the high cost of living, and available/affordable housing. She also brought up the Town's Smoking By-Law and how it affects their school. The school has a policy in place, but with the Town's current by-law, it just isn't working any more because many of the students will go near the Rec Centre to smoke.

Mayor Krewusik stated that the smoking by-law issue would be brought before Council at the next Regular Meeting.

Derrick Shaw, Principal – Summitview Middle School

Mr. Shaw stated that housing for new staff is a problem, and will become a larger issue in the near future. He asked whether the Town would consider subsidized housing for teachers and health/medical staff, or is it possible to form some sort of partnership to bring this into our community. As it currently stands, they are unable to recruit qualified staff, and keeping the existing staff will also become more difficult unless the community can provide facilities, programs and activities for residents. Mr. Shaw expressed a concern that with so many transient workers, their children suffer from moving, settling into a new school, etc. Many of these children have special needs, and services need to be provided to deal with this. He also said that Highway 40 creates a lot of problems as well.

Judy Osborne, KASH and Cornerstone Mountain Assembly

Ms. Osborne said that the KASH program had to be cancelled because they couldn't get enough volunteers involved. This program is needed in the community, as it provided activities for children. She said the Cornerstone Mountain Assembly is willing to make their facility available to FCSS if they are willing to provide programming and volunteers to run the programs. Currently, use of this facility is fully maximized, but they are willing to make extra time available for a children's program. The children and youth in our community are under a lot of stress and need a program to deal with them at their level.

3.4 Questions and Discussion

Mayor Krewusik gave each Councillor a moment for comments and questions, with each one thanking the members for attending the meeting.

Pastor Newbury, on behalf of the members attending, thanked the Mayor and Council for facilitating this meeting. He asked if Council would consider doing something for the local caregivers, such as holding a conference or bringing in speakers.

3.5 Summary and Next Steps

Mayor Krewusik presented the Town of Grande Cache's 20/20 Vision document. She told the members that this document was compiled by the Town to give direction for the community and to help in addressing issues important to residents.

Mr. Ottaway gave a brief overview of how this project was initiated by Council and the process Administration used in compiling and completing this document. He stated the importance of all the local organizations getting involved in the Vision.

Mayor Krewusik said that Council understands the importance of ongoing communications between the members, and involving each in the process of addressing community issues. She said that copies of the Minutes from this meeting will be provided to each agency, and that Council will follow-up on the issues presented. She encouraged the members to continue to communicate with Council regarding these issues and any new concerns that may emerge in the future. She asked that each member consider possible solutions, such as forming committees, or other means to address and decide how to deal with the issues our community faces.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councillor Bailey and seconded by Councillor Dube
98/06 WHEREAS the business of this meeting has now been completed;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council does now adjourn.

CARRIED

The meeting concluded at 2:32 p.m.

Louise Krewusik
Mayor

Darren Ottaway
Chief Administrative Officer