

Minutes
Regular Council Meeting
Monday, August 14, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Town Council of the Corporation of the Town of Rainy River was held on Monday, August 14, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the municipal council chambers.

In attendance were Mayor Deborah Ewald and Councillors Martin Kreger, Gordon Prost, and Brent Helgeson.

Giving regrets for employment reasons were Councillors Joel Hagarty, Daniel Armstrong, and Neil Ivall.

Chief Administrative Officer Veldron Vogan recorded the minutes.

Opening Ceremonies, Moment of Silence, and Salute to the King

Mayor Deborah Ewald opened the meeting with a moment of silence and a salute to the King.

Additions, Deletions or Amendments

Wording to be changed on Resolution #23-018 “City Council” will be changes to “Town Council”.

Motion #23-076 - Gordon Prost – Brent Helgeson

“That the agenda be accepted as amended.”

Carried

Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of conflicts of interest.

Presentations/Delegations

No delegates were in attendance.

Adoption of Minutes

Regular Council July 10, 2023

Motion #23-077 - Brent Helgeson – Gordon Prost

“To approve the minutes of the Regular Council meeting of July 10, 2023, as presented.”

Carried

Financials (as of July 31, 2023)

Motion #23-078 - Gordon Prost – Brent Helgeson

“That approval be granted for the accounts payable for the month of July 2023 which have been paid in the following amounts:”

Town General	\$218,113.35
Water	\$ 4,768.00
Cemetery	\$ 2,036.08
RRHCC	\$ 3,228.86

Carried

Reports from Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS – COMMITTEE REPORTS (AS NEEDED)

Finance/Personnel – Mayor Deborah Ewald and Councillors Neil Ivall, Martin Kreger and Daniel Armstrong

Funding Request – RR Daze/Reunion/Anniversary

Motion #23-079 - Brent Helgeson – Gordon Prost

“That the Town of Rainy River provide upfront funding for the Town’s 120th Anniversary/School Reunion/RRDAZE celebrations to take place in July 2024. Funding will be utilized to secure entertainment, venues, and rental equipment.”

Carried

Property/By-Law/AMBIS – Councillors Brent Helgeson, Gordon Prost, and Joel Hagarty

Addendum to Agreement with Richard Hallam

Motion #23-080 - Gordon Prost – Martin Kreger

“The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River agrees to amend the existing agreement with Deputy Chief Building Official Richard Hallam to provide additional CBO during the construction of the K-12 School by the Rainy River District School Board, as per attached.”

Carried

It was noted that the lease agreements with the Fix-It Club and the Activity Depot have been reviewed and updates will be forwarded to the various committees and meetings set up.

Fire Board – Mayor Deborah Ewald and Councillor Martin Kreger

Bill C-345

Motion #23-081 - Martin Kreger – Gordon Prost

“That the Corporation of the Town of Rainy River values the efforts of firefighters, paramedics, and other first responders, both as employees and volunteers;

And further, Canadian firefighters, paramedics and other first responders should be able to perform their duties without fear of attacks;

Now therefore, the Corporation of the Town of Rainy River supports the amendments to the *Criminal Code* to provide that the murder of a first responder is automatically, first degree murder, to increase the maximum term of imprisonment for the aggravated assault of certain persons, including first responders, and to create an offence of assaulting a first responder.”

Carried

Other Business

Petrolia – Home-based Childcare Resolution

Resolution #23-014 - Gordon Prost – Martin Kreger

“**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Council of The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River hereby supports the Town of Petrolia in recommending to the Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, that in time for the 2023 school year amendment to the current regulations be made to allow licensed home-based child care operators the ability to provide two (2) before and after school care spaces to school aged children, in addition the permitted six (6) full time child care spaces; and

THAT in an effort to attract and retain qualified early childhood educators, the Minister of Education, review the current wage bracket for early childhood educators with implementation of an increase to wages to align with the services provided; and

THAT the province provides more capital-based funding sources for the construction of new centre-based facilities; and

THAT the province considers increasing the current goal of thirty-three percent (33%) access ratio, to align better with the current provincial situation and anticipated population growth over the next ten (10) years.”

Carried

AMO Policy Update: Property Tax Reassessment

Resolution #23-015 - Brent Helgeson – Gordon Prost

“**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Council of The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River hereby supports the AMO as they advocate to resume the property tax reassessment cycle.”

Carried

Chatham-Kent – MFIPPA Resolution

Resolution #23-016 - Gordon Prost – Brent Helgeson

“**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Town Council of The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River hereby supports the Municipality of Chatham-Kent in requesting that the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services review the MFIPPA, and consider recommendations as follows:

1. That MFIPPA assign the Municipal Clerk, or designate to be the Head under the Act;
2. That MFIPPA be updated to address current and emerging technologies;
3. That MFIPPA regulate the need for consistent routine disclosure practices across institutions;
4. That the threshold for frivolous and/or vexatious actions be reviewed, and take into consideration the community and available resources in which it is applied;
5. That the threshold for frivolous and/or vexatious also consider the anonymity of requesters, their abusive nature and language in requests to ensure protection from harassment as provided for in Occupational Health and Safety Act;
6. That the application and scalability of fees be designed to ensure taxpayers are protected from persons abusing the access to information process;
7. That administrative practices implied or required under the Act, including those of the IPC, be reviewed and modernized;
8. That the integrity of the Act be maintained to protect personal privacy and transparent governments.”

Carried

RRWT Road Closure Request

Resolution #23-017 - Martin Kreger – Brent Helgeson

“The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River hereby approves closure of the bottom portion of Fourth Street (from the south entrance of the hospital down to the marina) for their annual “Touch a Truck” event on Saturday, September 16, 2023.”

Carried

CN Rail Safety Week Proclamation

Resolution #23-018 - Martin Kreger – Brent Helgeson

“**WHEREAS** Rail Safety Week is to be held across Canada from September 18 to 24, 2023;

WHEREAS 232 railway crossing and trespassing incidents occurred in Canada in 2022; resulting in 66 avoidable fatalities and 43 avoidable serious injuries;

WHEREAS, educating and informing the public about rail safety (reminding the public that railway rights-of-way are private property, enhancing public awareness of the dangers associated with highway rail grade crossings, ensuring pedestrians and motorists are looking and listening while near railways, and obeying established traffic laws) will reduce the number of avoidable fatalities and injuries cause by incidents involving trains and citizens; and

WHEREAS Operation Lifesaver is a public/private partnership whose aim is to work with the public, rail industry, governments, police services, media, and others to raise rail safety awareness;

WHEREAS CN has requested Town Council adopt this resolution in support of its ongoing efforts to raise awareness, save lives and prevent injuries in communities, including our municipality;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED to support national Rail Safety Week to be held from September 18 to 24, 2023.”

Carried

NOMA: FONOM’s Housing Resolution

Resolution #23-019 - Martin Kreger – Gordon Prost

“**WHEREAS** the Federal and Provincial Governments need to support their most vulnerable households, the ones who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. Overall, housing and services for low-income, vulnerable, or marginalized people should be a primary consideration moving forward so we help those who need it the most.

WHEREAS The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River understands every community across Ontario is impacted by a need for affordable housing and support for people at risk of homelessness. Municipal governments are working in collaboration with all orders of government to invest in permanent solutions to the housing and homelessness crisis in Ontario.

WHEREAS The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River understands that the Federal National Housing Strategy allocation formula to provinces and territories for jointly funded housing initiatives, roughly follows their share of the national population. This approach leaves Ontario underfunded because, as per the 2021 Census figures, the number of Ontario households in Community Housing Network as a share of the national total is 44.1 percent, which is well above the provincial share of the national population at 38.5 percent. This is also by far the highest share of the national Community Housing Network relative to every other province and territories.

WHEREAS receiving a by-population allocation from the federal government hampers Ontario's ability to reach more of those households in need that require assistance with housing.

WHEREAS the lack of ongoing federal operating funding for National Housing Strategy initiatives leads to significant underfunding for subsidized housing projects and can undermine the physical and financial viability of the community housing stock.

WHEREAS a similar situation occurs with federal homelessness funding to Ontario through Reaching Home, where the share allocated to Ontario is also below the provincial share of Community Housing Network nationally.

WHEREAS there is an inequitable distribution of Reaching Home funding in Ontario as only 25 of 47 Service Managers have designated communities receiving funding under the program, despite the prevalence of need across the entire Province.

WHEREAS The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River understands the federal government takes the position that its role is to provide capital funding while Provinces and Territories are to fund operating expenses, but this approach does not create an equitable sharing of the burden of funding long-term operating costs, which continue for the life of a project.

WHEREAS taken altogether, the underfunding to Ontario for housing and homelessness relative to its share of national Canadian Housing Network amounts to approximately \$480 million over the term of the Federal National Housing Strategy.

WHEREAS the federal government previously provided leadership in ensuring the long-term financial and physical viability of the social housing stock under the Social Housing Agreement for several decades through federal social housing operating agreements that provided funding for both mortgages and operating costs.

WHEREAS without some flexibility on the part of the federal government, Ontario and its municipalities will be poorly positioned to take advantage of this funding, and this will turn into

a significant missed opportunity, leading to a further deterioration in the long-term physical and financial sustainability of the community housing stock.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River also supports the provincial ask for federal operating funding for National Housing Strategy initiatives.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River would appreciate the federal effort to repurpose this funding quickly from the main National Housing Co-Investment Fund program line, Service Managers across the province have indicated their challenges with meeting the terms of the federal proposal, particularly as they relate to cost matching and meeting the requirements for greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency and accessibility.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River would like need-driven indicators incorporated into the funding allocation formulas for all federal programs.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that NOMA and FONOM appreciates the federal government's commitment to end chronic homelessness and wishes this to be inclusive across all areas of our province by expanding Reaching Home funding to all Service Managers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, NOMA and FONOM also support the provincial position in relation to the provinces and territories Repair Fund under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, NOMA and FONOM supports the Province of Ontario position on the application-based \$4 billion federal Housing Accelerator Fund. We wish to emphasize the importance of providing municipalities with maximum support in preparing applications to the HAF, understanding that some rural and northern municipalities may face capacity challenges in applying to this program on the anticipated tight timelines.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River wishes to request that Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation consider actions taken by municipalities under the province's Housing Supply Action Plans into account when assessing municipal applications, recognizing that these initiatives have the potential to significantly increase the supply of housing in our communities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River believes the lack of ongoing federal operating funding for National Housing Strategy initiatives leads to significant underfunding for subsidized housing projects and can undermine the physical and financial viability of the community housing stock.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River believes the federal government should heed the precedent of the Social Housing Agreement and

recommit itself to funding operating costs that often stretch out over decades for the lifetime of a housing project.

As an example, the Rapid Housing Initiative's (RHI) 20-year affordability requirement and lack of federal operating dollars will very likely result in housing providers asking Service Managers and the provincial government to fund operating expenses to ensure the long-term affordability of units given housing providers' limited revenue-raising capacity. However, the recent federal changes to the RHI program guidelines no longer define Northwestern Ontario as the "North" rather only communities located in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, or Nunavut receive this designation. This is an issue for municipalities in our region as this results in those municipalities automatically losing 25% marks on their application, meaning they are only able to secure 75% max with a perfect application. Therefore, applications are unsuccessful, and funding is not flowing to Northwestern Ontario municipalities. This will significantly affect housing initiatives moving forward through the RHI in our region and put us further behind our housing needs.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that all northern, rural, and remote communities in Northwestern Ontario receive northern designation through the RHI, as they are not currently recognized as such.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED This lack of ongoing federal operating funding for National Housing Strategy initiatives leads to significant underfunding for subsidized housing projects and can undermine the physical and financial viability of the community housing stock.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The Corporation of the Town of Rainy River urges the Federal Government provide additional funding for Ontario so that we can deal with our shortages of safe and affordable housing and at the same time build safer and healthier communities for all our residents.

FURTHER IT BE RESOLVED THAT a Copy of the Resolution be forward to the individuals listed below for consideration and support, Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Ahmed Hussen, MP Patty Hajdu – Thunder Bay-Superior North, MP Marcus Powlowski – Thunder Bay-Rainy River, MP Eric Melillo – Kenora, Premier Ford, Minister Clark, MPP Kevin Holland – Thunder Bay-Atikokan, MPP Lise Vaugeois - Thunder Bay-Superior North, Leaders of the Federal and Provincial Opposition Parties, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, and all clerks and CAO's in NOMA.”

Carried

Confirming By-law

By-law 1850-23 to Confirm the Proceedings of Council

The reading of By-law 1850-23 was given by Councillor Brent Helgeson.

Motion #23-082 - Gordon Prost – Martin Kreger

“That By-law 1850-23, being a by-law of the Town of Rainy River to confirm the proceedings of Council at its meeting held on the 14th day of August 2023, having been read in open council, be hereby approved.”

Carried

Next Meeting – Monday, September 11, 2023

Adjournment

Motion #23-083 - Martin Kreger

“There being no further business, the meeting is hereby adjourned at 6:10 p.m.”

Carried

Original Signed

Mayor

Original Signed

Chief Administrative Officer