

Minutes of a Meeting of the Wood Buffalo Recovery Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Municipal Offices in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Wednesday, August 24, 2016, commencing at 6:00 p.m.

Present: J. Bancarz, Chair
S. Germain, Councillor
M. Giles
M. Hodson
K. Jenkins
K. McGrath, Councillor
A. Vinni, Councillor

Absent: M. Farrington, Vice-Chair
K. Fleury

Administration: J. Brown, Supervisor, Legislative Services
A. Rogers, Senior Legislative Officer
D. Soucy, Legislative Officer

Call To Order

Chair J. Bancarz called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and extended regrets on behalf of M. Farrington and K. Fleury.

Adoption of Agenda

Moved by M. Giles that the Agenda be adopted as presented.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Minutes of Previous Meetings

1. Minutes of Wood Buffalo Recovery Committee Meeting - August 17, 2016

Moved by K. Jenkins that the minutes of the Wood Buffalo Recovery Committee Meeting held on August 17, 2016 be approved as presented.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

New and Unfinished Business

2. Taxation Matter
(6:08 p.m. – 6:57 p.m.)

Marc Fortais, Recovery Task Force, and Philip Schofield, Director, Assessment and Taxation, presented options on providing tax relief to residents who have been displaced from their homes due to the May 2016 wildfire, as well as the potential impact to tax revenue of the proposed options. M. Fortais also noted that discussions are on-going with the Government of Alberta regarding the potential for a similar tax relief in relation to the education tax levy, which would further reduce the tax burden on affected residents.

J. Paul McLeod, resident, spoke in support of providing tax relief to displaced residents.

M. Giles put the following motion forward for consideration:

“THAT it be recommended that Council use its authority under s. 347 of the Municipal Government Act to cancel the municipal portion of property taxes payable for 2016 on residential properties, in accordance with the following:

1. For all residential properties that were required to be evacuated due to the wildfire: cancellation of 1/12 of the tax (the “base tax cancellation amount”);
2. For every residential property that was not allowed to be re-occupied after general re-entry in the first week of June due to actions taken pursuant to recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health: cancellation of the base tax cancellation amount plus cancellation of an additional amount representing the pro-rated daily amount of the whole municipal portion of tax multiplied by the number of days in 2016 commencing June 1, 2016 that the property in question was not allowed to be re-occupied;
3. For every residential property that became uninhabitable because it was destroyed or irreparably damaged by the wildfire: cancellation of the base tax cancellation amount plus cancellation of an additional amount representing the pro-rated daily amount of the whole municipal portion of tax other than that portion attributable to the land only, multiplied by the number of days from June 1, 2016 until the first to occur of:
 - (a) completion of reconstruction of the residence on the property,
 - (b) sale of the property to a new owner, or
 - (c) the end of the calendar year 2016.”

Point of Order

Councillor A. Vinni called a Point of Order on the timing of allowing delegations from the floor. Chair J. Bancarz overruled the point of order citing that the call for delegations from the floor was after the presentation from Administration but prior to M. Giles presenting the motion.

J. Paul McLeod, resident, spoke in support of the motion put forward, noting that many homes would not be rebuilt by the end of 2016.

Moved by Councillor S. Germain that the proposed motion be amended by adding the following sections:

4. That the Government of Alberta be requested to remove the education tax levy to be consistent with the cancelled portion of municipal property taxes identified in sections 1 through 3 of this motion; and
5. That an application be made to the Government of Alberta for funding support to offset the cancelled portion of municipal property taxes.

CARRIED

For: S. Germain, M. Giles, M. Hodson,
K. Jenkins, K. McGrath, A. Vinni

Opposed: J. Bancarz

Voting then occurred on the individual provisions of the original motion, as amended.

Moved by M. Giles that it be recommended that Council use its authority under s. 347 of the Municipal Government Act to cancel the municipal portion of property taxes payable for 2016 on residential properties, in accordance with the following:

1. For all residential properties that were required to be evacuated due to the wildfire: cancellation of 1/12 of the tax (the “base tax cancellation amount”);

CARRIED

For: J. Bancarz, S. Germain, M. Giles,
K. McGrath, A. Vinni

Opposed: M. Hodson, K. Jenkins

Moved by M. Giles that the Recovery Committee recommends that Council use its authority under s. 347 of the *Municipal Government Act* to cancel the municipal portion of property taxes payable for 2016 on residential properties, in accordance with the following:

2. For every residential property that was not allowed to be re-occupied after general re-entry in the first week of June due to actions taken pursuant to recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health: cancellation of the base tax cancellation amount plus cancellation of an additional amount representing the pro-rated daily amount of the whole municipal portion of tax multiplied by the number of days in 2016 commencing June 1, 2016 that the property in question was not allowed to be re-occupied.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved by M. Giles that it be recommended that Council use its authority under s. 347 of the Municipal Government Act to cancel the municipal portion of property taxes payable for 2016 on residential properties, in accordance with the following:

3. For every residential property that became uninhabitable because it was destroyed or irreparably damaged by the wildfire: cancellation of the base tax cancellation amount plus cancellation of an additional amount representing the pro-rated daily amount of the whole municipal portion of tax other than that portion attributable to the land only, multiplied by the number of days from June 1, 2016 until the first to occur of:

(a) completion of reconstruction of the residence on the property,

(b) sale of the property to a new owner, or

(c) the end of the calendar year 2016.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved by M. Giles that it be recommended that Council use its authority under s. 347 of the Municipal Government Act to cancel the municipal portion of property taxes payable for 2016 on residential properties, in accordance with the following:

4. That the Government of Alberta be requested to remove the education tax levy to be consistent with the cancelled portion of municipal property taxes identified in sections 1 through 3 of this motion.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Moved by M. Giles that it be recommended that Council use its authority under s. 347 of the Municipal Government Act to cancel the municipal portion of property taxes payable for 2016 on residential properties, in accordance with the following:

5. That an application be made to the Government of Alberta for funding support to offset the cancelled portion of municipal property taxes.

CARRIED

For: S. Germain, M. Giles, M. Hodson,
K. Jenkins, K. McGrath, A. Vinni

Opposed: J. Bancarz

3. Transitional Housing Update

(6:58 p.m. – 7:13 p.m.)

Erin O'Neill, Recovery Branch Lead, provided an update on the request submitted in July to the Government of Alberta for interim, pet-friendly housing units with three or more bedrooms that would be made available to residents affected by the wildfire, noting that more information on the provision of interim housing and the detailed results from the housing needs survey conducted by the Red Cross were expected by the end of August.

Exit and Return:

Councillor K. McGrath exited the Chamber at 7:00 and returned at 7:13 p.m.

4. Sub-Committee Reports

(7:14 p.m. – 7:25 p.m.)

Community Engagement Sub-Committee - Kim Jenkins, Chair, and Sarah Murrant, Manager, Stakeholder Relations, provided an overview of the community engagements to date and the plan for future engagements to address specific issues. The feedback from these engagements will help guide the Committee's dialogues and recommendations.

Exit and Return:

Councillor S. Germain exited the Chamber at 7:14 and returned at 7:15 p.m.

5. Wildfire Recovery Team Update
(7:25 p.m. – 7:28 p.m.)

Dana Woodworth, Interim Recovery Team Leader, provided an update on the Recovery Task Force activities, which included green home re-entry plans, interim housing, long-term planning and budgeting.

Adjournment

As all scheduled business matters had been concluded, Chair J. Bancarz declared the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Chair

Chief Legislative Officer