

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo held in the Council Chamber at the Municipal Offices in Fort McMurray, Alberta, on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, commencing at 6:00 PM.

Present:

Sandy Bowman, Mayor
Ken Ball, Councillor (via MS Teams)
Funky Banjoko, Councillor
Lance Bussieres, Councillor
Kendrick Cardinal, Councillor (via MS Teams)
Shafiq Dogar, Councillor
Allan Grandison, Councillor
Keith McGrath, Councillor
Jane Stroud, Councillor
Loretta Waquan, Councillor
Stu Wigle, Councillor

Administration:

Henry Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer (via MS Teams)
Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer
Deanne Bergey, Director, Community and Protective Services
Jody Butz, Regional Fire Chief
Chris Davis, Senior Manager, Legal Services
Laurie Farquharson, Chief Financial Officer
Matthew Harrison, Director, Communications and Engagement
Keith Smith, Director, Public Works
Nasir Qureshi, Manager, Program Management, Engineering
Elliot White, Senior Manager, Environmental Services
Anita Hawkins, Legislative Officer

1. Call to Order

Mayor S. Bowman called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Councillor S. Dogar served notice of his intent to bring forward the following motion for Council's consideration at the November 28, 2023 Council meeting:

"THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, send a letter to federal representatives urging them to consider a revision to the Oath of Citizenship to portray love and loyalty to the Indigenous peoples."

Councillor K. Cardinal served notice of his intent to bring forward the following motion for Council’s consideration at the November 28, 2023 Council meeting:

“THAT Council consider an adjustment to Council’s remuneration schedule.”

MOTION:

THAT the Agenda be amended by moving Item 5.2 - Fort McKay Métis Nation Capital Request and Item 6.2 - Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) Plan - Pilot Project - On Road/Direct Trail Use in Abasand - Mayor S. Bowman, to immediately follow Item 3 - Consent Agenda;

THAT “Advocacy Letter - Gaza - Humanitarian Ceasefire” be added as the last item on today’s meeting agenda and that notice related to this item be waived; and

THAT the Agenda be adopted as amended.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Lance Bussieres, Councillor
SECONDER:	Shafiq Dogar, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

3. Consent Agenda

THAT the recommendations contained within items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 be approved.

3.1. Minutes of Special Council Meeting – October 17, 2023

THAT the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on October 17, 2023, be approved as presented.

3.2. Minutes of Council Meeting - October 24, 2023

THAT the Minutes of the Council meeting held on October 24, 2023, be approved as presented.

3.3. Minutes of Council Organizational Meeting - October 24, 2023

THAT the Minutes of the Organizational Meeting held on October 24, 2023 be approved as presented.

3.4. Bylaw No. 23/010 - Wood Buffalo Advocacy Committee

THAT Bylaw No. 23/010, being a bylaw to establish the Wood Buffalo Advocacy Committee, be read a first time.

3.5. Bylaw No. 23/022 - Fees, Rates and Charges 2024 Bylaw

THAT Bylaw No. 23/022, being the Fees, Rates and Charges Bylaw 2024, be read a first time.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Stu Wigle, Councillor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

5.2. Fort McKay Métis Nation Capital Request

Conflict of Interest

Councillor L. Waquan declared conflict of interest and exited the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

Laurie Farquharson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Fort McKay Métis Nation Capital Request, noting that the request for reimbursement of funds expended to pave a private roadway and parking lot does not align with existing programs, projects or municipal grant opportunities, therefore Administration is recommending that the request be denied.

Delegation

Jennifer Vardy, Director of Government Relations and External Affairs, and Ron Quintal, President, Fort McKay Métis Nation spoke in opposition to the administrative recommendation and requested that reimbursement be provided.

MOTION:

THAT the Fort McKay Métis Nation Capital Request be deferred to Council's Budget deliberations scheduled for December 11 to 14, 2023.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Keith McGrath, Councillor
SECONDER:	Shafiq Dogar, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

Return

Councillor L. Waquan returned to the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Vacating Chair

Mayor S. Bowman vacated the Chair at 6:46 p.m., at which time Deputy Mayor L. Waquan assumed the Chair.

6.2. Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Plan - Pilot Project - On Road/Direct Trail Use in Abasand - Mayor S. Bowman

With agreement of Council, Mayor S. Bowman put forward a slightly revised motion, adjusting the date from the end of 2023 to end of the first quarter 2024.

Mayor S. Bowman spoke to his motion, noting that developing the pilot project would allow implementation of regulations relative to usage of off-highway vehicles in a safer environment.

Delegations

Jason Mills and John Fenner, Wood Buffalo Recreational Riders Association, spoke in support of the recommendation.

Exit and Return

Councillor S. Dogar exited the meeting at 7:28 p.m. and returned to the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

MOTION:

THAT Administration be directed to bring forward a plan for a future pilot project that would allow for Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) on road/direct route to trail use in Abasand, such plan to come forward before the end of the first quarter 2024.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Sandy Bowman, Mayor
SECONDER:	Stu Wigle, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

Resuming of Chair

Mayor S. Bowman resumed the Chair at 7:31 p.m.

Recess

A recess occurred from 7:31 p.m. to 7:52 p.m.

4. Presentations

4.1. Shannon Rex and Christopher Cameron, FuseSocial re: Current State of the Sector and Tomorrow Project Collective Impact Update

Mayor S. Bowman advised that due to a time commitment, the presenters were unable to stay for the duration of the meeting, therefore this item will be re-scheduled to a later date.

4.2. Erin Seiger, Manager, Emergency Management re: Emergency Management Activations - Summer 2023

Erin Seiger, Manager, Emergency Management and Regional Fire Chief Jody Butz, presented the Emergency Management Activations - Summer 2023, providing chronological data on the various incidents which occurred between April 2023 and September 2023, and the activities undertaken by Regional Emergency Services during the various activations.

5. New and Unfinished Business

5.1. Advisory Committee on Aging Annual Update

Luana Bussieres, Vice-Chair, Advisory Committee on Aging, and Deanne Bergey, Director, Community and Protective Services, presented the Committee's Annual Update, noting that age-friendly efforts will continue to be a priority for the Committee who continues to advocate for accessible housing options for older adults in the region.

It was also requested that the Mayor send a letter to the Minister of Infrastructure requesting that the remaining land at Willow Square Continuing Care Centre site be transferred to the Municipality or held for an aging-in-place facility at a nominal fee of \$1.00.

MOTION:

THAT the Advisory Committee on Aging Annual Update be accepted as information; and

THAT the Mayor be authorized on behalf of Council to send a support letter to the Minister of Infrastructure requesting that the remaining land at the Willow Square Continuing Care Centre site be transferred to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo or held for aging-in-place facility at a nominal fee of \$1.00.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Funky Banjoko, Councillor
SECONDER:	Loretta Waquan, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

5.3. 2023 Request for Property Tax Arrears Write-Off

Laurie Farquharson, Chief Financial Officer, and Keivan Navidi, Senior Manager, Assessment and Taxation, spoke to the 2023 Request for Property Tax Arrears Write-Off, noting Council approval is required to write-off arrears which are deemed non-collectible.

MOTION:

THAT the recommended Property Tax Arrears Write-Off of \$428,375.63, dated October 23, 2023, as Attachment 1, be approved.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
SECONDER:	Loretta Waquan, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

5.4. 2023 Reserve Bids and Sale Conditions for Tax Sale Properties

Laurie Farquharson, Chief Financial Officer and Keivan Navidi, Senior Manager, Assessment and Taxation, presented the Reserve Bids and Sale Conditions for Tax Sale Properties, noting that Administration will continue to reach agreements and receive payments until the date of the public auction, and properties will continue to be removed from the list.

MOTION:

THAT the reserve bids and sale conditions be established as listed in Attachment 1, dated November 14, 2023.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
SECONDER:	Loretta Waquan, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle

5.5. 2023 Q3 Capital Project Status Update

Laurie Farquharson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the 2023 Q3 Capital Project Status Update, noting that the report has been developed to provide a comprehensive look at approved capital projects, and includes 2023 and prior approved budget details, actual spend to date, current progress to date and future plans.

Exits and Return

Councillor K. McGrath exited the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

Councillor L. Bussieres exited the meeting at 8:51 p.m. and returned to the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

MOTION:

THAT the Capital Project Status Report, as summarized on Attachment 1, be accepted as information.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
SECONDER:	Stu Wigle, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Cardinal, Dogar, Grandison, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle
ABSENT:	McGrath

5.6. 2023 Q3 Financial Performance Report

Laurie Farquharson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the 2023 Q3 Financial Performance Report, speaking to the various components of the report being annual projections, operating expenses, capital project spending, cash and investments, term to maturity, financial commitments, grants, and extraordinary events.

Return

Councillor K. McGrath returned to the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

Exit

Councillor K. Cardinal disconnected and exited the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

MOTION:

THAT the 2023 Q3 Financial Performance Report be accepted as information.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Loretta Waquan, Councillor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle
ABSENT:	Cardinal

5.7. Abraham Place Traffic Assessment - Council Motion

Keith Smith, Director, Public Works and James Semple, Supervisor, Traffic Operations, presented the Abraham Place Traffic Assessment report, noting that based on field observations and traffic volume counts undertaken by Administration, and an adjustment to the intersection timing to provide a longer turning phase during the peak times, it is recommended that no improvements be undertaken at this time.

Exit and Return

Councillor S. Wigle exited the meeting at 9:30 p.m. and returned at 9:35 p.m.

Delegation

Abdulsalam Abdu, President, Markaz-ul-Islam, and Bashir Ikharia, Vice-President, Projects, spoke in opposition to the administrative recommendation.

Exit and Return

Councillor K. McGrath exited the meeting at 10:02 p.m. and returned at 10:03 p.m.

MOTION:

THAT the road and intersection remain unchanged, as outlined in Option 1.

RESULT:	CARRIED [7 TO 3]
MOVER:	Ken Ball, Councillor
SECONDER:	Allan Grandison, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Bussieres, Grandison, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle
AGAINST:	Banjoko, Dogar, McGrath
ABSENT:	Cardinal

Recess

A recess occurred from 10:10 p.m. to 10:18 p.m. at which time Councillor K. McGrath and Councillor L. Waquan were not in attendance.

5.8. Bylaw No. 23/012 - Public Notice Bylaw

Sonia Soutter, Manager, Legislative Services, presented the Public Notice Bylaw No. 23/012, noting that following conclusion of the Public Hearing, the Bylaw was posted as required under the *Municipal Government Act*, and no petition has been received on the matter.

MOTION:

THAT Bylaw No. 23/012, being the Public Notice Bylaw, be read a second time.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Allan Grandison, Councillor
SECONDER:	Jane Stroud, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Dogar, Grandison, Stroud, Wigle
ABSENT:	Cardinal, McGrath, Waquan

MOTION:

THAT Bylaw No. 23/012 be read a third and final time.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Allan Grandison, Councillor
SECONDER:	Stu Wigle, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Dogar, Grandison, Stroud, Wigle
ABSENT:	Cardinal, McGrath, Waquan

6. Councillors' Motions

6.3. Advocacy Letter – Gaza – Humanitarian Ceasefire - Councillor S. Dogar

Councillor S. Dogar spoke to his request for a letter to federal representatives to bring about a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.

Delegation

Abdulsalam Abdu, President, Markaz-ul-Islam, spoke in support of the recommendation.

Returns

Councillors K. McGrath and L. Waquan returned to the meeting at 10:27 p.m.

MOTION:

THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Council, send a letter to federal representatives urging the Federal Government to do everything possible to bring about a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, to secure the release of all hostages and get humanitarian aid to families in need.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shafiq Dogar, Councillor
SECONDER:	Funky Banjoko, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle
ABSENT:	Cardinal

6.1. Utility Services - Councillor K. McGrath

Councillor K. McGrath spoke to his recommendation, noting the need for businesses to pay for municipal utility services they utilize, and measures should be put in place to ensure compliance.

MOTION:

THAT Administration be directed to review and bring forward a bylaw or bylaw amendments that allow for withholding access to municipal utility services where there is a history of unpaid amounts owing for these services including the landfill.

RESULT:	CARRIED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Keith McGrath, Councillor
SECONDER:	Stu Wigle, Councillor
FOR:	Bowman, Ball, Banjoko, Bussieres, Dogar, Grandison, McGrath, Stroud, Waquan, Wigle
ABSENT:	Cardinal

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Mayor

Chief Legislative Officer