

MINUTES OF A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Monday, February 3, 2025
Council Chambers, District of Hope Municipal Office
325 Wallace Street, Hope, British Columbia

Council Members Present: Mayor Victor Smith
Councillor Angela Skoglund
Councillor Scott Medlock
Councillor Heather Stewin
Councillor Dusty Smith
Councillor Pauline Newbigging

Staff Present: John Fortoloczky, Chief Administrative Officer
Donna Bellingham, Director of Corporate Services
Thomas Cameron, Fire Chief
Dave Hick, FireSmart Coordinator/Assistant Chief
Branden Morgan, Deputy Corporate Officer

Others Present: 1 member of the public
Conor Corbett, Frontera Forest Solutions

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved / Seconded

THAT the February 3, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda be adopted, as presented. **CARRIED.**

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

(a) Committee of the Whole

Moved / Seconded

THAT the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held January 13, 2025, be adopted, as presented. **CARRIED.**

4. DELEGATIONS

(a) Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan

Conor Corbett, Frontera Forest Solutions, and Dave Hick, District of Hope FireSmart Coordinator/Assistant Chief, were in attendance to present to Council regarding the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan. In their presentation, the following items were discussed:

- Community Wildfire Resiliency Plans
 - High-level strategy for managing wildfire risk in a community
 - Directed at and adopted by local governments

- Funded through provincial government grants
- Includes population and area statistics, growth trends, parks, environment, and natural landscape, and considers climate and weather including climate change
- Key Factors
 - Wildfires can involve structures through both radiant heat and ember showers
 - Increasing wildfire risk:
 - Heavily forested portions of the community
 - Continuous conifer forests surround community
 - Extremely steep slopes
 - Dry, warm summers
 - Variable winds
 - Mitigating wildfire risk:
 - Strong local BC Wildfire Service presence
 - Multiple large fuel breaks
 - Location at the base of a valley
 - Excellent regional connectivity
- Wildfire Behaviour and Risk in Hope
 - A mix of moderate to high wildfire behaviour under typical summer fire conditions
 - Anticipated that most wildfires will be burning upslope away from the community, and that downhill or sidehill spread will be slowed by ample fuel breaks
 - For example, the 2022 Flood Falls Fire spread rapidly uphill and away from the community, but the danger of embers being spread by high winds into the community still existed
 - Wildfire risk is moderate in areas nearest to homes meaning that while wildfire can occur during typical fire seasons, there is a high likelihood of containment by the BC Wildfire Service and the Hope Fire Department
 - The highest risk scenario to Hope is a large wildfire occurring within a few kilometers of town similar to the Flood Falls Fire
- Recommendations and Disciplines of FireSmart
 - Education
 - Continue to enhance and expand existing FireSmart programs
 - Install wildfire danger signage and complete demonstration projects to show FireSmart vegetation management
 - Community Planning
 - Identify wildfire as a natural hazard in the Official Community Plan
 - Integrate FireSmart design principles into future District led construction
 - Development Considerations

- Interagency Co-operation
- Emergency Planning
 - Complete training exercises to strengthen relationships and ensure seamless, multi-agency responses to wildfires
 - Set up formal and regular Community FireSmart and Resiliency Committee meets for collaboration and information sharing
- FireSmart and Cross Training
- Fuel Management
 - Identify fuel management areas for community education or reducing ignitions
 - Small fuel management projects at the base of steep, coniferous vegetated areas within and around the District
- Other Communities
 - Many communities in BC are behind on managing and mitigating wildfire risk
 - Hope has the opportunity to get ahead of this problem by expanding their existing programs

Council inquired as to the next steps that Mr. Corbett believes the District should be taking. Mr. Corbett advised that the District should continue to seek funding through grant opportunities in order to maintain and expand existing FireSmart programs, and added that having the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan in place increases the number of available grants. The CAO noted that senior staff have reviewed the recommendations and have identified several opportunities that align with the strategic plan.

5. QUESTION PERIOD

There were no questions raised.

6. CLOSE

Moved / Seconded

THAT the February 3, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting adjourn at 7:24 p.m.
CARRIED.

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held on February 3, 2025 in Council Chambers of the District of Hope, British Columbia.

Original Signed by Victor Smith
Mayor

Original Signed by Donna Bellingham
Director of Corporate Services