



NOTICE OF MOTION

Date: October 17th, 2022
To: Mayor and Council
From: Councillor Kyle Sampson
Subject: Request for Provincial Ministry Meetings and Public Update
RE: Public Safety, Health and Addictions Crisis, Housing Shortage
Attachment: None

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council directs staff to organize a workshop to develop a strategic framework inclusive of current, and potential initiatives the City and other community partners have undertaken/ identified to present to the provincial representatives mentioned in the next motion.
2. That Council formally requests that representatives from:
 - a. The Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction
 - b. The Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions
 - c. The Ministry of Health
 - d. The Attorney General and the Minister responsible for Housing
 - e. Northern Health
 - f. BC Housing

Come to the City to Prince George to engage in meetings with Council for an opportunity for the Ministries to inform Council, City staff, and the public of what steps and initiatives the Provincial Government is and will be taking to address the crisis our community is facing with respect to homelessness and the encampments, as well as with our severe addictions and mental health crisis; and for the City to further emphasize the increasing challenges our community is experiencing. And, that information surrounding the Provincial Governments plans to address prolific offenders, including how the recently developed independent BC Prolific Offenders Report will be used to support policing and law enforcement in our community, as well as the impacts the report will have on the provincial court system and how charges are/are not recommended to crown.

3. That Council directs Administration to develop a meeting format with input from Council and Ministry Staff that would allow for fulsome discussion, information gathering, potential site visits, as well as for participation from our locally elected provincial, federal, first nations, regional district representatives, and relevant City staff personnel.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Prince George is facing a number of crises that are impacting the daily lives of all residents in our community. The need for our Council to take further action towards reducing the impacts felt by those connected with these crises needs to take priority now. It is important to note, organizing meetings of this caliber with high profile Ministries can take time, and it is important that while staff coordinate these meetings, Council continues to work towards building the framework for potential solutions and ideas pitched as “made in PG solutions”.

The most recent BC Coroners report found that northern BC has the second highest drug toxicity death rates by health services delivery area per 100,000¹. In addition to this, the *2020/21 Report on Homeless Counts in BC* indicates that Prince George, by far, has the highest number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Northern BC. It also highlights that Prince George has the 7th highest homeless count within the reported municipalities²; one could argue that although we have become the social service hub of the north (by default), Prince George has significantly fewer provincial resources than those peer municipalities located in BC’s southern interior and lower mainland.

The impacts of homelessness, the encampments, as well as the mental health and addictions epidemic are a growing concern and are impacting all residents of our community, including those living directly with these struggles. Although areas like health, housing, mental health, and addictions are not under the jurisdiction of a local government, this is our community, and we need to take the next steps beyond simple advocacy and gain the supports necessary to resolve these issues.

In addition to the mental health, addictions, and housing issues, our city is experiencing a crisis when it comes to prolific offenders and how their regular committing of crimes affects our community, including often targeting the vulnerable population. It is imperative that we continue to do our part as a municipality and provide the necessary police resources, however, we need more answers from the provincial government on their plans to help address these limited individuals who are causing the majority of crime throughout our city. I believe that the independent provincial government prolific offenders report³ that was recently released will provide opportunity for a new outlook on how our two governments can address those prolific offenders that have a negative effect on our community.

As mentioned, these areas of concern are not under the jurisdiction of a local government, nevertheless, we must be concerned about our own future and take a leadership role, bringing the necessary parties together to address these issues in a collaborative and effective way. Through this meeting, one of the primary goals should be to find areas in which our municipal and provincial governments intersect. This ensures that discussions can move beyond advocacy and real action can begin to be taken from each party to make progress towards a plan with actionable items that bring respite and resolve to the issues mentioned above. The results of this meeting and the actionable items must be clearly communicated out to the public.

Respectfully Submitted,



Councillor Kyle Sampson

The date for this motion to be considered is at the December 5th, 2022, regular council meeting.

CC;

Shirley Bond, MLA Prince George – Valemount

Mike Morris, MLA Prince George – Mackenzie

Todd Doherty, MP Cariboo – Prince George

Bob Zimmer, MP Prince George – Peace River

Chief Dolleen Logan – Lheidli T'enneh First Nation

Art Kaehn, Board Chair – Regional District of Fraser – Fort George

CORNERS SERVICE, ILLICIT DRUG TOXICITY DEATH IN BC – Published September 2022:

¹ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>

2020/21 REPORT ON HOMELESS COUNTS IN BC – Published December 2021:

² <https://www.bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2020-21-BC-Homeless-Counts.pdf>

A RAPID INVESTIGATION INTO REPEAT OFFENDING AND RANDOM STRANGER VIOLENCE IN BC – Published September 2022:

³ https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Prolific_Offender_Report_BCFNJC_submission.pdf