

**DATE:** December 14, 2023

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Garth Frizzell, Chair, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Advocacy for a Host Community ESS Reception Centre

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Council APPROVES the following resolution:

*WHEREAS the City of Prince George is proud, well positioned, and routinely provides host community support to the region as community's grapple with more frequent emergencies, and;*

*WHEREAS no dedicated facilities have been constructed in the region to appropriately manage this response, leading to frequent reception center relocations which add unnecessary strain on all involved;*

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Central Local Government Association request the province fund a permanent Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George for the North Central Local Government Area.*

## PURPOSE:

To provide Council a potential advocacy route to establish a permanent host community reception center, as identified as a priority within the Department of Public Safety and recommended by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

## BACKGROUND:

The City of Prince George is proud to support our neighbors as a host community during emergencies. Activating the Prince George Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has become an almost annual task. The City set up some form of host community Emergency Social Services (ESS) reception centre in 2017, 2018, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

For the 2023 season the City's EOC was activated on May 5<sup>th</sup> and continued to provide host community services until October 3<sup>rd</sup> (139 days). Within that period the ESS Reception Centre was moved 8 times to accommodate other municipal activities, adding unnecessary strain and confusion to the emergency operation as well as additional staff resources.

These movements were necessitated as no dedicated space for an ESS reception centre exists within the city. As such, civic facilities are used as they are available and reconfigured as prescheduled activities take place.

The proposed solution to this challenge would be for the establishment of a purpose-built, seasonally activated, facility to function as a dedicated host community ESS reception centre. Locating that facility in Prince George, as the most common host community in the region, is suggested.

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

It is assessed that the establishment of a dedicated ESS reception center supports several City priorities including climate change adaptation, under the Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action Pillar as example.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

At this time there are no financial considerations related to this advocacy.

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

At its meeting on December 11, 2023, the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs reviewed this item and offered the following recommendation:

*“That the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs RECOMMENDS that Council endorse the proposed resolution to the North Central Local Government Association as presented in the report dated November 20, 2023 from the Manager of Intergovernmental Relations titled “Advocacy for the Establishment of a Permanent Emergency Social Service Host Community Reception Centre in the North Central Local Government Area” with the final clause amended to state: “THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED” that the North Central Local Government Association request the province fund a permanent Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George for the North Central Local Government Area.” and that the resolution be sent to the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation before being sent to the North Central Local Government Association”.*

With that feedback incorporated the proposed resolution is:

*"WHEREAS" the City of Prince George is proud, well positioned, and routinely provides host community support to the region as community's grapple with more frequent emergencies, and;*

*"WHEREAS" no dedicated facilities have been constructed in the region to appropriately manage this response, leading to frequent reception center relocations which add unnecessary strain on all involved;*

*"THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED" that the North Central Local Government Association request the province fund a permanent Host Community Reception Centre in the City of Prince George for the North Central Local Government Area.*

If Council supports the recommendation staff will communicate to the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation for their awareness before submitting the resolution to the North Central Local Government Association.

#### **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Garth Frizzell, Chair, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

Prepared: Eric Depenau, Manager, Intergovernmental Relations

**APPROVED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2024/01/08