

STAFF REPORT TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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DATE: May 13, 2024

TO: STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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

SUBJECT: Proposed Motion – Gender Based Violence

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Draft Motion to Declare a Gender-Based Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic in the City of Prince George
2. January 30, 2024, Mayor’s Report to Council: Participation in the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2024

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION this report titled, “Proposed Motion – Gender Based Violence”, dated May 13, 2024.

PURPOSE:

To provide the committee with an option to move forward an advocacy item contained within the February 23, 2024, report titled “Update on Municipal Role in Fighting Human Trafficking” related to exploring the municipalities’ role in fighting human trafficking.

BACKGROUND:

At the Dec 11th committee meeting the Committee directed administration to return a report to the committee with advocacy options within the municipal scope in consultation with organizations such as the Elizabeth Fry Society, Carrier Sekani Family Services, the Canadian Human Trafficking Organization, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and the RCMP related to combating human trafficking. An initial report was provided on January 15th, 2024 (Document# 700537), a further report was brought to the committee on February 23rd, 2024 (Document# 703865). This report provides an option to advance an item contained within the February 23rd report.

1) A pledge to mark intimate partner violence as an epidemic could be explored.

As the two social issues (intimate partner violence, and human trafficking) are often related to one another, this pledge is an action that more than 90 municipalities have undertaken in Ontario. See item 12 below for further comments on pledged. If the committee would like further research to be completed to this end staff would request a motion.

As background, this action is suggested as human trafficking and these forms of violence are two criminal, social challenges, that are often related to one another. This deceleration is an action that more than 90 municipalities have undertaken in Ontario to help raise awareness of the issue.

Further awareness is assessed as necessary as, according to national data, only one in five intimate partner violence crimes are reported to police. Even so, the number of police reports rose across the country in each year between 2015 and 2021. Full text: (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/221019/dq221019c-eng.htm>)

Here in BC, the BC Prosecution Service began releasing statistics about intimate partner violence files in its 2022 annual report. Examining the number of reports received from police recommending criminal charges in these cases shows that for the five previous years, one in five reports submitted to Crown counsel has been an intimate partner violence file. In terms of the actual number of files, the five-year average is 13,221 – which works out to 36 files per day if spread across 365 days, according to the 2022/2023 BC Prosecution Service report. Full text of the annual report: [BC Prosecution Service Annual Report 2022/23 \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/prosecution-service/annual-reports/2022-23)

There are several other items from the February 23rd report that have been motioned for follow-up. Examples include continued participation in the February 22nd National Day to End Human Trafficking. The committee has also requested follow up on the Human Trafficking Prevention Network, a program announced earlier this year by the Lieutenant Governor and Shell Canada. The committee has asked for further research to be completed around membership in the network.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Work to better understand the municipalities' role in combating crime, including human trafficking, may be considered in relation to the City's strategic pillar of Social Health and Well Being. Specifically, ensuring a safe, healthy, and clean community for all.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

No financial considerations arising from the proposed actions. The works described are within the regular duties of municipal staff and capacity is assessed as present should these items be recommended for further exploration.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This report provides an update on engagement completed around this subject since the last update and is provided for information.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Garth Frizzell, Chair, Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

PREPARED BY: Eric Depenau, Acting Director, Administrative Services

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2024/05/21