



NOTICE OF MOTION

Date: May 17, 2025
To: Mayor and Council
From: Councillor Trudy Klassen and Councillor Brian Skakun
Subject: UBCM Resolution endorsement
Attachments: none

The date for this motion to be considered is at the June 09, 2025 regular council meeting.

Recommendation:

Recommendation that Council endorse this UBCM Resolution for 2025:

Resolution Title: Strengthen Council Governance

WHEREAS the Community Charter undermines voter intention by misaligning Council and municipal officer's incentives, as Section 152(2) requires a two-thirds vote of all council members to terminate a municipal officer;

WHEREAS Section 151's mandate to review suspensions at the next meeting is too short to properly review a suspension thoroughly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM call on the provincial government to amend the Community Charter Section 152(2), allowing termination of a municipal officer by a simple majority vote of council members present, with notice and opportunity to be heard;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that UBCM urge the provincial government to amend the Community Charter Section 151(2) to extend the suspension review period of a municipal officer to the third meeting after suspension, with notice and opportunity to be heard;

Rationale:

Elections empower the public to shape municipal policy through their chosen council, with municipal officers tasked to serve the public by supporting elected officials. Council's role is governance, not passive oversight. However, the Community Charter disrupts this relationship by creating misaligned incentives.

The issue lies in structural flaws: Council relies in part on municipal officers for information, and officers' job security depends in part on Council's decisions. Yet, Section 152(2)'s two-thirds vote requirement for termination allows a minority of council members to maintain an officer, shifting governing power from the majority to a minority. This contradicts voter expectations of majority rule.

Municipal officers, controlling the flow of information to Council, wield significant influence. Without proper incentives to serve the entire Council equitably, they may prioritize a supportive minority, undermining accountability. Similarly, Section 151's mandate for suspension review at the next meeting is too brief for thorough assessment, risking hasty or poorly informed decisions.

This resolution seeks to realign incentives by enabling a simple majority vote for officer termination and extending suspension reviews to the third meeting. These changes empower Council to better reflect voter priorities, enhance accountability, and strengthen democratic governance.

Alignment with City of Prince George Council's Strategic Priorities:

- **City Governance and Infrastructure Priorities:**

Strategic Goal: Engage the community in exploring expectations, needs and priorities.

- Identify, develop, resource, and implement a range of one-way and two-way engagement methods to connect with the community.

Alignment: Elected to govern Prince George, Council holds the public's trust to enact their will. Election of Council is the most basic and primary engagement with the public. The Community Charter's two-thirds vote requirement (Section 152(2)) allows a minority of Council to block municipal officer changes, even when officers fail to serve the entire Council equitably. This undermines the Strategic Plan's call for robust community engagement by sidelining the electorate's reasonable expectations.

- Amending Section 152(2) to allow termination by a simple majority vote restores Council's ability to align administration with the electorate's vision, ensuring community priorities drive governance.

- **Economic Diversity and Growth Priorities**

Strategic Goal: Promote Prince George as a thriving business hub by developing incentives and supports to attract and retain professionals, businesses, and entrepreneurs.

- Alignment: Prince George's economic growth depends on governance that champions the needs of our business community and draws new entrepreneurs. Realizing this vision requires an administration aligned with Council's Strategic Plan, one that supports the risk-takers and innovators fueling economic progress. Administrators, often more risk-averse than elected officials or business leaders, may favor stability over bold economic strategies. Section 152(2) of the Community Charter worsens this by requiring a two-thirds Council vote to terminate municipal officers, enabling a minority of Council to protect officers who resist innovative economic priorities. This imbalance grants excessive power to administration, undermining Council's authority.
 - Amending Section 152(2) to allow a simple majority vote empowers Council to align administration with economic goals, ensuring policies support existing businesses and attract new ventures.

MyPG Sustainability Plan:

- **Strategic Goal:** Strengthen governance to align with Prince George's integrated community sustainability plan (myPG, 2010).

Alignment: The myPG plan, built on extensive public engagement, emphasizes effective governance to achieve a shared sustainable vision. The Community Charter's minority veto power (Section 152(2)) and rushed suspension reviews (Section 151) hinder Council's ability to align administration with this vision.

- The resolution's proposed amendments, allowing a simple majority vote for officer termination and extending suspension reviews to the third meeting, ensure Council can uphold the myPG plan's goals, enhancing accountability and community-driven governance.

Financial Considerations:

No direct costs. The resolution offers financial opportunities by improving governance accountability, aligning administration with community needs, and fostering economic growth through responsive policies.

Discussion:

Voters elect Council to fulfill campaign promises, but the Community Charter undermines this mandate. Section 152(2)'s two-thirds vote requirement allows a minority to block officer terminations, while Section 151's next-meeting suspension review limits thorough oversight. These flaws weaken Council's authority under Section 114, misaligning administration with voter priorities.

Low voter turnout (often below 30% in Prince George) reflects growing apathy and eroded trust. One of the most common objections heard when knocking on doors during the campaign was "Why bother, voting makes no difference to how the city is managed because Council has no authority."

Amending Section 152(2) to allow a simple majority vote and extending suspension reviews to the third meeting, both with notice and opportunity to be heard, fixes the structural error in the Community Charter. It is a step toward empowering Council to govern effectively, restoring democratic accountability and public confidence.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Brian Skakun



Councillor Trudy Klassen
