

June 10, 2025

Mayor and Council
City of Prince George
ethan.anderson@princegeorge.ca

RE: June 9, 2025 Council Meeting
Public Comments re: Investigative Journalism

Dear Mayor and Councillor,

I wish to take direct issue with a comment Councillor Trudy Klassen stated at the Prince George City Council meeting which took place on Monday, June 9, 2025. The comments were made during the debate of the notice of motion regarding public notice advertising. I attended the meeting, and upon further review of the recorded video of the council meeting (easily found at the City of Prince George website), I wish to highlight the following statement starting at the 44:58 mark of the recording:

Councillor Klassen stated:

"I think it's important, I think the value that The Citizen provides to us through the investigative reporting they do that is then.... I don't believe any other media outlets do that type of thing and so.... Um... and and they can... by The Citizen doing the investigative reporting other... our other local media outfits... um... are able to use that for their own reporting and and spread it out even more..."

There is no reading between the lines of the words of Councillor Klassen. Ms Klassen is clearly stating that Pattison Media and other Local Media are looking to The Citizen's published news and then creating stories from that content or story idea. I find this comment distasteful and disrespectful to the hard-working journalists in the local media market, many of which have spent decades reporting on local news that matters to our city and region.

Pattison Media prides itself on providing local news to the region. Our team of reporters and video journalists work hard to provide news that matters in an accurate and ethical manner.

Pattison Media is a member of the Radio Television Digital News Association of Canada (RTDNACanada) and as such follows the RTDNACanada Code of Journalistic Ethics (the code) in news gathering and reporting. As the code states, our commitment to accuracy, fairness, independence, integrity and respect supersedes the desire to be the first to publish a breaking news story. Suffice to say, in all cases, stories are often being investigated by multiple news organizations, and we choose to ensure the details are correct as opposed to being the first to the finish line.

A copy of the RTDNACanada Code of Journalistic Ethics is included at the end of this letter for your current and future reference.

Investigative Journalism involves story creation through a reporters own initiative that is important and relevant to viewers, listeners and readers. This kind of reporting often shines a less then positive light on

individuals or organizations. If the investigative story lacks truth, it can be quite damning to the organization or individual. We have seen this happen over the past 14 months on at least one story that lacked such truth from a local news outlet.

Pattison Media and the CKPG News team are engaged in investigative journalism in a responsible manner on a regular basis. The CKPG News team have filed no less than two dozen Freedom on Information requests (FOI) regarding stories we have been working on over recent history. The FOI requests at times turn into a story and at other times do not. We choose to run stories that are fair and most importantly accurate.

There are many locally relevant topics that the CKPG News team has published a news story, both written and video, that are not picked up by other local media despite the importance to the community. There are many stories that the CKPG News team have published that are covered by other media outlets. That is the benefit of NEWS in that it is there for all to cover and share with their audience and often multiple entities are working on the same story at the same time. To suggest “local media outlets” are simply taking the information published by The Citizen and making their own story of it is simply wrong.

I request this letter be included as correspondence at the next meeting of council as scheduled for Monday June 23, 2025 at 6pm.

Through to Councillor Klassen, I find the statement you made in your position of public office at the public council meeting to be inaccurate and I believe an apology is due. I further request the apology be made at the council meeting scheduled for June 23, 2025 at 6pm.

I would be happy to discuss this with you if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Kevin Gemmell

General Manager

99.3 REWIND Radio | 101.3 The River | CKPG-TV | CKPGToday.ca
Divisions of Pattison Media Ltd.

cc-

Mayor Simon Yu

Councillor Tim Bennett

Councillor Garth Frizzell

Councillor Ron Polillo

Walter Babicz, City Manager, City of Prince George

Ethan Anderson, Manager of Legislative Services, City of Prince George

Councillor Cori Ramsey

Councillor Kyle Sampson

Councillor Susan Scott

Councillor Brian Skakun



RTDNA Canada
Radio Television Digital News Association
Association de Radio, Télévision et Informations Numériques

Code of Journalistic Ethics

PREAMBLE

An informed public is vital to a democratic society. Canadian journalism's purpose is to serve the public interest.

It is our responsibility to act independently, to be fair and respectful, and to report the facts.

This Code of Ethics is based on more than a century of journalistic experience and represents our membership's guiding principles.

We welcome its adoption by all practicing journalists.

1. ACCURACY

We are committed to journalism in the public interest that is accurate and reliable. Journalists will strive to verify facts and put them in context.

- 1.1. We will attribute news sources on the record whenever possible. Sources will be kept confidential only when there is overriding public interest and when sources risk retribution or other serious harm.
- 1.2. Accuracy also requires us to update and correct news and information throughout the life cycle of a news story as we become aware of relevant and reliable information.
- 1.3. Errors and inaccuracy that affect the understanding of a news story will be unambiguously and promptly corrected.
- 1.4. The commitment to accuracy also applies to verifying third party or user-generated content.

2. FAIRNESS

We are committed to impartial, unbiased journalism that serves the public interest through the free and open exchange of ideas, and respects the diversity of society.

- 2.1. Journalists should be fair and balanced, and avoid allowing their personal biases to influence their reporting. News events and public issues may be analyzed and put into context, but commentary, opinion or editorializing must be kept distinct from regular news coverage.
- 2.2. We will clearly distinguish news content from advertising and other forms of sponsorship.
- 2.3. Race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age or mental or physical disabilities will only be reported when relevant to news coverage.
- 2.4. Journalists should be responsive to questions of fairness posed by the public.

3.0 INDEPENDENCE

Journalism's first obligation is to act in the public interest. We will resist any attempts at censorship or interference, direct or indirect, which would undermine the principle of editorial independence.

- 3.1. We will oppose any corporate, political or other attempts to influence our journalistic decisions.
- 3.2. We will pay our own way and not accept payments, gifts or favours in exchange for news coverage.
- 3.3. We will not pay subjects or sources that have a vested interest in a story. Commentators or contracted experts are exempted.

- 3.4. We will apply the same journalistic standards of fairness and balance when reporting news about owners. We will oppose attempts by owners, either directly or indirectly, to influence news coverage.

4. INTEGRITY

We will govern ourselves on and off the job in a manner that avoids conflict of interest, real or perceived. When conflicts are unavoidable, they should be disclosed.

- 4.1. We avoid deceiving the people we cover or misrepresenting ourselves in any way, unless it is clearly in the public interest.
- 4.2. We identify clearly any part of our news coverage which is rehearsed or recreated.
- 4.3. Never plagiarize. We give proper attribution to the research, words, ideas, images, sound and intellectual property of others.
- 4.4. We recognize that expressing personal opinions publicly or in social media can erode our ability to be perceived as fair and balanced in our news coverage. It affects our personal reputations and those of our news organizations.

5. RESPECT

Our conduct will be respectful, always taking into account editorial relevance and the public interest.

- 5.1. We will endeavor to respect the dignity of everyone, especially when news involves children and the vulnerable.
- 5.2. We will act with sensitivity and restraint when reporting on potentially dangerous situations and when using violent or graphic images and descriptions.
- 5.3. We will treat people with decency, courtesy and consideration and we will strive not to distort the character or importance of events by our presence.
- 5.4. We will avoid sensationalism.
- 5.5. We will not infringe on a person's privacy unless we believe there is overriding public interest.