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January 20, 2026

To Mayor and Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Spruce Capital Senior Recreation Centre, both as its Administrator and as a senior who understands firsthand the importance of community, connection, and support. The recent vote not to support the Senior Centres in Prince George has created a tremendous reaction among seniors across our city. Many felt overlooked and forgotten, and I believe it is important to clarify the original intent behind the December 12, 2025 discussion regarding the Contingency Fund. The goal was to ensure that all senior centres received equitable support—not just one.

The Senior Centres in Prince George are an essential part of seniors' daily lives. Every day, hundreds of seniors come together to enjoy Bingo, Canasta, Cardio Drumming, Yoga, Seated Exercises, Crib, art classes, and simple social drop-ins that provide connection, purpose, and joy. These activities are not luxuries; they are lifelines that combat isolation, support mental and physical health, and create a sense of belonging.

The Spruce Capital Senior Centre, located on Rainbow Drive, is the smallest of the five centres, yet last year we served more than 150 members and welcomed over 12,000 visits through our doors. Seniors come not only for recreation but for social support, companionship, and a safe place to feel seen and valued. Many of our members felt deeply discouraged when they believed their needs were not considered by certain council members—especially when decisions were made without ever visiting our centre or seeing the work we do firsthand.

Many seniors in our community are living very cautiously on limited incomes from OAS, CPP, GIS, or the RRSP savings they were fortunate enough to set aside. For far too many, this is simply not enough to live on. After working hard their entire lives, seniors should not find themselves struggling to meet basic needs or sitting at the bottom of the support ladder. Rising costs of rent, food, insurance, medical care, and daily living have made life overwhelming for many. The promise of retirement is slipping away as seniors are forced back into the workforce, caring full-time for grandchildren, or selling their homes because taxes and maintenance have become unaffordable.

At the Spruce Capital Senior Centre, we do everything we can to support them. We provide hot, healthy, affordable meals four days a week—and when someone cannot afford a meal, we make sure they are still fed. Many of the women who come to our centre are widows seeking friendship, comfort, and a reason to leave the house. We offer a warm, safe, welcoming place where every senior feels included and supported. Sometimes that support is a shared laugh or a comforting hug; other times it means

helping someone fill out forms, set up online bill payments, or navigate phone plans. We have become a family for many, and the needs we meet go far beyond recreation.

While the grants currently available are appreciated, they do not cover the true cost of operating a centre that hundreds of seniors rely on every week. Each year, I am left worrying about how to raise the additional funds needed just to keep our doors open. Operating costs are our greatest challenge, yet they are the foundation of everything we provide. Without stable operational funding, the essential services that keep seniors connected, healthy, and supported are put at risk.

Seniors are the foundation of what we have built in this community. They deserve dignity, stability, and recognition. It is time to offer them a hand up—not a handout.

I am asking that you include the Spruce Capital Senior Recreation Centre, along with the four other senior centres in Prince George, in the upcoming city budget. Stable financial support is essential to ensure that we can continue to operate and provide the vital services that seniors depend on—not only for 2026, but for many years to come. We are as important to this community as the Arts, Community Foundations, Sports, and Recreation programs that already receive support. Seniors deserve the same recognition and investment.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your commitment to the well-being of all residents of Prince George.

Sincerely,

Administrator, Spruce Capital Senior Recreation Centre

Shirley Morin

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