



**COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FORT SMITH
SPECIAL MEETING SP-01-20
THE FIRST SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL FOR
THE YEAR 2020**

PRESENT: Mayor L. Napier D/M K. Smith
Cr. J. Cox Cr. L. Beaulieu
Cr. B. McArthur Cr. A. Pischinger
Cr. M. Couvrette Cr. C. Westwell
Cr. K. Campbell

REGRETS:

STAFF: C. White, A/Senior Administrative Officer
R. Nawaz, Executive Secretary

GALLERY: Premier C. Cochrane Hon. D. Thom
Hon. P. Chinna Hon. K. Nokleby
Hon. R.J Simpson Hon. S. Thompson
Hon. C. Wawzonek

M. Blake-Moore J. Soucy
Lorraine Tordiff Joan Mercerdi
Derise Rehm-Lepine Priscilla Lepine
Don Webb Mira Dunn
Denise Yuhas

Special Meeting SP-01-20 7:00 PM
February 17, 2020 Council Chambers

The purpose of the Special Meeting is to meet with Premier and Ministers of the 19th Legislative Assembly.

A. CALL TO ORDER & CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

Mayor Napier called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and confirmed quorum of Council was present.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

20-024 Moved by: Cr. Cox
Seconded by: Cr. Couvrette

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- a. Meeting with Premier and Ministers of the 19th Legislative Assembly. Mayor Napier welcomed the guests and noted that Council is grateful for their attendance. Council and Cabinet completed introductions. Mayor Napier noted that Council had a number of items they were hoping to discuss, and noted that they are hoping for the opportunity for dialogue and partnership going forward. She added that there were a few items that they wanted to bring forward that were noted coming over from the last assembly, and wanting to be recognized as a level of government when legislation is being written to be able to provide input while bills are being drafted.

Mayor Napier referred to Public Lands Act, with commissioners land within municipal boundaries and local lands issues. Mayor Napier noted that there are certain concerns such as with commissioners land within municipal boundaries, and that the Town had submitted some letter regarding this. She noted that there are concerns with leased lands

within municipal boundaries and a transfer of commissioners land to the municipality, but also the responsibility of the GNWT to take care of the lands that they current possess such as for fire abatement. Minister Thompson noted that the Public Lands Act was passed by the 18th Assembly, and the 19th Assembly and the Lands Department will be working on regulations which is to enforce the act. He noted that some challenges faced currently have been lease payments that have gone up, and land withing municipal boundaries. He noted that the development of regulations will take eighteen to thirty-six months. He added that items cannot be fast tracked as then this would effect other items. He noted that they are taking the time to ensure the work is done properly. He added that this involved consultation and working with Indigenous and Municipal governments, and noted that it is about working together to resolve the lands issue correctly this time. Minister Thompson noted that the Department of Lands has begun work on this, and noted that they have diligent staff such as the Department of Lands South Slave Superintended Ms. Rehm-Lepine who will be taking the lead and working with the South Slave. Minister Thompson noted that he was asked once that you are the Minister and can change things, and have the discretion to do so. He noted that that this is why we are here, and that we have seen discretion where certain issues have caused problems in the past. He noted that they are going to do the work that needs to be done which includes working with Indigenous Governments, Municipal Governments and the Committee of Economic Development and Environment as well. He added that fiscal challenges are faced as well, as they are \$1.1 Billion in debt.

Mayor Napier referred to the river bank, and noted that the Town has applied for climate change funding and had completed a study on what it would take to stabilize the riverbank slope. She noted that the area where the landslide occurred has been treated and did not slide, but noted that they have seen landslide activity up and down the river to where the sewage lagoon and water intake is located, and around and near park drive. She noted that it is coming closer to the infrastructure of the community and a lot of the land that is there and affected is commissioners land, and noted that the GNWT and the Town will have to work together before any damage might occur to the infrastructure in the community. She added that they have been meeting regarding fire smart and fire abatement in the community, and the Department of Lands was represented at this meeting among others. She noted that areas of the Town need to be treated for fire prevention, and some of this land is commissioners land. She noted that they are hoping to complete this work with the least amount of red tape as possible so that we are not trying to fight for land leases when we need to complete fire smarting to protect the community. She inquired what the fastest way is to make this possible, and inquired how the Town and GNWT may partner to make this as efficient as possible. Mayor Napier referred to few parcels of lands that are near the snowboard park that the Town had moved infrastructure onto for the Arctic Winter Games and are hoping to acquire. She noted that the Town has been advised to move the infrastructure to acquire the land, and noted that this is another item that is delayed due to red tape, and noted that this is another long lasting concern for the Town.

Minister Thompson referred to improvements of the slide zone, and noted that there was a commitment made between the Town and the GNWT to allow the Town to put the infrastructure on site for the Arctic Winter Games. He noted that the challenge is that the structure were not move and this it is a compliance issue. He added that in order to make the land available they must ensure everything is in compliance. He noted that they will have to conduct consultation with people and cannot just give it to the community, and that they must follow process. Minister Thompson noted that the facilities would need to be moved before the process to transfer the land may begin. Minister Thompson noted that the Department of Lands is willing to begin work once the structure are moved. He noted that he understands it's not the answer the Town would like to hear, but that they must follow process and stay consistent around the North. Minister Thompson noted that in regards to the fire smarting, he is aware that there is a committee presently that the Town is involved with and which includes Indigenous Governments and GNWT Departments. He added that ENR has informed lands regarding areas that need to be addressed immediately, and are working to address this immediately. He noted that if things are prevalent from the Towns point of view to reach out the to the Superintendent of Lands for the South Slave who is willing to work with the Town on such items. Mr. Thompson referred to the landslide concerns, and noted that this includes working with both the Federal Government and the Town to find out what we may do next to support one another and address these concerns. He stated that his understanding is that it may not have been moving for fifty years, but noted that it may be moving now as per his

communications with residents. He added that they may have to consider moving infrastructure that is in peril. Minister Thompson noted that sometimes red tape is necessary, but noted his commitment to having all three items addressed in a timely manner.

Mayor Napier noted that Council acknowledges that this is a new assembly, and that answers are not expected on every issue, but that Council is hoping to open dialogue moving forward.

Mayor Napier noted that the next item refers to the Aurora College transition, JK – 12 education and early childhood education. Mayor Napier noted that the community that has had over fifty years of partnership with the College, and spoke recently regarding the symbiotic nature of the College and Fort Smith. She noted that the Town is interested in partnering and working together to see the college move forward, courses return and see advancement in both post-secondary education and JK – 12 education. She added that they have seen the auditors report and recognize that changes need to be made. Mayor Napier referred to childcare and noted that the ability to provide a daycare to the community would assist in not only the economic development of the community, but also bring in students to the community. She noted that they are in the process of working with the community to start a daycare in the RCC. She added that they were asked to put forth a proposal for universal daycare, and noted that the response to the proposal essentially asked to put forth another proposal. Mayor Napier acknowledged that they have seen early childhood education in the mandate for the Assembly, and noted that Council would like to see the Early Childhood Education Program come to Fort Smith. She noted that it had been in Inuvik and Yellowknife for two years, and was noted to be delivered in Fort Smith next which has yet to occur. She noted that this would be beneficial to attract residents and students to the community. Mayor Napier noted that four years ago the Town partnered with the community to start a daycare society at the time. She noted at the time there were four day homes in the community which have now shut down. Mayor Napier noted that this has been a concern in the community since the last daycare burnt down. Mayor Napier noted that the Bachelor of Education program is in its last year, and noted that they understand there is currently a review occurring. She added that at the completion of this review they hope to have it return to the community as they have the infrastructure and ability to host it and highlighted the importance of the College to the communities which is a campus community and is built around Aurora College. Cr. Couvrette noted that one of the items the Town of Fort Smith is working on as a proposed resolution for the NWTAC is a call for comprehensive review of the entire education programming addressing early childhood development, JK – 12 and post-secondary education. He noted that based on the auditor generals report and previous comments made in the Assembly showcase the need to improve education in the NWT. He stated that he hopes this resolution will have support at the NWTAC and noted that he hopes this resolution will receive support at the NWTAC and that he hopes Minister Simpson will see the value in addressing something is notably deficient and make proactive moves to see a long and proactive solution to the problem.

Minister Simpson noted that he touched on a number of these concerns in his phone call with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. He noted that there was an Auditor General report in 2010 and one of the things they touched on was a lack of data. He added that work has been done in gathering that data, and this data showcases where the concerns are and the recent report highlighted them as well. Minister Simpson noted that things cannot be addressed separately, and noted that there is awareness in ECE about the continuum from perinatal childcare, early childhood development and all the way through. He noted that he is working closely with the Minister of Health regarding the early childhood portion as it is vital and important, and both department address this. Minister Simpson noted that he would look into the Town's daycare proposal right away. He acknowledged that childcare is a major issue in Fort Smith and noted that it is vital to have stable and accessible childcare for expansion or normal operations of the College. He added that if they are looking at expanding and improving the College, childcare must be available and any transformation to a poly-technic will require it. Minister Simpson noted that ideally the market would step in, but acknowledged that staffing can be a concern as well as infrastructure requirements. Minister Simpson noted that he is glad the Town wishes to be a partner because that is needed, and noted that every time education is successful is through partnerships. He stated that there is no doubt Fort Smith is the education capital and acknowledged that many people present in the room have had participated in Education. He acknowledged that there have been concerns in the past regarding how the

Government collaborates, gathers information and engages, and noted that they are addressing how to improve this. Mayor Napier noted that statistics has recently been released regarding the population that is in the justice system, and noted that it would be interesting to see the collaboration between the number of people in the justice system and the correlation of education rate. Minister Simpson noted that if there are things going on outside the classroom cannot be ignored when addressing education and social indicators are all related. He noted that we need to do a better job integration our services and holistically address concerns.

Minister Wawzonek noted that she had spoken regarding the issue in the media, and noted that we will not be reducing the over representation of Indigenous peoples within the justice system without a partnership between Justice, Health, Education and Housing, and noted that she looks forward to having those conversations. Cr. Westwell echoed the concerns regarding childcare and noted that the Municipal government is making efforts to towards cbildcare but are suffering from a lack of capacity at an employment level. He noted that legislative change and an on going programming change has left the nursery school and daycare with staffing challenges. He noted that the Town provided the space, but the municipality is suffering due to a lack of childcare.

Mayor Napier noted that the next issue they wish to highlight is decentralization and positions moved out of Fort Smith. She noted that the Town has recently lost a superintendent position and the superintendent of ITI position is in Fort Smith but is currently being worked from Hay River. She noted that the transport supervisor for Fort Smith has been working from Fort Resolutions. She added that it is her understand that an individual acting in this position for some time has not been given the opportunity to move into this position. Mayor Napier highlighted that Fort Smith and other communities are faced with a loss of positions through attrition, rebranding or being move to Yellowknife. She noted that with a smaller population, the effect of losing one position is larger that it would be in Yellowknife. She noted that losing the Bachelor of Education program which had thirty students means thirty families are lost from the community which has a ripple effect and added that Fort Smith cannot afford to lose more positions.

Minister Nokleby noted that she would commit to looking into the specific instances mentioned within her department, and noted that she has directed her Department that the supervisor position for ITI will be back in Fort Smith soon. She noted that one of the priorities of the 19th Assembly is to increase employment in the smaller center outside of Yellowknife, and noted that Cabinet is aware that the movement of services into Yellowknife has impacted communities unfavorably. She committed to providing more progress reports as they move forward. Mayor Napier also highlighted the devolution of positions and noted that they have had the MLA highlight how number of positions hasn't changed, but noted that with devolutions Federal positions became GNWT positions and thus Federal positions were lost. She noted that there should have been an increase in staff. Minister Wawzonek noted that they may be able to find out and see what the dconnection is between what happened in terms of those positions. She noted that in her time and as per her knowledge there has been no loss of positions, and that there were changes internally. She noted that if she is incorrect she is happy to be told so. Minister Wawzonek noted that Cabinet is aware and has made the commitment to try and increase employment in small communities. Minister Wawzonek noted that when evaluating programs and services the department analyses the positions proposed they consider maintaining positons in smaller communities, and noted that with the new mandate this will be strengthened. She noted that she cannot guarantee that there will never be a job loss again in Fort Smith, but that they can be aware moving forward regarding what is happening, continue to have communication and avoid job losses in the community. Cr. Westwell noted that one of the questions Council has inquire of MLA's is regarding positions in the community, and noted that a similar answer is received regarding there being no identified loss of positions in the community. He noted that they have asked three MLA's for the number of vacant positions in the community, and inquired if the Minister could provide this information. He highlighted that there are vacant positions across different departments. Minister Wawzonek noted that this is not difficult to provide as it is all tracked.

D/M Smith thanked all for attending, and noted it is not just regarding positions but also the nature of positions. He noted that in his first term during the 16th Assembly, the interaction was simpler and the Town mostly interacted with MACA, or with ENR or ITI. He noted that now Council is consistently writing angry letters to different Ministers in

Yellowknife regarding pressing concerns in the community and the lack of avenue for addressing those concerns. He noted that through the dismantling of public boards and the decrease of leadership positions in the community there is less opportunity for discussing and addressing local concerns locally. He noted that this is a great opportunity to change that and to allow local tax based communities that have autonomy, capability and capacity. He noted that the relationship between the GNWT and the municipality has changed and gaps must be filled. He noted that a number of policy decisions effect the municipalities, and gave the example of STIP days. He added that there is a number of examples such as this, and noted that there should be a government to government relationship and talk about concerns locally. Minister Simpson noted that one of the priorities is to increased decision making authority. He noted that there is a plan to reinstate the Board of Governors for the Aurora College by 2020 and to have them at more arm's length. He noted that he wishes to modernize the Education Act and noted that he will not eliminate regional boards and authorities but they may look different. He stated that he values what is offered by the local knowledge and decision making authority, and commended the work that the South Slave DCE does. He noted that STIP days came from of negotiations, and noted that there have been childcare concerns. Premier Cochrane noted that Council has received a commitment from the Minister of Finance regarding vacant positions in the community. She asked if qualifiers could be provided as part of it. She referred to the position of Director of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, and noted that the Towns MLA has been a strong advocate for this position, but highlighted that there are two Director positions for the Territory for the North and South. She noted that the representative from the South may be from Fort Smith, or Yellowknife among other communities.

Mayor Napier referred to the College Board of Governor, and referred to Minister Simpsons comments regarding qualified individuals serving on the boards. She highlighted that this has been heard before, and highlighted that the NWT is full of many qualified individuals. Premier Cochrane noted that boards have come up in this assembly, and noted that she has a issue with how board members have been allocated in the past. She noted that this discussion was had at the Cabinet table regarding qualifiers. She recognized that corporate knowledge is needed, but highlight that there should be new individuals coming in. She noted that they are addressing qualifications and terms of board members, regions and also gender balance. She highlighted that women seem to receive positions in boards with less decision making authorities, and noted that we are challenging this as a group. She noted that there are a number of educated women that can sit on any board. She highlighted that they are still a new Cabinet.

Mayor Napier referred to commends regarding discussion between departments and municipalities, and noted that Town Council has a monthly RCMP delegation to the Town of Fort Smith and there was a lot of discussion regarding the status of the Health Care Center. Mayor Napier referred to the media article regarding this and the staffing issues at the Health Center, and noted that after a delegation the RCMP member apologized for speaking out of turn in regards to the status of the Health Care Center. Mayor Napier highlighted that they have a great relationship with the RCMP in the community and noted that they appreciate the RCMP coming and delegating monthly. She noted that the concerns made by the RCMP member had been raised by other in the community, and their comments brought forth discussion. She noted that they do not wish to stifle the relation they have with the RCMP due to concerns they have not just as RCMP but as members of the community. Minister Thom noted that MLA Martselos approached her regarding this and was upset that the equipment and position was moving but this was not the case, and she was informed that this is not the case. She added that they are currently in the hiring process, and noted that one of their highlights is to recruit and retain positions in the community. She noted that this is where she looks to the Minister of Finance to make hiring positions in Health a priority. She noted that someone talked earlier today regarding communication being key, and noted that someone should not talk to Council regarding issue surrounding health care as this should be the Department of Health.

Minister Wawzonek noted that RCMP are critical in the justice system, and noted that she does know regarding the specific reference. Minister Wawzonek noted that the Department of Finance is very actively involved and that they have things underway to specifically help recruitment and retention in health care so they are not bringing locums. She stated that there will be action regarding this in the moderate future. Mayor Napier noted that after the media article was released a representative from the Hospital met with

the Mayor to discuss changes happening at the hospital. Mayor Napier noted that the locum for hiring doctors and nurses is located in Yellowknife, and inquired if it would be possible to have them visit Fort Smith so they have a better understanding of the community. Minister Wawzonek noted that she understood there to be an individual in Fort Smith supporting this specifically in health, and noted that she will look into this further to determine who this is and what kind of tours they go in in the region. Mayor Napier clarified that she is not making a complaint regarding the interaction with RCMP and noted that they find the interaction extremely valuable. She noted that there was a spike in youth crimes a few years ago in the community, and the RCMP discussed the different programs they were doing, and it worked. She noted that those conversations are valued. Cr. Westwell noted that unsubstantiated rumors persist when there is a lack of representation at the local level as discussed. Cr. Westwell noted the first response received regarding a reduction in services was solicited due to the media article. He noted that they are bringing a motion to the NWTAC regarding reinstating public boards. He highlighted the importance of local boards in awarding decision making capabilities. Premier Cochrane noted that Cabinet wishes to decentralize as much as possible, but does not want to make positions for the sake of making positions. She noted that they are in a huge deficit and have almost met the borrowing cap. She highlighted that they have twenty two priorities, many of which are high costs. She noted that they are in a financial issue, and this will go on for at least ten years until they are able to find new revenue sources and the Economy in the Northwest Territories may not be great during this time. Premier Cochrane highlighted that it is important to manage funds properly for future generations, and added that Cabinet wishes to have regional representation and more positions in communities as well and are addressing this. She noted that this government is going have to make hard choices in the coming four years. She noted that they are not here only to be friends or as tokens, but that they are all here for the best interest of the residents of the NWT, but that they know tough decisions are coming.

Mayor Napier referred to the concern regarding municipal funding gaps, and noted that previously a study was completed that showcased that municipalities are being significantly underfunded. She noted that in the last Legislative Assembly there was an increase in the amount received by the community, but noted that a significant amount is underfunded each year. She referred to the doubling of the gas tax that came to communities, and noted that the FCM is pushing to make this a permanent doubling. She inquired what the plans are to increase funding for municipalities in the coming years. Minister Chinna referred to the \$4 Million gap and noted that all communities feel it. She noted that going forward they will be looking at strategies to address this. She added that they have taken over the lotteries for the NWT, and are looking at this so Sports and Recreation do not feel the loss. She noted that this is an expensive year, they have AWG and NAIG ongoing and noted that she does not wish for youth in the community to miss out on attending programs and services. Minister Chinna noted that they are looking at forecasted infrastructure as GIL is received as a tax based community. She noted that they are looking at Federal funding as well, and they are making water and sewer a main priority within the municipality. She noted that they are looking to work with ENR to balance the funding going forward, and unsure there is clean water available to all communities within municipal boundaries. She highlighted that climate change is a concern as well within municipal boundaries and noted that they are looking access federal funding and work with municipalities to address this. She referred to land transfer and development for municipalities as well. She noted that this is a large conversation and that they want to prevent communities from feeling negative effects. She added that she plans to travel to communities and meet with Municipalities to see what is working and what isn't.

Minister Chinna noted that she is looking forward to the lotteries that the NWT has had. She added that she has not seen a significant increase yet as it is too early to tell, and added that it was only transferred in May, and noted that they are hoping to see results in November. Premier Cochrane noted that the Assembly tabled a mandate which includes \$5 being allocated to the Municipal funding gap. She noted that she acknowledges they would like more, but added that their funds are restricted. Premier Cochrane noted that the Federal government is doing negotiations with the Municipalities, and noted that the old government's preference was to receive all the money in the NWT and to be the ones dispersing the funds, but noted that this new government has met with the Prime Minister and Ministers for the North and have been saying the opposite that they are not concerned how money is received into the NWT, but rather funds be allocated to the NWT generally whether to municipalities, Indigenous governments or the GNWT. Premier Cochrane

noted that \$5 Million is all they can do at the moment, and noted that if research was done to address the GNWT deficit, the \$40 Million may not exist as the GNWT's costs are very high as there is a lack of infrastructure. She noted that for the GNWT to address the gap the Federal government would have to allocate a large amount of funds to allow the territory to be on par with southern jurisdiction. Premier Cochrane referred to the transfer of lands which have a \$1 value, and noted that they need to start looking at that value and to reflect that in relation to the funding gap. She noted that they want to work in cooperation and noted that she wants to ensure that if they are working together that all play the roles that they need to. She noted that if legislative changes are requested, that municipalities be prepared to implement those legislative changes. She noted that we are here, we are your friends, and that when they go to the Federal government they are no longer competing with the communities but instead will be supporting them.

Mayor Napier noted that they are appreciative of the increase to address the municipal gap. She noted that she met with Minister Vandal a few weeks ago as President of the NWTAC and spoke regarding the effects of Climate Change on the infrastructure in the NWT, specifically to permafrost degradation and noted that \$5 Billion is expected in effects to infrastructure across the North and this was only for permafrost degradation, and not speaking to shoreline erosion or forest fire. She noted that Mayor Alty recently visited Ottawa and spoke to the Minister of Finance regarding the impacts of climate change in the NWT and the funding needs for this. She acknowledged that by working together they are stronger.

Mayor Napier referred to work with different departments and within the community regarding forest fire management. She noted that they work with Smith's Landing First Nation who are in Alberta, and are a part of the Towns emergency response team and are a partner with them in fire management and river bank sliding. He noted that funding received for the study to address river bank sliding came from climate change funding. She noted that they are working with First Nations in Alberta in Wood Buffalo National Park regarding a highway through the park so they have a secondary egress in case of Forest Fire. Mayor Napier highlighted that they are seeing drier springs, and could be faced with forest fire concerns in May. She noted that the community has major concerns surrounding forest fire. She inquired what kind of partnership may they look at with the territorial government and in working with Alberta and the Federal government to have a highway towards the south. Minister Nokleby noted that the road through the park would have issues around the legislation around parks, and noted that if there is a project of any sort relating to infrastructure that the community is keen on going forward, then the department will want to work with you to help facilitate that and help in applying for funding. She committed to discussing any infrastructure projects they may want to see and noted that she does not know the specific aspects, but knew that there was concern regarding having the land taken out of the park to build that road.

Premier Cochrane noted that she will be meeting Premier Silver in May and he is looking at doing a tri-territorial climate statement. She noted that he has worked with Yukon's Indigenous governments as they have less Indigenous communities than the NWT, and noted that they are beginning consultations with theirs. She noted that they will be issuing a joint statement that will be used to lobby the Federal government and receive more funding regarding climate change. Premier Cochrane noted that she may not be able to consult all municipal governments as they wish to move forward with this, and highlighted that they are consulting Indigenous governments. Minister Thompson referred to the 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategy Framework and the 2019/2023 Action Plan outlines how they are going to deal with this and it replies to the Auditor General's report. He added that they hope to deal with this in a productive way involving as many individuals as possible. He added that they are developing a NWT Climate Change Council with regional Indigenous governments, organizations and community governments. He noted that they are also looking to work with the Economic Development and Environment Committee, and Member O'riley with his climate change motion. He noted that they are starting on this, but to realize that this is a huge issue. Minister Chinna noted that she has not seen anything specific to climate change but acknowledged that it affects their day to day function, development in the community and infrastructure. She noted that she was recently in Ottawa and met with the Minister Hussein but noted that this meeting was specific to how climate change is affecting housing, and referred to the NWTAC and invited Council to advise her regarding their lobbying efforts to Ottawa in this matter as she would like to support those moving forward. Premier Cochrane noted that the disaster mitigation fund is very limited in what

it will address. She noted that she met with Federal Minister regarding expanding the fund, and noted that it would be beneficial if Council also highlighted the importance of this message in their lobbying efforts with the Federal government. Mayor Napier noted that in their conversations with the Federal government they have highlighted that the Territories do not fall under the same umbrella when applying for funds as they Provinces and that programs need to be rewritten to address this. Mayor Napier highlighted that the NWTAC would like to be represented on the Climate Change Council. Minister Thompson noted he would follow up regarding this.

Cr. Westwell noted that this references back to land access and that the shoreline erosion is a long term concern. He added that if they are able to leverage funds to begin some analysis, and are able to leverage further funding, that they can ensure that the government will be a partner in moving forward regarding this and that red tape does not result in end of life or infrastructure disaster. He stated that red tape may need to be reduced at times, as situations are becoming direr. Premier Cochrane noted that with respect to climate change there is not significant time to delay. She noted that there are times frameworks and action plans are required, but there may not be much time with respect to climate change. Premier Cochrane noted that there are funds available to study climate change via a polytechnic university. Minister Wawzonek noted that the only exception she will make is that if there are business and proposal plans. She noted that asks arrive late in the cycle and process. She noted that she has reached out to the NWTAC to do a budget fundamentals, and noted that the sooner they have the information the better the chances for them to have those partnerships and be effective, even if it is Federal funds.

Premier Cochrane noted that people need to pay attention to what is going on in politics. She stated that they have twenty two priorities and tabled their mandate on the 10th. She advised those applying to do research, view the mandates and tailor the proposal to that. Mayor Napier referred to Cr. Westwell's comment regarding studies done regarding the riverbank and noted that the funding received was regarding what remediation is needed. She noted that now the funding is required to complete the work. She noted that she will speak with the CEO regarding Budget Fundamentals for the NWTAC.

Mayor Napier referred to the Taltson Dam expansion and inquired regarding the status of it, what impact it may have on the community and how they can work together. Minister Nokleby noted that they have received \$18 Million in Federal funding to continue studies and advance the project. She noted that this funding will be used to develop Indigenous partnerships, undertake the planning, regulatory and feasibility work to get to a point where they can be shovel ready to receive funds to start the work. She committed to provided regular updates to the Town so they are aware where the process is. She added that there will implications for constructions, jobs and spin off industry. She referred to impacts from cost rates and noted that she is learning that it is a complex situation, and noted that Cabinet realized after setting priorities that improvement to NTPC may not lead to a lower cost of energy. She noted that Taltson is a huge part of the 2030 energy strategy, and it will be a way to get greenhouse gas emissions down to a target. She noted that from a business perspective this would provide the green energy options to industry and community, so they have a better source of power. She noted that during her campaign she was talking with mining and exploration companies who noted that they are not even looking at the NWT anymore as they have public relations issues as well, and now a lot of them have sustainability mandate where they cannot use diesel operated mines anymore. She noted that if they do not move forward with Taltson then they will be unable to utilize the great amount of minerals and metals that they could be extracting for the green energy sector for making solar panels and electric cars. She added that this is a key project for her that must advance for green energy. She noted that she is trying to foster open door communications for her department and herself. She invited Council to have further discussion with her and her department regarding the expansion.

D/M Smith acknowledged that there will be some difficult decisions over the next few years. He noted that not every dollar invested is an equal dollar, and noted that investment in local economies through local infrastructure. He highlighted that such investments stay withing the community and support economic diversification and activity. Premier Cochrane noted that she agrees with D/M Smith, and noted that it is not only the tax based communities, but the smaller communities that benefit from this as well and potentially more. She noted that the more funds that they keep and invest in the

capital, the more likely it is to leave the Territories as the capital is more transient. She highlighted that it is important to support smaller communities, and noted that she believes there is a right way to do this.

Mayor Napier noted referred to childcare, and home businesses in housing. She noted that there had been concerns regarding individuals in housing units to be able to provide childcare. She inquired if this is one of the possibilities under the mandate. Minister Chinna noted that they are having discussion and recognize there are limited facilities for childcare. She noted that they are looking at their policies to have their units open so childcare facilities may be run out of them, and noted that they don't want it to be exaggerated where every household is holding childcare services. Cr. Westwell noted that he looks forward to engage further regarding the Taltson Dam, and noted that the Town of Fort Smith will be undergoing an Energy Plan review. He noted that the community was not under the impression that the rates were to be reduced by it, but it was the idea that the capacity for it and ability for it to open up energy reduction and greenhouse gas emissions. He noted that the current struggle with the NTPC was to have them to allow use of the existing surplus of energy to be able to power homes and other non-industrial activity. He added this has been a moving target over the last ten years. Minister Nokleby noted that she is glad to hear that the expectations tempered, and inquired if the Department was involved in assisting with the Energy Plan. Cr. Westwell noted that there was funding that came with a MACA initiative and this funded the Energy Plan consultation, and the Plan itself was done in consultation with a group of volunteers. Minister Nokleby noted that it makes sense that the GNWT and the municipality are communicating regarding this at every level, and noted it would be good to start the conversation sooner. Mayor Napier added that there are lower power and water rates in the community if they are looking to expand the Aurora College.

Premier Cochrane noted that the old government was more competitive, but this government is about working together and collaborating. She requested that the Town advised the relevant GNWT Department or her office it is general work being conducted in Ottawa, and that they would do the same. She noted that it is not favorable for the NWT for the governments to work separately, and noted that they should work together moving forward for the betterment of the NWT. Mayor Napier referred to representation on boards, and women's representation on various levels of boards. She highlighted that Council is almost gender balanced, there are two Superintendents in the room and the CEO of the hospital is also a woman. She added that there are a lot of strong knowledgeable women in the community that they are very proud of and who work very hard for the community, and thanked them for their efforts. Mayor Napier recognized that this she looks forward to working together over the next few years, and acknowledged that Council is here to work with Cabinet and want what is best for the community. She acknowledged that partnerships are the best way to move forward.

C. **DISCUSSION**

D. **ABSENCE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

E. ADJOURNMENT

20-025 Moved by: Cr. Couvrette
Seconded by: Cr. Cox

That this meeting be adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Minutes adopted this 31st day of March, 2020.



Mayor Lynn Napier



Certified Correct by Keith Morrison
Senior Administrative Officer