

Town of Norman Wells
Agenda
Meeting for Information with Sahtu Health and Social Services
Tuesday, March 26, 2019 – 12:00 pm
Council Chambers

Present:	Frank Pope Alexis Peachey David Wever	Mayor Deputy Mayor Councillor
Regrets:	Jean-Paul Bernard Pascal Audet Trevor Smith Jim Boyle	Councillor (Out of Town on Vacation) Councillor Councillor (Out of town of Work) Councillor
Staff:	Cathy Clarke Misty Rayner	Senior Administrative Officer Finance Manager/Acting Town Clerk
Guests:	Mimi Hamlyn Ellen MacDonald Phil Bailey Colleen Murphy Cyril Rogers Ginny Harrington	Chief Operating Officer SHSSA Manager of Mental Health and Addictions Regional Manager of Operations SHSSA Regional Manager of Health Centers Manager of Child and Family Services Manager of Long Term Care SHSSA

1. Delegations

a) Discussion of Mutual issues surrounding health care services and fire department involvement with calls for service of a medical nature.

Council would like to discuss topics within two segments, the first being Health Care, followed by the Fire Department.

Deputy Mayor Peachey asked what communication, if any, exists with other agencies; IE: RCMP. Is there communication between your departments when drugs are found (Fentanyl).

- SHSSA responded that there is no formal communication

Councillor Wever added on to the question to determine whether there is communication with/from MACA with the roll out of 911.

- SHSSA indicated that they have not received any communication from MACA as of yet, and it is believed that 911 will be accessible by the NWT in September 2019.

Deputy Mayor Peachey asked on behalf of residents, what are the processes, procedures, and/or protocols in place for a request of second opinion from a client.

- SHSSA responded that they absolutely can and will action requests for a second opinion, within reason. If the request for a second opinion requires the patient to travel, it would then fall on the discretion of medical travel and whether they will pay for the patient to travel. Nurses do not have any control over the medical travel policy. The only caveat being that the patient may have to pay to obtain the services of a second opinion.

Councillor Wever stated at there is an expectation with moving to a larger facility within town that more services would be offered. It seems there is still a lot of air travel. Is there a timeline or a plan in place that these services will be offered in the future?

- SHSSA responded that there is no plan in place to have more services offered in Norman Wells. The New Health Centre is classified as a B level service center. All services are considered a visitor basis. The push to change the facility was because the old facility was at the end of its life. Though the building is bigger, we do not have the ability to admit patients overnight. We are a B/C facility because we have long term care. We are working with our partners on retaining permanent physician services. We have never been able to recruit or retain a resident physician, although we do have that position available, we have been unable to fill it which is why the position has been staffed as visitor status. SHSSA is also looking into Rehabilitation services offered in Norman Wells as a discussion topic.

Councillor Wever mentioned there have been complaints regarding the follow up process for residents in regard to the service received at the health centre. What process do people utilize to issue complaint, and follow up on a complaint that has been issued?

- The process has been circulated to all Sahtu communities for posting as well as additional posters. Issues should be addressed with the nurse in charge. If people don't know where to go, they can always come to the Chief Operating Officer. Information within complaints can be confidential and privacy related, so the outcome will not always be easily determined by the public, but the HR processes in place are being followed on our end. Complaints can be issued verbally, or in email, but the preference is set to having complaints submitted in writing, there are templates available to assist the public in ensuring all necessary information is compiled.

Mayor Pope has received complaints from residents in regard to lack of consistency with the nurses, job sharing, and where the nurses are being recruited from. Nursing staff in the Long Term care have become permanent residents of the community. Is there similar arrangements being made with our nurses? Or perhaps a permanent Nurse in Charge. People are confused as to who is in charge and at what times. What are your plans to rectify the unsettled situation this has become? How is lack of housing affecting your processes? Lack of daycare? There may be things that we as a community can be doing to assist you to remedy some of these situations.

- SHSSA responded that Long Term Care Nurses are residents. Housing is always a challenge, as is child care. The 24hr operation in long term care is feeling the stress of lack of daycare. When a position becomes vacant, it is posted as a full time position, when we are unable to recruit; it goes out again as a job share. The job is very taxing as you are on-call for the duration of your tenure. Hiring in nursing is a struggle across the country. All nurses are registered nurses. They would not be able to work for us unless they are registered within the NWT.

Mayor Pope clarified that his comment about where nurses are being hired from is more in regard to the money it costs to travel them here to work.

Councillor Wever asked for clarification on the factors that apply to being unable to recruit and/or retain resident nurses.

- SHSSA responded that it is housing, child care, and applicants being at a time in their career where they do not wish to be working full time. Stress factors in for the NIC (Nurse In-Charge) as they end up being on call all of the time to back-up the other nurses on call.

Mayor Pope mentioned the lack of adequate housing; and how we knew for three years that this Long Term Care Centre was coming. Yet it seems that we have a problem for long term care staff to find suitable/affordable housing. Are there any discussions or plans with the Housing Authority or Housing Corporation to assist in this situation?

- SHSSA responded that when housing got their new units in the lower trailer court, they were supposed to be geared for the new long term care center staff. There was delay in the project completion which meant that situation ran into some difficulty. Some staff resigned due to these issues.

Mayor Pope asked if all staff were given training on WHIMIS, First Aid.

- SHSSA responded that all nurses are certified. Mayor Pope clarified that he was speaking more to casual, custodian, kitchen staff, etc. SHSSA responded that the basic courses were offered to all staff.

Mayor Pope stated that Council will be meeting with Imperial Oil very soon to discuss their surplus housing and IORL's plans to dispose of their vacant housing units in regard to market flooding, and current housing issues within the community.

- SHSSA responded that they have found that staff is not looking to purchase houses, but rent instead.

Mayor Pope asked what the plans are for the old facility.

- SHSSA clarified that the GNWT Department of Infrastructure was now in control of the asset.

Mayor Pope mentioned that most of the public is very happy with the front line staff.\

Mayor Pope requested a change in topic to discuss the Fire Department services provided to the community.

Mayor Pope requested information on the procedures/processes for emergency situations with health care staff within the community as well as outside municipal boundaries.

- SHSSA responded that 5 or 6 years ago nurses used to respond to emergencies. With turnover of staff we were unable to keep that up. With the new territorial system and direction from our legislation, we do not respond outside of facility. Nurses are not trained, we can do homecare visits. Outside of the community – winter road – that is a MACA jurisdiction, and they are responsible for response to those incidents. SHSSA is unaware of MACA procedures on how that is conducted.

Mayor Pope mentioned the concern is having our key fire personnel gone from the community. Our members are so dedicated to the residents that they will go regardless of direction. Council wishes to develop our processes for when and how a fire department member assists on these types of calls. Our fire service By-Law sets a fee for service, Council assumes that a fee can be levied to SHSSA if a member of their staff is calling in our fire department members.

- SHSSA responded that they do not call the fire department for that. That Fire Department call comes in from the RCMP or community members. We are not ambulance.

Mayor Pope states that this an example of a gap in service that SHSSA and Council need to work together, so we can figure out how this can be better handled. Until such time as a fire chief is hired, all requests to the fire department should be directed to the SAO rather than the Fire Emergency line.

- SHSSA responded that an RFP was put out 2 years ago for medical transportation. At the time there was an appetite from the Town to apply on it, however there was no applicant on it. We can check to see if they will put it out the RFP again. It would be much appreciated for the service to be available within the community because according to SHSSA, oftentimes an extra nurse needs to be called in to drive to the airport and pick up the medivac team, which can then result in mandatory rest for nurses working overtime; which in turn results in SHSSA not being able to ensure a nurse available the following day.

Mayor Pope addressed the issue of the Fire Departments means of transporting patients to the Health Center and on Medivac calls, citing the past use of the “box of a pickup truck” or the Nurse’s Ford Flex. He asks whether there are any plans within the health department to purchase a proper vehicle for such use.

- SHSSA responded that their Ford Flex’s can accommodate a stretcher and are limited to picking up someone at the airport and back. This type of vehicle is what we have in all of our communities. As for medical transport within the community to respond to an emergency, it is considered to be an ambulance service, which is out of the SHSSA’s scope. It always comes down to who’s going to pick the patient up and it’s always been a back and forth conversation, but it’s up to MACA and the Town as to what emergency services are offered within the community.
- Mayor Pope pointed out how this dilemma puts the onus on the Norman Wells Volunteer Fire Department, who out of the goodness of their hearts respond to help in these cases, but face a question of liability as their often doing things they’re not fully qualified for.
- SHSSA responded that they do not request Fire Department members to facilitate treatment, only packaging and transport. Most people with first aid are able to provide that service.

Mayor Pope believes a meeting between MACA, RCMP, Sahtu Search and Rescue, SHSSA, the Fire Department and Council is required to take place to address this gap in service and the liability issue that comes with it.

- SHSSA responded that in Yellowknife and Inuvik, the ambulance service is a part of their fire service.

Mayor Pope requested clarification that if any emergency happens outside of the community, the nurses will not respond?

- SHSSA said that they will not respond, because the license of the nurse is on the line as they are not covered outside of the facility and this response would be outside of their scope. Some nurses put themselves at risk because they are not trained as a paramedic, but sometimes assist on these incidents.

Mayor Pope asked where the liability would fall given the following scenario: if there is a heart attack within the community and no one responded. The patient dies as a result.

- SHSSA responded that it is outside of SHSSA mandate to respond outside of the facility. It is MACA and the Town's mandate to figure out what they want as far as emergency services within their communities.

Mayor Pope asked who would call the fire department if there is an issue.

- SHSSA responded that generally we are not calling the fire department, we are not sure who is making these calls. We do not have a procedure in place that results in the fire department being called. If it is happening, we need to know.

Councillor Wever asked SHSSA's take on how the fire department came to respond to these calls.

- SHSSA stated that they are not sure how it came about that the Fire Service took over that responsibility. We speculate that someone offered their services in the past and that the practice continued to this day, but if the fire service is unwilling to continue in this practice, it would be good to let the Chief Operating Officer, so that staff can be instructed to follow their own procedures. We believe the fire department was only ever responsible for driving the paramedics.

The SHSSA commented that they will not be responding to 911 phone calls, so the importance of having this issue sorted out is paramount.