

**Minutes**  
**Committee of the Whole #23-08**  
**Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 12pm**  
**Council Chambers and Microsoft Teams**

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Present:	Frank Pope	Mayor- Chair
	Pascal Audet	Deputy Mayor
	Kacee Hunter	Councillor
	Alexis Peachey	Councillor
	Kelly McCoy	Councillor
	Dave Wever	Councillor
Staff:	Cathy Clarke	Senior Administrative Officer
	Hugo Pabke	Utilities Manager
	Kayla Turner	Governance and Community Engagement Manager
	Melody Puno	Finance Clerk
	Karen Boudreau	Finance Manager
	Mkhabela Masuku	Development Officer
	Alex Millette	Recreation Manager
Regrets:	Trevor Smith	Councillor (Personal Commitment)

**1. Call to Order 12:00PM**

**2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

- None noted.

**3. Review and Adoption of Agenda**

**4. Delegation**

**5. Topics**

1. Definition of Types of meetings held by Council
2. Financial Role of Council:
  - Planning and Budgeting
  - Revenue and Expenditure Management

- Reporting and Oversight
3. Advocacy:
    - Review of NWTAC Resolutions
    - Cost of living impact on Town of Norman Wells and residents
    - Attraction and retention of skilled workers for Norman Wells
    - Infrastructure Funding – Climate Change Impacts
  4. Council Committee Status:
    - Council Roles/Responsibilities as committee chairs
    - Staff Expectations as support to committees
    - Council’s fiduciary responsibility
    - How to maximize the role of our committees as advisory committees
    - Council’s working groups IE: Cultural Center
    - Economic Development Conference
  5. Proclamation Policy for Council Discussion
  6. Body Camera / Dash Camera Policy
  7. Speed Limits within Municipal Boundaries
    - Specifically, Canol Drive Residential Area
  8. Seasonal Chain Off Area for tire chains.
  9. Ongoing research for alternative service delivery models in all areas:
    - Daycare Provision Models
    - Food Security Models
    - Municipal Best Practices
    - Sustainable Business Models
    - Climate Change Impacts on Municipalities
  10. Capital Budget Discussion
  11. Letter from Norman Wells Chamber of Commerce- Discussion
  12. Petition- Discussion
  13. Flag Presentation
  14. Scholarships
  15. In Camera- Staffing
  16. 2023 Budget Amendments- Discussion
  17. Daycare- Discussion
  18. Draft Capital and Operation Budgets- Discussion

- Administration provided a budget summary document to council for review.
- As three council members will be away next week, administration suggested canceling the regular council meeting scheduled for December 5th to ensure more council members can be present for budget readings.
- Council was provided with the true costing of water for review. Administration is available to answer any questions council may have regarding true water costing. True costing refers to the cost of producing and delivering water. Administration reminded Council that water is highly subsidized. Administration also suggested obtaining a true cost for quarry material.
- Administration feels that no more cuts can be made to the budget at this time. There is added value with the resources we already have. Staff consistently go above and beyond, essentially working for free. The SAO mentioned the importance of staff loyalty. There are training plans in place to enhance staff abilities going forward.
- Councillor Wever suggested a 5% rate increase across the board on quarry materials. He is also in favor of true costing quarry materials.

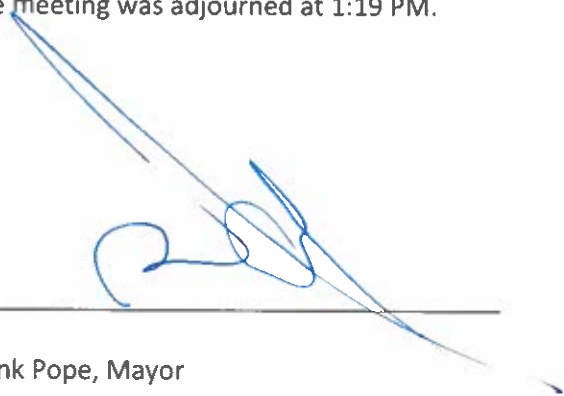
- Councillor Hunter would rather have the true cost of quarry materials before increasing rates, as this could hamper any economic development projects that use the quarry. He noted he would be in favor of increasing commercial rates but keeping residential rates the same.
- Councillor Wever noted that it is the cost of hauling/trucking that is expensive, not the quarry materials.
- Administration reminded council that there has been no residential tax increase in over ten years.
- Mayor Pope noted that holiday days at the Landfill would be a good idea, especially on Boxing Day. He also suggested opening a few extra hours in the fall would be beneficial.
- Council indicated the need to review the snow removal/road maintenance policy in the new year, specifically the amount of snowfall required before sending equipment out for snow clearing.
- Councillor Wever noted that he does not support more staff at the arena during the holiday season. From his experience, there are not a lot of users during the holidays. He does not feel it is necessary to open the facility for 3-4 people to use. The recreation manager responded that opening the arena during the holidays provides an opportunity for socialization for those who may not be able to travel out of town. It also shows the community that the Town values recreation and that a lot of good things come from opening during the Christmas season. Councillor McCoy suggested more advertising to the community to inform everyone that there are extended hours during the holidays. Councillor Wever asked if data tracking is done, and the recreation manager responded that facility and program usage are tracked, and they are currently looking for software that will help make this process easier.
- Councillor Wever asked if staff had received a price for how much it would cost to survey lots at Jackfish Lake. As the Public Works Manager was absent from the meeting, staff will have to get back to council with an answer.
- Mayor Pope requested administration try to recruit and train local pool staff as a way to extend the season as well as the daily hours.
- Councillor Hunter asked about pothole repairs and if the town will have the material and staff training to complete pothole repairs next season.
- Councillor Hunter asked how much the Town needs to bankroll in order to put money into reserves. The SAO responded that the operational surplus may or may not be what is put into reserves. He then asked what finance would recommend going into reserves. The Finance manager responded that it depends on how much chipseal costs as it is unknown how much money will need to be paid up front for the project. The SAO noted that administration does not have a firm price on chipseal and will need funds from the operational surplus to cover the increase in costs.
- Mayor Pope mentioned that during COVID, MACA mentioned that municipalities need to prepare for emergencies, and he asked if the town is prepared for the potential of another emergency. The finance manager confirmed that the town is financially prepared for emergencies.
- The finance manager noted putting \$200,000 into reserves would be reasonable.
- Councillor Hunter noted he is in favor of donating \$100,000 to the daycare society; he opened the discussion and asked council if the money would be taken from capital or the operational surplus.
- Mayor Pope asked to defer the daycare funding discussion until council can see further progress from the daycare society. He noted he is not saying no to funding and that he does support daycare; however, he would like to see further progress. He would gladly put money towards daycare once they are ready.
- Councillor Hunter noted that the town should be the first to support the daycare to make the town more liveable. He mentioned that volunteers have produced a business plan, projections,

and answers to questions as requested by council, and they have gotten further than anyone else who has ever tried to start a daycare.

- Councillor Wever suggested taking \$40,000 from the council donations line and \$90,000 from Black Bear Jamboree to give a donation to the daycare. He noted that it is not ideal as council will have no donation money left and no black bear jamboree.
- The SAO suggested putting money in reserve for daycare.
- Councillor Hunter suggested giving the daycare a \$100,000 donation and a \$150,000 zero percent interest loan. He suggested the money the daycare pays back go into a daycare reserve fund.
- Councillor Hunter suggested taking the money for daycare out of the guardrails project as daycare is more appealing to families who are looking to move to town.
- Councillor Peachey noted that she is in support of daycare and thinks that the town should support it with some conditions such as a guarantee that the building is actually coming. She noted her biggest concern is how much the daycare is going to be charging for fees. She also stated that the guardrails need to be done as it is a safety hazard. She also noted that many organizations rely on council donations, and some residents who don't have children may not support the money coming from council donations.
- Councillor Hunter also suggested cutting the mayor's travel budget as well as branding, which he does not support as he has talked to at least 50 community members who do not like the new brand/logo. He noted it is not right to commit money to implement a brand that has gotten so much negative feedback.
- The SAO noted that the guardrails in critical condition have to be done. She explained that council needs to be aware of the regulations, as ignoring them could lead to more trouble. If someone were to get hurt or die, and the Town is aware of the areas that need to be done, the Town could be liable for murder/manslaughter or other serious charges.
- Councillor Audet noted that the daycare donation money could also be taken out of general reserves. He also mentioned that no work has been tendered for the guardrails project so the amount dedicated to guardrails could be less than what is shown in the budget.
- Councillor Audet stated that it seems that council is all in support of the daycare; it is just a matter of where the money is coming from. He mentioned that he does not want to see the same mistakes with daycare happen again, and that council should make sure there is a certain criteria to meet before releasing the funds.
- Council took an informal vote to see who was in favor of putting money towards daycare this year vs. deferring for later conversation. Councillors Hunter and McCoy voted in support of daycare immediately. Councillors Peachey, Wever, Audet, and Mayor Pope voted in favor of deferring daycare discussion to the new year.
- Councillor Hunter reiterated that he is in support of daycare immediately, as based on the conversation with the daycare society on the morning of November 29th, the Town needs to take the lead by dedicating funds in the budget; he suggested the funds come from a mix of operations and reserves.
- Councillor Wever asked that administration communicate to the daycare society that council is still interested in supporting them.
- Mayor Pope suggested meeting with all potential funders to discuss where everyone is at and how we can all help out.
- The SAO mentioned that the one thing on the budget summary that hasn't been discussed yet is the 5% cuts mentioned by Councillor Hunter during budget discussions. She noted that council asked for additional service and a 5% cut to the overall budget; administration has determined that they are unable to decide where cuts will be made.


- Councillor Audet suggested leaving the budget as is and looking for operational efficiencies. He noted that if Council is too modest with the budget and goes way over, that is not good either. He noted the budget is good and that he would like to proceed with it as is.
- The SAO noted that if there are cuts, they will land on staff and service cuts in more than one area.
- Councillor Peachey suggested having a committee of the whole discussion regarding reserves in the new year.
- The 1st budget reading is scheduled for Thursday, November 30th, at 12 pm.
- Councillor Wever noted that he is not in support of chipseal as it is too much money for the product, plus the cost of maintenance, and that the Town may not have the reserves to maintain it.
- Councillor Audet would like to look at all options such as dust suppressant; he asked if this would be a cheaper option. He would like more information to make a more informed decision.
- Councillor Peachey mentioned her concerns over the expected drought in the southern provinces and the potential of not having another barge next year.
- The SAO noted that she will investigate the funding requirements for chipseal to see if the funding can be used for dust suppression.
- Mayor Pope thanked staff for the hard work in preparing the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19 PM.



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Frank Pope, Mayor



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Cathy Clarke, SAO

