

DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION	City Manager's Office - Corporate Strategic Services	REPORT NO.	R 28/2017
DATE PREPARED	01/18/2017	FILE NO.	
MEETING DATE	02/27/2017 (mm/dd/yyyy)		
SUBJECT	Initial Response to Seven Youth Inquest		

RECOMMENDATION

With respect to Corporate Report R28/2017 (City Manager's Office – Corporate Strategic Services), it is recommended that the implementation approach described in Attachment A be approved;

AND THAT Corporate Strategic Services report back with an Annual Report at the Administrative Services Committee of the Whole meeting on May 29, 2017;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 2 of the *Becoming our Best* 2015-2018 Corporate Strategic Plan is to be “Safe, Welcoming and Inclusive.” The Strategic Plan includes strategies and actions to update the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Strategy (2.1.1), the Aboriginal Liaison Strategy (3.2.1.), develop a welcoming strategy with partners including a focus on supporting students relocating to Thunder Bay (2.4.1), and recognizing diversity (Goal 3).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Inquest into the Deaths of Seven First Nations Youth (the “Inquest”) concluded on June 28, 2016 when the Jury rendered its verdict. The Jury issued 145 recommendations including 31 directed to the City (among other parties to the Inquest).

While the recommendations are not legally binding, the Inquest's main purpose is to prevent future deaths of First Nations youth who must live away from their home communities to attend high school in Thunder Bay.

Attachment A describes the proposed approach to the City's implementation of the recommendations directed to the City.

Corporate Strategic Services will report back with an Annual Report on implementation at the Administrative Services Committee of the Whole meeting on May 29, 2017.

DISCUSSION

The Inquest into the Deaths of Seven First Nations Youth (the “Inquest”) concluded on June 28, 2016 when the Jury rendered its verdict. The Jury issued 145 recommendations including 31 directed to the City (among other parties to the Inquest).

A complete copy of the Jury’s verdict and recommendations was sent to the Mayor and Members of Council via email from the Director – Corporate Strategic Services on June 28, 2016.

The Inquest, which began on October 5, 2015, investigated the deaths of seven First Nations youth: Jethro Anderson, Reggie Bushie, Robyn Harper, Kyle Morrisseau, Paul Panacheese, Curran Strang, and Jordan Wabasse.

In a letter (November 3, 2016), Ontario Chief Coroner Dirk Huyer explained that the purpose of an Inquest is to “look for lessons that can be learned from the deaths that may contribute to a safer future for the living. Juries often make recommendations based on these learned lessons and, while they are not binding, it is hoped that implemented recommendations will prevent future deaths in similar circumstances.”

The Chief Coroner requests a response by the anniversary of the inquest – June 28, 2017. He further wrote: “We trust they (the recommendations) will be given careful consideration for implementation and, if not implemented, that your organization provides an explanation.”

On January 18, 2017, the Chief Coroner was advised by the City Manager that the Director of Corporate Strategic Services is the member of the City’s Executive Management Team who is leading the City’s response to the Inquest.

Recommendations Directed to The City of Thunder Bay

This Report is intended to provide an overview of the 31 recommendations directed to the City and other parties and the steps Administration is taking as detailed in Attachment A – Chart of Recommendations Directed to the City.

This Chart provides a high level outline of the recommendations that affect the City and provide the following information:

- i. Recommendation number as identified in the Jury’s verdict and recommendation
- ii. High level description of the recommendation
- iii. Parties to the Inquest affected by the recommendation
- iv. Steps Administration is undertaking in considering the recommendation

- v. Information, if available, on current status

Guiding Statements

Wherever the recommendation is directed to the City and other partners, the first step is to meet with the parties to discuss the approach in keeping with the intent of the Guiding Statements.

Recommendation 7 from the Jury states that, in moving forward with any initiatives that respond to the Inquest recommendations, the parties should be guided by the following:

- i. All of the Treaty Partners, including Indigenous communities and governments, Canada and Ontario, must respect the treaty rights of others and work together towards fulfilling treaty obligation;
- ii. First Nations governments exercise inherent control over their education systems;
- iii. First Nation communities seek to have a greater responsibility to govern their own spiritual, cultural, social and economic affairs;
- iv. Without the improvements of conditions in First Nations reserve communities, a gap in education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students will remain;
- v. Canada should support individual First Nations communities as they develop local solutions to the effects of colonial policy; and
- vi. In order to ensure timely delivery of publicly funded services to First Nations children, where jurisdictional divisions or disputes within or between governments threaten to delay or impede the provision of services, Jordan's Principle* should apply.

**Child first principle intended to ensure that First Nations children do not experience delay, denial or disruption of services that are normally available to all other children. A members motion (M-296) endorsing the adoption of Jordan's Principle was unanimously passed in the House of Commons in 2007. Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action 3 states: We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.*

Nishnawbe Aski Nation, through Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, has provided the political leadership to bring together the parties at a number of different tables to review and discuss various recommendations. This includes a Seven Youth Inquest Political Table meeting held on January 19, 2017. The City was represented by Mayor Keith Hobbs, City Manager Norm Gale, Karen Lewis, Director – Corporate Strategic Services and City Clerk John Hannam. Parties named in the recommendations were also represented including Ministries of the Provincial and Federal Government. The Political Table agreed to meet again in advance of the first Annual Reports being shared with the Chief Coroner's Office and the public.

Implementation is being undertaken by an Internal Team led by the Director of Corporate Strategic Services, the City Clerk who manages the Aboriginal Liaison Office, and Donna Sippala, the Director of Recreation Culture (Acting). The Internal Team also includes the Director of Human Resources and the Supervisor – Development, Staffing and Support Services, the Manager of Transit, Program Supervisor – Children and Youth, Coordinator – Planning, Projects Development (Community Services), the Aboriginal Liaison, the Crime Prevention Council Coordinator, the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy Coordinator, and Legal Services.

Recommendations were also directed to the Thunder Bay Police Service, which will consider and report separately on their response to those recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

Implementation is being undertaken within the approved annual budget. Some larger projects such as a comprehensive youth inclusion project require funding from other orders of government as identified in Attachment A. The City's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee is seeking support from the Federal and Provincial Governments for implementation of recommendations by the City and other parties. Funding implications for enhanced training are not yet known.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the implementation approach described in Attachment A should be approved and that Corporate Strategic Services should report back with an Annual Report at the Administrative Services Committee of the Whole meeting on May 29, 2017.

BACKGROUND

The Inquest started on October 5, 2015, and concluded on June 28, 2016. The City was granted standing at the Inquest and provided evidence through a panel presentation comprised of former City Manager Tim Commisso, Karen Lewis, Director – Corporate Strategic Services, John Hannam, City Clerk, and Donna Sippala, Director – Recreation Culture (Acting).

The City provided evidence with respect to the general operation of the municipality including funding, its Strategic Plans, and its ability to pass by-laws with respect to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality.

Evidence also described programs and initiatives supported by the City including:

- Diversity Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay Anti-Racism and Respect Committee
- Aboriginal Liaison Strategy
- Elder's Advisory Council

- Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Strategy
- Thunder Bay Drug Strategy
- Recreation and Facilities Master Plan
- Thunder Bay Youth Strategy
- Respect. Initiative
- P.R.O. Kids
- Children's Charter
- Inspire Thunder Bay Culture Plan

As well, the City gave evidence on initiatives undertaken in response to the goals established by the various Strategic Plans adopted by City Council over the years including:

- The Declaration of Commitment between the City and Urban Aboriginal People
- The Declaration of Commitment between the City and Fort William First Nation
- The development of a welcoming strategy for newcomers to Thunder Bay with an initial focus on students coming to Thunder Bay for high school
- The development of the respect. Positive Youth Identity campaign
- The development of options for a youth centre
- The establishment of a youth centre in partnership with Wasaya Group Inc.
- The support of a Youth Centre within the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre
- The sponsorship of the Fall Feast and Festival of Services
- The short documentary film series "Walk-a-Mile"
- The Aboriginal Youth Development program
- Supporting the development of Student Living Centre for students of Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School on lands owned by Confederation College.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – Chart of Recommendations Directed to the City, February 27, 2017

PREPARED BY: *Karen Lewis, Director – Corporate Strategic Services*

THIS REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY: (NAME OF GENERAL MANAGER) Norm Gale, City Manager	DATE: February 17, 2017
---	----------------------------