



Memorandum

Office of the City Clerk
Fax: 623-5468
Telephone: 625-2230

TO: Members of Council
FROM: Krista Power, City Clerk
DATE: Friday, August 6, 2021
SUBJECT: **New Business**
Committee of the Whole – August 9, 2021

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

New Business

1. Memorandum from N. Gale, City Manager, dated August 6, 2021 containing a recommendation that Council endorse the position of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) relative to the inability to accommodate the transfer request of 470 evacuees.
2. Establishment of Committee of the Whole - Closed Session – August 23, 2021

The following resolution will be presented to Committee of the Whole for consideration:

THAT a Committee of the Whole – Closed Session meeting be scheduled for Monday, August 23, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in order to receive information relative to the security of the property of the municipality or local board; personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees; and a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board.

Memorandum

TO: Krista Power, City Clerk

FROM: Norm Gale, City Manager

DATE: August 6, 2021

SUBJECT: Update – Hosting of Evacuees in Thunder Bay
Committee of the Whole – August 9, 2021 – New Business

Members of Council,

At the July 20, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting, City Council directed Administration to report back to City Council and seek direction in situations where a request to host evacuees is denied by the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG). This was as a result of a council request and subsequent memorandum from then General Manager of Development and Emergency Services, Mark Smith.

On Thursday, August 5, 2021 the MECG advised the NAV Centre that the transfer request (August 4, 2021) to bring evacuees to Thunder Bay was not able to be accommodated. If this request was approved it would bring 470 evacuees from Deer Lake to Thunder Bay, evacuees are currently housed in Cornwall, Ontario.

There has been thoughtful consideration regarding this transfer request. Concern for the evacuees, resources from all emergency service units (Police, Fire and EMS) and considering that this is a transfer of evacuees and not an emergency evacuation situation, the City of Thunder Bay has determined it is not in a position to accept the transfer request. This decision was made for the following reasons:

Specifically:

- The City of Thunder Bay emergency services (Police, Fire and EMS) are operating at maximum capacity at this time, and cannot safely support an additional 470 people while sustaining the required level of service to our Municipality;
- The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is operating at 91% capacity, is experiencing staffing shortages, and SNEMS is seeing increasing offload delays;
- Operational staff do not have the capacity to run more facilities for evacuees;
- Municipal resources are already straining in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Evacuees will not have access to all resources, personnel and services that they require which is neither safe nor fair to evacuees; and

- Thunder Bay is already on stand-by as a Transportation Hub for life threat evacuations if required.

Accordingly, the City of Thunder Bay is not in a position to accept any additional evacuees at this time. Currently there are approximately 1170 forest fire evacuees already in Thunder Bay from the Poplar Hill, Deer Lake and Pikangikum First Nations. The collective teams from the City of Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay District Health Unit and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre are working hard to provide the necessary services and supports to evacuees currently in Thunder Bay.

As such, the following recommendation is provided for City Council's consideration.

WITH RESPECT to the memorandum from N. Gale, City Manager dated August 6, 2021, we recommend that the position of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) relative to the inability to accommodate the transfer request of 470 evacuees from Deer Lake be endorsed and supported as it is in the best interest of the evacuees, emergency services, health care systems and our community as a whole;

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

C.C. Dr. J. DeMille, Medical Officer of Health
Chief S. Hauth, TBPS
Chief W. Gates, SNEMS
Chief G. Hankkio, TBFR
K. Lewis, General Manager, Development &
Emergency Services