



MINUTES
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Thursday, June 8, 2023
5:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers

Livestream Recording: <https://kenora.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Present: Mayor A. Poirier
Councillor R. Bernie
Councillor G. Chaze
Councillor L. Koch
Councillor L. Moncrief

Regrets: Councillor B. Manson
Councillor K. Van Belleghem (arrived at

Staff: Kyle Attanasio, CAO, Heather Pihulak, Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk, Greg Breen, Director of Engineering & Infrastructure, Ryan Marsh, Director of Finance, David Pratt, Director of Fire & Emergency Services, Roberta Marsh, Director of Human Resources, Risk & Insurance, Janis Pochailo, Director of Planning & Building Services, Stace Gander, Director of Economic Development & Tourism

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Poirier called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Land Acknowledgement
Delivered by Councillor Bernie

As we gather, we recognize that we are on Treaty Three Lands which are steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations and Metis people today. We continue to be thankful for the partnerships with Indigenous people.

We give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in the City of Kenora. We seek wisdom in our minds, clearness in our thinking, truth in our speaking and always love in our hearts, so that we may try always to unite the Citizens of Kenora. Let these principles guide us in our decision making.

Public Notices

Take Notice that as required under Notice By-law #160-2022, Council intends to adopt the following items at this Special Meeting of Council:

None

Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & General Nature thereof

i) On Today's Agenda

ii) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance

There were none declared.

Deputations

None.

1. Communication Audit Report Presentation

Emma Hunt, Director of Strategic & Business Communications, and Dan Bordonali, Managing Partner at Sutherland Corporation opened the presentation.

Municipalities have unique needs and responsibilities, and our constituents have equally unique expectations. Effective communications play a vital role in all aspects of municipal governance by engaging residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the municipalities' decisions, programs, initiatives and day-to-day activities. The City of Kenora's decision to pursue a Communications Audit exemplifies a commitment to effective communication.

A communications audit is the first step in the strategic communications planning process. It is an important tool for municipalities to evaluate current communications practices and provide recommendations for consideration.

The expectations of communications on the municipalities has increased. The Communications Department is comprised of the Communications Officer and the Communications Lead. This team produces and manages communications for the City on a day-to-day basis.

The City recognizes the importance of effective communications and seeks to identify ways to enhance internal and external communications to keep its stakeholders informed and engaged. The City of Kenora Charting Our Course 2027: 2022-2027 Strategic Plan Goal 4.4: "Enhance City communications to the community on municipal services, developments and affairs" by updating the existing Communication Strategy.

There is an opportunity for the City to reflect on the community's and staff's experiences, interests and preferences to make informed decisions on communications.

This is the first step in a communication practice is to analyze the channels and strategies used by the City to engage audiences in order to provide City Council, Senior Leaders and the Communications Department with renewed knowledge and understanding that supports the enhancement of communications practices according to your audiences' interests, opinions and needs. The consultants reviewed current practices, outputs, methods, policies, priorities and experiences. Then, analyzed the data and provide recommendations for consideration to enhance communications moving forward.

Communications audits are an important tool for municipalities to evaluate current communications practices and provide recommendations for consideration. Recommendations may provide new perspectives, ideas and methods to mitigate communications challenges, and leverage opportunities to align your communications practices with the needs of your audiences.

The City may use these findings to develop and implement new communications practices that build on the success of the existing communications program. Findings and recommendations lay the groundwork for the City to take the next steps in the strategic communications planning process. This could include developing an updated communication strategy and a comprehensive action plan to execute the strategy.

The audit was conducted following a five step process and approach. The first phase was to establish the project parameters. Meetings between The Hub and the City Communications Department to confirm project process and parameters. The communications team shared all the channels and access to all our communication procedures and reviewed social and traditional media coverage from the past year. The team shared and reviewed key City channels, materials, tools, tactics, plans and policies, including:

City of Kenora Charting Our Course 2027: 2022-2027 Strategic Plan

City of Kenora Communication Strategy

City of Kenora Corporate Communications Plan

City of Kenora Communications Policy (2017)

City of Kenora Social Media Policy (2017)

Phase 2 was the stakeholder survey stream and included digital surveys, paper surveys, both internal and external format. Phase 3 was the stakeholder one to one meeting stream and provided very valuable insight that can't always be captured through general surveys. Phase 4 was the content and channel analysis stream. Identified digital and social channels, marketing materials and content to be analyzed through a combination of tools and methods, from web analytics to manual analysis. The group assessed the effectiveness of communication content in terms of its relevance, clarity, tone and performance, and communication channels in terms of reach, frequency, and engagement. Next was to review physical facilities and in-person communication channels to gain a broad understanding of how, when and where the Communications Department disseminates information to internal and external audiences on a day-to-day basis.

The City's strategic plan highlights the importance of communications and survey results from the strategic plan highlighted the improvements to communications. The City has enhanced communications over the past five years. The communication team is motivated and dedicated to communication. The City's leadership is invested in, and supportive of, effective communication. The City leverages a variety of communications channels to prioritize meaningful communication and easy access to information for a broad audience. The City's communications team prioritizes proactive information sharing. The Kenora community wants to be engaged in the civic process. City stakeholders, residents and the staff praise the communication department efforts to expand and enhance communications in recent years. The official City website serves as a primary information source for accurate information, news and updates for the City of Kenora for residents, media and stakeholders. A balanced approach to communications is valued.

Opportunities to enhance external communications:

#1 - Create a multimedia public awareness campaign to raise awareness of City roles and responsibilities, where to find key City information and how to leverage City communication channels.

#2 - Further enhance ease of access to Council news and municipal information through the official City website by increasing and clarifying calls-to-action, simplifying access to popular information, enhancing the website's search function and search engine optimization.

#3 - Further enhance ease of access to Council news and municipal information through social media by posting Council Decision Summaries.

#4 - Consider a specific strategy for communications with First Nations communities through the hiring of an Indigenous Relations Specialist.

#5 - Strengthen local media relationships by considering a media engagement survey, engaging a proactive approach to public relations where possible and managing expectations.

#6 - Refine and enhance the approach to social media by tailoring content according to a platform-specific strategy, identifying cross promotional opportunities to highlight communication channels, standardizing brand application for social media, and considering the use of an all-in-one tool for planning, scheduling and analyzing content across all platforms.

#7 - Review and consider expanding external communication channels for targeted outreach focused on two-way feedback opportunities through awareness campaigns, surveys, touchpoints and regular channel audits.

Opportunities to enhance internal communications:

#1 - Clarify and reinforce internal communication roles, responsibilities and requirements through regular communications touchpoints and policy reviews.

#2 - Review and consider expanding internal communication channels to extend outreach opportunities through instant alerts and paper newsletters.

Opportunities to enhance internal and external communications:

#1 - Enhance departmental cooperation to strengthen overall city communications and information sharing with the public through the implementation of a committee, shared tools and streamlined systems to effectively leverage internal resources.

#2 - Continuing to apply a balanced approach to communications through an updated strategic communications plan that looks to acquire additional resources for the Communications Department including an additional full-time position.

Final Insights and next steps for consideration:

Subject to the City's review of the Communications Audit and The Hub's recommendations, the next step would be to develop a strategic communications plan. This process includes leveraging the insights of the Communications Audit to identify what the City's goals are with regards to communications, a comprehensive action plan that outlines how the City will achieve these goals, and what resources the City will require to successfully execute the action plan.

Strategies for success may directly align with some of the recommendations provided, while others may build on the City's communications successes, in addition to the priorities identified in the City's strategic Plan. As the Communications Department and other stakeholders within the organization work to invest time and financial resources into the implementation of the Hub's recommendations, they will be well-positioned to build on the momentum of the last few years and pursue an updated strategic communications plan.

For municipalities of our size, it was questioned what is the typical staff complement for a city of our size. It varies, there are some municipalities that the populations are small-mid size and they have a fairly large or robust communications department. The large urban municipalities can be quite comprehensive or extensive. It varies from 2 to the double digits. City of Toronto has 30. Every municipality is unique and what they see as communications evolve and the competition increases, there is a renewed focus with the

municipality on advancing and building their communications department. Some build internally and some build with consultants and some use a combination of two. In large part, it is based on size. What is found most recently that beyond population, in large part now is the shift to issues and the type of communications that are being done. Large seasonal populations have a very robust and public relations division where they handle a lot of output. In terms of staff compliment it depends on how they want to build their staff and seeing a trend in a mix of in-house and consultants.

Council questioned how we turn the local media around so that they report on the positives instead of always the negatives in the work we do. The negative undertone in the click bait is a theme across the province. Working at it, it won't change overnight. One key thing is to implement a media engagement survey and would allow us to connect with the local media and gain an understanding of their experiences. It is difficult to take in that feedback but is a step to having them feel heard and working with them to move forward. It allows for an open dialogue. It allows us to look at what they suggest and for us to have a dialogue around why things are reported the way they were. There is an opportunity to have discussions around local media and different ways positive information can be shared. It creates new opportunities to engage with local media and communicate with them on a more regular basis.

2. 2023 AMO Delegation Requests

Council reviewed several items to consider for advocacy with the Ministers at the upcoming AMO conference. It was noted that we don't want to raise the same concerns that we have brought forward in the past. We want to bring forward things more upstream and issues that we can lobby for. They keep hearing the same things and we need to change our approach.

Policing costs and improving capacity to address substance abuse is important to Council and should continue to be considered.

Mitigation funding agreement for public health ends in 2024 and the costs for public health (NWHU) will be downloaded to municipalities. We cannot afford a drastically increased levy to NWHU. Our funding on some programs is a 25/75 split with the municipality paying 25%. The government proposed several years ago a 30/70 split was proposed but it was deferred for implementation. It is more than a 5% increase to municipalities and a bigger hit. It was passed and in legislation that it is 70/30. There will be a delegation request from the Health Unit to the MMAH regarding this matter.

There is a shortage of ambulances and an increase of calls based on the funding model as the requests for calls to surrounding communities or transfers to Winnipeg. It could seriously affect our budget and we should be considering advocating for our partners.

It was suggested that the municipality join the KDSB and the Health Unit when presenting on the topics they are advocating for rather than making our own delegation requests on these subjects.

Mayor Poirier is submitting a list to the Executive Director from NOMA for delegations on behalf of NOMA at the conference as well. NOMA gets a different time element for submission. It is the executive that brings the issues forward.

Council agreed to the following categories:

<p>Policing Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicitor General 	<p>The existing cost-formula simply does not work for the City of Kenora. Since the cost formula was introduced in 2015, our municipality have paid hundreds of thousands more for policing than the average cost paid in other communities. This is significant money that could be invested in critical infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and other local community needs.</p>
<p>Improving Capacity to Address Substance Abuse and Substance Abuse treatment beds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health 	<p>A holistic treatment centre for addiction is desperately required in Kenora. To combat addiction, particularly for methamphetamine, treatment must go beyond the traditional 30-day model.</p> <p>We started this advocacy in January and we need to continue with this. We need to continue to hear Kenora, Dryden, Red Lake. Having mental health support is key so we need to keep advocating for a facility.</p> <p>We will also join the KDSB in this advocacy.</p>
<p>Critical Infrastructure Support</p>	<p>We have advocated for this issue for years. Council agreed that it was time to refocus our ask and present this issue when we have a specific project to make the ask for. In 2025 we have a significant bridge repair or replacement and therefore in 2024 would be the time to start with that specific ask to the Province.</p>
<p>Commitment to sustained funding for Ontario Health Teams</p>	<p>This came out of the All Nations Health Partners. The work of the ANHP is done on the side of someone's desk and they take turns. It is hard to advance things without a dedicated staff lead. It is a unique team in the province and are really working together as a group now and feel they are leaps and bounds above of other health teams but would like a coordinator and money for the team for advertising and engagement. This will not be part of the 2023 AMO delegation requests.</p>
<p>Physician Remuneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Health 	<p>The policy, legislation and funding formulas for primary care (physicians remuneration) is inequitable in the north and creating barriers to success and creating physician shortages. The funding formula for primary care in the north is not equitable and it is causing doctors to leave. There needs to be significant change put to this.</p> <p>Council agreed that 4, 5 and 6 could be in the package but we speak to physician remuneration. This is a community issue that is important to everyone as no one wants to be without a family physician.</p>
<p>Capital Project Cost Sharing</p>	<p>Not proceeding</p>
<p>Food security in the north</p>	<p>cost of living, housing, utilities, lower wages and increased food costs are creating poverty and decreasing access to nutritious food choices (this could intersect with small regional economic development support to northern food producers/growers etc.)</p> <p>The NWHU will be sending some briefing notes on this subject and will be requesting delegations more specifically how it ties to school programs and healthy babies and healthy children. Some will be addressed through the NWHU through a delegation. We will support the NWHU with their delegation.</p>
<p>Territories Without Municipal Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long Term Care 	<p>(unorganized territory) need to contribute to long term/homes for the aged the same way municipalities are required to.</p>

<p>NWHU Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Health 	<p>The mitigation funding agreement for public health ends in 2024 and the costs for public health (NWHU) will be downloaded to municipalities. We cannot afford a drastically increased levy to NWHU.</p> <p>This can have another negative financial impact to the municipality and therefore advocacy on this one is important. We will also support the NWHU in their presentation.</p>
<p>Increased Air Carriers</p>	<p>Assistance with enhanced/increased air schedules/carriers in the north.</p> <p>Remove for now and when we have more information, bring up with Minister Rickford when we have more information.</p>
<p>EMS Funding</p>	<p>EMS services 50/50 funding model doesn't begin to cover cost of providing service to surrounding communities.</p> <p>The KDSB will be advocating for this one, and we can support that work.</p>

Heather will submit our delegation requests by the deadline of Friday, June 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. EST.

Ministry offices usually confirm delegations about 1-2 weeks prior to the conference.

3. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.