



Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held in the Municipal Chambers on Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 5:30 pm

Mayor S. Storey presided. Councillors present were C. LePoidevin, K. Watt-Senner, A. Fennema and J. Jenkinson.

Staff present were CAO R. J. Holland and Economic Development Officer D. Christie

**Meeting Called to Order
At 5:30 pm.**

Agenda:

Mayor Storey called for a motion to adopt the agenda and asked for the declaration of new business.

CAO Holland added a CAO Report which outlined a funding opportunity for a proposed Water Plant upgrade.

Mayor Storey declared she was adding an in-camera meeting to the meeting agenda.

MOVED/SECONDED to adopt the agenda with the addition of the CAO Report on the funding opportunity for the Water Plant Upgrade and an in-camera meeting.

Resolution 01-27-15

Carried.

Delegations & Guests:

Lori Borth - Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development.

Joining on the phone were:

Dave Van Dolah – District Manager, Vanderhoof FLNRO and
Justin Calof – Director of Strategic Initiatives.

Ms. Borth presented on the Apportionment process for both the Prince George & Lakes Districts Timber Supply Areas. A Power Point presentation accompanied the presentation.

The allowable annual cut (AAC) for both the Lakes District and the Prince George Timber Supply areas have already been set by the Chief Forester. In both timber supply areas (TSA), the AAC has been cut dramatically to reflect the reduced timber supply available in each district. The Prince George AAC was reduced by 33 percent, while the AAC in the Lakes District was reduced by 41 percent. The impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation, wildfire, and the end of shelf life of affected timber have worked together to reduce the timber supply.

The apportionment decision divides the available AAC amongst the different categories of forest licences; Replaceable Forest licences, Non-replaceable Forest licences, First Nations, BC Timber Sales, Forest Service Reserve, Woodlots and Community Forest. Ms. Borth noted a key consideration for the apportionment decision is the equitable distribution of timber harvesting rights amongst the key groups: BC Timber Sales, First Nations, and Industry.

The Minister of Forests is responsible for the apportionment decision.

The apportionment proposals that are being considered provide volumes to all forest licence types except wood lots and Community Forest Agreements.

Ms. Borth noted the Minister is actively considering apportionments in both the Prince George and Lakes District Timber Supply Areas. The Minister is expected to make these decisions in next couple of months.

Ms. Borth believes the Provincial Government is very concerned about rural communities and First Nations. The Minister would like to hear from rural communities who would like to express their concerns or interests relative to coming apportionments. The government would like to see shared interests in regional economic development and community resilience. The Minister understands the importance of a thriving regional economy to maintain sustainability. She added the government is striving for lasting and comprehensive solutions to rectify First Nations Rights, Title, and Interests. The government is looking for opportunities for integrated solutions and to address stewardship challenges of the fiber supply.

Written submissions should be submitted by February 15, 2021.

Justin Calof added, the greatest value within the apportionment is the live tree volume. Everyone wants the live trees due to their higher value. The challenge for the apportionment decision relates to how the live tree volume will be divided up equitably, given the reconciliation pressures?

A second key consideration relates to the last time there was an apportionment decision. In 2004, the decision was to provide forest companies with about 50 per cent of the AAC. That decision is seen to have created benchmarks for industry's share in the apportionment decision.

Mr. Calof talked about the reconciliation component of the Apportionment Decision. He stated First Nations want a piece of the economy and they would like to be economic partners.

Stewardship has always been a contentious point with First Nations. Addressing this issue can translate to the Province's ability to approve permits. When First Nations have the licenced volume, that dynamic changes. The Province feels this is what is needed for a successful forest industry.

Mayor Storey thanked Justin Calof for his comments.

Mayor Storey stated there are a lot of discussions behind the scenes. The Village is concerned about West Fraser, job creation and our community forest that the Village would like to expand. The Village is interested in working with the local First Nations on an expanded area-based tenure.

Mayor Storey commented on our Community Forest operations. She feels we have raised the bar around how forestry operations can occur. She spoke of the number of people employed in our Community Forest. The Village of Fraser Lake would like to be able to keep doing what we have been doing. She would like to see some assistance so the Community can survive.

Councillor Jenkinson asked what the apportionment decision will look like and whether it will be equivalent or more than what is required by the mills to sustain them over the next 10 to 20 years.

Lori Borth responded the decision relating to the allowable cut has already been made by the Chief Forester. The annual cut is going down significantly. The lower volume may be less than what is required. The apportionment decision does not set volume, but it does place what is available into different categories and then disposed of it.

Councillor Jenkinson asked if there was a balance between what will be allowed to be cut and what is needed to feed our sawmills?

Lori Borth explained there is a maximum amount that can be cut. If there is not enough to feed the mills, then there is an issue. There have already been mill closures in some areas. She used the Isle Pierre mill as an example. There will also be downsizing of mills or milling operations to adjust for the reduced AAC. There is always consideration around what is needed for mills and what is required for stewardship issues such as wildlife habitat. When fires happen, there is even less timber available.

Justin Calof stated there is less timber available now than there was in 2000. He repeated communities need to begin transitioning their economies. With respect to the apportionment, the question is who has the right to cut down trees. Regardless of who cuts down the trees, the fiber will flow to the mills. Regardless of whether they are First Nations or Industry, the wood will still flow to the mills.

The relationships between the entities who have the cutting rights, and the mills will likely change. But he expects the wood will remain in the north where the milling infrastructure exists.

Jason Regnier asked if the different apportionment scenarios were provided to the public or just to the licensees?

Lori Borth felt it went to licensees.

Justin Calof advised the Ministry reported to Licensees and several local government representatives who were invited. He recalls there were four or five possible scenarios in the Lakes District and approximately the same number of scenarios for the Prince George Timber Supply Area. Mr. Calof offered to supply those scenarios.

Jason Regnier explained that Fraser Lake has only one licensee: West Fraser. If there is a major shift in tenure ownership, such as a strong First Nations ownership, that may impact West Fraser decision making. West Fraser is making business decisions that align with their corporate goals. Their business decisions may not necessarily align with the needs of the Village of Fraser Lake. The community is independent of West Fraser. That issue needs to be discussed openly between the Village and the Province.

The Village understands the amount of timber on the land base is out of synch with the milling capacity. It is also understood that the Fraser Lake Sawmill is unlikely to operate at half or three-quarter capacity. There needs to be some discussion between the Village and Province to figure out how to best secure the economic future of Fraser Lake.

Mr. Regnier feels the importance of the Village of Fraser Lake is being overlooked because of the focus on reconciliation with First Nations. Although reconciliation is important, the fragility of the Village of Fraser Lake's economy is just as important. If we lose one sawmill, we have lost all our sawmills. If we have 20 fewer children enrolled in our schools, do we lose our schools. If we lose our schools, what happens to the community. Those

developments will not help Nadleh Whut'en or the Stellat'en either. He believes Fraser Lake needs more say in this issue.

Mayor Storey thanked Jason Regnier for his comments. She noted it is great to have people who understand the forest industry. The members of Council are not experts in the subject so they must defer to those who know and understand the industry. She noted CAO Holland has a background in Forestry and he has been doing a great job.

Mayor Storey stated it is very important we do not lose another industry in our community. If the Fraser Lake Sawmill is lost, it will impact both communities on either side of Fraser Lake as well. The children from Stellaquo and Nadleh attend school in Fraser Lake. The doctors and most community supports are in Fraser Lake.

Mayor Storey agreed with earlier comments, that the Village of Fraser Lake needs to be part of the discussion. She would like to see something for the Community Forest. At the end of 2022, the AAC drops significantly. What does the community do when that occurs?

Mayor Storey noted the Village has a significant infrastructure deficit that needs to be tackled.

CAO Holland voiced his concern that communities have been left out of these discussions. West Fraser is not the community and the company is not beholding to the community. West Fraser is a private entity that is profit driven. Their focus is to address business concerns. In doing so, they may close the local mill if there is not sufficient timber supply. As was stated by Justin Calof, harvested timber will go to the mills because that is where the value of the harvested timber is realized. The discussion is appropriately about who has the right to harvest timber. Who has the right to the economy of logging the remaining volume?

At a time when there is dwindling fiber basket, many communities have criticized the waste seen from conventional logging. Those same communities have made the comment that they can do it better. Communities do not want to see the waste of this important resource. They also want better stewardship of the land.

Alongside the alignment for First Nations Reconciliation, there should also be an alignment with Rural Communities such as Fraser Lake. If the apportionment decision prompts West Fraser to make the decision to shut down the mill and leave town,

without volume in the apportionment decision the Village of Fraser Lake will be left with nothing. CAO Holland suggested the better solution is to provide the volume being considered for Industry to the rural communities. This provides communities some control over how the timber is harvested, where the timber is milled and how the land is managed. This ensures rural communities can retain a forest industry in their area. Currently the system is broken due to a lack of consideration of the needs of rural communities.

Mayor Storey commented about the successes of the Fraser Lake Community Forest. Our efforts to improve environmental responsibility, more complete use of the available fiber, wildlife habitat enhancement, and local employment. She commented on our non merchantable tree retention practices. She also feels it is important to recognize how great the loggers feel about the work they are doing. We are doing an amazing job.

Mayor Storey invited Lori Borth, District Manager Dave Van Dolah and Justin Calof on a tour of the community forest. She would like them to hear from the loggers working in the Community Forest about how proud they are about what they are achieving.

Lori Borth noted CAO Holland provided several photos of work completed in the Community Forest. She was happy to see the strong stewardship of the land base.

Jason Regnier confirmed there was no volume set aside for expansion of the community forest in any of the apportionment scenarios that are being considered.

Lori Borth agreed.

Jason Regnier repeated the mills are going to get the volume regardless of who cuts the timber. There needs to be an opportunity for volume for communities. We have been able to prove we are able to put volume to market. He noted, the area-based tenure that was assigned to the Fraser Lake Community Forest was in West Fraser's planning cell. The timber profile was too small for them to log, so they gave it up. The Fraser Lake Community Forest has been able to market the smaller profile timber to area mills, resulting in a very positive impact on the local market by making this timber available and creating employment in doing so.

If you look at risks and consequences, the consequences will be severe if no volume is apportioned to the Village of Fraser Lake.

One way to mediate that concern is to look at what is most important for the Province. If the Province provides an opportunity to expand the community forest, in all likelihood that will be in partnership with the local First Nations. However, if there is no volume available in the apportionment, it just will not happen.

Mayor Storey stated the suggestion is to include Community Forests as one of those categories to receive an apportionment of volume.

Mayor Storey is committed to working toward solutions. She acknowledges the need for a Tri Council Meeting to discuss these concerns with the leadership in Nadleh and Stellaquo. She pointed out the jobs that are being created in the Community Forest are benefiting our First Nations. Our biggest contractor, Kenneth Schmidt, is working in the Community Forest. Everything we do, benefits the region. It is important that the Village of Fraser Lake stays economically healthy.

Jason Regnier added he does not want the volume for the Community Forest to come from the volume set aside for First Nations. He would prefer to see volume that is to be apportioned to Industry be placed into the hands of the community. He commented that while West Fraser may or may not have an interest in supporting the community, the Village of Fraser Lake has a vested interest in the economic future of the community.

Justin Calof offered to provide a written document relating to this discussion as a means of providing feedback. He commented on the importance for communities to take steps to transition their economies and the importance of being proactive. With a reducing timber supply there needs to be an active discussion on the economic future of rural communities. He feels the current government is willing to have that discussion. The apportionment discussion should be a signal to have these important discussions. Discussing the role and value of Community Forests is important.

Justin Calof commented about the growth of the Community Forest program over the past decade. He noted the Province devoted significant effort toward creating community forests. As a subsidized timber source, the Province must consider how much of the AAC has been allocated to Community Forests. As a subsidized timber source, what are the impacts on the Softwood Lumber Agreement. These challenges have influenced the Province's ability to expand Community Forests. Mr. Calof noted this is just a policy barrier that exists.

Justin Calof added that while the Province has been growing the Community Forest program, there has been little growth for the First Nations portfolio. From an economic perspective, if the Province does not address the reconciliation issue, there will be increasing challenges to getting timber to market.

Mayor Storey stated the Village will prepare a submission before February 15th, 2021 to meet the Province's deadline.

Mayor Storey thanked Lori Borth, Dave Van Dolah and Justin Calof for the conversation.

Jason Regnier added inside the Lakes District and Prince George TSA's are sub economies. Fraser Lake is stuck halfway between Burns Lake and Prince George. Half of our local timber volume comes from the Lakes District and half from the Prince George Timber Supply Area. That dynamic tends to get overlooked.

Like the lack of growth of the First Nations portfolio, if you look at the regional economy there are 200,000 hectares set aside for the Burns Lake Community Forest and the Chinook Community Forest. Those area-based tenures were set aside in support of the local mills, the community, and the First Nations of Burns Lake. In comparison, there is a 23,000-hectare Community Forest in Fraser Lake. That is only 15 percent of what was set aside for Burns Lake. Why such a difference relative to a community that is just down the road.

As a person living in Fraser Lake, Jason Regnier feels the Village of Fraser Lake is in a similar circumstance to that of First Nations. We have been passed by in terms of opportunities for our community forest. He would rather have stability in the Village of Fraser Lake rather than having West Fraser, Can For and Sinclair maintain their AAC at the expense of small communities. If that volume is pushed toward our community forest, we will get that timber into the market. However, if there is no volume set aside through this apportionment process, the Minister of Forest will not be able to provide volume regardless of future developments.

Lori Borth stated she understands the point being made. She appreciates the time that was provided for this discussion. She feels it is an important topic. If further questions or comments arise, Lori Borth invited Council to contact her.

District Manager Dave Van Dolah thanked Council for the conversation. He noted that other northern communities such

as Vanderhoof and Fort St. James would also like to see more volume in their hands because large corporations do not have the same loyalties to communities as the people who live there.

At 6:30 pm Mayor Storey called for a five-minute break.

Minutes:

**Regular Council Minutes,
December 9, 2020**

MOVED/SECONDED that the Regular Council Minutes of January 13, 2021 be adopted as read on this day and that such Minutes as read set out all the business before Council that day and fully and properly record all the resolutions and bylaws passed and adopted by Council at that meeting.

Resolution 01-27-016

Carried

MOVED/SECONDED to adopt the Minutes of the In Camera Meeting held January 13, 2021.

Resolution 01-27-17

Carried

**Business arising from
the Minutes:**

Mayor Storey asked that policies that were presented at the January 13, 2021 Council meeting be brought back to the next meeting.

MOVED/SECONDED to receive Business Arising from the Minutes.

Resolution 01-27-18

Carried

**Reports on Council
Activities:**

Councillor LePoidevin
Nothing to report.

Councillor Watt-Senner
Nothing to report.

Councillor Jenkinson
Attended the meeting with School District 91 earlier today. He felt the meeting was informative. He is happy to see an annual meeting will happen in the years to come. He is also appreciative of the work that has been completed at the Fraser Lake Schools.

Councillor Fennema

On January 21st Councillor Fennema attended the Autumn Services Meeting. They did not have a lot to report this time. They have just finished their renovations. They are offering some of their programs under COVID restrictions. The seniors are looking forward to Autumn Services re opening.

The Historical Society was scheduled to have a meeting, but it was cancelled.

Councillor Fennema also participated in the meeting with School District 91 earlier today and found it quite informative.

Mayor Storey

Attended the NDI Meeting. The Village of Fraser Lake was approved for the Business Façade funding.

NDIT is conducting a Rail study. The interesting thing is CN is on board with the study.

While at NDI Mayor Storey asked about our application for an Intern. She asked Joel McKay to put Fraser Lake on a high priority for an intern. Fraser Lake is one of the few communities who has not received an intern.

This past Friday Mayor Storey spoke with James Simpson of Northern Health. She has arranged a meeting between Council and Mr. Simpson for Friday January 29th at 2:00 pm. She encouraged members of Council to attend.

Mayor Storey commented on the Coastal Gaslink project. She would like to see better communications between industry and local governments.

Mayor Storey moderated the rural connectivity webinar. She feels it was a success.

Mayor Storey has been sitting in on the Northern Health Updates. These updates explain what is going on in the area and provide updates on the vaccine roll out. She noted the RCMP are not on the priority list of First Responders who will receive the vaccine at the onset of the roll out. Mayor Storey advocated for the RCMP to be moved up the list.

Earlier today, Mayor Storey participated in the virtual Natural Resource Forum. She also attended the afternoon meeting with representatives of School District 91. She was happy to be able to discuss local concerns. Mayor Storey commented on the importance of supporting the mental health of students in the school system. From conversations with a member of the Fort St. James Municipal Council, she has heard a psychiatrist is providing services at the school one day a week. Mayor Storey met with Principal Brian Cross from FLESS to discuss the plan for

FLESS. Mayor Storey is concerned the Fraser Lake schools are not getting the same services that are being provided in other schools. She believes there are significant wait lists for services through Connexus. She would like to see doctors and psychiatrists in the schools to support the mental health of our students.

Mayor Storey is happy to hear the School District is working on Child Care in the schools. She is interested to learn more and wonders if they will provide before and after school childcare services.

MOVED/SECONDED to receive Councillor Reports.

Resolution 01-27-19

Carried

Accounts payable:

MOVED/SECONDED to adopt Accounts Payable and payroll in the amount of \$1,017,624.72.

Resolution 01-27-20

Carried

Councillor LePoidevin asked for more information about the payment made to Fraser Lake Forest Consulting. Cheque 29386 refers.

CAO Holland advised the payment was for Community Forest expenses.

Correspondence List:

None

Business from the CAO:

Village of Fraser Lake Cell Phone Use Policy proposal:
CAO Holland presented a policy update. The existing policy does not allow cell phone use during work hours at the Village. The new policy recognizes the value of cell phones and their ability to add in production, however, it sets guidelines for use and directs that personal use must be restricted to lunch and coffee breaks.

Councillor Jenkinson stated in the mining industry, there is no cell phone usage allowed. He asked if we accept cell phone usage, will the Village have to pay part of the employee's cell phone bill?

CAO Holland advised the Village provides cell phones to the CAO, Director of Public Works, the EDO, the Water Plant technician, and the on-shift arena staff. There is no allowance for personal

cell phone costs. The Village provided cell phones are used for communication, monitoring the water plant and ice plant and often research to see something is done. The old policy does not reflect current practices.

MOVED/SECONDED to adopt the Village of Fraser Lake Cell Phone Use Policy.

Resolution 01-27-21

Carried

Delinquent Building Permits:

CAO Holland advised the Village is responsible for managing construction activities within the Village boundary. Historically, the Village has not been diligent about managing building permits to ensure the inspection process was being followed through. In 2019, a first round of letters was sent to property owners who were delinquent with their building permits. A second round of letters were hand delivered to property owners in 2020. Recently the Building Inspector brought another list of properties with delinquent building permits. Some of those properties received letters in 2019 and 2020 but did not respond to the written request to update their building permit by calling for an inspection.

CAO Holland advised there are two approaches to deal with these delinquent building permits. Many municipalities simply put copies of the correspondence on the property folio. This demonstrates the efforts of the municipality to bring the property into compliance.

The second approach is to place a Notice on Title. Section 57 of the Community Charter provides authorization for such an action. This is very similar to placing a covenant on title. The presence of a Notice on Title indicates that something was done to the property or structure that relates to the safety or construction of the building, a building permit was required, and it has not yet been completed.

A discussion followed.

MOVED/SECONDED to send a letter to the delinquent building permit holders giving them a three (3) month time frame to either reactivate their building permit or complete the inspection process.

Resolution 01-27-22

Carried

Prince George Timber Supply Area Allocation Decision:

MOVED/SECONDED to send a letter to the Minister of Forests asking for an allocation of volume to the Fraser Lake Community Forest.”

Resolution 01-27-23

Carried

Bylaw development for the Community Forest Revenues:

CAO Holland began a discussion about the importance of developing a Reserve Bylaw for the revenues from the Fraser Lake Community Forest. A copy of the Community Forest Agreement application was provided to each member of Council. CAO Holland advised the Village committed to using the proceeds of the Community Forest to build community capacity. Administration would like to establish a generalized list of what that means so the relevant bylaw can be drafted.

MOVED/SECONDED to table the discussion of the Community Forest Reserve Bylaw until the next Council Meeting on February 10, 2021.”

Resolution 01-27-24

Carried

C.H. Foote Memorial Arena:

CAO Holland referred to the current Provincial Health Orders that discourage discretionary travel. There has been a request from one user group to allow players from Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake and Burns Lake to practice together at the arena. Administration and staff have discussed the request. They do not feel the request is consistent with the current Provincial Health Order. Aside from the arena users, staff had a concern about accompanying family members being brought to the community. The COVID-19 numbers in two of the four communities were a strong consideration.

Administration has restricted access to users residing in the area from Priestly Hill to the west and Willowvale to the east.

Councillor LePoidevin stated he is OK with restricting use of the arena to local players. He had heard through the rumour mill the players had been shut down. He did not feel that was right.

Mayor Storey feels it is okay to not bring people to the community during the pandemic. She received a call from one of the effected parents and listened to her concern. The caller simply wanted the concern to be brought to Council for their consideration.

Budget Meeting schedule:

CAO Holland advised he would like to schedule budget meetings. Typically, these are held by way of several Special Meetings.

A discussion followed.

Budget Meetings were scheduled for.
Friday February 5th between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm.
Tuesday February 9th between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm.

Water Plant Upgrade – ICI COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Funding:

MOVED/SECONDED to apply to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure program under the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure funding stream for water plant upgrades to the Fraser Lake Water Treatment Plant in the amount of \$293,540.00.

Resolution 01-27-25 Carried

MOVED/SECONDED to receive CAO Reports.

Resolution 01-27-26 Carried

Staff Reports:

None

Reading List:

MOVED/SECONDED to receive the Reading List.

Resolution 01-27-27 Carried

New Business:

Councillor LePoidevin noted the ice at the CH Foote Memorial Arena is not being used much. He noted it is expensive to keep the ice plant running and the building staffed. He suggested the Village moved the closure date up to the end of February 2021.

Mayor Storey suggested staff look at bookings and choose a date. Staff is directed to choose the closure date.

Councillor Fennema complimented Mayor Storey about an article in the Omineca Express. The article talks about what the Village is doing at the Professional Building.

Councillor Fennema stated the Chamber of Commerce dollars that were purchased by local employers and given to their employees for Christmas have been very good for the community. She has heard many positive comments. Close to \$55,000.00 was spent in the community.

Mayor Storey reported she has been asked to present a birthday card and flowers to a resident of Silver Birch Lodge who will be turning 100 years old.

Mayor Storey would like to thank Dave Sansom for donating his time and money to maintain the rink at the lake. She feels Dave Sansom should receive a \$50.00 gift certificate as a token of our appreciation for his efforts. The rink has been very good this year.

MOVED/SECONDED to thank Dave Sansom publicly and to provide him with a \$50.00 gift certificate.

Resolution 01-27-28

Carried

WHL and BCHL request for support. Mayor Storey referred to a letter received from these organizations asking for letters of support for their application for COVID-19 relief funding.

MOVED/SECONDED to write a letter of support for the BCHL and WHL 's application for funding.

Resolution 01-27-29

Carried

MOVED/SECONDED to receive new business.

Resolution 01-27-30

Carried

Bylaws:

None

In Camera:

MOVED/SECONDED to move the Regular Meeting of Council in Camera 8:15 pm under Section 90(1)(c) of the Community

Charter which states a part of a council meeting may be closed to the public if the subject matter being considered relates to labour relations or other employee relations.

Resolution 01-27-31

Carried

Return to the Regular Meeting at 9:14 pm.

MOVED/SECONDED to hire a support worker to conduct speed tests.

Resolution 01-27-33

Carried

Motion to adjourn M/Councillor Watt-Senner 9:16pm

Next Regular Meeting of Council:

February 10, 2021 at 5:30 pm

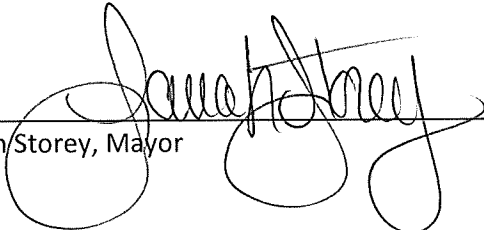
Adjournment:

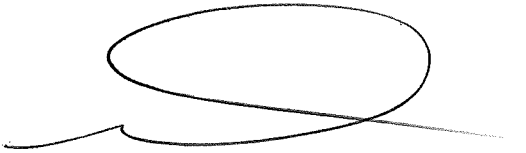
MOVED/SECONDED that the January 27, 2021 Regular Meeting of Council be now adjourned. 9:15 PM

Resolution 01-27-34

Carried

Certified Correct:


Sarah Storey, Mayor


Rodney J. Holland, Chief Administrative Officer