

Minutes
Council's Response Committee on Housing and Emergency Shelter (CRCHES)
Committee Meeting
June 11, 2025 – 9 am
Council Committee Meeting Room, City Hall

Attendees: Councillor Gord Klassen, Councillor Trevor Bolin, Councillor Sarah MacDougall, Bonnie McCue, and Glennis Wunderlich (recording secretary)

Guests: Anne McMenamin, Client Services Manager CCDP, Employment Connections Work BC Centre and Jordan Soggie, CEO, Fort St. John Association for Community Living

1. Call To Order:

9:00 am

2. Approval of the Agenda:

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

The May 6, 2025, CRCHES meeting minutes were provided and will be included on the next Regular Council agenda.

5. Invited Guests/Presentations

Anne McMenamin and Jordan Soggie attended as invited guests.

Discussions took place regarding:

The services offered by the Fort St. John Association for Community Living (FSJACL) including community outreach for individuals with complex needs to support and connect them with other resources. Working to improve access to assessments. Risks for experiencing homelessness can be attributed to complex needs going undiagnosed and a lack of required supports.

The City can support by lobbying the government to expand and improve health assessment services and bring more Crown Corporations and other support entities to Fort St. John.

A new FSJACL project with BC Builds Homes focuses on providing affordable rentals. Of a total of 60-75 units, 20% are designed to be accessible and below the market rental rate. Around 30-40 units would be designated for Northern Health staff and travelling medical professionals.

A project unrelated to the FSJACL, HomeWay Benefits, is a program focused on providing a path to homeownership for the employees of participating companies while promoting retention for employers. Renters are at greater risk of falling into poverty and homelessness compared to homeowners. The program supports employees to save for a down payment. The program is voluntary, and the employer

matches contributions of the participating employee to save for a down payment on a home fitting their income level.

BC limits the types of professionals who can make official diagnoses. Through Employment Connections, Work BC offers funding that can be used to pay for an assessment where employment is the goal.

Employment Connections addresses barriers to employment, offering various employment securing services from resume and cover letter writing workshops to the Learn, Innovate, Transform program. The services Employment Connections provides are not well known, and available funding is underutilized. The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction no longer requires those seeking financial assistance to visit a Work BC provider for help achieving employment. Referrals come from other entities, such as the Salvation Army transitional housing. Barriers to using the program also include stigma and not understanding how to navigate the program.

The new Regional Director for BC Housing has started, and there is interest in meeting with them to better understand services and opportunities in the area.

4. Correspondence

- Staff Response – Showers in City Facilities

Received for information and discussion. A response will be provided to the original letter received.

6. Updates and Progress Reports:

- Engaging with BC Provincial Ministries:
 - Draft Letters for review and signature
- BC Housing Update –
- Invitations sent to Work BC, NLC, AHMA, and FSJACL to attend a future meeting
- SharePoint site for Committee Documents
- Committee Page on Website

7. Ongoing Discussion Items

8. New Business

None

9. Budget and Resource Planning

None

10. Action Items

- Arrange a meeting with the new BC Housing Northern Regional Director
- FOI BC Housing: the number of units in Fort St. John and vacancy levels

11. Adjournment

10:37 am