

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

Attendees: Councillor Trevor Bolin, Councillor Sarah MacDougall, Erin Ferris, Darrell Blades, and Glennis Wunderlich (recording secretary)

1. Call To Order:

9:00 am

8. New Business

Darrell Blades, Deputy CAO, and Erin Ferris, Community Safety Manager

RCMP met with City staff to discuss the temporary shelter across from Salvation Army. Some individuals are actively trying to find more stable shelter but there are challenges with long-term bans from the emergency shelter and difficulties finding rental units.

The Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw No. 2615, 2025 would allow for any abandoned belongings to be removed after 24-hours but there is still no place for the people living there to go.

The Salvation Army emergency shelter is at maximum capacity. A potential solution is to expand the emergency shelter into the transitional housing side and relocation of those in transitional housing away from the emergency shelter to free up space and better support sobriety programs.

A meeting with David Sheach of BC Housing and the new Salvation Army Executive Director is scheduled for Monday, July 14.

Darrell Blades left the meeting.

2. Approval of the Agenda:

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

The June 11, 2025, CRCHES meeting minutes were provided and will be included on the next Regular Council agenda.

4. Correspondence

None.

5. Invited Guests/Presentations

Erin Ferris, Public Safety Manager

Discussions took place regarding:

The Fort St. John Housing Solutions Project, a locally tailored “Housing First” initiative. Prioritizes immediate access to permanent, stable housing without preconditions, supplemented with individualized supports. Funding of \$300,000 has been awarded from NDI for the project. The first Housing Solutions Project meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 14 and a pilot launch is anticipated for March 2026.

The Situation Table is a separate initiative and staff and community partners have completed the initial mentorship training component. The Situation Table participant training was sent to community organizations, but many do not have capacity to participate which has delayed the launch. Participants, who are community agency representatives, will respond to address urgent situations.

A meeting with BC Housing representatives and staff. BC Housing has funding for supportive housing complexes in Fort St. John. The exact need for supportive housing in Fort St. John is not known. Data of the number of emergency services calls over a five-year period is being collected to demonstrate need. Over 300 calls were responded to in 2024; relocation of Overdose Prevention Site to the Salvation Army could help reduce the number of calls.

The Executive Director for Salvation Army starts on July 14 and will be invited to meet with CRCHES.

6. Updates and Progress Reports:

- Engaging with BC Provincial Ministries:
 - Response from Ministry of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities indicated interest in meeting. Minister accepted meeting with committee members at the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Annual Summit July 20-24.
Add potential for LNG revenue sharing for solving local housing problems to discussion
- BC Housing Update – FOI submitted June 25
- Invitation sent to NLC
- SharePoint site for Committee Documents
- Committee Page on Website:
 - Additions ongoing

7. Ongoing Discussion Items

None.

9. Budget and Resource Planning

None.

10. Action Items

- Additions to the committee page on the website
- Invite David Sheach and Executive Director of Salvation Army to meet with CRCHES

11. Adjournment

10:57 am