

CITY OF IQALUIT
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING #19
August 1, 2014 at 11:30 AM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

PRESENT FROM COUNCIL

Deputy Mayor Mary Wilman
Councillor Kenneth Bell (via teleconference)
Councillor Noah Papatsie
Councillor Simon Nattaq
Councillor Joanasie Akumalik
Councillor Stephen Mansell

ABSENT

Councillor Romeyn Stevenson
Councillor Terry Dobbin

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION

John Hussey, Chief Administrative Officer
Tracy Cooke, City Clerk
John Mabberi-Mudonyi, Senior Director, Corporate Services
Luc Grandmaison, Fire Chief
Kevin Sloboda, Chief Municipal Enforcement Officer
Matthew Hamp, Engineering
Joe Brown, Operations Superintendent
Eva Michael, Communications Officer
Valerie Collin, Recorder
Jeanie Eeseemailee, Senior Interpreter/Translator

PRAYER

Councillor Nattaq opened the meeting with a prayer at 11:30am.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion #14-235

Moved by: Councillor Nattaq
Seconded by: Councillor Mansell

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

Unanimously Carried

animal; these effects resulted in a possible decrease in fertility and male offspring. Based on these studies, they set a standard taking this into account and adding the safety factor.

Dr. Baikie believed that it was important for Council to understand that there are many other sources of exposure to dioxins and furans for people. Over ninety (90) percent of dioxins and furans exposure comes from food that we eat, especially meat, dairy and fish products. Burning garbage, forest fires, burning diesel fuel, furnace oil as well as smoking and second hand smoke are all other forms of exposure to dioxins and furans. The Department of Health was tasked with monitoring results and providing important health related information to the public, especially pregnant women, or women who may become pregnant while the landfill is burning.

She noted that the original public health advisory was mostly to address women with child bearing age and the intent of the advisory is for women to take necessary steps to limit exposure to the smoke. She believed that the public advisory caused some anxiety throughout the community as it was not interpreted as it was intended to be and the department has since then amended the public advisory ensuring that it is clear and properly interpreted.

Dr. Baikie noted that although dioxins and furans concentrations have at times exceeded the standard, it does not mean that adverse health effects will be observed; the Ontario standard is very conservative and very protective of health risks associated with air borne concentrations, but dioxins and furans in Iqaluit remain low. Experts with Health Canada have also reviewed the results of air quality data collected and provided the same advice. The landfill fire and smoke is causing anxiety and stress in the community, and these do have an impact on individuals' health. There is also an impact on the quality of life in Iqaluit and those who would normally camp, enjoy a barbeque or any other outdoor activities feel that they should remain inside and limit their exposure to the fire smoke.

She did not believe that this was a public health emergency and the Department of Health does not expect to see any health effects in Iqaluit other than from the fine particulates explained earlier. The Department of Health has been transparent and has shared all information received based on air quality monitoring and have provided advice to residents as best as they can. It is the responsibility of residents to protect themselves and limit their exposure as they are vulnerable to health effects based on their own health.

Other factors also need to be considered when Council is discussing the matter and trying to make decisions. One would be to consider what the health effects and air quality would be in the community if the City were to attempt extinguishment of the fire. Will the extinguishment produce higher levels of smoke or produce ash? The extinguishment plan recommended by the City has been sent to Environment Canada and Health Canada who reviewed the plan from those perspectives; they feel that the plan does include mitigation measures so that these issues can be managed. The City has taken many other public health issues into consideration during their discussions and identifying an extinguishment plan.

Dr. Baikie explained that Health Canada considered many different provinces when trying to compare Iqaluit's air quality results; not every jurisdiction has a standard and Ontario has one that was recently developed and was the most up to date.

Councillor Papatsie believed that several letters were received from doctors in Iqaluit requesting that the fire be extinguished as soon as possible as it was a health concern for residents. He asked for clarification as to whether or not the landfill fire was a serious public health concern for residents of Iqaluit.

Dr. Baikie believed that the request from the doctors was that Council explores the possibilities of extinguishing the fire as soon as possible. She believed that many factors needed to be considered prior to Council moving forward with the extinguishment to ensure that the method selected will be safe for residents, workers and the environment.

Councillor Bell asked if actual measurements could be provided on the spikes that have occurred in Iqaluit in relation to air quality.

Dr. Baikie noted that the Air Pollution Concentrations in Iqaluit, Nunavut report is posted on the Department of Health website and is dated June 14 to July 28, 2014. The report provides specific measurements and information in relation to data collected over short-term and long-term periods and at each location.

Councillor Bell believed that the air monitoring equipment in Ontario was more advanced than the equipment in Iqaluit as it was only received recently due to the landfill fire.

Dr. Baikie believed that Iqaluit was now using the urban pollutant measurement equipment, which is also the equipment, used in Ontario. The spikes seen in Iqaluit do not compare to the spikes seen in the Northwest Territories during their forest fires.

Councillor Bell asked for clarification why women who are pregnant or may become pregnant are asked to limit their exposure to the smoke if there are no public health concerns.

Dr. Baikie explained that the short-term spikes can cause health effects to those who have chronic heart or lung disease and there are measures that these individuals can take to reduce their exposure. The concern with pregnant women or those who may become pregnant is in relation to the dioxins and furans during the short-term spikes.

Councillor Bell asked for clarification why these individuals would be advised to limit their exposure if in her opinion there is no immediate public health concern.

Dr. Baikie advised that the furans and dioxins results are, on average, above the Ontario standards. Based on these results, residents are simply advised to take necessary steps to reduce their exposure to smoke.

Council will need to consider this very carefully as funds have been invested for specific projects or purposes but some could be deferred to a later date if needed. The City has certain obligations with some of the reserves, such as the Land Fund, and funds cannot be used from these reserves other than their intended purpose.

Councillor Bell noted that the City also received a letter from the Government of Nunavut earlier in the day and asked for clarification on what the content of the letter was.

Administration noted that a letter was received on July 29, 2014 and indicated the government's commitment to acquire pumps, hoses and other equipment as well as their indication that no funding is currently available to assist the City with the extinguishment costs. The City is also being asked to receive written authorization from the federal government for use of seawater if chosen to do so, as well as a number of other regulatory requirements must be met or permission must be obtained prior to the City moving forward with the extinguishment.

Councillor Bell believed that another letter was delivered to the City early in the day regarding City reserves and other funds available to the City to cover the costs of the extinguishment and asked for clarification.

Administration advised that another letter was received by the Government of Nunavut in relation to use of City reserves for operational costs; this letter was delivered to Deputy Mayor Wilman and Mr. John Hussey, Chief Administrative Officer. The Government of Nunavut has asked a few questions that remain to be answered by the City at this time, as clarification is required from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada such as possible violations to the Fisheries Act or other violations that may be compromised during the extinguishment of the fire.

A resident recently asked if the City knew what affects the landfill fire had on the City's portable water; water testing was requested and results indicated no contamination to the portable water. There is also a concern with water run-off into the ocean from the extinguishment operation but the Fire Department does not believe that there will be run-off from extinguishment operations as the fire will absorb most of the water and the minimal water run-off will be collected and placed in a holding pond. This water will then need to be treated before being released back into environment but this will also be an expensive operation.

Administration advised that the Director of Environment with the Government of Nunavut also approached the Fire Department indicating that the City is technically in violation of Section 5(1) of the Environmental Protection Act, specifically in that, the City is discharging contaminants in the environment. The Department of Environment has, for the time being, elected to stay any enforcement actions as they recognize that the City is severely limited in their ability to manage the situation. This is, however, contingent upon the City making every effort to fulfill their stated commitment to extinguish the landfill fire.

Administration stated that they have two recommendations for Council:

- (1) As per motion 14-172, *"That the Fire Chief, at his discretion, extinguish the fire as he sees fit, with the assistance of experts in the field of dump fires and seek help from the Government of Nunavut, to be done as soon as possible."*
Administration is recommending that the City allocate all financial assistance needed to try to extinguish the fire starting immediately, independent of the final costs of the operation, in order to protect lives, property and the environment.
- (2) As per Council's decision on May 20, 2014, Administration recommends to Council not to move forward with fire suppression, protect the safety of all employees of the Fire and Public Works Departments and contractors, let the fire burn itself out, no matter what time frame it takes. The fire has not posed any threats to human life, property or the environment. The cause of the fire is due to spontaneous combustion. Fire smoke and omissions being released in the atmosphere is minimal.

Councillor Mansell asked for confirmation that no level of government is prepared to financially assist the City over and above funds that the City is already owed.

Administration confirmed that the only in kind contribution the City will receive from the Government of Nunavut for the extinguishment of the fire is the equipment noted earlier as well as the cost for transportation of the equipment to Iqaluit; an estimated total value of four hundred thousand (\$400,000.00) dollars.

Councillor Mansell believed that Council should return to an emergency meeting next week to discuss financial matters so that the City can proceed with the extinguishment of the fire.

Councillor Akumalik expressed his disappointment with the two levels of government and that they are not providing the City any financial assistance to address this matter. He expressed his confusion with the Fire Chief's second recommendation, not to move forward with the extinguishment, as Council passed a motion on June 11, 2014 requesting that the fire be extinguished as soon as possible. Council requested that the fire be fully extinguished but the first recommendation made by the Fire Chief indicates that the department could try to extinguish the fire and does not indicate that it would be fully extinguished. He expressed his concern with the fact that the City is in violation of the Environmental Protection Act and asked for clarification. It was also noted that the causeway would be closed to residents until the extinguishment is complete and asked for clarification as to whether or not this will be permanently closed or only at certain times and how long they anticipate it being closed or providing limited access; boating season is fast approaching and residents need access to the causeway.

Administration explained that in order to protect the lives of residents, access to the causeway must be denied until the extinguishment is complete; the extinguishment operation will produce more smoke and will release more particulates in the atmosphere.

Administrative Officer and other city officials since the fire began. In fact, the Government of Nunavut has increased its efforts at the city's request well over a month ago. We continue to provide logistical and administrative support, as well as supply specialized equipment and resources to the City of Iqaluit. In addition, Government of Nunavut has participated in a working group struck between the city, GN departments and federal agencies to review options for extinguishing the fire.

We are disappointed that the working group meeting to review the city's plan was cancelled for August 1, 2014, as we have provided a number of options for the City of Iqaluit to consider prior to this meeting. However, we are hopeful that at today's (August 1, 2014) emergency council meeting the City of Iqaluit will seriously consider what the GN has put forward and communicated through our officials.

To reiterate, CGS received notice from the City to move forward with shipping equipment stored in Pangnirtung, which arrived in Iqaluit earlier this week. This equipment includes:

- Two water pumps;*
- 1000 meters of hose;*
- One sealed bladder to store contaminated water*
- Two gas-fired low-volume fire pumps*

The GN is also providing approximately \$400,000 worth of additional equipment and resources to extinguish the fire, namely:

- Three additional water pumps*
- 1500 meters of hose*
- A third portable water drop tank to complement the two tanks already in our possession*
- Various fittings and nozzles*
- A chartered flight to ship up equipment*

We have contacted various suppliers to procure the additional 1500 meters of hose; however, due to ongoing forest fires in the western part of Canada, supplies are unavailable or would be unduly delayed. We are looking to alternate suppliers in the United States to be able to ship the hose to Iqaluit as quickly and efficiently as possible. CGS is working diligently to ensure that cargo space on the chartered flight is used to its fullest capacity. We are waiting for confirmation from the city regarding the weight and dimensions of equipment that can be shipped on that chartered flight, specifically the contaminated water decant equipment.

The GN is requesting that the City of Iqaluit provide, as communicated by officials, a timeline for the delivery of equipment they are procuring, and an anticipated start date for the city's extinguishment proposal. In addition, CGS would like confirmation in writing that all regulatory approvals are in place prior to commencing work at the dumpsite.

- *The GN is willing to make accommodations that will see the balance of any funding programs, such as equalization payments and Water Sewer Subsidy Support Program funding that normally would get paid to city on a quarterly basis released immediately for the balance of the fiscal year. This release allows for the city to begin tackling the fire without suffering a crunch in its cash flow and restrict other operations. The current equalization/municipal funding is \$957,712 and the Water Sewer Subsidy Support Program is \$617,299. Both of these funds can be advanced.*

In addition, expense vouchers under the Grant In Lieu of Taxes Program (GILT) totaling \$3,144,000 were processed on Friday July 25, 2014 and should either be on deposit with the city already, or will be with n the two business days.

For the benefit of all concerned citizens of Iqaluit, the GN feels this Information should be made public, so that there is unfettered transparency in the Information the GN has communicated to the City of Iqaluit.

We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the city. Moving ahead, we are hopeful that the City of Iqaluit considers this information (which has been communicated by GN officials) at today's meeting (August 1, 2014) in their next steps and its approach to the fire.

Sincerely,

*Minister Tom Sammurtok
Community and Government Services*

*Cc: John Hussey, CAO, City of Iqaluit
Darren Flynn, Acting Deputy Minister, Community and Government Services
Ed Zebedee, Director, Protection Services, Community and Government Services*

Councillor Mansell stated that he would be prepared to review funds available in reserves and moving forward with the extinguishment of the fire. He believed that the City should be working with both levels of the government on this matter and that the matter be addressed as soon as possible.

Councillor Akumalik asked what other resources are required in order to move forward with the operation aside from what was listed in the letter received from the Government of Nunavut.

Administration noted that many of the following types of resources are required as per the proposed extinguishment plan as well as others that were not specifically listed in the plan:

- heavy equipment
- manpower

Approved by City Council on the 23 day of June, 2015, AD.