

**MINUTES** of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** of the **DISTRICT OF MISSION** held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Hall, 8645 Stave Lake Street, Mission, British Columbia, on June 25, 2009 commencing at 5:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor James Atebe  
Councillor Terry Gidda  
Councillor Paul Horn  
Councillor Danny Plecas  
Councillor Mike Scudder  
Councillor Jenny Stevens  
Councillor Heather Stewart

Staff Members Present: Glen Robertson, chief administrative officer  
Kelly Ridley, deputy director of corporate administration  
Carmelle Jullion, executive assistant

## **1. NEW BUSINESS**

SC09/192  
JUNE 25/09

### **Potential Closure of Mission Memorial Hospital Emergency Services (District of Mission Press Release attached)**

Mayor Atebe welcomed Randy Hawes, MLA and Marc Dalton, MLA and the following from Fraser Health Authority: Dr. Nigel Murray, FHA President and Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Arden Krystal, VP Acute Care Network, Ms. Barbara Korabek, VP Primary Care and Community Health Network, Mr. David Plug, Interim VP Communications and Public Affairs, Mr. Peter Goldthorpe, VP Capital Projects, Real Estate and Facilities, Ms. Vivian Giglio, Executive Director, Acute Care, Mission Memorial Hospital and Abbotsford Regional Health and Cancer Centre, Dr. Keith Wong, Medical Director, Mission Memorial Hospital, Ms. Kathi Thompson, Senior Consultant, Public Relations and stated that the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss the potential closure of Mission Memorial Hospital Emergency Services.

The mayor noted the strong opposition from council and the community to the potential closure of Mission Memorial Hospital Emergency Department. He expressed concern that the District of Mission has been working closely with Fraser Health on a health care plan. Last year Fraser Health allocated 20 million dollars to Mission for health planning and he asked why now that the plan was released Fraser Health is considering closure.

Dr. Nigel Murray acknowledged the concerns of the community and stated that no decision has been made. The Fraser Health Authority has yearly assessments of the funds being spent in the Fraser Valley on health care and they do not want to close or reduce services but ensure better quality services and ensure the funds are being used for the right services and in the right manner.

Dr. Murray noted that a joint community health plan was developed and they are looking forward to further discussions on improving and building health services in Mission. Although in the budget process, services need to be redefined and the urgent services in Mission are being reviewed, they are committed to patient care and quality of care.

In response to questions from council, Dr. Murray responded that during discussions of "urgent services", accessibility, safety, quality and affordability are considered. Fraser Health Authority has been trying to increase services from general practitioners for the hospital and have received help from family practitioners but it takes time.

Councillor Stevens commented that the last seven years has been very disappointing as consideration to Mission's health care needs is only addressed following decisions being made for the community.

Councillor Horn expressed concern with the lack of services for Mission for a number of years and the fact that the community is still without a maternity ward and feel that expansion should not be discussed if basic services are being jeopardized. He would like Fraser Health to clarify urgent vs. emergency health care in Mission and noted that there were 18,000 visits to the Mission Memorial Hospital emergency room last year and ambulance service would be required to transport a further distance which would largely affect patient care.

Dr. Murray responded that a governance has been established between Fraser Health Authority and a group of Mayors which is chaired by Mayor Fassbender of Langley.

Councillor Horn noted that Fraser Health needs to ensure in the future that they discuss our community health care issues with council as the communication seems to be minimal until the community protests.

Councillor Plecas commented that Mission has lost many health services over the years and questioned whether Fraser Health is withholding funds for Mission to fund larger communities' health care.

Dr. Murray stated that Fraser Health is aware of the health care services required in both large and small communities and changes are not always about fiscal pressure but to ensure that health services are accessible and effective within the communities. All health authorities are presently struggling and hard decisions need to be made, but there is good framework to make these decisions.

Councillor Scudder asked if the emergency room at Mission Memorial Hospital is going to close, but no response seems to be forthcoming. He noted that Fraser Health Authority should consult council and the community before finalizing any decisions.

Dr. Murray responded that the Board of Directors and executive are committed to the community.

Councillor Stewart expressed concern about Fraser Health Authority's yearly planning process and their lack of consultation with council as there is always a concern to sustain appropriate health care in our community. Mission requires special consideration due to our location and an increase in services not a decrease.

Dr. Murray noted that places like Mission can have special services and there are positive things on the planning table to attract people to Mission.

Councillor Gidda noted that there are approximately 38,000 people in Mission that use the health services in addition to outlying areas including Dewdney and Deroche and questioned if emergency service is included in appropriate or urgent care. He questioned why \$20 million was reserved for Mission if there are discussions of closure.

Dr. Murray replied that this process is not isolated to Mission only. He notes that Section 2.3 Assumptions in the Community Health Plan for Mission states that "Options will align with and support the advancement of the vision and, or strategic goals of the Ministry of Health Services, Fraser Health and the District of Mission", but cannot pre-empt decisions. He noted that urgent care is emergency care and Mission will have the best possible services.

Mayor Atebe noted that removing the emergency services from Mission Memorial Hospital, which is critical and essential to our community, does not build a community health centre and the driving distance for Mission residents to other hospitals could mean the difference between life and death. He stated that health services should be supported equally between health authorities and communities.

Randy Hawes, MLA noted that Fraser Health starts with a basic budget then expends on needed services, and any community in fear of losing health services would also panic, but Fraser Health needs to consider all services and not just in Mission. He noted it was unfortunate that the possibility that Mission Memorial Hospital emergency services may close was leaked into the media, as it is on the bottom of the list as there are large waiting times in Abbotsford's emergency room and that less emergent patients will travel to Mission where the wait time is less. He stated that presently there is not a need for consultation and no decisions have been made. Once decisions have been made, the Minister of Health will be aware, followed by the MLA, mayor and council in Mission and that council would receive the decision well in advance of any action being taken.

Councillor Stewart noted that thousands of dollars have been spent on the preparation of the recently released health care report and the emergency department is a key access point to Mission's health care plan and a possible closure should be removed from any discussion.

Dr. Murray replied to questions from council that the budget process will be complete in the next few weeks and they are considering a three year plan and acute capacity to 2020 and there is a 20-year horizon in the planning process.

Mayor Atebe concluded the meeting by thanking all in attendance and expressing his desire that communication between FHA and the District continue.

In conclusion, Dr. Murray noted that services in Mission will expand eventually and will attract employment opportunities to the community and urgent care will be provided to Mission.

**2. ADJOURNMENT**

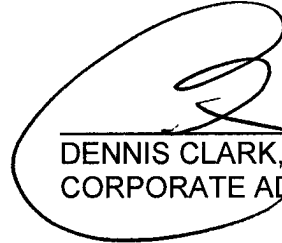
Moved by Councillor Horn, seconded by Councillor Scudder, and

RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.



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JAMES ATEBE, MAYOR



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DENNIS CLARK, DIRECTOR OF  
CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION