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CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

FILE NO: 242-61

ACTION:



Northwest Territories Health and Social Services



Northwest Territories Justice

*Bob
Dennis M
Ananda*

March 21, 2011

His Worship Mayor Gordon Van Tighem
4807- 52 Street
PO BOX 580
YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 2N4

Dear Mayor Van Tighem:

In 2009 the Departments of Justice and Health and Social Services (HSS) advised that they would participate in the Yellowknife Social Issues Committee. The Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of the Solicitor General Branch, Department of Justice, and the ADM Operations, Department of HSS have been representing the Departments on this Committee.

As you know, the Committee is still at the formative stage and is working towards understanding its mandate and identifying substantive issues to work on. This initial development work by the Committee has provided an opportunity for the GNWT to review the Committee's mandate and our role.

The terms of reference for the Committee identify a vision that indicates that the Committee could be an "agent of change" on social issues in Yellowknife. The purpose of the Committee is to assist the City, the GNWT and the Government of Canada in an advisory capacity on social issues within the City of Yellowknife. The Committee is to further assist the GNWT by considering issues, conveying areas of concern and providing advice to the GNWT on social issues.

The GNWT certainly welcomes advice and recommendations from a variety of stakeholders on social issues. Information provided is often helpful in formulating approaches on a variety of items. In light of the Committee's mandate and emerging areas of interest, it has become clear that continued participation of GNWT officials as committee member's places officials in potential conflicts of interest. A GNWT senior manager must first and foremost fulfill their management obligations to the GNWT public service. Asking them to provide advice to Yellowknife City Council through their role on this Committee is not appropriate. We would also suggest that it is also difficult for a mix of members of the public, GNWT officials and City elected officials to function equitably, as discussions can focus on the political nature of issues.

In light of this assessment, we are proposing a different role that would continue to support the work of the Committee while respecting the obligations and responsibilities of GNWT officials. We recommend GNWT officials provide information and subject/program expertise to the Committee on particular items of interest identified by the Committee. This may allow for other participants such as representatives from Education, Culture and Employment or the NWT Housing Corporation to be invited to present on related social issues or program considerations.

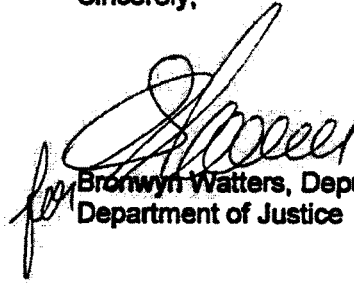
In closing, we applaud the interest of Yellowknife City Council and current Committee members to bring together expertise and frontline service providers to address social issues in Yellowknife. We have appreciated being involved in the Committee's work to date, but must respectfully withdraw as active Committee members. As mentioned should there be a desire on the part of the Committee to receive information or presentations from Justice or HSS, the contact person for this for Justice matters would be: Sylvia Haener, and for HSS matters, Dana Heide.

Sincerely,



Paddy Meade, Deputy Minister
Department of Health and Social Services

Sincerely,



Bronwyn Watters, Deputy Minister
Department of Justice