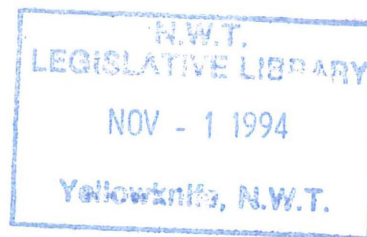




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CAPE DORSET
COMMUNITY TRANSFER AGREEMENT
UPDATE
SEPTEMBER 1994



Community Transfer Initiative

Executive Report

September 6, 1994
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Senior Administrative Officer

Overview

The Hamlet of Cape Dorset is now heading into it's seventh month under the Community Transfer Agreement. This document will attempt to summarize the events and expectations leading up to the transfer and a brief review of the present status.

To do this the document will be broken in to several sections:

- Background
- Objectives and Goals of Transfer
- Accomplishments to Date
- Recommendations

Background

Organizational Review & Training

In the spring of 1991 the Hamlet Council and staff undertook a complete review of structures and training requirements. As a result the organization was restructured, complete new job descriptions were developed and a new personnel by-law was developed. The intent was to better meet the increased responsibilities that had accrued as a result of Govt. regulations and expectations, growth and change. It was also to make the organization capable of taking on new responsibilities. The new structure and training strategy were implemented.

Gradual Assumption of Responsibility

Over the next several years Council and staff became more involved in areas outside their normal mandate. Responsibility was assumed for the Alcohol and Drug committee which brought increased involvement in Social programs. The NWT Housing Corporation involved Council more and more in decisions relating to Housing policy and allocation. Lands development and Tourism responsibilities brought Council and staff directly into areas of Economic Development. The problems of maintaining millions of dollars of public buildings with no qualified tradesman also led to a realization resources in the community were not being used efficiently.

Initial Approach

The Council and SAO prepared a series of documents outlining areas of concern in the community in the areas outlined above and others. As there was no single department or method to deal with these issues, the Council sent the SAO to Yellowknife for a series of meetings with the individual departments. The SAO met with representatives of Social Services, Economic Development, NWTHC, MACA, Public Works and Transportation. After the meetings Council received few or no responses to their concerns. It became obvious that control over program and service delivery had to be based in the community for concerns to be addressed seriously.

Phase 1

A comprehensive proposal was developed by Council for the provision of funds under the new Community Transfer Initiative to study the feasibility of taking over programs and services. Workshops were held in February 1993 with the involved departments on the details of their programs in the community and the resources of each department.

The SAO and facilitator met with effected staff in the different organizations over the next several weeks to gather their concerns and input. The Council met with the local elected authorities to discuss the proposals and gather their input. Govt. programs were reviewed and assessed in detail. Public meetings, radio call in shows and telephone polls ensured the input of the community.

On the GNWT front detailed data was requested from all effected departments. In some cases replies were received but in the majority of instances the departmental staff did not seem to see the process as a priority and access to information was repeatedly a problem. In many cases after the transfer the staff found that this information had been readily available.

As a result of delays and the unexpected complexity of the process, the Phase 1 report was not ready until August 1993. It's recommendations were reviewed by Council, the community and staff and the decision was made to proceed. A funding request was prepared for Phase 2, Planning and Implementation.

Phase 2

During this phase the nuts and bolts work was done. It became obvious that the Council and SAO must have some direct access to the staff and resources of each department within the community to gather the information needed and to learn what would be required after the transfer. Memoranda of Understanding were developed and signed giving the SAO and Council day to day ability to direct the local staff and resources. Many areas required joint decision making.

Negotiations began and were intense. The Council initially had been directed to deal directly with the Community Transfer Working Group, however during Phase 1, and especially during the early months of Phase 2, it became apparent that the individual departments were not willing to let the CTWG negotiate on their behalf. What ensued was ongoing detailed development of documents with each individual department as well as with CTWG on the overall umbrella document. Each department made repeated trips to the community and the SAO spent almost all of his time from January to March exclusively on Transfers.

While the direct negotiations were going on the GNWT was negotiating directly with the Union of Northern Workers on a workforce adjustment program. This was carried out with very little involvement of the Hamlet and led to some difficulties within the community due to lack of communication. The end result was an agreement that the Hamlet could live with.

Council representatives travelled to Yellowknife during the negotiations when it appeared that events were moving too slowly and received promises from the Government Leader and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that an agreement would be signed by April 1st, the target date Council had set. This meant however that there would have to be several areas in the final agreement identified to continue to be worked on over the next fiscal year. Target dates were put into the agreement. A review of the agreement and areas where there were problems and room for improvement would require a separate document, and the SAO will be working on this over the next month.

Finally the agreement was approved for April 1, 1994. The formal signing took place in Cape Dorset in May during a meeting of the Baffin Leaders Summit. On hand were the Government Leader and the Minister of Housing, as well as the MLA's and Mayors from the Baffin Region. Staff and Council immediately took on the task of implementing the agreement.

Objective and Goals of Transfer

Over the several years leading up to and during the transfer negotiations, many objectives and goals were identified:

- a) Increase local employment and training
- b) Increase local economic opportunities
- c) Develop tourism businesses
- d) Shift emphasis of program delivery from reactive to preventative and proactive
- e) Increase local coordination of local resources and decisions
- f) Increase local involvement and knowledge of programs
- g) Improve the use of present resources and identify additional resources required
- h) Reduce duplication of services.

Council also identified:

- a) Increased accountability of the Hamlet Council and staff
- b) Security and control of funding for the long term
- c) Long term coordinated planning between departments
- d) An improvement in access to programs
- e) Better knowledge of the public about what programs exist
- f) A more coordinated and stream-lined approach to the delivery of programs to residents

Many of the goals and objectives centre on the same main points and I will summarize accomplishments in each area on the main subject headings.

Accomplishments to Date

Goal - Increase Local Employment and Training

Initial results in this area are mixed. Accomplishments in this area will be much easier to gauge over the long term. However there have been some immediately successful areas.

In Social Services the negotiations led directly to two new social worker trainee positions. Although training is just starting the melding of the Alcohol & Drug workers as well as the two new trainee positions has led to much greater competence in handling Social programs. In future it is expected that at least one of the trainees will finish their formal training through a combination of on the job, statutory, workshops and attendance at University.

Finance/Personnel has brought together all of the people originally involved in these areas from the Housing Association and the Hamlet. Training and development of new systems and procedures has been intense. The level of competence and ability to handle a much more complex system has dramatically increased. However this is a continuing process. It is expected that the Director of Finance will take on a new trainee in the future who will train on the job and complete a certified accountancy course.

Housing/Public Buildings. Bringing together all of the journeyman and maintenance workers in DPW, the Housing Association and the Hamlet has also led to employment and training opportunities. Now that there is a full slate of journeyman the department has the opportunity to get apprentices in each position. However attempts to hire apprentices locally have been thwarted by the fact that the majority of people applying (including Grade 12 graduates) are not capable of passing the trades entrance exam and will have to receive extensive upgrading. This will slow down the process considerably.

Goal - Local Economic Opportunities/Tourism

In this area there have been dramatic immediate results and indications of considerable change over the coming years. Within months of taking over economic development, issues which had been outstanding for years were well on their way to being resolved. Three new companies are almost complete. These companies are all 49% owned by a local non-aboriginal company. As a result of negotiations with the Hamlet's new Community Development Department, 51% of voting shares will be eligible only to aboriginal residents of the community.

Also the Director of the new department has been appointed as the Hamlet representative to the Kinngait Business Development Corporation. This Corporation oversees the applications for the incubator mall. For over a year this mall has been ready to occupy and there were still not even stairs built. As a result of the efforts of the Director there have now been several applications accepted and the mall should be fully occupied over the next 2-3 months.

The Director also initiated direct communications with all five of the major Canadian banks. These efforts resulted in visits to the community on several occasions by senior Bank of Montreal representatives as well as senior reps of the Toronto Dominion Bank. The Hamlet is attempting to have a full service branch put into the community. Negotiations are ongoing.

In Tourism the department handled group tours by Bank of Montreal reps, cruise ships and several independent group and individuals. The Dept. is working with ED & T on developing a local visitors' centre as well as hiking trails and a territorial park. The Director is presently attempting to find funding for a local Tourism Coordinator.

Goal - Shift Programs to Preventative and Proactive

Most of the departments in the Hamlet have had this as their main theme. Housing/Public Buildings is working on this issue in regards to vandalism, tenant damages, rent collection and evictions. In all of these areas coordinated approaches involving several departments as well as outside groups have been undertaken. However at this stage the most dramatic results have been in Social Services.

This department has made great progress in improving all areas of program delivery in the community. It has trained all staff to enable them to properly handle client interviews, thus spreading the work load and ensuring that the clients actually understand the programs and process they are following. The staff has been putting together tapes in which they role play different issues such as: spousal assault, alcohol, social assistance and so on. Several community meetings have been held with Justice committees, elders, youth in many different areas and the residents have been much more directly involved. Also the direct involvement of staff with the Alcohol committee, RCMP, nursing station, schools and other groups has lead to much more input and many more people being involved in solutions.

This is a marked and very visible improvement over what had been happening in the past. An overall community social planning process will be carried out this fall to summarize and focus the needs and possible solutions of the community. Measuring the final success of these endeavours will be a long term exercise.

Goal - Improved Coordination and Use of Resources

In this area the results may be much less apparent at this stage to the community than they are to the SAO and Directors. The senior staff meet every Monday to coordinate and deal with problems of every type. Decisions are made quickly and issues which had seemed insurmountable for years are often dealt with before the next meeting.

The coordination provided by all Directors being aware of the issues affecting the others is invaluable. Starting with Municipal Works and Housing/Public Buildings it is obvious that the millions of dollars of Public (especially Municipal) assets will be much better cared for. Having Municipal Works concentrate on Roads, Heavy Equipment, Vehicle maintenance and etc. and building maintenance being centralized has already led to better use of and control of inventory. Vehicles, buildings, tools, assets, office furniture, all resources are quickly directed to where they are needed and not held up interminably by interdepartmental squabbling.

Immediate results are visible internally in the use of office automation, centralization of personnel & finance functions, systems management, maintenance, recreation facilities, internal controls and procedures, pay equity, training and etc. This will have a dramatic effect on the organization over the years but unfortunately comes at a high initial cost in both time and dollars.

Goal - Increased Accountability

The structure designed by Staff and Council and approved by the Public for the organization has already led to more accountability in some areas. Each Hamlet Councillor is now responsible for one portfolio and Chairs a subcommittee with two residents appointed by the Council. In most departments this has led to increased information going out to the Public. Work still needs to be done to make this the cornerstone of individual Councillor accountability, however the process is well under way after the passage of a new Council Procedures By-law. For several of the Councillors, most notably the Social Programs chair it has led to much more public attention and knowledge of his area of responsibility. This process will be continued as the Staff and Council develop more public information policies and procedures, a topic of ongoing discussion at Senior staff meetings.

As for the accountability of staff, the system has definitely ensured much more attention to the individual departments and their mandates. Regular reports from each Councillor on each department is ensured by peer pressure and this leads to more regular direct contact between the Councillor and the staff member. It has led to the development of a detailed Personnel By-law, evaluation of the SAO and the passage of a SAO by-law, municipal works planning initiatives and the implementation of a Recreation Review. This process continues to be refined and will become more important over time.

Recommendations

The community transfer process is very complex at the level that the Hamlet of Cape Dorset has taken on. It requires many different new skills and the ability for Senior staff and Council to spend long, hard hours concentrating on, and solving, the issues each step of the way. There are several things which I believe must be done to ensure the process works well.

Evaluation

It is imperative that the Council has a realistic report of the strengths and weaknesses of their organization before taking on new responsibilities. This should involve a detailed examination by competent, external, professionals with extensive, practical experience in Municipal Government in the NWT. This could take the form of a consultant or a comprehensive Municipal evaluation by MACA officials. This review should not involve any other group or department as it is not intended to deal with the issue of transferred responsibilities at this stage.

Planning Strategies

In many cases an excellent evaluation or even auditor's recommendations are never followed up on. A development and training strategy should immediately be implemented after the evaluation is complete. The evaluation may have indicated that the organization is ready to take on new responsibilities and that will form the basis of reorganization and training, or the strategy may be a plan to improve the present capabilities of the organization. The capability and training of the Council itself should not be overlooked.

Negotiations

During the negotiations the Municipality should definitely have assistance in the form of a consultant or other competent professional whom they trust and has proven effective in the past. This process is long and complicated and without outside help the organization can end up regretting they ever attempted Transfer. Just as a Municipality should be represented by a professional negotiator when dealing with a union, so should it be in dealing with the legions of accountants and lawyers of the Government.

Information

When requesting information from the GNWT there were many times when it was not forthcoming. In some cases it was unavailable in the format requested. There are many other groups who can provide information such as other Municipalities, Unions, GNWT staff members, MLA's and research assistants. The Organization looking for a transfer should be aware of who else is doing something and contact these groups. In many instances it was found that a department would be dealing in a completely different way with two different groups. This knowledge is valuable.

Analysis of Previous Agreements

Each group which has negotiated an agreement should be aware of areas which affect all of the other groups and work together to ensure they are addressed. There are still several major areas not determined yet which will affect all present and future agreements. I will be attempting to work on the outstanding issues from a staff level and Council will be working on outstanding issues as well over the next several months.

That is an interim review of the process to date. The Senior staff of the Hamlet will be working on a semi-annual review and planning process over the months of September and October. There is also a requirement in our agreement to provide an annual report. This will probably be complete in May of 1994