



Report

City of Merritt
REGULAR Council Meeting
October 8, 2019

File Number: 0583

To: Scott Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
From: Sean Smith, Director of Corporate Services
Date: October 3, 2019
Subject: Youth Advisory Committee

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council create the Youth Advisory Committee in accordance with the attached Terms of Reference;

AND THAT Council direct staff to advertise and accept applications for membership to this Committee.

Background:

Council for the City of Merritt has maintained its intent to create a Youth Advisory Committee, to assist Council in better understanding the concerns of youth in our community.

During the Strategic Planning process, Council identified the creation of the Youth Advisory Committee as a high priority action item.

Many communities across BC and Canada have created Youth Advisory Committees and there are three (3) primary areas where the Terms of Reference for these Committees differs.

Reviewed by:			
Director, Corp. Services Not yet approved	Director, Finance & IT Not yet approved	Director, Engineering & Development Not yet approved	Chief Administrative Officer: Choose an item.

1. **Youth (Junior) Council vs. Youth Advisory Committees** – Though there are multiple variances in the names of these committees, there are two significant divides in how youth committees are structured.

Though not rigidly true, Youth Councils generally receive limited delegated authority from Council and have small, but independent budgets. They are also designed to mimic City Council as closely as possible, meaning that meetings are usually quite formal and held more frequently, and formalities, like being sworn in are often observed. As a result, Youth Councils have a greater degree of autonomy than a Youth Advisory Committee, and City Council generally doesn't interfere with the decisions of Youth Councils. In general, Youth Councils are found in larger communities where there is more funding and staff support available, though communities as small as Clearwater have established Junior Councils.

Youth Advisory Committees are less formal and operate like other Council Committees, by gathering information and making recommendations to Council.

2. **Size of Committee** – Youth Committees vary wildly in terms of size. Some communities have committees as small as 5 and larger communities, in order to ensure broad representation from many different schools, have committee sizes over 30.
3. **Age of Members** – There is also significant variance regarding age of members, as illustrated by the attached table. Committees across BC include persons as young as 12 and as old as 30, depending on the community.

In the Terms of Reference attached, staff is recommending the Committee be structured as an Advisory Committee, that the number of voting members be 7, and that the age of voting members range from 16-24. However, this is Council's committee and Council is free to recommend or suggest alterations regarding any of these categories.

As drafted, one member of Council would sit on this Committee as a non-voting, advisory member, and subject to the agreement of School District #58, staff is also recommending that one School District Trustee also be a non-voting, advisory member.

Options / discussion

1. THAT Council create the Youth Advisory Committee in accordance with the attached Terms of Reference.
2. THAT Council amend the Terms of Reference as it sees fit, prior to establishing the Youth Advisory Committee
3. THAT Council direct staff to provide more information prior to establishing this Committee.

Strategic Plan Reference:

The establishment of the Youth Advisory Committee is listed as a Priority item on Councils "Strategic Priorities Chart".

Attachments:

Youth Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference

Youth Advisory Committee – Age Variance Table

Respectfully submitted,

**Sean Smith,
Director of Corporate Services**