



INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: January 10, 2022
SUBJECT: Mayor's Monthly Report
FROM: Mayor Zeleznik

Happy New Year Nakusp 2022!

The Nakusp Village Council and staff would like to wish everyone a safe and Happy New Year. A special thank you to our local Emergency Services for what they do for our community.

This includes Firefighters/Road Rescue (volunteer), police officers, doctors, nurses, ambulance crews, EMS teams, Search & Rescue (volunteer), and support teams who need to be recognized for their crucial role in providing emergency services.

Also like to acknowledge all the volunteer involvement of all those who, have devoted themselves to helping others.

They do it selflessly, volunteering their time and expertise to help, comfort or simply be a presence for those in need. Whether you are involved in the community, culture, sports or recreation, your generosity is commendable.



These women and men of our own local Emergency Services are among the most dedicated people who put in countless hours to provide life-saving services when it matters most. They work through the night, think on their feet, are compassionate, and provide time-sensitive medical care - often on their own time. To all volunteer and employed EMS teams "Thank you on behalf of the entire community."



December 15, 2021 – Received a reply from my previous letter sent to our Honourable Katrine Conroy on advocating for better ambulance service for our area.

Update:

I have forwarded the letters as per Katrine's suggestions to the appropriate Minister, Chief Ambulance Officer, and Interior Health CEO to continue advocating for changes.

Also recently received a message from a local Nakusp resident who ended up in the New Denver hospital who were not equipped to help, staff arranged for this patient to go to the Arrow Lakes Hospital by ambulance. Patient waited from 3pm until 11 30 pm (8.5 hrs) until an ambulance arrived from Castlegar and arrived in Nakusp just after midnight. All because of an inadequate ambulance service and nothing else. Drs and nurses are becoming more and more furious, all have stated no one will listen to them!

This patient is now writing and calling the appropriate minister and other departments advocating for change. Will require the communities help on advocating. Someone possibly could lose their life from this system.

Letter received from our Honourable Katrine Conroy:

Thank you both for your strong advocacy for your communities. It is critical that small rural communities like ours have elected officials who consistently strive to make lives better for their communities and constituents. This is an important issue, and a complex one as you note. While I will provide some information regarding the rationale behind the decision to implement the SOC (partially), this is not necessarily an endorsement of it. This is intended to share additional information and also to provide you with further opportunities to advocate for changes you see as important for your communities and region. As we all know, change can be slow and incremental.

First, to request a meeting with Minister Adrian Dix, the best approach would be to write to his office directly and to cc our office. His email address is HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca As you can imagine, there are many demands on his time at the moment and it is possible that a staff person would be better suited to meet with you. I would encourage you to request that as an option.

Other options for advocating for change include: (interim) Vice President and Chief Ambulance Officer Leanne Heppell who works at the Victoria office- 250-953-3298 (though I doubt you will be able to speak directly to her). BCAS.Q&A@bcehs.ca (this may be the best route to get her contact info, or have yours passed to her).

In regards to the interfacility transfer concerns, this would need to be directed to Interior Health Authority as all decisions around the staffing, and the option to hire ASP (Alternative Service Providers) lies with them. You may or may not know that this specific issue was raised by all three MLA's from the region with IHA in 2021. You can write to Susan Brown, CEO of IHA directly: susan.brownCEO@interiorhealth.ca . I would suggest cc-ing our office on this as well.

To respond to the various remaining comments and concerns you raised in such an articulate manner, I have shared the details we received below:

- On July 14, 2021, the Province announced new measures to further strengthen the provincial ambulance service. These measures initiate significant action to ensure ambulance services are faster, more responsive, and able to rapidly meet changing demands and needs. They also mean increased support for paramedics and dispatchers.

- Actions to reinforce ambulance operations include funding for full-time positions in high call-volume communities, new positions in dispatch, additional full-time staffing at rural ambulance stations to ensure full-time 24-hour paramedic staffing, and new regular part-time SOC positions for the smallest remote stations across the province.
- As part of the 2019-2022 Collective Agreement with the Ambulance Paramedics and Dispatchers Association of BC, a number of initiatives were agreed upon to create permanent, salaried jobs for paramedics, including the SOC staffing model (a blend of scheduled and on-call hours). This model is being rolled out in various rural and remote communities, creating regular paramedic jobs with benefits in these communities.
- The SOC model is meant to provide rural and remote communities with permanent, salaried jobs for paramedics, with employer-provided health and wellness benefits, consistent emergency coverage and enhanced community services, and improved paramedic recruitment and retention.
- As part of the ongoing efforts to stabilize staffing and to ensure consistent emergency coverage in smaller rural communities, as of October 29, 2021, 24 rural ambulance stations in BC began the Alpha 24/7 model, which is full-time, 24-hour paramedic staffing with eight full-time paramedics.
- In Nakusp, the changes implemented under the SOC model resulted in four net new regular part-time paramedic positions as they transitioned to a SOC station.
- Three of the four paramedics have been hired. Until the 4th shift is hired the vacancy will be staffed via kilo on call staff when available. This means that paramedics are available in their home community and carry a pager, ready to respond to the station in case they are needed for a callout or an emergency.

Call volume in Nakusp compared to other 24/7 stations:

- The Nakusp response area consistently had lower call volumes when compared to communities with similar populations, such as Burns Lake, Sicamous and Tofino, the communities mentioned in Zeleznik's incoming email.

Fiscal Year	Response Area	MPDS*	Transfers	Total
2018/2019	753 - Burns Lake	852	497	1,349
	136 - Tofino	638	295	933
	333 - Sicamous	708	17	725
	419 - Nakusp	279	318	597
2019/2020	753 - Burns Lake	868	533	1,401
	136 - Tofino	624	349	973

	333 - Sicamous	777	20	797
	419 - Nakusp	328	258	586
2020/2021	753 - Burns Lake	996	579	1,575
	136 - Tofino	654	353	1,007
	333 - Sicamous	790	30	820
	419 - Nakusp	354	239	593

***MPDS stands for medical priority dispatch system**

- The vast majority (74%) of calls attended by Nakusp units are in the community of Nakusp.
- The below chart reflects the Nakusp station and the areas that they cover.

Fiscal Year	Response Area	Call Location	MDPS	Transfers	Community Paramedicine	Total
2018/2019	419 - Nakusp	Nakusp	237	316	406	959
		Burton	21		5	26
		Arrow Park	13		0	13
		Galena Bay	5	2	0	7
		Trout Lake	2		0	2
		Beaton	1		0	1
		Total	279	318	411	1,008
2019/2020	419 - Nakusp	Nakusp	291	258	654	1,203
		Arrow Park	11		14	25
		Burton	13		6	19
		Trout Lake	6		8	14
		Galena Bay	6		0	6
		Beaton	1		0	1
		Total	328	258	682	1,268
2020/2021	419 - Nakusp	Nakusp	326	239	800	1,365
		Burton	13		11	24
		Arrow Park	8		7	15
		Trout Lake	5		0	5
		Beaton	1		0	1
		Galena Bay	1		0	1
		Total	354	239	818	1,411

- The below chart reflects the Edgewood station and the areas that they cover.
- Over the last three years, Nakusp units have responded to 11 calls in Edgewood

2018/2019	407 - Edgewood	Edgewood	45	12	0	57
		Needles	49	17	0	66

		Fauquier	14	3	7	24
		Cherryville	13		0	13
		Burton	5		0	5
		Total	126	32	7	165
2019/2020	407 - Edgewood	Edgewood	40	10	31	81
		Needles	49	24	7	80
		Fauquier	23		40	63
		Cherryville	16		0	16
		Burton	1		0	1
		Total	129	34	78	241
2020/2021	407 - Edgewood	Edgewood	27	7	329	363
		Needles	64	22	30	116
		Fauquier	30	4	71	105
		Cherryville	13		0	13
		Total	134	33	430	597

As always, if MLA Katrine Conroy's schedule will allow, she would be pleased to attend any meetings you are able to confirm.

Sincerely,

Sarah Brownlee

She/her/hers

Constituency Assistant to MLA Katrine Conroy, MLA Kootenay West

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December 3rd - High concern letter that was sent to our MLA. The Honourable Katrine Conroy,

Hi Katrine,

As our MLA for our area, I am asking for your help and assistance in arranging a meeting with our Honorable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and yourself.

The residents of Nakusp, including residents all the way to Edgewood and to Trout Lake need to be aware that the province has recently introduced a new system in our region for our local paramedic ambulance service called "Scheduled On-Call" (SOC), we believe it will not work here.



Our council and staff were consulted on November 19, 2021, by BC Emergency Health Service, BCEHS of

this new system, but, after reviewing and assessing this system, we believe this will not work for this area. The

public need to be heard by our MLA, and Health Minister that this system will fail by putting them at increased risk, and could prove fatal with longer ambulance response times.

Under SOC, our paramedics are to be staffed with two paramedics eight hours per day. For the remaining 16 hours, paramedics will be on-call (\$2.00/per hour stipend). Local paramedics warn the conversion to SOC could substantially increase response times up to 20 minutes or more, during those 16 hours, when no one is at the station.

Our Ambulances serve a large area including Nakusp and area. This service area extends from Trout Lake to Angel Falls, which is located at the top of Monashee Pass; This can be a very dangerous section of highway with relatively frequent car/motorcycle crashes. Residents are realizing when our paramedics are on a call to Trout Lake at 2 am, for example, that would mean there will be no coverage for our local area for a life threatening emergency!! Ambulances would need to dispatch from other regions prolonging the safety and health of our residents.



What is very disheartening is that 24 other small communities in BC, similar in size as ours with similar call outs, will now have eight full-time paramedics beginning the end of October while Nakusp receives 4 full time paramedics, yet, have a much larger area to cover!! Some of these smaller but similar communities are: Burns Lake population of 1779, Sicamous population 2429, Tofino population 1932. Nakusp has a population of 3200 inside our fire service boundary. Note, this does not

include the population of Burton, Fauquier, Edgewood, Arrow Park, Trout Lake, Galena Shores, which are included in this Ambulance service area. The call outs in 2020 for Revelstoke were 705, but well over 600 in Nakusp. 2020 was not an exceptional year, numbers totaled 567 in 2019.

The Honorable Mr. Dix, says 24 ambulance stations in rural communities like Ashcroft, Barriere, Lillooet, Sicamous, and Clearwater will transition from on-call staffing to 24-hour service. He says the expansion in service will now include eight full-time paramedics in each of those communities. Several of our part-time paramedics said they expect a pay decrease under the new SOC system, which would make it more difficult to stay in communities like Nakusp. Our local doctors have expressed major concerns, stating “This is an issue that certainly needs to be addressed. We are often stuck with sick patients as we have no ambulance available to transfer them to another hospital”.



As a member of the Nakusp Fire Department and Road Rescue over the years, I hear the emergency calls during the day and night, and have begun documenting, and monitoring the time delays, and the frustrations within the departments of the ambulance service since the SOC system was recently introduced.

Example of one delay, and no coverage since this new system was introduced – November 23rd at 00:17.15 (12:17am) our local volunteer Fire Department/Road Rescue were called to

MVA/Extrication at Needles, our local ambulance was also paged to attend as no ambulance crews were available from Edgewood. The result was no coverage for Nakusp; if another 911 call was issued, what happens now as a life is now at stake?

This has been happening too often, and the public are unaware when with no coverage is available because the ambulance crew are on another call, or are timed out to their maximum hours under the SOC system.

Summer is even more extreme; fire department road rescue calls almost always require the ambulance to attend, leaving our community vulnerable with no coverage if another call is received.

Being on the Local Volunteer Fire Dept, and Road Rescue we use - The "golden hour" - which is the term often used in trauma or emergency care to suggest that an injured or sick person must receive definitive treatment within the first 60 minutes from the time of injury or appearance of symptoms. Doctors believe that there is a golden hour between life and death. We also use the 10 minute rule once the road rescue team arrives on scene at an Motor Vehicle Accident, which means we have 10 minutes to remove the patient(s) from the scene to the ambulance and onto the hospital. Ambulance services are measured on the time it takes from receiving a 911 call to the vehicle arriving at the patient's location. It should take **8 minutes** for the ambulance to arrive if the call is life threatening or an emergency. Ambulance services often send more than one vehicle to try to meet the 8 minute target.

Every second counts. Any delays only serves to deteriorate the victims' condition to a point that severely hampers their prospects for making a full recovery. There are many time sensitive, life threatening emergencies where a timely response by an ambulance staffed with a Paramedic can mean the difference between life and death. Other times it can mean the difference between a healthy future and one full of impairment due to an extended period of oxygen deprivation to the brain or heart.

My suggestion is to work together to find a mutually beneficial model for our unique Nakusp and surrounding area that includes Edgewood to Trout Lake. We require full time 24/7 coverage, which includes coverage for transfers to larger centres. One **suggestion is to add more resources to support interfacility transfers, and cross coverage in neighboring communities in the North Arrow Lakes**. This 24/7 model may support the unique requirements of Nakusp by having an dayshift 12 hour ambulance (0600-1800), an afternoon 12 hours shift ambulance (1500-0300) while retaining the SOC ambulance. This model would be similar to the 24/7 Alpha in other communities in number of full-time positions but would provide overlap so that there would be good coverage for late in the afternoon transfers and emergency events. We need to continually address the unique needs of the community with our small rural hospital that requires a consistent and timely method of transferring patients to a higher level of care or diagnostics in Trail, Nelson, Vernon or Kelowna. This option plus positive others should open the dialogue for a fit all 24/7 solution for our unique area, that is a must have!

Every minute matters between life and death! We need the Health Minister to understand that the current SOC system will fail our residents and putting them at increased risk. This model will only result in increased ambulance response times which will unfortunately prove fatal to our local residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

Tom Zeleznik, Mayor village of Nakusp

Paul Peterson, Electoral Area K,

Terry Warren, Nakusp Fire Chief, Reg Gustafson, Deputy Fire chief

December 9th – Arrow Lakes Caribou Society Meeting.

The Caribou are hopefully coming!!

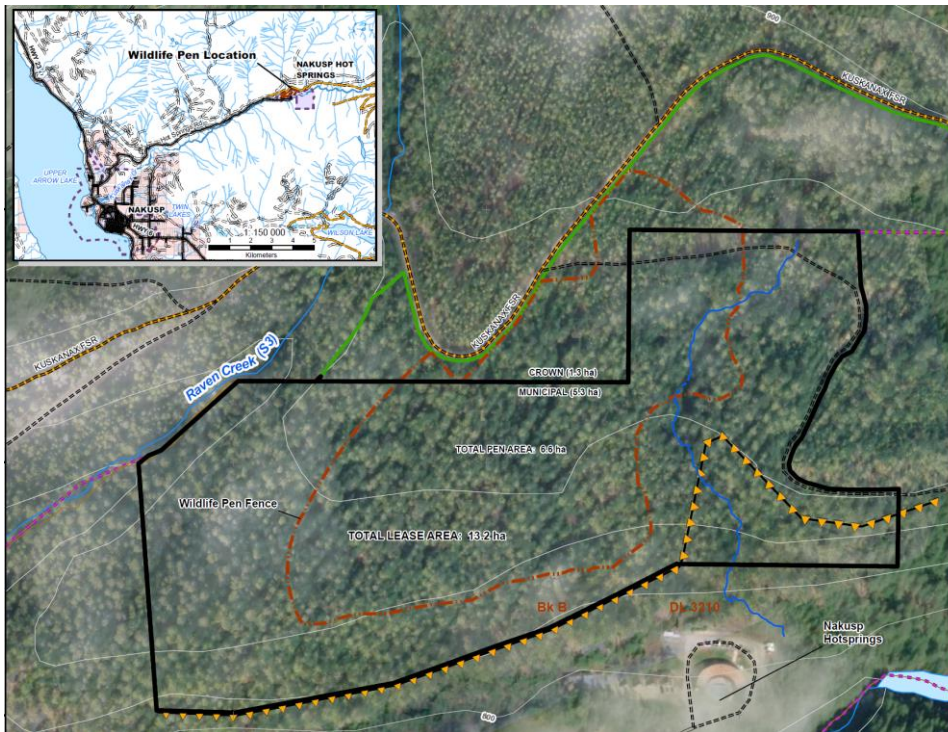
In 2021 a maternity pen was constructed in the Kuskanax Creek drainage on mostly Village of Nakusp Hot Springs property. The pen did not operate due to budgeting and COVID 19 challenges; however, it is expected hopefully to operate sometime in March 2022. Currently, maternal penning may be the only available recovery tool for the Central Selkirk population to improve calf recruitment.

In March 2021 census a total of 28 caribou were observed which included 26 adults and 2 calves. Despite 3 years of stability, the long-term trend in the Central Selkirk population is declining. The observed count from this census is 87% lower than the peak observed count of 1997 (222 – 28). Calf recruitment at 7.1% is below the suggested 12% - 16% recruitment required for a stable population.



On December 17th – The BC provincial Wildlife Veterinarian, Caeley Thacker, and Leo DeGroot, South Area Caribou Team, toured the Arrow Lakes Caribou Maternity Pen. They were very impressed!

Valuable assessments and continued collaboration with local and provincial organizations like this will promote the long-term sustainability of this population recovery project.





Interesting read for this New Year's 2022 Increased Tax Changes for employees, employers, individuals, retirees, along with an increase in the Consumer Price Index, Carbon Tax and BC Hydro.

Canada Pension Plan

The CPP tax has been increasing steadily over the past several years. Since 2018, the employee and employer taxes for CPP have increased from \$2,594 in 2018 to \$3,500 in 2022. This represents a CPP tax increase of \$906 on both employees and employers since 2018.

Year	Tax Rate	Maximum Pensionable earnings	Employee tax	Employer tax
2021	5.45%	\$61,600	\$3,166	\$3,166
2022	5.70%	\$64,900	\$3,500	\$3,500
2022 increase			\$333 (10.5% increase)	\$333 (10.5% increase)

Employment Insurance:

While the EI tax rate will remain the same, the maximum insurable earnings will increase. That will require employees to pay \$953 and employers to pay \$1,334 into EI in 2022. This represents a \$63 EI tax increase for employees and an \$89 EI tax increase for employers (earning above the maximum insurable earnings).

Year	Tax Rate	Maximum insurable earnings	Employee Tax	Employer Tax
2021	1.58%	\$56,300	\$890	\$1,245
2022	1.58%	\$60,300	\$953	\$1,334
2022 increase			\$63 (7.08% increase)	\$89 (7.15% increase)

Income tax: When leaving aside payroll taxes, federal income taxes paid in 2022 will be lower because the federal basic personal amount is increasing from \$13,808 to \$14,398. Canadians earning \$30,000 or less will see tax savings, but taxpayers at higher income levels will see their bill increase.

Income	Total income-based tax change
\$30,000	-\$22
\$40,000	+\$3
\$50,000	+\$28
\$60,000	+\$111
\$80,000	+\$308
\$100,000	+\$308

The Consumer Price Index rose 6.8 percent from November 2020 November 2021, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending June 1982.

Energy prices rose 33.3 percent over the last year, and food prices increased 6.1 percent. Dec 15, 2021

In Canada, the Consumer Price Index or CPI measures changes in the prices paid by consumers for a basket of goods and services

Carbon tax:

British Columbia's carbon tax is set to rise to \$50 per tonne on April 1, 2022.

This will bring the B.C. carbon tax cost up to 11 cents per litre of gasoline, 13 cents per litre of diesel and 10 cents per cubic metre of natural gas.

Here's how the carbon tax hike will impact a couple in B.C. that owns a Dodge Caravan and Ford F-150.

The carbon tax will cost nearly \$9 to fuel up the minivan and more than \$11 to fuel up the pick-up truck by the time it reaches \$50 per tonne.

If the couple fills up their minivan once per week and truck once every two weeks, then the carbon tax will cost a family \$735 for fuel ups in 2022.

The average home in Canada uses about 2,442 cubic metres of natural gas per year. The carbon tax will add \$233 to the family's natural gas bill in 2022.

That means the total cost of the carbon tax in 2022 will be about \$968.

Beginning on July 1, 2022, the maximum carbon tax rebate increases to \$194 for adults and \$57 for children.

A single individual is no longer eligible for the B.C. carbon tax rebate once they make more than \$44,842, according to B.C. government.

B.C. taxpayers also pay a second carbon tax through fuel regulations that adds an estimated 16 cents to the per litre pump price of gasoline.

Link to above information <http://www.taxpayer.com/media/New-Years-Tax-Changes-2022.pdf>

BC Hydro files 3-year rate application: BC Hydro has filed its Fiscal 2023-2025 Revenue Requirements Application with the BC Utilities Commission, requesting an annual average bill increase of 1.1 per cent for the next three years.

Statement from BC Hydro: Is committed to keeping rates as affordable as possible for customers and to making the investments required to provide reliable electricity service. As a result, it is requesting a bill decrease of 1.4 per cent starting April 1, 2022. This is the second time in the past three years BC Hydro will decrease bills for its customers – bills were decreased by 1.62 per cent in Fiscal 2021.

If approved by the BC Utilities Commission, residential customers will see a decrease of about \$23 on average in the first year. Commercial customers' annual electricity costs will be reduced by \$974 on average and industrial customers by \$325,205 on average.

In the following two years, BC Hydro is requesting bill increases of 2 and 2.7 per cent.

Government debt: By March 31, 2022, each Canadian's share of the federal debt will be about \$32,200.

When you add up all provincial and federal debt, each Canadian will owe \$57,500 on average.

Sincerely,

Tom Zeleznik, Mayor