

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ASKED FOR ANSWERS

Social agencies escape council's restraint axe

by BOB MILLER
Staff reporter

Social agencies and the Northern B.C. Winter Games emerged intact but cultural and promotional groups felt the axe during consideration of grants at Monday's city council meeting.

Council approved a grant package that could total more than \$235,000 this year, about \$40,000 more than was provided in its 1984 provisional grants budget.

The total sum could drop somewhat depending on how much council allocates the Prince George Chamber of Commerce.

The chamber's request for \$73,200 for city promotion and tourism was tabled until the chamber provides a more detailed budget, financial statements and an outline of what it hopes to accomplish.

A motion to approve the chamber's request as submitted was defeated on a 5-5 vote with acting mayor John Backhouse and Aldermen Jack Sieb, Richard Godfrey, Brian Brownridge and Cliff Dezell opposed.

Several of the aldermen who opposed the request said they would be prepared to consider the full amount but only after the chamber provided enough information on which to make a sound judgment.

"All they did was ask us for \$73,200," Brownridge said, adding that council has no idea if this represents 70, 100 or 130 per cent of the chamber's tourism costs.

Brownridge wants to see what the chamber's tourism budget is, what the cost for staff will be and

given some idea of what provincial and federal grants the chamber might get this year.

Backhouse added he wants to see details of what the chamber's objectives are, what sort of outcome it projects and see some method to measure its performance on tourism and promotion.

The motion to table the grant request carried with Aldermen Monica Becott, Steve Sintich and Art Stauble opposed.

Sieb said if the chamber insists on charging the city for the full cost of promotion and tourism then there's no advantage in letting them do it. He suggested it might perhaps be better for the city to do its own promotion.

Stauble said he wasn't pleased with the chamber's presentation at last week's council meeting, but he noted that for the money spent the city gets better value from the chamber than it does on other promotional items.

He said council is at fault for not giving the chamber clear guidelines of what it expects in the way of tourism and promotion.

Following defeat of the earlier motion he moved the budget be set at \$68,000 but it was set aside by the tabling motion.

Hardest hit in the promotional category were the Queen Aurora Society and Prince George Float Society which were granted the same amount of money they received in 1983.

The Queen Aurora Society had requested \$17,000,

largely for expenses to send Queen Aurora to on good-will tours to 28 communities outside Prince George, including the Miss PNE and Miss Canada pageants.

The society was given \$3,000.

The Prince George Float Society had requested \$15,335 to maintain the city float and send it to parades in 12 cities including the Grey Cup parade in Edmonton and the PNE parade in Vancouver this year.

The society received \$4,300.

In the cultural category, a request by the Prince George Art Gallery for \$36,287 was trimmed to \$32,000.

Cost-conscious aldermen attempted to cut the grant to \$28,000, the 1983 level, but a majority of aldermen felt with Expo 86 in the wings it would be poor form to scuttle one of the city's obvious tourist attractions.

Studio 2880 had its grant request trimmed from \$8,600 to \$7,275, the amount it received last year and the Community Arts Council had its request cut from \$4,000 to \$3,500.

The Prince George Symphony Orchestra will receive a \$5,000 grant, the amount it originally requested.

In the social grants sector, council considered chopping the Mary Harper Achievement Centre grant from \$14,000 to \$4,000 in an attempt to force the provincial government to shoulder more responsibility for health care, but a motion to this effect was ruled out of order

by acting mayor Backhouse. The centre helps mentally-ill adults.

Since council entered debate on social grants on the understanding the recommended amount \$57,800 (no more or less) would be spent, Backhouse ruled the motion would have defeated council's original intent.

Seven other grant applications by social agencies previously approved by the city's social advisory committee were approved as recommended:

Prince George Alano Club, \$11,000; Crisis Intervention Society \$10,000; Canadian Paraplegic Association \$1,000; Elizabeth Fry Society \$800; St. Patrick's House, \$15,000; Central Interior Society for Correctional Tasks, \$1,000 and the Christian Counselling Centre, \$5,000.

Rejected this year by the social advisory committee were: Moms and Kids Drop-in Centre (\$5,000), Prince George Senior Citizens Activity Centre Society (\$25,000) and the Prince George Women's Resource Centre (\$1,500).

In other grant categories, council approved \$28,000 for the Northern B.C. Winter Games and a total of \$9,450 to be shared among groups under the miscellaneous heading.

Miscellaneous groups that will be helped this year are: Spruce Capital Radio Association, \$300; Jubilee Scholarship, \$1,500; Red Cross blood donor clinic, \$2,080; Folkfest, \$520 and \$4,500 was earmarked for charitable organizations and business licence rebates for non-profit groups.

ENTERTAINMENT PACKAGE

Exhibition plan cheered

The Prince George Exhibition board was complimented by city council Monday for the work it's done to make this year's fall fair a success.

"It sounds like they've thought it through, I don't see what council can do but support them," Alderman George McKnight concluded, while Alderman Cliff Dezell noted in his opinion the board had responded to the concerns of former board treasurer Vic Rouse.

In a recent letter to council, Rouse criticized the board for signing an agreement on a \$35,000 (\$34,000 actually) entertainment package which he felt was an irresponsible move considering the economic climate and a payback agreement on a \$60,000 city loan that bailed the exhibition out of financial difficulties last year.

Entertainment losses were cited by Rouse as one of the primary reasons why the fall fair fell into financial difficulties in the first place.

He recommended council allow the board to pursue its present direction and "hope" it makes a profit in 1984; ask the board to resign and appoint a full-time organizer for the fall fair, or demand immediate repayment of the loan.

In a prepared statement, exhibition board president Garth Elgie explained projected entertainment costs are almost identical to last year's and the board expects to make enough profit to cover a \$10,000 payment on its loan, spend \$6,000 on grounds improvement and increase prize money in the livestock division by \$7,000.

He said the rodeo, which cost the fall fair about \$25,000 last year has been dropped in favor of a four-day total entertainment package that will cost \$34,000.

The board expects to recover this cost through increased gate attendance and a higher admission charge — \$4 for an adult.

The entertainment package includes shows from two to four times a day and offers something for everyone in the family: country entertainer Wilf Carter, Iris Larratt, The Orestos (jugglers), the Chenail Family Fiddlers, comedian Kirby St. Romain, two puppet shows, a unicycle act and an acrobatic ski show.

Alderman Brian Brownridge told Elgie he can't understand how the board could spend \$34,000 on entertainment and not charge an extra admission to recover costs.

Elgie explained that this year the board is attempting to sell people on the whole exhibition, not just a single entertainment event and by

appealing to a broad range of tastes, costs would be recovered at the gate.

Alderman Jack Sieb said he considers entertainment a frill in conjunction with the fall fair and would have preferred the board lower the gate admission and not provide entertainment.

"I'm not sure it will draw the crowd you expect, but I wish you well with it."

Elgie went on to say the board feels by presenting a complete package of events it will encourage the local business community to participate through the purchase of booth space during the fall fair.

"Attendance and participation by the public has declined in recent years and we are hoping to at least stabilize these numbers and perhaps improve on them through a more general show that appeals to all age groups," he said.

Even if the admission price is not raised the fair will break even, Elgie predicted.

Ministry rejects Vickers' charge

by BERNICE TRICK
Staff reporter

A Prince George official says she "takes extreme exception" to David Vickers' accusation that the B.C. Ministry of Human Resources is putting Tranquille's mentally-handicapped residents on an auction block.

Elaine Murray, human resources region five manager, was referring to a story Monday in The Citizen in which the Vancouver lawyer criticized an advertisement inviting individuals, businesses and societies interested in providing homes and programs to returning residents to submit bids and plans to the ministry.

Vickers called the ad "a complete breach of the ministry's undertaking" and claimed the ministry is moving too fast and failing to keep promises to meet residents' individual needs.

He claimed good planning is being sacrificed in favor of an "artificial deadline" to close the Kamloops facility Dec. 31.

Murray says the MHR "is advertising to find the best possible resources" available for returning residents.

"The onus is on the ministry to inform communities involved that any society, group or individual may put together a proposal and submit it for consideration," she explained.

She said it's common practice for the ministry to place ads for all types of resources like foster homes, community programs and group homes "and this one is no different."

The advertisement, which ran in The Citizen

ized, was criticized by Vickers and a group of parents and social agency workers during a meeting here Saturday.

Murray says the ad was placed as a result of a four-month study at Tranquille by three social workers from this region.

"The purpose of the study was to determine individual needs of every resident returning to the Region Five," she said, adding this involves about 19 residents to Prince George, 10 to Williams Lake and seven to Quesnel.

To date, 10 residents returning here between now and the deadline are slated for two group homes provided by AIMHI (Prince George's Association for Individuals with Mental Handicaps).

Murray claims Region Five "has an excellent working relationship" with associations for the mentally handicapped in the three communities involved.

"And they may well be the ones providing all facilities needed by the Dec. 31 deadline, but it's our duty to learn all that is available out there."

Ferry service reduced

Citizen news services

VICTORIA — Responding to protests from local residents, the provincial government has reversed its decision to shut down highways ferries at Castlegar, McLure and Marguerite, but there will still be service reductions.

The government wanted to eliminate the ferries to save money, but Transportation Minister Alex Fraser said Friday the move would have created hardships for local residents.

He added that the government will save more money by operating two of the ferries at a reduced level of service instead of chopping the service entirely.

He did not explain his reasoning, but said the ministry would have saved \$450,000 by eliminating the service. By operating the ferries on a reduced basis, Fraser said it will save \$1 million.

"That way we have a net gain and make some people happy," he told reporters.

The Castlegar-Robson ferry across the Columbia river will have its operating times reduced to 14 hours a day from 19 hours and the Marguerite ferry across the Fraser River north of Williams Lake will run 10 hours a day instead of 15. The McLure service will not be changed.

Financial burden seen

Citizen news services

VICTORIA — Attorney General Brian Smith says he does not believe mayors will follow through on a threat to refuse to have police replace provincial sheriff's officers in serving court documents.

Vancouver-area mayors at a news conference Monday joined in rejecting the provincial government's plan to have municipalities take responsibility for

serving documents at the end of this month.

Smith said Monday having police deliver documents will be more efficient, and also will give police a higher profile in the community. He said the mayors' statement is a political move, as they fight to ensure no additional burden is passed to municipalities.

In Prince George, city council has drafted a resolution to this year's North Central Municipal Association and the Union of B.C. Municipalities requesting the provincial government to keep the responsibility of serving documents.

The mayors said in Vancouver there are questions about the appropriateness of using police to serve court documents and say it may have a serious effect on the crime rate.

Smith, who was mayor

of Oak Bay for six years, said he understands the mayors' action. However, he insists, "mayors are not going to go out and tell the police not to carry out their duty."

"The mayors are not going to take that position," said Smith. "They're now acting with their political hats on and they are fighting to ensure that there isn't some additional burden being passed on to municipalities."

Municipal Affairs Minister Bill Ritchie says he's sure municipalities

will be able to take over the service at minimum cost. Ritchie said the government will monitor the new system for a year, then will review it with municipalities.

Smith said the mayors' fear of the new system costing more is legitimate.

"They're legitimately concerned about costs and we have given a commitment that we will make the system work and if it is a major cost burden on them, well then we'll work out an arrangement with them."

school board

A recommendation to adopt a locally-developed program as a full-fledged career preparation program is one of the main topics on tonight's Prince George School Board agenda.

The program at Mackenzie Secondary School has been in progress for the past three years and has been successful, says a report to trustees. To date it has been self-supporting, but the move to full recognition as a program is meant to guarantee stability.

Also on the agenda are discussions of school boundary changes and school bus service, both subjects set over from previous meetings.

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Double murder earns life term

Citizen news services

PRINCE RUPERT — A 25-year-old Sicamous man pleaded guilty in B.C. Supreme Court Monday to two counts of second-degree murder Monday and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Justice J. C. Bouck was told that in June, 1983, William Ray Hennessy hid in the attic of his estranged girlfriend's home in Terrace for two and a half days before using a pick to

kill her and the man she was with.

Maria Deutch, 23, and Earl Austin Barber, 29, both of Terrace, were struck several times with the pick as they lay in bed.

Hennessy will not be eligible for parole until he has served 10 years of his sentence.

Court was told that Hennessy met Deutch in November, 1982. The two lived together until April 1983. A few attempts by Hennessy to reconcile with Deutch failed.

On June 9, Deutch called Terrace RCMP, complaining that several articles of clothing in her house had been cut up. Crown counsel Mike Fulmer told the court that when the incident was repeated, Deutch again notified authorities and changed the locks on her doors.

At the time of Deutch's second report to authorities, Hennessy was hiding in her attic, Fulmer said.

On June 12, Barber visited Deutch's home unexpectedly, court was told. There were guests in the house and when they left, the couple retired. Hennessy later took a pick that was kept in the porch of the home and killed Deutch and Barber.

Hennessy was arrested in Watson Lake three days after the murders.

Blast victim named

The man killed in an explosion in the LaFreniere subdivision March 18 has been identified by coroner Bob Stevenson as Lloyd Cassel, 48, of Prince George.

Cassel's body was found inside a house which exploded and caught on fire on Aldeen Road about 10 p.m.

Prince George Fire Chief Harold Dornbierer said the explosion was caused by someone altering a gas line to the furnace.

Stevenson says foul play is not suspected.

Man killed in accident

Norman Glen Peters, 29, of Vanderhoof, died in an accident Monday night when his motorcycle left the road and went into a ditch two kilometers east of Endako.

Fraser Lake RCMP say the accident occurred shortly before 11 p.m. when Peters was travelling east on Highway 16.

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