



CITY OF WILLIAMS LAKE COUNCIL REPORT

DATE OF REPORT: January 22, 2021
DATE & TYPE OF MEETING: February 24, 2021 Joint Committee Meeting
AUTHOR: Ian James, Director of Community Services
SUBJECT: Greater Metro Hockey League (GMHL) Report
FILE: 7900-10

Recommendation

That the Central Cariboo Joint Committee receive this report on the Greater Metro Hockey League (GMHL) and the Western Provinces Hockey Association (WPHA) interest in bringing an expansion team to the City of Williams Lake for information and provide direction to staff.

Purpose

To determine if the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District have the required community interest and the facility resources to accommodate a GMHL Jr. A expansion hockey team. Additionally, to confirm if the GMHL and the WPHA are reputable Jr. A hockey leagues in good standing with BC Hockey and Hockey Canada.

Background / Discussion

A Special Central Cariboo Joint Committee (CCJC) Zoom Meeting took place on December 16, 2020 to give Derek Prue, WPHA an opportunity to present his Jr. A hockey team expansion proposal to bring a team to the City of Williams Lake. At the conclusion of Derek's presentation, the CCJC requested that City staff prepare a report summarizing the pro's and con's of the City committing to a GMHL Jr. A expansion team.

Historical GMHL

The Ontario Greater Metro Hockey League (GMHL) was founded in early 2006, with a mandate for development of young hockey players from Canada, the United States, and Europe within a Junior 'A' league format.

In 2019, the **Western States Hockey League** and the **Western Provinces Hockey Association** both pay-to-play leagues had a falling out and Derek Prue established a partnership with the GMHL. The GMHL and Derek Prue then opened their GMHL Western Division for the 2019–20 season with four Alberta teams:

1. **Fox Creek Ice Kings (2020)**
2. **High Prairie Red Wings (2019)**
3. **Northern Alberta Tomahawks (2019)**
4. **Slave Lake Ice dogs (2019)**

The GMHL now offers three divisions nationwide, two in Ontario and one in Alberta, and they hope to have expansion teams in BC in 2021:

- a) Ontario North (10 teams)
- b) Ontario South (10 teams)
- c) Alberta West (4 teams)
- d) British Columbia (MAYBE)

GMHL Ice Request

GMHL Home Game Ice Request

Friday and Saturday evenings from 6:30-11:00PM AND Sundays from 2:00-8:00PM. Note: Firm game dates and times will be provided when the GMHL game schedules are finalized.

***NOTE: Both the Williams Lake Stampeders and Williams Lake Minor Hockey Association are supportive of the GMHL expansion and are willing to share ice times with the GMHL Jr. A team.**

Practice Times Request

The GMHL Jr. A expansion team would require five (5) 1.5 hour Non-Prime practice ice sessions weekly Monday-Friday.

*Note - The GMHL will have knowledge of their home game schedule prior to the CMRC ice user groups meeting in May.

***According to Derek Prue, the GMHL will not require any capital funding or investment of any kind from the City of Williams Lake. All they require is a facility lease/ice user agreement**

CMRC Ice Rental Rates – Fees and Charges Policy (2021)

1. Winter Discount Adult Prime Time \$176.78 (game hourly rate X 3 HRS/game)
2. Winter Discount Youth \$96.51 (practice ice rate)
3. Summer Ice Discount \$151.13 (hockey school/training camp min 120 HRS)

Financial – Potential Ice Rental Revenue (GMHL)

Practice ice/month = 30 HRS x \$96.51 = \$2,895.30/month x 6 months = **\$17,371.80/season**

Exhibition/League & Playoff Games = 3 HRS/game x 25 games x \$530/game = **\$15,900/season**

Summer School/Training Camp = 120 min HRS x \$151.13/HR = **\$18,016/summer**

Total Revenue = **\$51,287.60**

GMHL Expansion to the City of Williams Lake

PRO's

- Jr. A hockey is a great community event and entertainment activity
- The GMHL games and summer skills camps are expected to increase tourism and visitor traffic to the City
- The City will receive increased publicity and media that comes with having a Jr. A hockey program and international sports team
- The CMRC will receive increased ice rental revenue
- There would be increased ice arena board advertisement revenue by working with the GMHL marketing department
- Better hockey skills development camps for community youth
- Having a Jr. A team improves the CMRC chance of receiving grant approval for the four ice arena changerooms project through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)
- Jr. A players can be a positive role model for community youth
- International players will need housing in Williams Lake

CON's

- Our current ice arena facility does not provide for dedicated changerooms and storage areas for a Jr. A team
- The current COVID pandemic restrictions on gatherings and events (no spectators, traveling, etc.) will delay any team expansion and game activities
- There is a risk of the GMHL and WPHA expansion teams folding in Alberta and BC communities if not supported
- GMHL and WPHA are still waiting for expansion team commitment from the City of Quesnel and the Lower Mainland of BC

Final Considerations

Derek Prue has stated, "The GMHL does not require any capital funding or investment of any kind from communities in which to operate." Therefore, as an ice rental and sports tourism business model there are minimal financial impacts if facility rental and payment policies / procedures are adhered to. All other operational risks are minimal and can be mitigated with some advanced planning.

It is important to understand if hockey leagues such as the Western State Hockey League and Western Provinces Hockey Association choose not to pay membership with Hockey Canada, this does not mean they are banned leagues. What it does mean is that they are not affiliated with Hockey Canada and do not receive the benefits that come with that affiliation. Therefore, the City will have to make sure that the GMHL and WPHA insurance policy is current throughout any rental agreement with the City of Williams Lake.

City staff are in favour of the GMHL and WPHA Jr. A expansion team coming to the City of Williams Lake on the condition that ice rental payments are made in advance of all activities on a month-to-month basis to avoid any non-payment or payment in arrears issues.

Financial Considerations (Cost and Resource Allocation)

- Yes – The City is waiting for cap-x and Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) grant approval for the ice arena four dressing rooms expansion project.
- N/A

Legislative Considerations (Applicable Policies and/or Bylaws)

- Yes – Approval of an ice allocation policy for user groups.
- N/A

This project aligns with the following Strategic Priority Areas:

- Resilient and Diversified Economy
- Strong Community Relationships
- Financial Stability and Sound Asset Management
- Positive Community Image
- Healthy and Inclusive Workplace
- Other

Other Implications (Environmental/Social/Economic)

- Yes – Improved sports tourism to the City of Williams Lake
- N/A

This report has been prepared in consultation with:

WLMHA, WLFSA, WLSSA and WLAHL (CMRC ice user groups)
Derek Prue, Western Provinces Hockey Association
Garry Muraca, City of Williams Lake CAO

Approved for Agenda by:

Gary Muraca, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Williams Lake

Respectfully submitted,

Ian James
Director of Community Services
City of Williams Lake

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – BC Hockey Skills Development Poster

Attachment B – Letter of Support from Williams Lake Stampede Hockey Club dated January 25, 2021