



CITY OF WILLIAMS LAKE COUNCIL REPORT

DATE OF REPORT: February 22, 2024
DATE & TYPE OF MEETING: February 28, 2024 Joint Committee Meeting
AUTHOR: Stacey Miranda, Director of Community Services
SUBJECT: KOOTENAY INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
FILE: 7900-10

Recommendation

That the Central Cariboo Joint Committee receive this report information and provide feedback to staff regarding next steps.

Purpose

The goal of this report is to provide background information on the ongoing discussions between staff and a junior hockey team looking to relocate to Williams Lake, and to give the committee an opportunity to ask clarifying questions or provide feedback on the matter, prior to staff negotiating contractual agreements with the Junior Hockey team.

Discussion

Background:

The Kootenay International Junior Hockey League (KIJHL) has been operating for more than 50 years (1966) and continues to grow in strength each season. The listing of former KIJHL players and officials advancing to junior A, major junior, collegiate, semi-pro and the NHL is significant. On July 25, 2023, BC Hockey announced that three BC Junior B leagues, the KIJHL, PJHL, and VIJHL, were being promoted to Junior A under a new Tier 2 status starting in the 2023–24 season. BC Hockey is evaluating their Junior A Tier 2 program and will be selecting teams from all three leagues to be promoted to Junior A Tier 1 under a new league to replace the BCHL.

There is an opportunity for a KIJHL team to re-locate to Williams Lake. Representatives from the potential team have visited the facility and began to reach out to some of the user groups at the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex. The KIJHL has made several commitments to BC Hockey, and the communities that are the home base for teams. Some of those commitments to enhance the player and community experiences include:

- Cooperation and engagement with an independent advisory board to evaluate Junior A, Tier 2 teams and determine which may be elevated to the Junior A, Tier 1 level.
- A rigorous process and analysis, conducted over the next three seasons, allowing individual teams and communities to find the level of Junior hockey best suited to them.
- An understanding that the advisory board will soon add other requirements aimed at optimizing the overall player experience with the intent of increasing them each season.
- An enhanced dedication to engagement with grassroots hockey in B.C. and Yukon, ensuring that homegrown players receive the opportunity to compete at this level.

- An ongoing structure ensuring that teams achieving the Junior A Tier 1 classification are ready to compete against the nation's highest-level of Junior hockey competition.

As part of its efforts to provide more opportunity for homegrown players, the KIJHL has committed to a three-year plan that will increase B.C. and Yukon player representation from 44% in the 2022/23 season to 52% by 2025/26.

Some of the potential commitments that would be a part of this opportunity include office and storage space. After reviewing the facility, some minor enhancements will ensure both office and storage space could be available, and it would not impact current ice users. Another commitment is a dedicated dressing room, and with some minor enhancements and adjustments, this can be accommodated in the facility. Much of the minor enhancements and a few adjustments will not impact the user groups but could affect the storage and offices used by staff, but staff use could be easily adjusted to accommodate the changes.

The ability to work with other user groups, the community and related organizations with involvement, training, peer leadership and development of physical literacy and activity would enhance the community, grow spirit, and develop well rounded individuals through the KIJHL would be an asset to the community, and the region.

At the City of Williams Lake Council Meeting on February 13, 2024, the following resolution was endorsed:

“That pursuant to the February 7, 2024 report from the Director of Community Services, Council support the opportunity for discussion regarding the addition of an ice user group to Williams Lake and area (a Kootenay International Junior Hockey League team) and provide a letter of intent to the team indicating the City’s desire to work with the potential new user group and determining the fit in the facility and the community; and further, that the Central Cariboo Rural Directors Caucus be invited to sign the letter of intent.”

A copy of this letter is attached for reference as Attachment A.

Currently, representatives from the KIJHL potential team owner and current coach have been in dialogue with Williams Lake Minor Hockey Association and the Williams Lake Stampeders hockey. Staff have reached out to all CMRC user groups with the information regarding this opportunity. Staff are satisfied with the engagement to date, and positive discussions moving forward will ensure all areas of the requirements, concerns and potential benefits can be realized.

Analysis

The basic requirement for ice is approximately 22 home games, exhibition games and a potential for playoff games along with practice times during the weekdays. Weekday practices can enhance current programs and users and can be easily accommodated. The 22-game schedule would be on evenings during the week, and afternoons or evenings on the weekends. These games would impact some of the ice users, moving bookings to other evenings or dates. Ice bookings would be required to shift, some

users moving to later in the day or earlier in the mornings. There is open ice available for these accommodations, however, there would be a shift for users to utilize non-prime time slots.

Best practices enable many recreation facilities to accommodate growth in user groups utilizing facilities. It is encouraged that new groups, emergent sports and various leagues play in community facilities and be included in facility allocations. There will be changes in trends, as well as future demands that are unpredictable, but are valued in ensuring diversity in sport and recreation. It is important to consider the needs of diverse populations, groups and individuals while recognizing the tax-based contribution provided by residents toward the development and operation of recreation infrastructure. Moving forward, should a KIJHL team be approved for the community, this group would become an integral part of the ice allocation process.

In reviewing the opportunity for a junior level hockey team hosted out of the CMRC, there are many items and discussions yet to come. Currently, Council wishes to continue to discuss this opportunity, and the attached letter (Attachment A) indicating support, with the Cariboo Regional District's Central Cariboo Rural Directors Caucus.

Next Steps:

The next steps to further the opportunity to have the KIJHL team relocate to the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex include:

- Determining potential leased spaces
- Determining authorized access into the facility to leased spaces,
- Determining shared use spaces with current and future user groups,
- Determining fees for allocated spaces, ice times and payment schedules,
- Determining potential revenue sharing opportunities; including advertising and sponsorship,
- Determining details for potential tenant improvements, and
- Length of the agreement

These items will be negotiated and gathered into an agreement between the City of Williams Lake per section 3.2(w) of the Recreation Management Agreement, and the KIJHL team proponent.

In addition, any items requiring space renovations will need to be approved by the CRD and any building plans associated with a final occupancy agreement will be reviewed first at the Central Cariboo Joint Committee table.

Financial Considerations (Cost and Resource Allocation)

- Yes There may be financial implications should the agreement be signed.
 N/A

Legislative Considerations (Applicable Policies and/or Bylaws)

- Yes There may be building code or minor construction required, along with league and municipal requirements for consideration and negotiation. Anything outside of approved operations will be brought to the relevant table(s) for policy guidance.

N/A

This project aligns with the following Focus Areas of Council's Strategic Plan:

- Collaboration and Partnerships
 - Indigenous Relations
 - Livability / Positive Atmosphere
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Organizational Effectiveness
- OR
- *Core Service (not identified in Focus Areas, but necessary local government function)

This report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Corporate Officer

Approved for Agenda by:

Chief Administrative Officer
Respectfully submitted,

Stacey Miranda
Director of Community Services

Attachments:

- A. Support Letter from City of Williams Lake / Central Cariboo Rural Directors Caucus

Other Resources:

<https://kijhl.ca>

[Kootenay International Junior Hockey League - Wikipedia](#)

[B.C. JUNIOR A LEAGUES PARTNER WITH BLACKFIN SPORTS GROUP | BC Hockey](#)

[BC Hockey approves KIJHL for Junior A status | Columbia Valley, East Kootenay, Elk Valley, Fernie, Invermere, Kimberley \(e-know.ca\)](#)

[Council Policy 118; Rationale for the Delivery of Public Leisure Services Policy \(FSJ\)](#)

[Council Policy 113; Civic Facilities Rental/Lease Policy \(FSJ\)](#)