



MAY 18 2018

MS. JULIE GREEN
MLA, YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

Oral Question 234-18(3) and 238 -18(3): Norman Wells Fire Department

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Questions you raised on March 09, 2018, and on March 13, 2018 in relation to the status of the Norman Wells Fire Department.

I am pleased to confirm that the Norman Wells Fire Department is operational at this time, including emergency contact phone lines. A recent assessment by Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) identified a number of areas requiring attention, which the Town and volunteer fire fighters are now addressing. A full-time Fire Chief has been hired and training has been scheduled to help ensure adequate capacity.

Since starting community fire department assessments in 2017, seventeen (17) community fire departments have been reviewed, including Norman Wells. From these assessments, thirteen (13) action plans have been created. The results of the Norman Wells assessment indicated volunteer fire fighters lack training, certification, procedures, and other foundational elements to safely fight fire. The Office of the Fire Marshal recommended the Town take immediate steps to identify safety risks and to implement an action plan to address the gaps.

A key benchmark for the assessment is the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) Firefighters Code of Practice, which provides detailed guidance in achieving the safety requirements of the *Safety Act* and *Regulations*. Although MACA does not enforce the *Safety Act*, it uses it quite extensively to identify areas requiring support and guidance. The WSCC provides community governments help in assessing and mitigating safety risks.

Community governments ultimately decide what level of fire protection they feel is both achievable and sustainable. Factors which influence decisions include the availability of volunteers, the desired level of protection for residents, available financial resources, and the types of hazards that are present in the community. Tools and guidance are available from MACA, and regional staff work closely with community governments to guide decision-making.

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MACA will continue to support each community government as they conduct the assessments, determine levels of service and develop and implement a work plan for their fire department.

Thank you for raising this important topic.



Alfred Moses
Minister of Municipal
and Community Affairs

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Coordinator
Deputy Minister, Municipal and Community Affairs