

Special Council Meeting

AGENDA

Monday, September 22, 2014 – Council Chambers, City Hall

Call to Order: 8:30 AM

I. REPORTS

- I.1. AUMA Extraordinary Resolution
Temporary Foreign Workers

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2. ADJOURNMENT



September 19, 2014

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)

Temporary Foreign Workers Extraordinary Resolution

City Manager's Office

Report Summary & Recommendation:

As per direction from the Governance and Policy Committee meeting on September 16, 2014, Council would like to propose an extraordinary resolution to be submitted to the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Convention (AUMA) scheduled to be held from September 23 to 25th, 2014 in Calgary, Alberta.

In order for this resolution to be considered by the AUMA, Council must have a resolution of support.

City Manager Comments:

I support the proposed resolution.

Craig Curtis
City Manager

Proposed Resolution

Resolved that Council of The City of Red Deer, having considered the report from the City Manager's office, dated September 19, 2014 re: Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Extraordinary Resolution hereby agrees to support the following:

WHEREAS economic growth and community prosperity relies on the ability of small, medium and large businesses to access the necessary skilled labour force;

WHEREAS the unique needs of Alberta's strong economy means that the demand for labour in our communities requires the support of programs like the temporary foreign workers program;

WHEREAS private sector entrepreneurs are questioning future capital investments, business expansion and current operations because they are uncertain of their ability to access the necessary workforce;

WHEREAS all workers in Canada deserve a safe and respectful work environment and abuses to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program should not be tolerated;

WHEREAS Canadians should have first access to jobs in Canada and the Government of Canada and provincial governments should continue to develop a national labour mobility strategy that encourages and facilitates Canadians to fill jobs;



WHEREAS the Alberta mid-sized cities caucus has expressed its concerns about changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and its impact on the economy in a letter to the provincial and federal governments at their meeting in May 2014;

WHEREAS the Canadian economy is diverse and programs must be built that recognize the unique needs of provinces and economic sectors;

WHEREAS the federal government has introduced changes to the temporary foreign workers program on June 20, 2014 that were designed to increase accountability but have also detrimentally affected the ability of employers to access the program¹;

WHEREAS the goal of changes to the temporary foreign workers program should be to increase accountability, decrease abuse and ensure access to a workforce that Canadian small, medium and large businesses need, not decrease the number of applications;

WHEREAS changes in the temporary foreign workers program leads to uncertainty for those in the program and can cause undue stress to people and their families; and

WHEREAS changes in the temporary foreign worker program must align with the goals and objectives of the overall Canadian immigration system ensuring that the investment in training and settlement of temporary foreign workers is leveraged and not lost.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of Alberta work with the Federal Minister of Economic and Social Development and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to develop a short and long term strategy in relation to the temporary foreign workers program that addresses the unique labour market needs of Alberta's economy.

BACKGROUND:

In the spring of 2014 the Government of Canada issued a moratorium for the on the Food Services Sector's access to the temporary foreign worker program after it was revealed that there were many instances of employers abusing the program. The moratorium had an immediate impact on businesses in Alberta where the unemployment rate is very low and the demand for a skilled labour force is high.

In response to the moratorium the Alberta mid-sized cities jointly signed a letter on May 26, 2014 asking for the federal government to reinstate the temporary foreign workers program due to its effect on the local economy and to make changes to the program to ensure workers in the program are fairly treated. On June 20, 2014 the Federal

Government announced changes to the entire temporary foreign worker program (<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?mthd=advSrch&crtr.mnthndVI=9&crtr.mnthStrtVI=1&crtr.page=1&nid=859859&crtr.yrndVI=2014&crtr.kw=temporary&crtr.yrStrtVI=2002&crtr.dyStrtVI=1&crtr.dyndVI=19>) that have improved the accountability of the program and protection of workers but at the same time decreased the ability of businesses to access the labour force they need to continue to operate or build their businesses.

¹ Minister Kenney responded in Question Period on September 16, 2014 that the number of applications to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program have decreased by 75%.

DATE: September 25, 2014
TO: Mayor, City Council, Craig Curtis, City Manager
FROM: Frieda McDougall, Legislative Services Manager
SUBJECT: Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)
Temporary Foreign Workers Extraordinary Resolution

Reference Report:

City Managers Office, dated September 19, 2014.

Resolution:

At the Monday, September 22, 2014 Special Council Meeting, Council passed the following Resolution:

Resolved that Council of The City of Red Deer, having considered the report from the City Manager's office, dated September 19, 2014 re: Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Temporary Foreign Workers Extraordinary Resolution hereby agrees to support the following:

Whereas economic growth and community prosperity relies on the ability of small, medium, and large business to access the necessary skilled labour force;

Whereas this program is only possible because Canada is full of opportunity and is a desirable place to build a better life for foreign workers and their families;

Whereas the unique needs of Alberta's strong economy means that the demand for labour in our communities requires the support of programs like the temporary foreign workers program;

Whereas private sector entrepreneurs are questioning future capital investments, business expansion and current operations because they are uncertain of their ability to access the necessary workforce;

Whereas all workers in Canada deserve a safe and respectful work environment and abuses to the temporary foreign worker program should not be tolerated;

Whereas Canadians should have first access to jobs in Canada and the Government of Canada and provincial governments should continue to develop a national labour mobility strategy that encourages and facilitates Canadians to fill jobs;

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Whereas the Alberta mid-sized cities caucus has expressed its concerns about changes to the temporary foreign workers program and its impact on the economy in a letter to the provincial and federal governments at their meeting in May 2014;

Whereas the Canadian economy is diverse and programs must be built that recognize the unique needs of provinces and economic sectors;

Whereas the federal government has introduced changes to the temporary foreign workers program on June 20, 2014 that were designed to increase accountability but have also detrimentally affected the ability of employers to access the program;

Whereas the goal of changes to the temporary foreign workers program should be to increase accountability, decrease abuse and ensure access to a workforce that Canadian small, medium and large businesses need, not decrease the number of applications;

Whereas changes in the temporary foreign workers program leads to uncertainty for those in the program and can cause undue stress to people and their families; and

Whereas changes in the temporary foreign worker program must align with the goals and objectives of the overall Canadian immigration system ensuring that the investment in training and settlement of temporary foreign workers is leveraged and not lost.

Therefore be it resolved that the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association urge the Province of Alberta work with the Federal Minister of Economic and Social Development and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to develop a short and long term strategy in relation to the temporary foreign workers program that addresses the unique labour market needs of Alberta's economy and explores such strategies including protection of temporary foreign workers from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

Background

In the spring of 2014, the government of Canada issued a moratorium for the Food Services Sector's access to the temporary foreign worker program after it was revealed that there were many instances of employers abusing the program. The moratorium had an immediate impact on businesses in Alberta where the unemployment rate is very low and the demand for a skilled labour force is high.

In response to the moratorium, the Alberta mid-size cities jointly signed a letter on May 26, 2014 asking for the federal government to reinstate the temporary foreign workers program due to its effect on the local economy and to make changes to the program to ensure workers in the program are fairly treated.

On June 20, 2014, the federal government announced changes to the entire temporary foreign worker program.

(<http://news.gc.ca/web/articleen.do?mthd=temporary&crtr.yrStrtVI=2002&crtr.dyndVI=19>) that have improved the accountability of the program and protection of

workers but at the same time, decreased the ability of business to access the labour force they need to continue to operate or build their businesses.

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Report back to Council: No

Frieda McDougall

for Frieda McDougall
Manager

- c. P. Goranson, Director of Corporate Services
K. Fowler, Director of Planning Services