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Savannah Price

From: Al Dyer <panorthernbears@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 7:58 PM
To: City Clerk
Cc: Laurie Huet; Steve Young; [REDACTED]
Subject: Northern Bears dressing room presentation to Council
Attachments: 2026 City Hall Speaking Notes.docx; Schedule A - City Council presentation.docx

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Hi,

The Prince Albert Northern Bears would like to make a presentation to City COuncil regarding the long overdue need for a dedicated dressing room. Attached are the speaking notes and some additional background.

Please confirm to us when this presentation can be done.

Please contact us with any questions.

Regards,

Al Dyer
 Board Member
 Prince Albert Northern Bears

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[REDACTED]
 Prince Albert, SK
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Recommended Disposition:

Refer to
Parks, Recreation
and Culture

City Hall Speaking Notes.

Good evening, Mayor Powalinsky and members of council. We are here representing the Prince Albert Northern Bears Hockey Club.

The Prince Albert Northern Bears is a female AAA U18 hockey program for Saskatchewan women aged 15 to 17. The Bears are proud founding members of the Saskatchewan Female U18 AAA Hockey League (SFU18AAAHL) along with 6 other teams entering their 19th year in existence. Our current annual operating budget is around \$200,000.00.

We had five years ago and even for many years prior to that, discussed with the city the urgent need for a Northern Bears dressing room. We were assured that the new event center would be proceeding quickly, and further, that there was little point in investing the major expenditure for a dressing room, at that time 5 years ago, when we would be moving to a dedicated dressing room in the new proposed Event Center facility within a few years. We were actively part of those discussions.

Yet, here we are 5ish years later and we honestly feel we are actually farther away from the phase 2 Event Center build than we were 4 years ago. In the mean time the Bears are continuing to make due with sub-standard, in comparison to the rest of the league, arrangements for our dressing room, practice time, game day times and storage. We are the only team in our league without a dedicated dressing room.

We only recently were able to expand our small storage room at the AHC after years of lobbying. Currently our players are constantly moving and removing their equipment from various dressing rooms and their homes or billet homes. Additionally, we, the Mintos, the Speed Skating club and the Raiders have to compete for the limited ice slots

that are suitable for our needs and have, for the past 2 years, even been double booked for games, not our fault.

To continue this for an indeterminate time does not make sense, when there is a manageable solution available to provide good support until the event center proceeds, if and when that happens.

We believe that the Bears have been more than patient and it is definitely time to assess our future needs with what we know, and not with what we hope. We find it difficult to rationalize our hockey club needing to spend potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars for a dressing room that is crucial to our success when there is, in our opinion, a cost-effective and available solution.

We believe this requires far more consideration than simply saying that we should settle for the status quo, absolutely not acceptable, for an indeterminate time or having to spend a very large amount of money.

As you are well aware, female hockey has struggled in the past for recognition. That has changed in the past few years and is actually primarily responsible for the growth in overall participation in minor hockey. One only has to look at the recent dynamic growth in women's hockey and sports in general.

There are basically two options that we feel deserve consideration.

1 – Move to the Leisure center and be provided one of the 10 current dressing rooms with some additional office/storage space. This is a cost-effective temporary solution that frees up ice time at the AHC and reduces scheduling conflicts with the Mintos, the Speed Skating Club and the Raiders. We are agreeable to paying our fair share of costs including discussion of possibly paying reasonable rent for a dressing

room and storage room at the leisure center in addition to our regular ice rental rates.

2 – Build a new dressing rooming similar in concept with the Minto room. This is a far less desirable option due to cost approaching several hundred thousand dollars, timing and adding to a building already close to its life cycle end. We don't feel that it should be necessary for the team to invest large amounts of time, effort and money to building a dressing room addition to the AHC. Cost alone is prohibitive.

However, we can't wait for a solution and we ask city council for your support and direction to arrange an immediate relocation to the Leisure Center in time for the 2026-27 season. As ice time scheduling begins in May for the upcoming season, we ask for your direction to the Recreation Department to provide for this accommodation as soon as possible. We wish to be as reasonable and proactive as possible and are happy to meet at any time to discuss this further.

Attached are some more specific notes that underline the fundamentals of why we need the room and the specific nature of our request.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Schedule A

The Bears are requesting the use of dressing room #10 at the Lake Country Leisure Centre for our exclusive use. We would cover all costs to put in our own player stalls and other improvements in room #10 to accommodate our players needs. We are currently the only U18AAA team in the league without their own permanent dressing room.

We would ask that on game days only, the Bears also have access to dressing room #9, which is right next to #10. This room would be used by coaching staff to prepare for the games, conduct player meetings, and also provide a private space for player first aid treatments by our training staff.

The Bears would additionally require use of the PA Minor Hockey's current office space on the east end of rink #2. It is the neighbouring office to the one already in use by the Figure Skating Club. We would look after furnishing and any improvement costs for this space as well. This would be used as a team office and storage area by Bears staff and Board Committee. To accommodate PA Minor Hockey for giving up this space, the Bears would allow PA Minor to take over our current storage room at the Art Hauser Centre for their use.

Additionally, this would bring to par with the Mintos with their dedicated dressing room, weight room and added storage room at the AHC. We recognize that the Mintos constructed their room at their own cost and the Bears will fully undertake the cost of any improvements both now and in the future.

It is very important to note that at times the team arrives back late and after operating hours. We have also arrived back during Raider games, tournaments, funerals, and other major events at the Art Hauser. We have had to bring team equipment into our storage area disrupting the other users. Therefore, the Bears would request to add a keyed door handle to the rear southeast door of the Leisure Center. This door is directly outside the office space we have requested. We would also ask to pour a sidewalk to that door from the rear parking area. The Bears are prepared to cover all costs of these requests. By doing this we would limit our traffic through the main facility when loading and unloading the team bus. This ensure little to no disruption when the facility was being used by others, or already closed for the night.

It our opinion, shared by many others in the community, that moving the Bears to the Leisure Centre would simplify current scheduling problems between the Raiders, Mintos, Speed Skating Club and other users such as Pow-wows and tournaments. The Bears female hockey players primary focus is to continue their careers after their time in U18AAA as student athletes. This differs from the male game as most male players go on to junior hockey before making the next jump to post-secondary play. Our girls continue directly on through recruitment opportunities earned from American and Canadian Colleges and Universities. Not only are they required to perform on the ice at a high level, but their grades matter too. Many nights our girls are not leaving the rink before 9PM because of the current scheduling conflicts at the Art Hauser Center. The Bears could practice Monday to Thursday 4:15-5:30 at the Leisure Centre. This would allow for our girls to have more time to look after their studies, and rest their bodies as all high-performance athletes need to do. By using practice ice at this time of day, it still allows adequate amounts of time for other user groups to schedule at the Leisure Centre on a daily basis.

Having a designated space in the Leisure Centre would also assist the Bears in recruiting top quality future players to their program. The U18AAA league is highly competitive. Looking professional and being professional are very important pieces to attracting elite players to help continue our culture.

This request is intended, at worst, to be 100% revenue neutral and none of these requests will create any cost to the City of Prince Albert. In fact, there may be opportunities for the City of Prince Albert to increase revenues through more efficient scheduling at the Art Hauser Center.

The alternative option is for the Bears to build a dressing room similar to the Mintos current room on the south side of the Art Hauser. We would expect that the costs for this to approach \$300 per square foot with a total cost of \$300,000.00 for room attached to a building with a limited remaining life span. Assuming at least a 10-year life, that works out to \$30,000.00 per year. For a small not-for profit hockey team, this makes no economic sense when there is a far more cost effective and efficient option available.

It is obvious what the benefits of our preferred option are. It is also vital to recognize that there is a very short window to plan, fundraise and construct a new dressing room at the Art Hauser Center. We would sincerely appreciate this being expedited as quickly as possible as maintaining the status quo is not acceptable in today's day and age. The Bears are well respected active participants in the wider community and it is disappointing to think that the team is forced to deal with sub-standard facilities when compared to their peer groups and teams in female and male programs around the province.

We thank you for your attention and consideration in this important matter. We look forward to discussing this further.