

December 13, 2021

Report To: Mayor and Council

From: Aaron Bisson, Manager of Recreation and Culture

**RE: Memorial Sports Centre Canteen**

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On June 30, 2021 the contract for the canteen formally lapsed, and was not renewed. Our operator at the time had closed the canteen in March 2020 due to the Pandemic and never re-opened it due to the rules in place at the Memorial Sports Centre. The canteen was not budgeted for in 2021 due to the fact that the pandemic did not allow gathering in common areas and significantly decreased spectators at games/practices. These restrictions were not conducive to allowing a canteen operator, and there was no indication of when these restrictions would lift. On October 25, 2021 the provincial government announced changes to the re-opening plan. On that date Public Health was contacted to determine if we could once again allow people to congregate in our lobby area as well as allow 100% capacity in our arenas. Once confirmation was obtained we reached out to the previous operator to see if they would like to continue operating the canteen and a report was presented to CSEC on November 1, 2021, and Council on November 8, 2021 to approve the contract.

The previous operator had indicated it would be willing to operate the canteen until June 30, 2023. After contacting the previous operator on November 9, 2021 the day after Council approved the contract, The previous operator indicated they may not take the contract and would let us know the next day. On Wednesday November 10, 2021 the previous operator indicated they had contracted someone to operate the canteen and this person was coming to meet with me to discuss opening. I met with the individual and went through the kitchen, when asked when he expected the canteen to be running he indicated that he could have it going by Friday November 12, 2021. The weekend came and no one showed up or opened the canteen. Monday morning I went and looked in the kitchen and items had been dropped off, seemingly in preparation to open the canteen. A couple of more days passed and I reached out to the individual but only got voicemail. By Friday the following week having heard nothing I reached back out to the previous operator for more information. The previous operator only indicated they were having trouble reaching this person as well. By November 24<sup>th</sup> The previous operator indicated they were no longer going to be using the individual they planned but had a back up plan in place and would let me know more details as soon as they were available. On Wednesday December 1, 2021 I called back as I had heard nothing and they indicated they had secured an individual and staff to work the Canteen and they should be able to open by Friday December 3 with a limited menu. Friday rolled around and I did not see anyone so I reached out again and was told that the person who was to be running the canteen had been a close contact to someone with COVID and would be unavailable until tests came back. On December 8 at 2:30 an email was received from the previous operator formally declining the contract for the Canteen.

Administration is now reaching out to a number of organizations to try and find a group willing to operate the Canteen. There has so far been limited interest in the Canteen as staffing is a significant issue in the industry.

We have three options available to us to deal with this situation:

- 1) We can begin a new RFP process which would leave us without a canteen operator well into the new year.

- 2) We can contact known caterers/businesses/individuals about potentially operating the Canteen and choose the best option based on availability, start date, and service level. This operator would operate the canteen until June 30, 2022, we would then begin an RFP process to award a contract beginning July 1, 2022.
- 3) We can contact known caterers/businesses/individuals about potentially operating the Canteen and choose the best option based on availability, start date, and service level. This operator would operate the canteen until June 30, 2023, we would then begin an RFP process to award a contract beginning July 1, 2023.

**Recommendation**

The Recreation and Culture Manager recommends to Mayor & Council to allow administration to find an operator based on either option 2 or option 3. Having two options as potential solutions allows flexibility in finding an operator.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Bisson  
Manager of Recreation and Culture

**Council approval of this report will agree to the recommendation of the Recreation and Culture Manager to find an operator for the canteen at the Memorial Sports Centre and enter into an agreement based on the criteria in option 2 or 3, whichever allows the greatest benefit to the public and facility.**