

REPORT

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: March 13, 2023

From: Lisa Spitale,
Chief Administrative Officer
File:

Item #: 2023-147

Subject: A Year of Truth Proclamation and Presentation

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the presentation regarding A Year of Truth.

THAT Council direct Mayor Johnstone to proclaim March 2023 to March 2024 A Year of Truth.

PURPOSE

Following up from the motion from February 13, 2023, this report accompanies a presentation to Council and proclamation related to A Year of Truth.

SUMMARY

A Year of Truth is an initiative which connects both City staff and the community to the City of New Westminster's Truth and Reconciliation journey by establishing that **truth needs to come before reconciliation**. Several opportunities to learn and reflect will be offered and were detailed in a report to Council February 13, 2023. This report accompanies a presentation and a Proclamation.

DISCUSSION

Building on the groundwork of education and relationship-building, a next step is needed to more deeply understand what Truth and Reconciliation means. These two terms must be separated in order to truly learn and understand what they mean. For this reason, staff are recommending that 2023 be acknowledged as "A Year of Truth", with

several actions that educate and acknowledge the truth of the harms of colonization and the Indian Residential School system. It is important to note that this is A Year of Truth, not *The* Year of Truth; it may take several years to develop a deep enough understanding of the truth before reconciliatory acts can be undertaken. The work to uncover the dark history of New Westminster’s violent past and its genocidal relationship with local Indigenous communities was an important and necessary first step in acknowledging, understanding and accepting the truth. *Truth* must come before *Reconciliation* because it is only through the seeking of truth that we will truly understand those things for which we need to reconcile.

NEXT STEPS

Indigenous Relations staff will continue to work interdepartmentally to plan and implement actions in support of A Year of Truth. Future communications to Council will provide details as they are finalized.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All proposed programs so far are achievable within existing operational budgets.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Indigenous Relations and Economic Development collaborated to prepare this report. Several of the programs will involve all departments and opportunities exist to collaborate with community partners.

OPTIONS

There are three options presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. THAT Council receive the presentation regarding A Year of Truth.
- 2. THAT Council direct Mayor Johnstone to proclaim March 2023 to March 2024 A Year of Truth.
- 3. THAT Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Option 1 and 2.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator
Christina Coolidge, Indigenous Relations Advisor

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer