

**MINUTES
CITY OF IQALUIT
TAXI REVIEW COMMITTEE #01
FEBRUARY 1, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT

Councillor Kyle Sheppard, Chair
Councillor Methusalah Kunuk, Vice Chair
Alan Webb, Member at Large
John Maurice, Member at Large
Cameron DeLong, Member at Large
Jakub Garbarczyk, Member at Large

ABSENT

Steve England, Chief Administrative Officer

PRESENT FROM ADMINISTRATION

Rod Mugford, Director of Human Resources/City Staff Resource
Tammy Ernst-Doiron, City Clerk
Brianna Longworth, Deputy City Clerk
Katrina Sarmiento, Executive Assistant
Steven Allen, Chief Enforcement Officer/City Staff Resource

Councillor Sheppard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Change:

1. MINUTES
 - a) Taxi Review Committee Meeting #02 Minutes dated April 21, 2021 changed to Taxi Advisory Committee Meeting #01 Minutes dated February 16, 2023

Motion TRC 24-01

Moved by: Councillor Kunuk
Seconded by: Cameron DeLong

Adoption of agenda as amended.

Unanimously Carried

Councillor Sheppard asked the Committee members to introduce themselves as
Councillor Kunuk was a new councillor.

1. **MINUTES**

- a) Taxi Advisory Committee Meeting #01 Minutes dated February 16, 2023

Motion TRC 24-02

Moved by: Cameron DeLong
Seconded by: Alan Webb

Taxi Advisory Committee Meeting #01 Minutes dated February 16, 2023.

Unanimously Carried

2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None

3. **DELEGATIONS**

None

4. **DEFERRED BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS**

None

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) **Vehicle for Hire By-law No. 971**

Rod Mugford, Director of Human Resources, advised that at the last meeting, staff were directed to draft a new Vehicle for Hire By-law No. 971, which would be a condensed version of the current by-law.

Councillor Sheppard noted that the draft by-law had significant changes pertaining to vehicles and seasonal vehicles. Councillor Sheppard made the following comments:

- Definitions
 - Bus operated as a vehicle for hire and there is no mention of bus or public transit in the by-law
 - Indictable convictions – clarify
 - Mr. Mugford advised that this was different than a summary conviction. When an applicant applies for a taxi license, the Criminal Record Check will show indictable convictions, which determines if they are eligible for a Taxi Driver Permit and the scope of the timelines.
 - Convicted under the laws of Canada or legislation enacted by any province or territory

- Sections pertaining to fares being charged. Council sets the fare with no minimum or maximum. Council has been interested in setting a maximum fare, which allows the opportunity for operators to offer a lower fare.
 - Section 3 – Payment of Fare – 3 (c) to be amended to allow flexibility for lowering pricing. This would also have to be reflected in other sections of the draft by-law.
- Vehicle changes – noted the required change in vehicles, which only permits rear-wheel drive vehicles during May 31 to October 1. After January 1, 2026, rear-wheel drive vehicles will no longer be permitted.
- Winter tires – discussion regarding the requirement of studded tires on front-wheel drive vehicles during the winter months
 - Mr. Mugford advised that front-wheel drive vehicles could be required to have studded tires from October 31 to May or June.
 - There are opportunities to put other safety measures in the requirements for vehicles for hire, such as a vehicle replacement plan for rear-wheel drive vehicles, which allow the use of rear-wheel drive vehicles from later spring to early fall.
- Section 17 – Audio and Video Surveillance – there is potential liability and privacy concerns. Included in this section, the Livery License holder may install audio and video surveillance.
- Section 17 (e) – The City shall enact a Vehicle for Hire Audio and Video Surveillance By-law. If the by-law gives the Livery License holder the opportunity and choice to install audio and video surveillance, must the City have a by-law to legislate the surveillance?
 - Mr. Mugford explained that the legal opinion was if the by-law mandated audio and video surveillance, then the City would be required to have a Vehicle for Hire Audio and Video Surveillance By-law. He noted that the equipment is currently installed in some vehicles and there should be a governing by-law.
 - Mr. Mugford advised that the wording could be changed but recommended that there be a Vehicle for Hire Audio and Video Surveillance By-law.
- Section 17 (g) should be removed
- Schedule “G” Schedule of Tariffs - Elder Fares – definition should be simplified
 - Alan Webb suggested that seniors be charged 80 percent of the flat fare
- Schedule “H” Taxi Fare Increase Grid – include a maximum rate for elders and seniors

Jakub Garbarczyk pointed out that elders are transported at a reduced rate and children under the age of ten are free, which creates a disincentive for taxi drivers to pick up passengers with children or elders. He expressed concern that there should be something in place to ensure passengers paying a reduced rate are being picked up and not being ignored.

Councillor Sheppard noted that the dispatch system mitigates this from happening.

Mr. Mugford noted that previously, the Fine Schedule did include a fine for failing to carry a passenger upon request. He advised that this would be included in the draft by-law.

John Maurice expressed concern that the fares listed would require taxi drivers to have various denominations of coins (nickels, dimes and quarters). He suggested that fares be a full dollar amount to avoid the coin denominations.

Mr. Maurice felt that taxi drivers should not have the right to discriminate against picking up elders or passengers with children, but they should be able to refuse passengers that were intoxicated or belligerent.

Councillor Sheppard suggested that rates be set with 50 cent denominations.

Mr. Maurice asked if the taxi industry had concerns with dealing with various coin denominations.

Councillor Sheppard pointed out that taxi industry representatives were attending the meeting. He noted that the Committee could give permission to allow the representatives to speak on the draft by-law only.

Mr. Webb noted that society was moving toward cashless and asked if the technology was available for passengers to use contactless payment.

Councillor Sheppard pointed out that the draft by-law allowed for contactless payment and he felt that encouraging this type of payment would be beneficial.

Mr. Mugford noted that taxi companies were considering software that would enable passengers to use preloaded cards.

Danny Savard, Nunavut Caribou Tuktu Cabs, advised that he did not have any concerns regarding the draft by-law. Mr. Savard provided information regarding questions and concerns posed by Committee members:

- Will be meeting with software companies regarding contactless payment, which will be similar to bus passes. The pass would have the passenger's picture and preloaded fares. The pass would be scanned on the onboard tablet in the taxi, which would verify the card owner to ensure the card was not stolen.
- Previously, studded tires were used during the winter, but it did not work very well as the studs came off and tires were ruined and had to be replaced each winter. Purchasing a good brand of winter tires worked much better.

Cameron DeLong noted that having pictures on passes could create some potential problems, as children may be using a pass without a picture.

Mr. Savard noted that having a picture on the pass was a safety feature to prevent people from stealing passes. He indicated that software was currently being designed and he

would consider the implication of a pass with a parent's picture or without a picture, which would be used by children.

Councillor Sheppard asked if the City had to legislate the use of passes. He asked if the draft by-law could include wording regarding contactless payment.

It was pointed out that having a set fare for an elder or senior would clarify the fare for everyone.

Mr. Maurice commented that visitors to Iqaluit may not have cash to pay taxi fares and contactless payment would be beneficial.

Mr. Savard advised that the option to pay cash would always be available. He explained that contactless payment was the easiest way to accept payment in taxis. He noted that a Point of Sale (POS) system to accept electronic payments was not currently available. Once it was available, it would require attaching a reader to the tablet or purchasing an additional machine.

Mr. Maurice expressed concern regarding collection of personal information.

Mr. Savard noted that work was underway to ensure that the system would work using the pass and tablet in the taxi. He noted that consideration could be given to the collection of personal information.

Mr. Savard advised that having fares in 25 cent denominations was acceptable, however, having other coin denominations (nickels and dimes) makes considerably more work.

Mr. Webb also expressed concern regarding personal information being a privacy concern.

Councillor Kunuk noted that he did not frequently use a taxi, but he had been asked his age in order to receive the senior fare.

Mr. Savard commented that some taxi drivers were being honest and want to ensure seniors received the correct fare.

Mr. DeLong noted that Mr. Savard was attempting to make it easier for passengers to pay taxi fares. He suggested that during the development stage of the software, Mr. Savard should update the Committee to discuss any concerns that may arise to avoid possible software changes.

Mr. Garbarczyk pointed out that the long distance fare was less than the town fare in the Schedule "G" proposed increases. He also suggested that travelling to the park pavillion or the fire pits should indicate the fare amount to avoid any discrepancy.

Councillor Sheppard asked about the taxi driver rental fee of \$80 per hour and whether the City should be setting an amount for a service that was used privately.

Mr. Savard advised that the service was used quite frequently on the weekend. The cost was based on ten fares per hour and was a reasonable amount.

Mr. Garbarczyk asked if seniors received a reduced rate for long distance travel.

Councillor Sheppard noted that there were some amendments to the draft by-law. He asked if Administration would revise the draft by-law to be presented to the Committee or if the draft by-law as amended could be recommended to Council.

Mr. Mugford advised that Administration would have to make amendments to the draft by-law. He noted that in recent discussions with Steven Allen, Chief Enforcement Officer, there were concerns regarding the transporting of liquor in taxis. He noted that there was legislation which the By-law Enforcement Officers did not have the authority to enforce. Mr. Mugford suggested that the charges be included in the draft by-law.

Mr. Mugford asked for clarity regarding the elder rate.

Councillor Sheppard recommended that the elder fare be 80 percent of the maximum rate, rounded to the nearest 50 cents.

Mr. Webb noted that there was a drop-off fare in Schedule "G". He pointed out that there were instances where a passenger may have to make a stop on the way to their end destination, such as dropping off a child at a babysitter on the way to work. He felt that consideration should be given to the taxi fare in such instances and the passenger should not be charged two separate fares.

Councillor Sheppard pointed out that Schedule "G" shows a drop-off fare of \$8.

Ronnie McGregor, Administrator, Nunavut Caribou Tuktu Cabs, explained that currently, a drop-off is charged two separate fares. Drivers are asked to use their judgement and have compassion for passengers dropping off children. He pointed out that the drop-off fare had to be included or passengers would abuse the drop-off fare.

Mr. Mugford noted that Schedule "G" drop-off fare should be the current fare.

Mr. Maurice commented that there should be a time frame for drop-off.

Councillor Sheppard pointed out Schedule "G" clarifies that a taxi driver must advise passengers of the fee for waiting over five minutes.

Mr. Garbarczyk pointed out that the fare for carrying animals loose or in cages would be charged at the full adult rate and should be shown.

Mr. McGregor noted that they were receiving numerous complaints and issues regarding the elder fare and asked if this matter could be dealt with separately.

Mr. Mugford advised that the Committee would have to pass a motion recommending to Council to set the elder fare.

Councillor Sheppard advised that based on the discussion, the elder fare would be set at 80 percent of \$9.25, rounded to \$7.50.

Councillor Kunuk confirmed that the taxi rates included HST and suggested that the elder fare be set at \$8.

Mr. Webb suggested that the elder fare be discussed and set by Council.

Councillor Sheppard advised that the Committee should make a recommendation on the elder fare.

Mr. Garbarczyk pointed out that it was a considerable increase from \$5 to \$8 for an elder fare and suggested that perhaps an increase to \$6 or \$7 this year and next year, the elder fare could be set at \$8.

Mr. Savard agreed that it was a considerable increase from \$5 to \$8. He suggested that an elder fare of \$7 would be acceptable.

Motion TRC 24-03

Moved by: Alan Webb

Seconded by: John Maurice

Committee recommends that Council approve the elder taxi fare be set at \$7 effective immediately.

Unanimously Carried

Mr. Maurice commented that previous discussions set taxi fares on flat rates and the proposed rates were outlined until 2028. He felt that it was not practical to set the rates for the next four years, as the price of gas fluctuates dramatically and there could be a requirement for electric vehicles.

Councillor Sheppard explained that the long-term fare rates were to eliminate a large increase. He noted that the proposed increases were 2.5 to 3 percent of the current rate. Councillor Sheppard also pointed out that the long-term rates provided certainty for the industry. If gas prices increased dramatically over the next four years, the fares would have to be adjusted.

Mr. Savard advised that the proposed yearly increase of 25 cents was acceptable. He agreed that if gas prices increased dramatically, the fares would have to be adjusted.

Mr. Webb understood that on occasion, some passengers did not want to pay the fare. He inquired as to taxi drivers having the option to request payment in advance and whether it would be helpful or problematic.

Councillor Sheppard felt that the taxi industry had the option to request payment in advance, but it should be consistent and not vary depending on the passenger. He noted that there were situations where a passenger may need to go to the bank for money.

Mr. Garbarczyk pointed out that the advantage of passengers paying at the end was having the availability to tip. He asked if the taxi industry had a preferred way of collecting fares and whether that was in advance or at the end of travel.

Mr. McGregor indicted that the two reasons to require fare payment in advance were to avoid discrimination and conflict.

Mr. Savard advised that every driver has two to five passengers per day that do not pay their fare. He pointed out that some passengers find creative ways to state that the taxi driver didn't do their job correctly and then get out without paying. Mr. Savard advised that payment in advance would eliminate a lot of problems.

Councillor Sheppard was in favour of fares being paid in advance.

Councillor Sheppard advised that Administration would make the necessary changes to the draft by-law, which would be presented to the Committee at a later date.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Motion TRC 24-04

Moved by: John Maurice

Seconded by: Alan Webb

Committee adjourns at 7:23 p.m.

Unanimously Carried




Councillor Kyle Sheppard
Chair


Steve Allen, Municipal Enforcement Chief
Staff Resource

Approved by the Taxi Review Committee on the 13th day of March 2025.