

Northwest Regional Welcoming Communities (NWRWC)

Partnership Council – Meeting Minutes

Date: September 2, 2025

Time: 2:00 pm

Location: Virtual (Teams)

Chair: Abdulmalik Nuhu, ZIP Coordinator

1. Opening

Abdulmalik Nuhu welcomed members, introduced the role of ZIP Coordinator, and emphasized the purpose of establishing the NWRWC Partnership Council.

2. Introductions

Participants introduced themselves:

- Andre Murphy – Mayor, The Pas
- Michael Slipp – Councillor, City of Flin Flon
- Jennifer Early – Recruitment Manager, Northern Health Region
- Emily Kesselman – Program Officer, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Gillian McGrath – Executive Director, NWRIS
- Jonathan Lalonde – Economic Development Officer, The Pas CDC
- James Goble – CEO, Juniper Centre, Thompson
- Anthony McInnis – City Manager, Thompson
- Mihir – Employer, McDonald's, Swan River
- Zhanna Khomonchak – ZIP Support Worker, Swan River
- Darpil Patel – Settlement Coordinator & ZIP Support Worker, Thompson

3. Overview of Project & Roles

Emily Kesselman (IRCC): Explained the role of ZIPs in building welcoming communities, emphasizing indirect funding to support collaboration, gap analysis, and community planning.

Gillian McGrath (NWRIS): Outlined NWRIS as contract holder, with offices in Swan River, The Pas, and Thompson; outreach in Flin Flon. Settlement services focus on practical newcomer support.

Abdulmalik Nuhu: Presented a visual of the ZIP framework - promoting collaboration across municipalities, service providers, and newcomers.

4. Terms of Reference (TOR)

Members reviewed the TOR (previously circulated).

- Concerns raised about clarity of governance structure - suggestion to add a chart.

- TOR accepted as a living document, subject to updates.
- Motion: Adopt TOR as first draft – Moved by Anthony (Thompson), seconded by Michael (Flin Flon). Motion carried.

5. Governance Roles

Discussion on appointing a Chair and Co-Chair.

- Mihir (Swan River employer) volunteered as Co-Chair. Chair position remains open.

6. Future Meetings

Meetings will be quarterly. Proposal to hold one more meeting before December 2025.

Abdulmalik to circulate date/time options for voting.

Consideration of both daytime and evening meetings to accommodate working newcomers (especially for the Immigrant Advisory Table).

7. Key Discussion: Service Gaps in Flin Flon

Michael Slipp raised concern that Flin Flon lacks a settlement services office, limiting support for newcomers.

- Flin Flon leadership emphasized the need for local presence.
 - NWRIS: Outreach visits happening, but consistent funding required for permanent office.
 - IRCC: ZIP funding is indirect (planning/coordination), not for direct client services.
- Agreement: Explore interim outreach and long-term advocacy for more settlement resources.

8. Indigenous Engagement

Anthony McInnis highlighted urgent need for Indigenous representation.

- Abdulmalik confirmed outreach to OCN and Manitoba Métis Federation.
- Members agreed Indigenous voices must be included early for genuine partnership.

9. Other Discussions

- Role of employers in ZIP planning (job fairs, integration supports).
- Potential collaboration with Chambers of Commerce.
- Importance of newcomer advisory voices in shaping plans.

10. Next Steps & Closing

Abdulmalik to circulate minutes and next meeting poll.

Members encouraged to suggest Indigenous and school board representatives.

Meeting adjourned with thanks to all participants.

Action Points

Action Item	Details
TOR Revision	Add governance chart; reword sections for clarity. Share updated draft for review. (Lead: Abdulmalik & Gillian)
Chair/Co-Chair Roles	Mihir confirmed as Co-Chair. Continue outreach for Chair nomination. (Lead: Abdulmalik)
Next Meeting	Coordinator to circulate poll for early December meeting dates and times (day/evening options). (Lead: Abdulmalik)
Flin Flon Services	NWRIS and Flin Flon council to explore interim outreach. Investigate funding opportunities for permanent settlement services. (Lead: Gillian & Michael, with IRCC guidance)
Indigenous Engagement	Follow-up with OCN and Manitoba Métis Federation. Members to suggest contacts. (Lead: Abdulmalik & Anthony)
School Board Engagement	Renew efforts to secure participation from regional school divisions. (Lead: Abdulmalik & members)