



WHEATLAND COUNTY

Reeve Monthly Report

Reeve: Amber Link

Division: 2

Reporting Period: September 2020

Report Date: September 27, 2020

September 1 Council Meeting

Full agenda packages (with back up documentation) are available on our website:

<https://wheatlandcounty.ca/agendasandminutes/>

You can also watch the recording on our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRJrvIs0eygNM7zERLnviOg?view_as=subscriber

Public Hearing and subsequent readings were approved for amendments to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) regarding Cannabis Production Facilities and Cultivation. First reading and Public Hearing were held to amend the LUB for a temporary skating rink in Muirfield (second and third readings deferred for area Councillor to consult). Council and staff reports, amended pay grid, and approval of a response to a letter from the Mayor of Rockyford as well as letters to Wheatland Regional Corporation Board and village partners.

September 3 Meeting with 4 MLAs who represent Wheatland County

Meeting to discuss proposed Assessment Model Review scenarios. Council presented potential impacts of each of the scenarios, possible responses (mill rate increases, workforce cuts, expense reductions), and outlined the length of time we could cover shortfalls assuming no changes with our unallocated reserves. We expressed frustration with the short engagement timeline, the lack of multi-year analysis, the disproportionate impact, including negative impacts on small and mid-sized oil and gas companies in some of the proposed scenarios, the lack of rationale provided on how these measures increase competitiveness. We asked for consideration of implemented changes to our urban neighbours, both in terms of our ability to continue with cost sharing agreements, as well as impacts on education taxation collected. We also reviewed some misinformation being spread regarding rural municipal spending, it's important to understand looking at spending on a per capita basis is unreasonable without being cognizant of the significant land mass and transportation network that rural municipalities build and maintain in Alberta. Rural municipalities provide services to approximately 85% of Alberta's land mass, despite having only 16% of the population.

"As a note of interest, industry stakeholders commonly use net financial worth to measure municipal financial position, which includes the total tangible capital asset (TCA) value of municipal assets. This measure creates an illusion of municipal wealth, but in reality, is merely a reflection of the incredible infrastructure network municipalities manage. In other words, although infrastructure assets have value, they provide no direct revenue for municipalities, and maintaining the assets carries a major cost. Net financial position, which does not consider the value of TCA, is a far better indicator of financial health.

Alberta's municipalities operate in a volatile world of rapid growth and contraction that requires large investments in infrastructure and services not typically asked of municipalities in other jurisdictions.

Despite this, Alberta's municipalities have done an admirable job controlling costs." (from RMA Cross-Jurisdictional Financial Comparison briefing package)

The significant investments that rural municipalities make in critical infrastructure that supports industry needs to be considered. Specific sector viability can not be at the expense of municipal sustainability. We recognize the gravity of the fiscal reality and are committed to working together to recover and rebuild and to fiscal responsibility in stewarding all tax revenue.

September 3 Community Futures Wild Rose AGM and Board Meeting

We held the Annual General Meeting of the Directors, followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders. At both meetings we approved the Audited Financial Statements and Management letter to the Board. The Directors reviewed the auditor appointment and confirmed signing authority. I delivered our 2019/2020 Performance Results as part of the Shareholders AGM.

We were honoured to have MP Martin Shields, Chief Crowfoot, and Councillor Crowfoot join us. Following the AGMs we held our regular Board meeting. Financial reports reviewed. Unbelievable uptake on the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund federal program that CFs are delivering. This financing has saved 94 jobs in the Community Futures Wild Rose area. There's a new social media campaign to highlight local business, please let me know if there are businesses you would like to have focused on, we're going to celebrate the resiliency and grit our business owners have shown through these times!

September 4 Multi-municipality Meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs

Nate Horner, MLA for Drumheller-Stettler, arranged a meeting in Stettler with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, including the newly announced Minister, the Honourable Tracy Allard, and municipal councillors from several municipalities that are impacted by the proposed Assessment Model Review changes. Many of the same points we made in the meeting with our MLAs were made. As well it was pointed out that assessment should never be politicized. The necessity for municipal leverage in collectability of taxation in this sector was also emphasized. Discussion regarding the disproportionate burden on rural municipalities when the outcomes would benefit all Albertans. As well as the shifting of the burden onto other sectors that the proposed changes would result in.

September 8 Municipal Planning Commission

MPC approved three Development Permits and three subdivisions, all with conditions.

September 8 Planning and Priorities

Discussion regarding donations process, Madsen Charity guidelines, Public Behaviour Bylaw updates, Parks & Playgrounds -permitting process, Open Space, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, tipping fees, communal water & rural density, Muirfield Water/Wastewater Operations RFP, gravel sales to county residents, Carseland water license purchase, County grader divisions.

September 10 Wheatland Housing Board Meeting

Reports on COVID financial impacts to date (being reimbursed by Province), financials, maintenance, Social Housing, Lodge, CAO, and Chair. Policy updates. Inquiries and wait list are currently reduced, 2 empty rooms, anticipate those being filled shortly. Decision on provincial Request for Expression of Interest for Designated Supportive Living 4/4D, Long Term Care, and Community Hospice. Building Committee report – architect decision (underbudget). Communications are to be handled through Building Committee.

September 11 Marigold and WID Joint Ground-breaking Ceremony

It was my honour to represent Wheatland County at the joint ground-breaking ceremony for the new headquarters in Strathmore.

September 15 Council Meeting

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Held Public Hearings for 2 Bylaws, passed 2nd and 3rd readings for one and tabled 3rd reading for a municipal reserve disposal. Granted 2 subdivision extensions. Approved updated planning policies. Approved Hammer Hill radio tower and funding for water for firefighting and training. Approved WID conveyance agreement for Muirfield.

September 16 Tour Old Sun College and Meeting with Siksika Chief and Council

It was an honour to be invited to tour Old Sun College with Siksika Chief and Council. It was a profoundly poignant experience walking the halls of the former residential school. We had an excellent meeting with the Siksika Nation leadership team and are looking forward to collaborating. From their website, “**Old Sun Community College is a Siksika-led, Board Governed educational institution that operates as a comprehensive, non-profit organization on the Siksika Nation reserve.** Old Sun Community College formerly operated as an Indian Residential School from 1929-1971. Today it is a bustling, multi-purposed, culturally based institution that offers accredited post-secondary courses, certificates, diplomas and degrees via partnerships with recognized colleges and universities along with its own designed and developed Siksika Knowledge Courses. The College was named in honour of Chief Old Sun (1819-1897) who served as a medicine man, warrior, and leader of one of the largest of the Blackfoot Confederacy nations. In the Blackfoot culture, Chief Old Sun’s name NA TO SA PI translates to ‘Sun Elder’ or ‘Sun Old Man’ which implies ‘to see’, or ‘to gain insight’.” (<http://oldsuncollege.ca/>)

September 17 FCM 3rd Vice President and Table Officer Speeches

Virtual speeches and question and answer forums with candidates.

September 18 Calgary Metropolitan Region Board Meeting

Growth and servicing plan update, What We Heard report from Workshop 3, public engagement update, approved Indigenous Awareness workshop funding, update on Board Chair recruitment committee, provincial update from Municipal Affairs representative, and roundtable discussion. Request to approve a letter of support regarding EMS dispatch.

September 22 WFCSS Policy Manual Review

Reviewed amendments to Policy Manual to keep up to date with legislative requirements and necessary changes.

September 23 Siksika Nation Interagency Wildfire Tabletop (TTX) Exercise

The primary objective of the Siksika Interagency Wildfire Exercise Series is to successfully join our regional partners and create a progression of exercises with common FireSmart cross-training objectives. By completing this tabletop exercise and a functional exercise planned for November, we hope to identify opportunities to increase partnerships and enhance interoperability as we prepare for wildfire risks in the region. It was an opportunity to evaluate current response concepts, plans, and

capabilities related to a wildfire incident. This exercise focused on providing a scenario that enabled participants to reflect on their own organizations' capabilities while identifying local risks and hazards. Interagency communication within emergency operations plans and procedures was a key focus. Participants included Siksika Nation Councillor Crowfoot, several members from Siksika administration across multiple departments, representatives from several neighbouring fire departments, RCMP from multiple detachments, provincial emergency representatives, facilitators, and an evaluator.

Actionable outcomes included the need to integrate emergency management considerations into our Memorandum of Understanding discussions and the need to finalize a Mutual Aid agreement. Interesting to note our radio system is compatible with Siksika.

September 23 Wheatland Family and Community Support Services Board Meeting

Reviewed Policy Handbook amendments, will come back to next meeting for approval, reviewed financials, Review Engagement quotes, and CAO report.

September 24 WC - Infinite Possibilities - Regional Business Collaboration

Acting CEO of Travel Alberta, Chris Heseltine, and his team presented Alberta's Visitor Economy Covid Update. Presentation reviewed Alberta tourism strategies (10 year, rebound, and Destination Management Plan, shared traveller insights (spends per visit and spend forecast), estimated job losses (raising Alberta unemployment by 1.8%), hotel and airline updates, and shared resources.

Travel Alberta information links:

<https://industry.travelalberta.com/visitor-market-insight/covid19-research>

<https://industry.travelalberta.com/programs-tools/coop-investment>

September 29/30 Community Futures Virtual Symposium

Keynote address, Reclaiming your Leadership During and After COVID-19, board training – Governing Your Greatest Asset (effective loan portfolio governance including developmental lending differences, duties and roles, loan review and approval, fit of financing project with board approved strategic direction), sessions on fostering resiliency, supportive management, and CF Award presentations.