



Town of High Level

Monthly report to Council

April 2021

Administration and Finance

CAO

General Administration

Worked with Boreal Housing on planning for the transfer of Heimstaed Lodge to La Crete Municipal Nursing Association. Boreal Housing has passed a motion to cancel the nursing contract at Heimstaed. This will allow LCMNA to work with AHS to develop a nursing contract appropriate to their needs. The LCMNA is working on their lodge operating license.

Worked with senior administrative team on asset management strategy. The initial focus will be water and wastewater and the Town's fleet.

Developed strategies for funding of multipurpose facility and reviewed options for land exchange with the Fort Vermilion School Division. Meetings have been facilitated with the Minister of Education, Adriana LaGrange, and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Devin Dreeshen. The federal outreach strategy has focussed on the analysis of the federal budget. Meetings with Federal ministers and departments will be arranged in May.

Reviewed Regional Air Transportation Initiative application for funding for the High Level Airport.

Assisted Council during Regional Service Sharing Agreement negotiations with Mackenzie County.

COVID-19

Kept abreast of developments with COVID and assisted with planning related to the Province's Public Health Order and amendments and communications to the public. The rapidly changing numbers, both locally and provincially, have required the Town to modify its programming to ensure public protection.

Reviewed updated COVID Protocols based on changes to the Public Health Order.

The Town had its first employee contract the disease in April and its first programming loss due to close contact. The incidents were unrelated.

Finance

Administration attended the CityWide Software Kick-Off Meeting on April 15th we are looking forward to the new asset management program and joint venture with all departments to make this successful. This will be beneficial for the Town.

The public auction has been set for July 29th at 2:00pm and will be advertised in the May 15th issue of The Alberta Gazette.

Accurate Assessment Group Ltd. has drafted up a five-year extension agreement with Town of High Level from 2022 to 2026 with the option to renew for another five-year term.

2021 Fees Bylaw has been passed by Council on April 26th and has been advertised on our website.

The finance department is happy to see more staff returning from unfortunate COVID circumstances and hoping everyone continues to stay healthy!

Planning and Development

Processed/sent out Referral Agent notifications for S21-001 and S21-002 – subdivision applications for the Multi-Purpose Facility on Town-owned and FVSD land.

Developed and sent letters with an inventory of Town-owned land to Land Titles, which require Certificate of Title name and address changes (128 in total).

Completed final draft content for NWSAR SOR Report – sent to graphic designer to finish.

Started Munisight Webmap and PD updates – Land Use Bylaw 1018–21.

Developed and implemented a Temporary Outdoor Program for food/drink businesses.

Reviewed Town's Quality Management Plan (QMP) for Safety Codes Certification.

HR

There are no new vacancies for the month of April. Recruitment for summer Community Services and Public Works positions are ongoing. Vacancies for the position of Summer Events Coordinator and three Lifeguard / Instructor positions have been filled and we welcome Lane Connellan, Aidan Dachuk, Sarah Hume, and Alyssa Lamberton to the team. Scott Smith has been promoted to the position of Deputy Fire Chief and we are looking forward to working with him in the new role. Offers for the positions of Summer Visitor Services Representative (two positions), Wildland Urban Interface Team Member (two positions), Taxation & Utilities Clerk, and Land Use & Planning Officer have been made and accepted with scheduled start dates during the month of May.

There are currently no protected positions being covered by acting staff.

IT

IT systems have been stable for the month of April with no critical disruptions to operations. The scheduled Axia equipment upgrade was completed with a slight deviation in plan that caused internet access to be disrupted approximately 30 minutes earlier than expected.

The deadline for Universal Broadband Fund applications was extended to March 15. Budget 2021 expanded the fund by \$1 billion and as at May 7, the now \$2.75 billion fund has selected 45 projects, serving approximately 23,500 households, with funding allocations total of approximately \$36 million. Eight of these projects are located in Alberta. Regional Land-Use and Environmental Project Manager

Communication

Members of Council met with MP Chris Warkentin on April 15, and it was an opportunity to get some photos of Chris and Council working together as well as provide a write-up to give the community a peek at these types of inter-governmental interactions.

We put together a video and news package on the drainage efforts in town by Operations staff – the Director of Operations drove me around and did an excellent job explaining the process. These types of projects are great for public information because they highlight the many different things that can go into managing a town the size of High Level.

Our latest COVID-19 communication efforts include a mix of our older messaging and new content – we are monitoring the public updates every day and using clips from those videos that we can focus for our residents. They sometimes run an hour or longer and it can be a lot of information to go through. Topics we focused on have largely been about vaccine safety and effectiveness – the messaging from the Province has really focused on encouraging people to get vaccinated. As a result, the online discussions taking place are also shifting away from masks a little bit and more and more about whether vaccines are safe. (Spoiler: THEY ARE!)

Health and Safety

In April, there were two reported incidents of slip/trip and fall – both of which were classified as close calls. Corrective actions have been assigned and are awaiting completion. The Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee conducted inspections on six facilities with no major deficiencies noted. Organizational training compliance is holding steady at 94 per cent. The employee health and safety recognition program went live in April with 24 employees participating – which equates to approximately 43 per cent of the organization. The winner for April, and the first ever winner was Kylie Hoskins. All facilities were compliant with their monthly health and safety meetings.

Community Services

Director

Administration is working with the architect on the final engineered plans for the multi purpose facility. The plans have gone to the cost consultant, Administration will have another review, and then they will be presented to Council in mid May.

We put out a request for proposal (RFP) for the geotechnical and topographical for Community Park.

There has been a new individual registration system designed by the province, (MAERS – My Alberta Emergency Registration System) that the staff received training on. This system will integrate into the current emergency reception centre registration, and will allow people to register as they are evacuating, and their information is put into an electronic holding area, by the province, and then allocated to the receiving municipality. From there, the municipality can allocate evacuees quickly and get them to the appropriate lodging etc. There is also an option to phone and the province will take the information and input it. This will greatly assist in reception centre registration. We have continued training in mid May on this.

We have two interns with the College, doing their Social work practicums, that started end of April, working remotely, with (Family and Community Support Services) FCSS, and will physically be here next week until the end of June.

We have Alyssa Lamberton returning to work as a senior guard as well as working on our (Emergency Social Services) ESS plan and registration.

We have been working with the Chamber and Town staff to update maps and guidelines around Community Clean Up. The Chamber will be rolling this out for the third week in May, prior to the long weekend.

Arena /Parks

The arena staff continued operating the arena for the last few weeks in April for Minor Hockey. Minor Hockey ended their season and the ice plant was shut down on the 24th.

Staff starting to get out to the parks for clean up and getting rid of water build up at Bjornson and Dragonfly parks. Staff prepped the Arena Hall for the Fire Hall to use for firefighter training and continue assisting with COVID assistance line deliveries.

Pool

Facility was open 6 days of the week Tuesday – Sunday. We opened up to 7 days a week on April 19. We had lane swim started April 7, but due to COVID restrictions, we had to pull this drop in program the same day.

E-commerce Portal set up, and the first month of use, 13 Clients have used the public access website for their registrations.

Stingrays are going forward with swim times and have booked 4 days a week for 3 hours a day starting May 10/21.

FCSS

For the COVID Assistance Line, 15 clients were assisted with grocery, prescription and mail pick-up and delivery and had six clients for food hamper.

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, we have been helping seniors and people with low income with filing their taxes, and we assisted four people this month.

For Volunteer Appreciation Week, there were 28 volunteers nominated this year. We picked one volunteer each day for the whole week as the Volunteer of the Day – they were featured on our Facebook page and were given gift baskets.

For the teens, we had a “Virtual Scavenger Hunt” via zoom. Boston Pizza sponsored this hunt, with 28 teens registered. The teens participated in a discussion entitled “How are Teens coping in this covid-19 pandemic and what effect it had in one’s life”, and then went on to the Scavenger Hunt. Many parents commented that they appreciated this, and thought it was well executed, and the teens had a lot of fun.

In addition to the regular Groovy Kids after school program, there were two full days of Groovy Kids in April with 16 kids registered.

Tourism/Museum

Ongoing work on inventory of museum items, and started on preparing a museum inventory policy and procedures for archiving and receiving artifacts.

Facilitated Banners of Remembrance meeting April 6 and then preparing edits for (Banner of Remembrance) forms, selecting photos for the updated/new banner application.

Attended Farmers Market Meeting April 15, and have been helping with social media, creating Annual General Meeting (AGM) poster, emails with the committee.

Working on creating a logo contest for the museum 30th anniversary.

Operations

Director

The Gateway boulevard final design was completed, the Tender will be posted in the middle of May and close two weeks later, and the expected start date is mid-June to July 1st.

The new bulk water fill station and RV sanidump specifications were finalized and sent to the Engineers. The completed tenders and the release date is expected for the first week of June.

The Hydrovac request for quotation was posted and will close on May 7. Review of the RFQS' will be completed the following week.

The summer mowing and aerator equipment package was sent out, and quotes have been returned. The pricing of the equipment has come in 15% higher than what was priced in early 2020. This seems to be caused by the current delays and restrictions in the supply market due to various factories' shutdown.

I continued to work on various 2020 -2021 Capital Projects and started the summer work plans.
Operations.

Airport

Runway Lights: Found to be not functioning, showing current asymmetry and open circuit. Electricians were notified, and a NOTAM was placed for no nighttime airport operations until the lights were working again. The lights were not working for about nine days. The issue was pinpointed somewhere in between the FEC and the runway lights in the field. Currently, the lights are functioning with an aboveground cable across the field.

Airport Capital Assistance Program (ACAP): ACAP program officials advised that funding was not granted for the plow truck (that was applied for in 2019). They announced, our application is still valid for the Plow Truck and will be reviewed again for the following year for funding. An application will be submitted by the August 2021 deadline for new runway lighting projects in anticipation of additional funding in 2022.

Airport Operations and Compliance: The maintenance plan is completed and sent to the mechanics for all our equipment. They currently have our JD1575 for repairs. We are also looking at finishing a summer projects list that we should complete in 2021. Also, we reviewed our staff schedule and continue to wait

for further instruction on what we will be doing moving forward. Lastly, we need to complete a review of the Emergency Response Plan.

Regional Air Transportation Initiative (RATI): Funding announced by the federal government for small regional airports, airlines, and businesses. There is \$206 million available for all of Canada, with \$54 million allocated to the Western Provinces.

Completed an application and sent it in for review by the April 30th deadline. The funding would apply to staffing costs, insurance, utilities, and maintenance.

Public Works

Snow operations when completed in April with the removal of snow piles around town on parking lots, boulevards, and small storage areas. All accessible lanes and alleyways had the center areas cleared to allow drainage during the spring thaw.

Culvert and storm sewer thawing and ditch clearing proceeded for most of the month, with the most work required in the industrial areas. The main obstacle we encountered during the thawing process was the excessive snow in the ditches. The majority of this was caused by property owners clearing their lots and piling snow on town property and in the ditches.

Potholes filling with a cold mix product proceeded as time allowed and will continue throughout the spring. The higher than groundwater levels from the 2020 rain have created additional problems with new soft areas and water weeping from the road surface cracks. Seal and patching will start when these areas are dry.

Street sweeping is well underway with both the new sweeper purchased in 2020 and the old sweeper. Staff will clear the bulk of the material off the roads and return later when the gutters are dry to complete the process.

The mechanics have been busy preparing the mowing equipment and summer crew vehicles for the 2021 season.

Utilities

The utility department has completed the install of the new treated water transfer pump and put the backup system back in service.

The testing of new treatment chemicals was completed and showed promising results. The staff shut down one of the three treatment units and cleaned and prepared it for a complete plant trial of the new products. This trial will commence in May and will run for one to two months.

Paddle Prairie has hired a WTP Operator, and we are no longer providing mutual aid support.

A few customer water service lines were frozen, and the owners could not thaw them with the equipment supplied by local contractors. We assisted the owners, and we were able to open the lines returning the service to normal operations. These properties have a shallow line, and we approved the install of a small bleeder line to keep the service open during the winter seasons.