



**COUNCIL MEETING
HIGHLIGHTS
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 15, 2021**

Public Hearing – Bylaw 21-1113 Road Closure Bylaw

A Public Hearing was held to hear arguments for or against the proposed closure and consolidation of the surveyed road plan 3808TR located in the SW-15-51-19-W4 off of Range Road 193, which is approximately 0.51 acres.

The surveyed road plan 3808TR (street) is currently being used as the applicant's driveway and is the sole access to their property. The applicants have occupied and maintained the street for many years and would like to include this in their titled parcel. An existing gate was placed across the street by the previous owners as the road ends at the applicant's home. The gate was placed to prevent the public from trespassing onto their private property.

There were no members of the public present for the Public Hearing or any written objections received regarding the proposed road closure. After the Public Hearing closed, Council passed a motion directing administration to refer road closure Bylaw 21-1113 to Alberta Transportation for approval prior to 2nd and 3rd readings.

Bylaw 21-1115 – Council Code of Conduct Bylaw

The Municipal Government Act requires that Council pass a Code of Conduct Bylaw. A Bylaw was passed by Council in 2018 and includes a provision that it be reviewed at least once every four years.

Recommendation #6 of the Corporate Governance Review suggests that Council revisit the terms of the Code of Conduct Bylaw and strengthen the confidentiality protocol, and that each Councillor swear and sign it upon becoming a Councillor.

Administration conducted a review of the Code of Conduct Bylaws of some of its rural neighbours and presented the Bylaw for Council's consideration at the December 1, 2021 meeting.

Council passed 1st and 2nd readings of the Bylaw at the December 1st Council meeting. A notice was published in the Chronicle, on the County's website, and on social media to advise the public of the proposed bylaw. No comments from the public were received.

Upon review of the Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Regulation, Bylaw 21-1115 has been amended to add an additional action of sanction.

Council passed a motion to amend Bylaw 21-1115 by adding:
Section 20.4 (d) a requirement to attend training,
and renumber subsequent subsections accordingly.

Council passed third reading of amended Bylaw 21-1115 – Council Code of Conduct Bylaw.

Each Councillor signed the Statement of Code of Ethics and Conduct.

Employee Benefits Plan Policy

The current *Employee Benefits Plan Policy* contains a broad statement regarding participation in the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP).

Both the Local Authorities Pension Plan administration and the County's auditors, MNP, have suggested that Beaver County formulate a written policy addressing LAPP eligibility and participation rules for its employees.

The changes align with the County's current practices.

Council passed a motion approving the amended *Employee Benefits Plan Policy*.

Budget Meeting Follow Up

Administration provided answers to several questions arising from the budget meeting held December 1, 2021.

2022 Interim Budget

It is a requirement of the Municipal Government Act that an interim budget be approved by December 31, 2021. Changes can/will be made to the budget as new information becomes available and the assessment base is finalized.

Council passed a motion approving the 2022 interim budget with total expenditures of \$27,605,331 and a tax levy of \$13,550,981.

5-Year Financial and Capital Plans

The Municipal Government Act requires that each municipality prepare a written 3-year Financial (Operating) Plan and a 5-year Capital Plan. These Plans must be reviewed and updated annually.

Administration has chosen to prepare a 5-year projection for each Plan. Capital purchases affect operating expenses; therefore, it is prudent to align the two Plans.

The Financial Plan must include anticipated total revenue and expenses by major category, the anticipated annual surplus or deficit, and the accumulated surplus or deficit. The Capital Plan must include capital additions and sources of funding.

The County is using the financial plan template prepared by MNP LLP when MNP prepared the County's long-range financial plan in 2016. The Plan includes the following assumptions:

1. Assessment base reflects projected changes to regulations, continued economic decline, and the impact of the proposed assessment model review;
2. Provincial Government grant for the DIP contract ends in 2023.
3. Provincial funding follows the latest announcements and the County's best estimate of future funding. The MSI initiative is expected to expire in 2023 and be replaced by the Local Government Fiscal Framework grant. It is not known what changes, if any, will occur.
4. Contracted services and materials increase (on the average) by the municipal price index calculated by the City of Edmonton, which is 1.51 %, 2.06% and 2.14% increase over the previous year commencing in 2023. Modest increases were made in other expense and revenue categories.
5. Road construction costs follow the plan previously approved by Council with the exception of the re-chipping cost which is projected to be less than previously expected (\$42,000 per mile instead of \$121,000 per mile);

6. Capital purchases follow the capital plan approved by Council in 2021;
7. No changes in levels of service.

The 5-Year Financial and 5-Year Capital Plans are high-level planning documents only. Council is not bound by them and no official approval is required. The 5-year capital plan should be reviewed and updated in 2022.

Highlights of the 5-Year Financial Plan

- The operating deficit in 2023 is \$570,000 and increases to \$2.102 million in 2026.
- The primary reasons for the deficits are;
 - A reduction in the assessment base in machinery and equipment and in linear (most pronounced in 2025)
 - Operating revenue decreases in 2023 due to one-time sale of large rocks (gravel) during reclamation and sale of one less grader offset by increase in sale of vehicles
- Operating grants are decreasing in 2023 due to one-time grants of ACP grant for LUB and water drainage in Thomas Lake
 - Expenses are decreasing in one-time payments (such as business incentive grant, consulting contracts, transfer to reserve for one less grader, completion of reclamation and COVID grants to Ag Societies) and transfer to reserve on allowances; as well, some expenses are increasing such as the RCMP contribution and MPI costs of living
- The effects of the operating deficits are projected annual increases to the mill rate of 4.085%; 1.66%; 9.87% and 1.217% for 2023 to 2026 respectively (cumulatively by year the rates are 4.085%, 5.745%, 15.615% and 16.832%).

The impact of these mill rate increases can be mitigated by considering a mill rate increase of 2.773% each year commencing in 2022. Increasing the mill rate each year will achieve the forecast overall increase of 17.837% over the next 5 years.

Council accepted the 5-Year Financial Plan and 5-Year Capital Plan for information.

Bylaw 21-1116 – Line of Credit Bylaw

ATB Financial requires that a bylaw be passed each year to authorize the temporary line of credit (revolving loan). The line of credit will only occur when cash flow cannot meet actual expenditures and then only on a revolving basis (i.e. funds are advanced in increments and repaid as deposits are made to the account).

Historically, the County has not used the revolving loan very often and normally only in the event of large, unexpected expenditures. Administration invests sums of money for varying periods of time but plans for any transfers so that payroll and accounts payable requirements can be met.

The previous bylaw's term ended on December 31, 2021. To ensure no lapse in availability of funds (if required), administration recommends that Council pass all three readings at this meeting.

Council passed all three readings of Bylaw 21-1116 – Line of Credit Bylaw.

Public Participation Survey

The Public Participation Survey questions were presented to Council to provide comment prior to the survey opening in January for the public's input. The Public Participation Survey will provide input on policies and programs related to water management, road maintenance programs and road construction priorities. Deadline for submissions will be January 19, 2022 to allow time for administration to review the information and prepare a report to Council.

Information regarding the Public Participation Plan will be published in the Beaver County Chronicle, on the County website, and through the County's social media profiles. An information flyer will also be sent to postal boxes within the County

Thomas Lake Watershed Communication

In the Spring of 2021, the County received grant funding to conduct a wetland study in the Thomas Lake Watershed. The study was initiated due to water levels in Thomas Lake rising considerably in recent years due to increased precipitation and agricultural activity in the region. The rising lake levels are encroaching on residents living near the lake and flooding County infrastructure.

Administration retained Fiera Biological Consulting in May 2021, to perform a desktop wetland analysis of the Thomas Lake Watershed. The purpose of this review is to identify drained wetlands that may be eligible for wetland replacement funding through the Wetland Replacement Program. The Wetland Replacement Program is a provincial initiative that funds wetland construction and restoration. By restoring wetlands, more water is held on the landscape and not drained into the lake.

Fiera has completed the desktop analysis of the watershed and compiled the maps that will be distributed to landowners in the coming weeks. In addition to these maps, Fiera has completed communications material for the County which will also be distributed to landowners in the Thomas Lake watershed.

Administration presented the Thomas Lake watershed maps and communication materials to Council.

Requests for Tax Payment Waiver – Roll No. 201354248, 179162006 & 179171005

The County has received requests for tax penalty waivers for roll no. 201354248, 179162006 & 179171005. Taxes for these properties were not paid by October 31, 2021 and penalties were levied.

Beaver County tax notices were mailed on May 14, 2021. Taxes were due upon receipt and if not paid by October 31, 2021 (November 1, 2021 this year), penalties were levied.

There are many options available for tax payment:

- a) Internet or telephone banking,
- b) Mail (post-dated cheques are accepted),
- c) In-person at the Beaver County Services Centre,
- d) Monthly tax payment plan,
- e) Credit card, e-transfer, PayPal, or at a Canada Post outlet.

All these methods of payment were posted on the County's website, social media, and in the Chronicle. Reminders of the payment deadline date were posted in the Chronicle and on bulletin boards throughout the County.

Waiving the late payment penalty would set an undesirable precedent and would be unfair to other residents who have also been late in payment and have paid the penalty.

Council passed a motion to deny the requests to waive late payment penalties for Roll #201354248, #179162006, and #179171005.

County Christmas Decorations Contest

Council is holding a Christmas Decorations Contest for rural County residents. Rural residents are invited to submit photos of their decorations (daylight or night-time) directly to their Councillor, via email, on or before Jan 3, 2022. Council will select 3 preferred photos from each Division and award cash prizes of \$100, \$200 and \$300 per Division.

Closed Session

Division 2, Section 16 of Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act – Disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party - MDP/LUB RFPs

Council passed a motion that the County enter into a contract with V3 Companies of Canada to proceed with a comprehensive review and update of the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw, for a total cost of \$59,860.00.

Division 2, Section 17 of Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act – Disclosure harmful to personal privacy – Personnel

Council tabled a motion that Council rescind Motion #21-306 and direct administration to tender for the operation and maintenance of Camp Lake campground.

The motion was amended to read:

“that Council rescind Motion #21-306 due to personnel and contractual issues and direct administration to tender for the operation and maintenance of Camp Lake campground. “

The motion was passed after a recorded vote of 3 to 2.

Council defeated a motion that Council seek an independent review of the matter presented by administration with respect to rescinding motion #21-306.

Division 2, Section 21 of Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act – Disclosure harmful to intergovernmental relations - Town of Tofield/Tofield Library Board

Council passed a motion that Council accept 2021/2022 legal fees associated with a Tofield library personnel matter in the cost-shared expense of the Tofield Library Shared Services Agreement.

Division 2, Section 16 of Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act – Disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party -CAO recruitment consultants Transitional Solutions Inc.

Council passed a motion that Council authorize administration to enter into a contract with Transitional Solutions Inc. for CAO recruitment services in the amount of \$21,000 plus expenses, subject to the Reeve’s review and acceptance of the revised proposal.

The next Regular Council Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday,
January 5, 2022, commencing at 9:30 am.

For more information, contact Beaver County toll free at 1-866-663-1333 or 780-663-3730.
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www.beaver.ab.ca
