

Minutes of a Regular Council Meeting of Clearwater County, Province of Alberta, held July 08, 2014 in the Clearwater County Council Chambers in Rocky Mountain House.

CALL TO ORDER: The Meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. by Reeve Alexander with the following being present:

Reeve:	Pat Alexander
Councillors:	Curt Maki
	Jim Duncan
	Theresa Laing
	Earl Graham
	Kyle Greenwood
	John Vandermeer
CAO:	Ron Leaf
Recording Secretary:	Tracy Haight
Director, Public Works:	Marshall Morton
Director, Community & Protective Services:	Ted Hickey
Director, Corp Services:	Rudy Huisman
Administration:	Dustin Bisson
	Rhonda Serhan
	Kurt Magnus
Public:	Dennis Ross
Media:	Sarah Maetche

AGENDA

APPROVAL: Ron Leaf requested the addition of In Camera Item 3 – Legal.

COUNCILLOR MAKI: That the July 08, 2014 Regular Meeting Agenda be accepted as amended.

248/14 CARRIED 7/0

**CONFIRMATION
OF MINUTES:**

1. June 24, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

COUNCILLOR MAKI: That the Minutes of the June 24, 2014 Regular Meeting be accepted.

249/14 CARRIED 7/0

2. June 24, 2014 Public Hearing Minutes

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN: That the Minutes of the June 24, 2014 Public Hearing be accepted.

250/14 CARRIED 7/0

PUBLIC WORKS: 1. Mapping of Navigable Waterways

Kurt Magnus provided information on the Navigation Protection Program (NPP) that administers and enforces the Navigation Protection Act (NPA).

Prior to any work done on or near a waterway, Clearwater County must apply for government approval.

Alberta Transportation is in the process of preparing a map of navigable waterways in Alberta to aid in the planning of work projects, such as bridge construction. The information will be sent to Transport Canada who will then make recommendations on which waterways should be protected at a provincial level.

Marshall Morton responded to questions from Council and noted the approval process remains unchanged, however approval will now be granted by the provincial government for waterways in Alberta, except for the North Saskatchewan River which will require federal approval.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: That Council accepts the information as presented.

251/14

CARRIED 7/0

2. Canadian National Railways (CN) Community Advisory Panel

Kurt Magnus presented an invitation from Lacombe County to attend a meeting on August 18 to determine if there is interest in forming a Community Advisory Panel (CAP) with the Canadian National Railways (CN) and other neighboring municipalities. The proposed panel would facilitate discussion on issues of mutual concern determined by agreed upon terms of reference.

Discussion followed on the advantage of forming a working relationship with CN to address concerns relating to the control of noxious weeds, brushing, drainage, and timely removal of debris next to rail lines.

Councillor Vandermeer nominated Councillor Duncan to attend the meeting and participate on the panel if required. Councillor Duncan accepted and suggested one representative from Public Works or Agriculture Services and Landcare attend the initial meeting and alternately participate on the panel.

COUNCILLOR VANDERMEER: That Council authorizes Councillor Duncan's attendance at the meeting, along with one representative from Public Works or Agricultural Services and Landcare, on August 18 and appoints Councillor Duncan to the Community Advisory Panel along with one representative from Public Works or Agriculture Services and Landcare to attend alternately, if required.

252/14

CARRIED 7/0

3. Friends of the Eastern Slopes Association Request for Crushed Aggregate

Marshall Morton stated Clearwater County received a request from Friends of the Eastern Slopes Association (FOESA) for approximately eighty yards of crushed aggregate. The current gravel policy states Council may consider any requests for aggregate from institutions other than community halls and cemeteries.

For the last three years, Council approved FOESA's annual requests for aggregate. Mr. Morton noted policy amendments could be made to include FOESA as an annual recipient of aggregate.

Discussion followed on the efficiency of the policy; FOESA's annual requests for aggregate; and aggregate needs for community halls, cemeteries, and campgrounds.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: That Council approves FOESA’s request for 80 yards of crushed aggregate.

253/14 CARRIED 7/0

COUNCILLOR VANDERMEER: That Council directs administration to amend the gravel policy to reflect the aggregate needs of the Clearwater County community.

254/14 CARRIED 7/0

Kurt Magnus and Marshall Morton left the meeting.

COMMUNITY &
PROTECTIVE
SERVICES:

1. Request for Letter of Support re Temporary Foreign Worker Program

Ted Hickey stated as per a request from the Rocky Mountain House Chamber of Commerce, a letter from Reeve Alexander to the Minister of Employment and Social Development was drafted to encourage the Minister to end the moratorium on the Food Services Sector’s access to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program.

Discussion followed on the effects of the loss of temporary foreign workers on agricultural industry. Council noted the letter to the Minister should include all temporary foreign workers, not just workers in the Food Services Sector.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: That Council approves the Letter of Support to the Minister as amended.

255/14 CARRIED 7/0

CORPORATE
SERVICES:

1. Operating & Capital Budget vs Actual Reporting as at June 30, 2014

Rhonda Serhan stated the estimated revenue from taxation increased by \$657,00 as a result of increases in assessment growth and the 2014 tax rates approved by Council. Therefore, staff recommends amendments to the budget to reflect an increase in levied tax revenue by \$657,000 and offset contingency by an equal amount.

Ms. Serhan responded to questions from Council regarding the possible loss of revenue due the expiration of the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET) regulation. Ron Leaf noted Clearwater County has taken a conservative approach to estimating WDET revenues given uncertainty of the program/regulation in past years. Council has allocated any revenue surplus to reserves, most recently the local bridge reserve.

Ms. Serhan presented the operating and capital variance reports as of June 30, 2014 and noted changes in operating revenue as follows:

- Tax revenue is as expected based on previous discussions during the tax rate bylaw preparation. As staff noted, there should be an amendment to the tax revenue budget line and a corresponding change in contingency of \$657,000.
- Credits were issued in 2014 for penalties issued in error in 2013.
- Increase in development permit revenue due to the number of applications and an increase in application fees.

- Well Drilling Equipment Tax revenue is healthy due to the amount of activity in the area. There is no renewal for this regulation for 2015 yet.

Ms. Serhan noted operating expense variances as follows:

- Ag Services and Landcare is experiencing increased activity. Chemical sales are up slightly over previous years.
- Community and Protective Services has not received invoices for the completion of the 2013 flood repairs and the arena project.
- Corporate Services has not received invoices for some annual costs, such as insurance.
- Planning and Nordegg are beginning facility repairs in Nordegg.
- Public Works Water and Sewer is still contributing to the town lagoon upgrades which are funded by the sewer reserve.

Ms. Serhan noted the capital revenues amount includes provincial grants, such as Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funds, for which receipt is expected within two to eight weeks.

Ms. Serhan noted capital expenditure variances as follows:

- Community and Protective Services is over budget due to winter construction costs associated with the completion of the South East Rec Grounds. Once final costs are in, funding option(s) will be brought to Council for review and approval.
- Planning and Nordegg budgeted costs for the Nordegg water project.
- Public Works began their capital project work, which will increase expenditures over the next months.

Discussion followed and Ms. Serhan responded to questions from Council and stated Clearwater County is in line with budgeted projects and the 2014 work plan.

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN: That Council approves amendments to the 2014 Operating Budget for tax revenue in the amount of \$657,000 and adjusts "Contingency" accordingly.

256/14

CARRIED 7/0

COUNCILLOR VANDERMEER: That Council accepts the Operating and Capital Budget Variance Report as of June 30, 2014 as presented.

257/14

CARRIED 7/0

2. Letter to Minister of Municipal Affairs re Well Drilling Equipment Tax

Rudy Huisman presented a draft letter from Reeve Alexander to the Minister of Municipal Affairs stating Clearwater County Council supports recommendations from municipal stakeholders to extend the Well Drilling Equipment Tax (WDET) regulation until a qualified third party conducts a comprehensive review.

Discussion followed on measures, such as adjustments to non-residential and residential mill rates, that municipalities would be required to take in order to maintain the tax ratio if the WDET regulation expired. Council noted points of view from industry and municipalities on the WDET and noted the purpose of the WDET is to offset cost of repairs to infrastructure.

Discussion continued on the lack of recommendations to the Minister on the WDET regulation and Council noted the letter should also encourage the Minister to honour the originally announced December 31, 2017 expiry date.

COUNCILLOR MAKI: That Council approves the letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs as amended.

258/14 CARRIED 7/0

Rudy Huisman and Rhonda Serhan left the meeting.

MUNICIPAL: 1. Alberta Urban Municipalities Association Submission re Municipal Government Act

Ron Leaf provided information on the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association’s (AUMA) position paper “*Building Thriving Communities: AUMA’s Submission to the MGA Review Process*”. The paper reflects policy and legislative framework that the AUMA suggests should guide the provincial government’s review of the Municipal Government Act (MGA).

Mr. Leaf noted AUMA’s position suggests “modernizing” the MGA. It is his opinion that the changes proposed by the AUMA would require significant policy work and legislative rewrite which is not feasible given the current timetable that proposes the new MGA be introduced during the Spring 2015 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Leaf also noted that the scope of change proposed is significantly different from what he understands rural municipalities, and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) are proposing. That view is that the current legislation is still relevant and that there are certain areas that require updating but that overall the MGA is still a very effective piece of legislation.

Discussion followed on principal concepts and proposals outlined in the paper and Council noted the AUMA suggests detailed and expanded changes to the MGA trending towards pooling of revenues and taxation reforms.

Michelle Swanson joined the meeting.

Discussion continued on the concept of regional revenue sharing and regional collaboration as applicable to Clearwater County and Council noted the provincial government would most likely encourage regional revenue sharing in the future.

COUNCILLOR GREENWOOD: That Council accepts the information as presented.

259/14 CARRIED 7/0

INFORMATION: Ron Leaf provided an update on the wildfire on the Banff National Park boundary line.

Dale Barr, Gail Wahl, Mandy Baier, and Jerry Reglin joined the meeting.

Ron Leaf requested confirmation of Councillor’s attendance on the Clearwater County float at the Red Deer Parade on July 16.

COUNCILLOR VANDERMEER That the CAO’s Report, Public Works Director’s Report, Accounts Payable Listing, and Councillors Remuneration be accepted as information.

260/14 CARRIED 7/0

2. Delegation: Central Alberta Economic Partnership Ltd. (CAEP) – Dale Barr, Manager

Dale Barr, Manager – Central Alberta Economic Partnership Ltd. (CAEP) provided information on the process used for compiling statistics and the forecasting models used in the 2013 Clearwater County Economic Indicators report.

Mr. Barr responded to questions from Council and noted definition of the “Marital Status” category will be provided to Council at first opportunity.

Michelle Swanson, Clearwater County’s Member-At-Large, provided information on CAEP’s current activities and projects and noted new programs and resources available.

Mr. Barr responded to questions from Council and stated he will inquire on obtaining a report for Council on regional trends for daytime population and commuting at first opportunity.

Mr. Barr stated after attending meetings with the provincial government on rural and regional economic development, CAEP is interested in forming a sub-committee to identify direction and action required to engage the provincial government in discussions regarding the Howse Pass project.

Mr. Barr invited a member of Council to join the sub-committee and discussion followed on the history of the Howse Pass project and the potential economic benefits of the project to central Alberta. Councillor Vandermeer indicated his interest as a member on the sub-committee and noted a letter from Council indicating Council’s support of CAEP’s initiative and appointment of a Council member would be beneficial. Councillor Vandermeer also noted including Rocky Mountain House and Lacombe County in the project.

Mr. Barr responded to questions from Council and suggested administration reviews the “Community Investment Readiness” tool kit developed by CAEP to determine community attractiveness to developers. Mr. Barr noted he will provide further details at first opportunity.

Dale Barr, Michelle Swanson, Gail Wahl, Mandy Baier, and Jerry Reglin left the meeting.

COUNCILLOR DUNCAN:	That Council accepts the information as presented.
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261/14	CARRIED 7/0
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COUNCILLOR GRAHAM:	That Council appoints Councillor Vandermeer to the CAEP Howse Pass Sub-Committee and provides a Letter of Support for CAEP to engage the provincial government in discussions regarding the Howse Pass project.
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262/14	CARRIED 7/0
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IN CAMERA:

COUNCILLOR MAKI:	That Council meets as a Committee of the Whole to discuss Legal and Labour items at 11:22 A.M.
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263/14	CARRIED 7/0
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Ted Hickey, Dennis Ross, Tracy Haight, and Sarah Maetche left the meeting.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: That the meeting reverts to an Open Meeting at 11:50 A.M.

264/14 CARRIED 7/0

Reeve Alexander recessed the Council meeting for lunch at 11:50 A.M.

Reeve Alexander reconvened the Council meeting at 12:55 P.M. with the same people present at the beginning of the meeting excluding Dennis Ross, Ted Hickey, Rudy Huisman, and Rhonda Serhan.

Robert Bell, Lloyd Metz, and Ken Brophy joined the meeting.

MUNICIPAL: 2. Delegation: Ram River Coal Corp. – Robert Bell, Lloyd Metz, and Ken Brophy

Ron Leaf introduced Robert Bell, President; Lloyd Metz, VP Mining; and Ken Brophy, Director of Sustainable Development, representatives from Ram River Coal Corp.

Mr. Bell provided information on Ram River Coal Corp and noted the company is currently a private Canadian company, with offices located in Calgary and Vancouver and is in the planning phase for a project office located in Rocky Mountain House.

Mr. Bell noted the company is proposing to develop the Aries Coal Project for the production of high quality coal for use in the steelmaking process.

Mr. Bell responded to questions from Council and noted Ram River Coal Corp emphasizes sustainable resource management and responsible land stewardship.

COUNCILLOR MAKI: That Council accepts the information as presented.

265/14 CARRIED 7/0

IN CAMERA:

COUNCILLOR VANDERMEER: That Council meets as a Committee of the Whole to discuss Third Party Interest – Ram River Coal Corp. at 1:10 P.M.

266/14 CARRIED 7/0

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: That the meeting reverts to an Open Meeting at 2:45 P.M.

267/14 CARRIED 7/0

ADJOURNMENT: COUNCILLOR VANDERMEER: That the Meeting adjourns.
2:45 P.M.

268/14 CARRIED 7/0

REEVE

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER