



Clearwater County

Regular Council Meeting - 23 Jun 2020

Agenda

9:00 AM - Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Council Chambers, 4340 – 47 Avenue, Rocky Mountain House, AB

Our Vision: Community, prosperity and natural beauty - connected.

Our Mission: Through proactive municipal leadership, we will invest innovatively to generate and support economic and population growth, to position Clearwater County for a sustainable, prosperous future.

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* For discussions relating to and in accordance with: a) the Municipal Government Act, Section 197 (2) and b) the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act	

10.1. Verbal Report: Town of Rocky Mountain House - Clearwater County
Negotiations; FOIP s.23 Local Public Body Confidences

11. ADJOURNMENT



MINUTES

Regular Council Meeting

9:00 AM - Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Council Chambers, 4340 – 47 Avenue,
Rocky Mountain House, AB

**COUNCIL
PRESENT:**

Reeve Timothy Hoven
Councillor Jim Duncan
Councillor Cammie Laird
Councillor Daryl Lougheed
Councillor John Vandermeer
Councillor Theresa Laing
Councillor Michelle Swanson

**ADMINISTRATION
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Administrative Officer - Rick Emmons
Director, Corporate Services - Murray Hagan
Finance Manager - Rhonda Serhan
Recording Secretary - Tracy Haight
Director, Public Works Operations - Kurt Magnus
Director, Public Works Infrastructure - Erik Hansen
Communications Coordinator - Djurdjica Tutic
Manager, Information & Technology - Cam McDonald
Director, Emergency & Legislative Services - Christine Heggart
Manager, Assessment - Rob Kotchon

DELEGATES:

West Central Alberta Justice Committee:
Brenda Klosse, Chair
Sister Margie MacDonell
Constable Harold Smits

Friends of the Corridor Schools:
Brenna Knopp, Chair

Metrix Group LLP:
Phil Dirks, CPA, CA, Partner

1. CALL TO ORDER

Reeve Hoven called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- 2.1. RES-255-2020 Motion by Councillor Daryl Lougheed that Council adopts the June 9, 2020, Regular Meeting Agenda as circulated.
CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1. Regular Council Meeting Minutes

RES-256-2020 Motion by Councillor Theresa Laing that Council adopts the May 26, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes as circulated.
CARRIED

4. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

4.1. 9:00 am West Central Alberta Justice Committee - Brenda Klosse, Chair

RES-257-2020 Motion by Councillor Michelle Swanson that Council receives information from West Central Alberta Justice Committee's Delegate as presented.
CARRIED

B. Klosse, M. MacDonell, H. Smits left the meeting.

B. Knopp joined the meeting.

4.2. 9:15 am Friends of the Corridor Schools - Brenna Knopp, Chair

Councillor Lougheed recused himself from Item 4.2 Friends of the Corridor Schools Delegation to avoid a potential conflict of interest or lack of impartiality and left the meeting at 9:30 am.

RES-258-2020 Motion by Councillor John Vandermeer that Council receives information from Friends of the Corridor Schools' Delegate as presented.
CARRIED

Councillor Lougheed rejoined the meeting at 9:46 am.

B. Knopp left the meeting.

E. Hansen and C. Heggart joined the meeting.

5. PUBLIC WORKS

5.1. Leslieville Public Services Building

RES-259-2020 Motion by Councillor Theresa Laing that Item 5.1 Leslieville Public Services Building, is tabled pending receipt of a report on estimated training revenue for the proposed facility and further discussion at a future Strategic Planning Committee meeting.
DEFEATED

RES-260-2020 Motion by Councillor Michelle Swanson that Council authorizes Administration to enter into contract negotiations with Ledcor Construction Ltd. for the construction of a three (3) bay public services building in Leslieville.
CARRIED

RES-261-2020 Motion by Councillor Jim Duncan that Council proceeds with the current building design for the Leslieville Public Services facility and directs Administration to find cost efficiencies in the floorplan design.
CARRIED

E. Hansen and C. Heggart left the meeting.
K. Magnus joined the meeting.

5.2. Speed Limit on Range Road 7-3A (River Road)

RES-262-2020 Motion by Councillor Cammie Laird that Council receives information regarding speed limit signage on Range Road 7-3A (River Road), as presented.
CARRIED

K. Magnus left the meeting.
R. Serhan and P. Dirks joined the meeting.

6. CORPORATE SERVICES

6.1. 11:00 am Draft 2019 Financial Statements and Auditors' Report, Metrix Group LLP

RES-263-2020 Motion by Councillor Michelle Swanson that Council approves Clearwater County's 2019 audited Financial Statements as presented.
CARRIED

R. Serhan and P. Dirks left the meeting.
R. Kotchon joined the meeting.

6.2. Consideration of First, Second, and Third Reading of Bylaw 1096/20 Central Alberta Regional Assessment Review Board

RES-264-2020 Motion by Councillor Michelle Swanson That Council grants first reading of Bylaw 1096/20 for the purpose of establishing the 'Central Alberta Regional Assessment Review Board (RARB) to exercise the functions of a Local Assessment Review Board (LARB) and the functions of a Composite Assessment Review Board (CARB) under the provisions of the Municipal Government Act in respect of assessment complaints made by their respective taxpayers of a Partner Municipality.
CARRIED

RES-265-2020 Motion by Councillor John Vandermeer That Council grants second reading of Bylaw 1096/20 for the purpose of establishing the 'Central Alberta Regional Assessment Review Board (RARB) to exercise the functions of a Local Assessment Review Board (LARB) and the functions of a Composite Assessment Review Board (CARB) under the provisions of the Municipal Government Act in respect of assessment complaints made by their respective taxpayers of a Partner Municipality.
CARRIED

RES-266-2020 Motion by Councillor Daryl Lougheed That Council grants permission for third reading of Bylaw 1096/20.
CARRIED

RES-267-2020 Motion by Councillor Jim Duncan That Council grants third reading of Bylaw 1096/20 for the purpose of establishing the 'Central Alberta Regional Assessment Review Board (RARB) to exercise the functions of a Local Assessment Review Board (LARB) and the functions of a Composite Assessment Review Board (CARB) under the provisions of the Municipal Government Act in respect of assessment complaints made by their respective taxpayers of a Partner Municipality.
CARRIED

R. Kotchon left the meeting.

6.3. Support for Private Member's Bill C-221, The Environmental Restoration Incentive Act

RES-268-2020 Motion by Councillor John Vandermeer that Council supports the Private Member's Bill C-221 - The Environmental Restoration Incentive Act, and participates in a joint letter of support with the Town of Rocky Mountain House.
DEFEATED

6.4. Property Tax Reduction Request

RES-269-2020 Motion by Councillor John Vandermeer that Council considers a reduction of property taxes for non-residential properties owned or operated by oil and gas companies for 2020.
DEFEATED

D. Tutic and C. McDonald joined the meeting.

6.5. Broadband Public Engagement Plan

RES-270-2020 Motion by Councillor Michelle Swanson that Council approves the draft Broadband Project Public Engagement Plan as amended.
CARRIED

D. Tutic and C. McDonald left the meeting.

7. REPORTS

- 7.1. CAO's Report
- 7.2. Public Works Report
- 7.3. Councillor Reports

RES-271-2020 Motion by Councillor Cammie Laird that Council receives the June 9, 2020, CAO Report, Public Works Report, and Councillor Reports from Councillors Duncan, Laird, Lougheed, and Swanson.
CARRIED

8. ADJOURNMENT

- 8.1.** RES-272-2020 Motion by Councillor John Vandermeer that the meeting adjourns at 1:44 pm.
CARRIED

Reeve

CAO



Agenda Item Report

Regular Council Meeting

AIR Type:	Delegation
SUBJECT:	9:00 am Wade Colwell, Wildfire Technologist, Rocky Mountain House Forest Area, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry - River Road Wildfire Mitigation Strategy FireSmart Program
PRESENTATION DATE:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020
DEPARTMENT: WRITTEN BY: REVIEWED BY:	Tracy Haight, Executive Assistant Rick Emmons, CAO
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Funded by Dept <input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Legislation <input type="checkbox"/> County Bylaw or Policy
COMMUNITY BUILDING PILLAR (check all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Community Social Growth	
ATTACHMENTS:	
River Road Wildfire Mitigation Strategy FireSmart Program	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives the Delegate's report on the River Road Wildfire Mitigation Strategy FireSmart Program as presented.

BACKGROUND:

Wade Colwell, Wildfire Technologist, from Alberta Agriculture and Forestry will report on the latest FireSmart Program project for the Rocky Mountain House Forest Area.

Greetings,

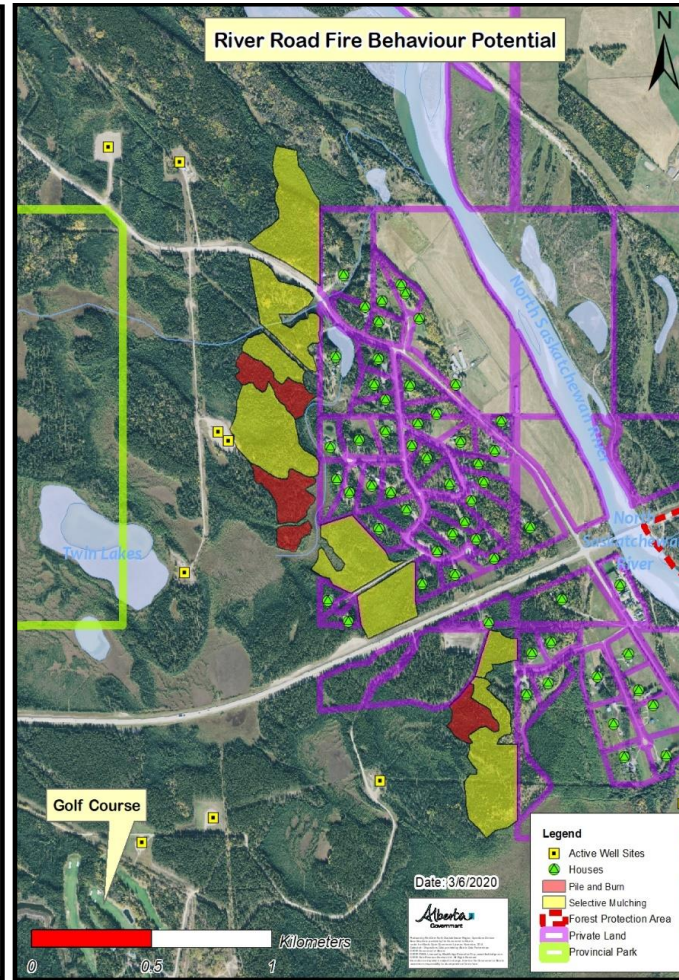
- Agriculture and Forestry is providing you with this information package as we are currently looking at reducing the risk of a wildfire to the River Road Area.

- We (Wade Colwell and Blake Christianson) work for Alberta Agriculture & Forestry in the Wildfire Management Branch. We have been working in the FireSmart program for 12 years in the Rocky Forest Area. Besides providing wildfire operational support we also develop, implement, and supervise FireSmart plans and strategies for communities within the forest protection area.

- There are 7 disciplines of the FireSmart program and we tend to focus on vegetation management for multiple reasons. Mitigating the forest vegetation (fuel) around a community will provide the following benefits:

1. Reduce the amount of fuel a wildfire can consume.
2. Reduce the intensity of a wildfire.
3. Reduces tree top (crown fire) spread to surface spread.
4. Allow a defensible space to start wildfire operations.
5. Allows Air tanker drops to reach forest floor.
6. Allows wildfire crews and equipment easy access.

- We are looking for input and suggestions from community members on our proposal; you can contact us via email or phone. Please pass this information along to anyone you feel should be consulted with. We will also be following this initial email with a mail out to make sure no one is missed.



- This plan includes 56ha of fuel mitigation identified on the current map broken down into 2 treatment types.

- The two treatment types are:
 1. Selective Mulching (yellow polygons).
 2. Pile and Burn (red polygons).

- The following page has a detailed description of both treatments and we have included pictures of these treatments from other FireSmart projects in the area.

- Agriculture and Forestry is fully open to making changes to proposed boundaries and taking suggestions and input from residents.

- Agriculture and Forestry would like to here feedback from the residents on the proposed plan. Questions, comments or concerns can be directed to:

Wade Colwell
(403) 844-5495
wade.colwell@gov.ab.ca

Blake Christianson
(403) 845-9140
blake.christianson@gov.ab.ca

- Thank you for your time and we would appreciate feedback no later than **May 11 2020**, and look forward to answering any question or concerns you may have.

Selective Mulch Conditions

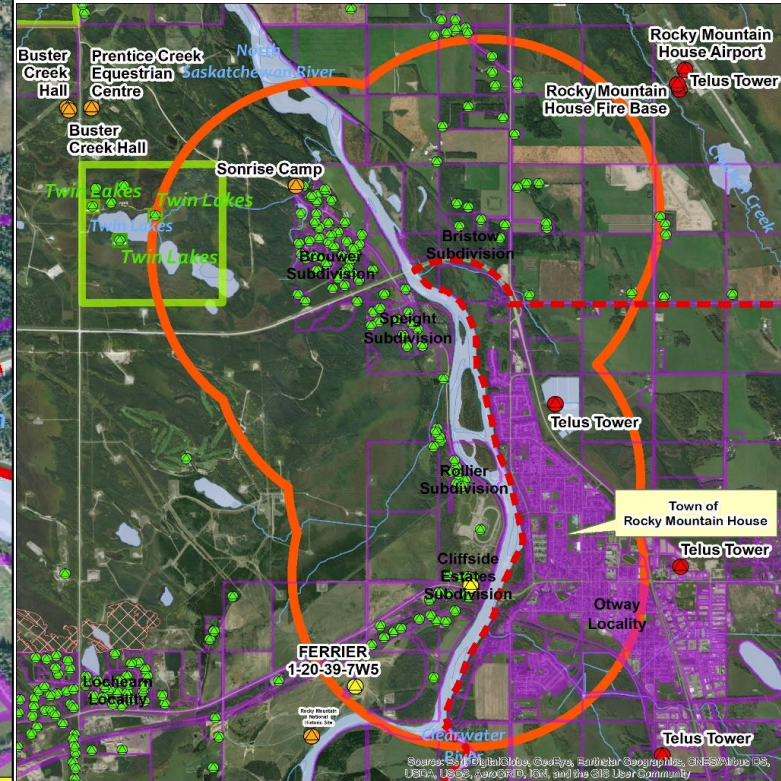
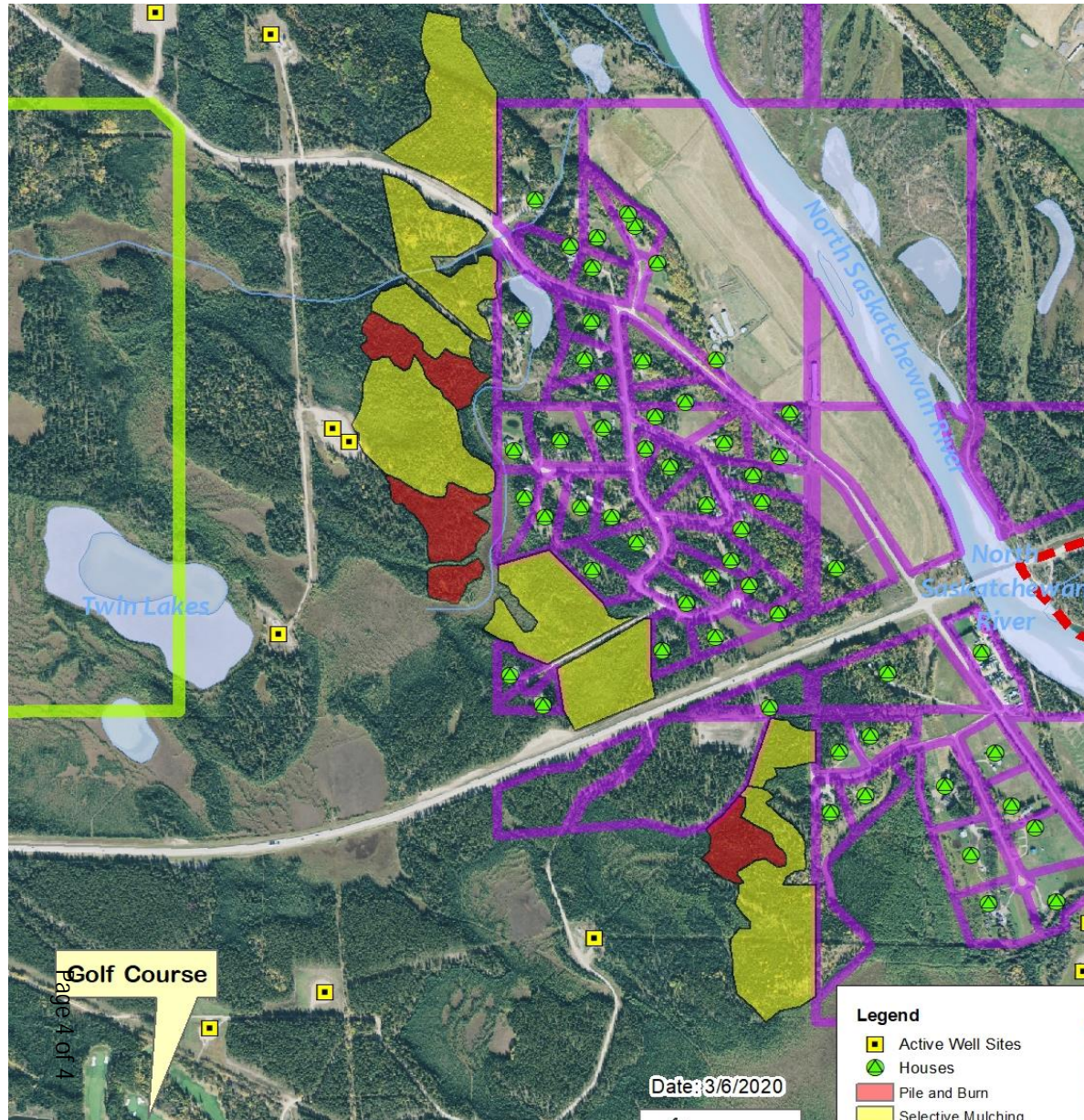
- All dead materials are to be mulched.
- All dying trees (Broken and dead tree tops) to be mulched.
- Any live tree leaners (>20 degrees lean off 90 degrees) are to be mulched.
- All black spruce are to be mulched.
- All white spruce under 6 inches to be mulched.
- All tamarack, aspen, polar, pine and shrubs under 4 inches shall be mulched only if they need to be removed to meet the above objectives.
- Avoidance of all other standing live trees is highly recommended. In the event that a live tree(s) need to be removed for operational capabilities than preference should be given to removing spruce over pine trees.



Pile and Burn Conditions

- All dead materials are to be piled and burned.
- All dying trees (Broken and dead tree tops) to be piled and burned.
- Any live tree leaners (>20 degrees lean off 90 degrees) are to be piled and burned.
- All black spruce are to be piled and burned.
- All white spruce under 6 inches to be removed.
- All tamarack, aspen, poplar, pine and shrubs under 4 inches are to be piled and burned only if they need to be removed to meet the above objectives.
- Avoidance of all other standing live trees is highly recommended. In the event that a live tree(s) need to be removed for operational capabilities than preference should be given to removing spruce over pine trees to be piled and burned.





River Road Wildfire Mitigation Strategy

Values at Risk

Legend

Community Zone

- 2 km Community Zone
- FireSmart Treatments
- Forest Protection Area
- Private Land

Values-At-Risk

- Critical
- Dangerous Goods
- Special
- Standard



1:42,021



Date: 4/10/2020



Agenda Item Report

Regular Council Meeting

AIR Type:	Presentation
SUBJECT:	2020 Year to Date Clearwater County Highway Patrol Report and May Long Weekend Task Force Report
PRESENTATION DATE:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020
DEPARTMENT: WRITTEN BY: REVIEWED BY:	Emergency & Legislative Services Terri Miller, Sergeant/Manager, Community Peace Officer Christine Heggart, Director/Rick Emmons, CAO
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funded by Dept <input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Legislation <input type="checkbox"/> County Bylaw or Policy
COMMUNITY BUILDING PILLAR (check all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Community Social Growth	
ATTACHMENTS:	
2020 year to date (june) report 2020 May Long Weekend Report	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives the *2020 Year to Date Clearwater County Highway Patrol Report* and the *May Long Weekend Task Force Report* as presented.

BACKGROUND:

Administration will be present at the June 23, 2020, Council meeting to present and answer questions regarding the attached *2020 Year to Date Highway Patrol Report* and the *May Long Weekend Task Force Report*.

Clearwater County's Community Peace Officers performed patrols throughout the first six months of 2020 to ensure infrastructure protection, road ban compliance and public safety within Clearwater County.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a number of challenges surrounding the continuation of work and safety of the officers and public. A strategic plan around COVID-19 safety and public interaction was developed that assisted the officers in performing their duties safely during the pandemic.

Clearwater County Highway Patrol 2020 Year to Date Report Jan – June

Prepared & submitted by:
Sgt. Terri Miller
June 23, 2020



INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

- 30 OVERLOADS DETECTED
- 3 BRIDGE OVERLOADS
- 35 OTHER COMMERCIAL VEHICLE VIOLATIONS

- ROAD USE AGREEMENTS ISSUED 203
- LOADS 20,439
- PERMITS ISSUED 1404



Infrastructure Protection – several patrols per day on county roads to ensure compliance as roads were very vulnerable to damage due to late release of frost.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Violation tickets 515

Includes:

413	Speeding tickets
8	Excessive Speed (high 61 over)
31	Stop Sign/Seatbelt
9	OHV
26	No Insurance/Un Reg/Suspended
4	Careless/Distracted/Liquor
24	Commercial Vehicle Violations

Warnings 67

(written only)

Files 123

Includes:

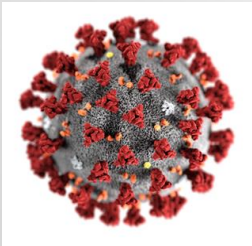
3	OHV
12	Warrants
5	Bylaw
5	Education
19	Assist
79	Traffic and Infrastructure

PUBLIC SAFETY

- April – Primary highway authority received for Hwy 11, 12, 22, 53, 54 within the Clearwater County.
- Officers were directed to deal with excessive speed and other safety concerns based on current traffic safety plan.
- Violations will be monitored based on regular patrols and will not include stationery enforcement.
- Positive response received from public

- Violation tickets issued:
 - Excessive Speed 16
 - Stop sign 3
 - Distracted Driving 1
 - Suspended Driver 1

EDUCATION and TRAINING



- Officers attended Rural Crime meetings
- "Report Impaired Boater" Signs were placed at boat launched

Alberta Health Services – COVID 19

- Public and industry education programs suspended in March
- Social Distancing and gathering CMOH enforcement in place
- To date Clearwater County CPO's have issued no tickets under CMOH

CONCLUSION

- Continued patrols of all Clearwater county infrastructure
- Long Weekend Task force initiatives throughout the summer
- CMOH monitoring will continue as per Health Inspectors direction
- Commercial vehicle inspections are not being conducted at this time
- Increase in recreational traffic - camping etc.
- Officer recertification training suspended by Solicitor General Dept.
- Assisting Planning & Development

QUESTIONS ?

2020

May Long Weekend Report



By: Stephen Shenfield – Lands Team Lead
Alberta Environment & Parks
6/5/2020

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Executive Summary

This report highlights the results of coordinated efforts along the South Eastern Slopes as agencies come together in working groups/task forces to ensure Albertan's are able to enjoy the outdoors in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

This has been an unpredictable year as a result of COVID-19 which led to a variety of restrictions that evolved on a daily basis. National and Provincial Park restrictions along with school closures contributed to one the busiest weekends over the past several years. Some areas even reported record numbers as vehicles were overflowing from staging and random camping areas.

Despite the large numbers of people recreating, the amount of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and other calls seemed to be less than other years. Statistics from recreational injuries/deaths were limited and information such as hospital stats were not recorded as in past years due to "Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy" concerns associated with small communities. The majority of the information provided is based on observations from all agencies along with a wealth of experience in dealing with the recreating public.

Crown Lands enforcement initiatives for the Alberta Environment & Parks – Lands South Branch are managed in three sub-areas – West Central Alberta (Drayton Valley, Rocky Mountain House, Sundre), Calgary/Kananaskis, Southwestern Alberta (Crowsnest Pass). Each area works with the various enforcement agencies with a variety of arrangements. Some of these arrangements also extend to other long weekends and the relationships created also helps provide additional support outside these activities including emergencies (i.e. search and rescue, wildfires, floods).

1.0 Introduction

The Victoria Day Long Weekend tends to be one of the busiest within Alberta as people flock to their favourite outdoor locations. Albertans find their own way of celebrating the nice weather and freedom after being cooped up all winter – be it camping, hiking, OHVing, or partying to name a few. Most people we connected with were generally compliant while others tended to be more challenging for our enforcement and emergency services partners.

Through working together with the various enforcement agencies and other first responders, we are able to coordinate our efforts and help lighten the load for everyone. Areas struggling with manpower are able to lean on their associated partner agencies to provide better coverage and deal with the influx of people. The common goals include reducing non-compliant activities, environmental degradation, and ensuring public safety.

Some areas along the South Eastern Slopes have formal arrangements where coordination occurs with main representatives from each agency attending planning meetings prior to the long weekends. Suggestions and key lessons learned from previous May long weekend debriefings are incorporated into these efforts. These meetings are also key to adapt to ongoing pressures and make adjustments based on weather and other challenging circumstances.

The warm weather and COVID-19 restrictions provided a different challenge compared to previous years. Albertans have chosen to recreate on public land in response to other travel restrictions and closures. Most agencies have defaulted to reactive enforcement as opposed to some of the proactive measures normally implemented in order to limit their exposure to others.

Although much of the focus of the report is on Crown Land, the associated activities have an impact on other areas such as highway traffic, rural crime and emergency services. Each agency comes with different expertise and by working together we are able to share knowledge and build relationships which have proven to be beneficial beyond the long weekends.

2.0 Participants

2.1 West Central Alberta Joint Task Force

The West Central Alberta Joint Task Force has been in existence for 17 years 'officially' although these efforts have occurred for much longer. The governance structure is flat and essentially the group was formed to provide a platform for agencies to collaborate. Rob Kohut (Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Branch) was the Chair of this task force for 2020 and coordinated by Stephen Shenfield (AEP, Lands) with support from all involved. Each agency is responsible for the overall management of their own staff/mandates and these planning meetings act as platform to collaborate resources where possible.

- **Environment & Parks**
 - Lands South Branch (Lands Officers)
 - Environmental Enforcement Branch (Conservation Officers)
- **Justice & Solicitor General**
 - Alberta Sheriffs (Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch)
 - Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Branch
- **Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)**
 - Rimbey Detachment – Sgt. K. Pillipow
 - Rocky Mountain House Detachment – Cpl. T. Epp
 - Sundre Detachment – Cpl. K. Mandel
 - Traffic Division (Blackfalds) – Sgt B. Herrick
- **Agriculture & Forestry**
 - Clearwater Wildfire Management Area (Forest Officers)
- **Municipal Government**
 - Clearwater County Highway Patrol
 - Clearwater Regional Fire Rescue Services (CRFRS)
 - Town of Rocky Mountain House CPO's
- **Other Agencies**
 - Mountain View SAR
 - Rocky Mountain House Volunteer SAR
 - Caroline Ambulance

2.2 Calgary/Kananaskis

- **Environment & Parks**
 - Lands South Branch (Lands Officers, Recreation/ Educational Staff)
 - Environmental Enforcement Branch (Conservation Officers)
- **Justice & Solicitor General**
 - Alberta Sheriffs (Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch)
 - Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Branch
- **Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)**
 - Cochrane
 - Turner Valley
- **Agriculture & Forestry**
 - Calgary Wildfire Management Area
- **Other Agencies**

- Cochrane SAR

2.3 South West Alberta Multi Agency Working Group (SWAMAWG) – Crowsnest Pass

Over the past few decades many agencies have been joining together in the Crowsnest Pass Area, to assist with the delivery May Long Weekend enforcement and emergency responses on Alberta's Public Lands. In a time where budgets were tight and staffing levels were low, several agencies such as Lands, Forestry and Wildfire, RCMP, Parks, and Fish and Wildlife, came together to work towards a common goal of reducing non-compliant activities, and ensuring public safety. Over the years the group has grown and so has their focus. In 2016 the group was formally named the South West Alberta Multi Agency Working Group, SWAMAWG for short, and expanded to many other agencies including Fire/Rescue, Transportation, Alberta Health, and other local MD representatives.

Today the group meets 3-4 times a year and focuses on more than just the May Long Weekend. Most recently, it was a group to share COVID-19 information and departmental changes with. It was also a group used to assist with the implementation of the 2 new PLUZ zones, Livingstone and Porcupine Hills, in 2017. It has become a venue to share information amongst senior staff, build partnerships, and educate members so that we all have a better understanding of how we can work cooperatively together, all looking to achieve the same positive outcomes.

- **Environment & Parks**
 - Lands South Branch (Lands Officers/Recreation Staff)
 - Environmental Enforcement Branch (Conservation Officers)
- **Justice & Solicitor General**
 - Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Branch
 - Alberta Sheriffs (Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch)
- **Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)**
 - Turner Valley Detachment
 - Nanton Detachment
 - Pincher Creek Detachment
 - Crowsnest Pass Detachment
- **Agriculture & Forestry**
 - Calgary Fire Centre – Forest Officers, Wildfire Rangers, Fire Patrolman
- **Municipal Government**
 - Crowsnest Pass Fire/Rescue
 - MD Willow Creek Fire/Rescue
 - MD of Pincher Creek

3.0 Objectives

Strength in numbers really resonates for the assemblage with the May Long Weekend. As recreationists flood into Public Land throughout the weekend, education and enforcement escalate in importance. The diversity across agencies involved in the task forces allowed for broad coverage of education and enforcement under multiple acts under a single broad mandate on Public Land.

Over the course of the weekend, the various teams addressed the following:

- Consistent message delivery by all agencies
- Manage infractions in a consistent manner
- Increased manpower deployment in problem areas
- Improve co-ordination of patrols to provide multiple contacts to problem groups
- Educate users regarding garbage, responsible camping, safe operation of OHVs, etc.
- Increase enforcement presence and public safety messaging to reduce the number of and ultimately avoid recreation-related fatalities
- Increase contact with non-compliant groups early on to set tone for the weekend rather than waiting for things to get out of control. Follow-up and other enforcement actions also occur as necessary.
- Minimize the amount of garbage left behind after the weekend
- Process to deal with abandoned fires and fire bans

4.0 COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic created much uncertainty and challenges in preparation for the May Long Weekend. As restrictions were relaxed, record numbers of people were recreating on Crown Lands despite fire bans. Mandated physical distancing (2 meters from one another) was non-existent despite being reminded by officers. Most recreationists seemed tired after spending several weeks apart from their families and close friends and have since become complacent with the current restrictions. Educational messaging was used as officers were reluctant to issue any violations due to the steep fines (\$1200) and loopholes that most likely would cause the file being dismissed in court. In a few cases, recreationists that ignored fire bans were issued violation tickets although compliance was mostly achieved through educational messaging.

Responses to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by the various agencies included:

- Some agencies have been directed to respond only to higher risk infractions
- OHV and Jet Boat patrols were reduced or non-existent
- Helicopters were not used for reconnaissance as physical distancing would be impossible and also due to the added risk to wildfire and other emergency staff that rely on this resource
- Most officers were driving separate vehicles
- Hand sanitizer, gloves and masks were utilized as necessary

- Educational messaging giveaways were minimal or non-existent
- Only reactive OHV checks were performed (No compliance stickers issued)
- Each agency was responsible for their own hazard assessment control reports
- Parks campgrounds were closed
- Hospital Stats (recreation/ traffic related) were not requested so healthcare staff could focus on COVID-19
- Planned check-stops were not conducted in the West Central Alberta
- Roadside BBQ's for enforcement staff working checkstops were cancelled (Clearwater County normally does this in the Rocky Mountain House area)
- Some areas (Sundre RCMP) did not fill any enhanced shifts
- Drones were used to supplement efforts in collaboration with Pegasus Imagery and the Environmental Enforcement Branch

5.0 Preparation

Prior to the May Long Weekend meetings occurred with the various agencies and partners. Most meetings occurred through virtual means such as video conferencing or phone in response to the COVID-19 restrictions. Items of discussions included:

- Reviewing Provincial Priorities
- Wildfire Management response including restrictions (Fire Ban / OHV)
- Educational messaging and promotional items
- Check stops – *decision we made to not conduct any in response to COVID-19*
- Collaboration of resources – equipment, manpower, speciality resources (i.e drones and SAR)
- Availability of manpower dedicated from each agency
- Communications – media, radios, daily briefings
- Adjustments due to COVID-19
- Reporting

5.1 Traffic Counters

Traffic Counters we deployed in the past to compare enforcement efforts with the amount of people recreating on Crown Land. Information was used to deploy resources to high use areas and provide appropriate check stops. In previous years the West Central area had traffic counters installed by Clearwater County which was discontinued due to the associated cost (~\$9000). Other means for gathering this information will be explored in the future.

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Daily Conference Calls

Conference calls were held on a daily basis to highlight any areas of concern and better coordinate our efforts. Prior to these calls, local meetings occurred at the Rocky RCMP Detachment which excluded some of the outlying areas. These proved to be valuable for this task force and were a quick way to connect with each other over a large area. Some agencies that were unable to attend provided updates through email which was informative for the group.

6.2 Garbage Bins

Garbage bins were deployed at areas known for an increase in litter which was well received on social media and by those recreating. Some of these costs were previously absorbed by industry who paid for these bins to be deployed in response to the garbage issues on their leases. With the down turn in the economy AEP has directly funded the garbage bins which has had mixed reactions. These bins are only deployed on the May Long weekend which corresponds with grad camps and this program may need to be re-evaluated with other options such as more enforcement of messy sites. Some staff and agencies have also expressed concerns with teaching bad habits of not packing out what is packed in.

Each area will need to re-evaluate these efforts are there still is a desire to maintain garbage bins in some areas of the Province.

Area	Cost
West Central Alberta	\$3752.60
Calgary/ Kananaskis	\$9278.20
Southwestern Alberta	\$3400.00
Total	\$16,430.80

6.3 Wildfires

A fire ban for the Forest Protection Area (FPA) was implemented by Agriculture & Forestry in response to COVID-19 and to reduce the impact any associated resources. The majority of people used propane fire pits and were compliant although campfires were observed in just about every area that was patrolled. Some people were unaware of the ban despite being signed or just acted confused like most caught disobeying the order. Through educational messaging we were able to bring those who had campfires into compliance in a few cases enforcement actions were carried out. Some confusion existed in the Brazeau County area due to messaging located on their website which was later addressed. Most agencies directed the public to the app/website www.albertafirebans.ca which provided clarification. The Rocky Wildfire Management Area received four human caused wildfires with the largest being about 10 ha in size and under investigation over the weekend.

6.4 Joint Patrols

Although checkstops were not conducted in most areas, the various agencies still collaborated where possible. Contacts for each agency were shared as part of the May Long Weekend package and efforts were made to connect when possible. Patrols were mainly limited to on-highway vehicles and jet boat/OHV patrols that normally are integrated were done on a small scale.

Even though the some Peace Officers did not have appointments to deal with issues (i.e. CVEB and Fire Bans), they were able to work with the appropriate agency if further enforcement was required. Public Lands staff were also deployed in an educational manner and come with the knowledge and background of some of the underlying issues in their perspective areas. Through exchanging information and relying on each others expertise we were able to provide more coverage as the issues tend to extend beyond each others programs.

One area that benefitted from collaboration was around Drayton Valley where a single Fish & Wildlife Officer was able to receive quite a bit of support from the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch. Without this type of assistance this area would be out of control as it has in the past with issues such as garbage, public lands damage, and other unlawful nature. The Sundre area required more attention than what was provided as it tends to be on the outlying areas of some agencies. Areas patrolled by Lands Staff observed more infractions in comparison with other areas that received more oversight throughout the weekend.

6.5 /EMS/ Fire Rescue/ Search & Rescue

Clearwater Regional Fire Rescue Services (CRFRS) has been a key member with providing assistance to rescues and supporting efforts with search and rescue. Command posts were made available for larger incidents and the team is equipped with drones, jet boats, and dedicated members with a variety of experience. The response are includes several fire halls covering a large area including Caroline, Nordegg, and Rocky Mountain House.

Rocky Mountain House Volunteer SAR was dispatched to a single call in the Rig Street area and assisted CRFRS with an OHV accident where the patient was flown out by STARS. This team has specialities such as swift water and mountain rescue with the capability of performing helicopter extraction with long lines. This team is normally dispatched by RCMP or CRFRS and even has volunteers from some of the agencies involved with the West Central Alberta Joint Task Force.

Mountain View SAR provided resources in the Burnt Timber area over the weekend and did educational/ awareness patrols. These efforts have occurred for several years and provide support to all agencies aside from regular search and rescue dispatches. Meals were provided to any agencies working in the area and adjustments were made to dispersing sandwiches, drinks and other items in alignment with COVID-19 protocols (in the past steak dinners were provided). The general public takes advantage of their staging area to deal with minor injuries and those which are more serious are stabilized on scene and turned over to the appropriate resource (EMS, STARS, etc.). Any infractions observed are passed along to the appropriate agency.

Cochrane SAR were active and worked with some of the partners over the long weekend. Deployments included two missing person searches and three proactive OHV patrols in McLean Creek/Waiparous with RCMP, Wildfire and Fish and Wildlife. These efforts included the use of 42 operational members and provide key messages for those recreating on public lands.

EMS – Caroline Ambulance attended all the West Central Alberta Task Force meetings and continues to support efforts in the Caroline area. They see no shortage in call volume as normally the Bighorn Stampede Rodeo occurs during the May long weekend (note: cancelled for 2020) and have provided educational messaging at checkstops along with meals for our agencies in previous years. Other EMS groups were invited to these meetings but declined for a variety of reasons.

7.0 Statistics

Each agency collected and reported their own statistics through their existing governance structures. West Central Alberta has been recording statistics as part of previous long weekend reports for many years

7.1 West Central Alberta

Statistics have been recorded for several years in a common format to identify themes and trends. Despite common forms being sent to several agencies, statistics were not received in the same format or even provided as in the past which made our coordinated reporting efforts difficult as depicted in Table 1. Based on the information provided there appears to be a higher amount of warnings issued which is most likely related to COVID-19 protocols and officer discretion. Some agencies were instructed to focus on dealing with the blatant or serious infractions which is also consistent with the data provided. We will also be reevaluating our reporting efforts in the future and explore other alternatives in discussion with the greater task force.

	Rimbey RCMP	Rocky RCMP	Sundre RCMP	EEB	FWEB	Lands Officers	Sheriff Highway Patrol	Clearwater County
Fatalities (MVC)	1							
Violation Tickets	5	NP	NP	61	24	NA	178	52
Warnings	15	NP	NP	35	65	18	150	48
Contacts	50	NP	NP	NP	190	235	501	NP
Manhours	30	NP	NP	NP	155	110	545	150

**NP – Not Provided; NA – Not applicable*

Table 1 – West Central Alberta Enforcement Statistics collected for the period of May 14-18, 2020. Statistics may not be complete and were based on information provided by task force participants.

8.0 Debriefing / Recommendations for improvement

8.1 Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System (AFRRCS)

AFRRCS Radios worked well and had a common talk around channel for the various agencies. Mountain View SAR was loaned one of these AFRRCS radios from Clearwater County which was effective during their response on an OHV incident. Some agencies and organizations (Lands Officers, Search & Rescue) still do not have AFRRCS radios and the common reason is due to the high cost and potential dead zones. We recommend working with AFRRCS Operations (Municipal Affairs) to explore potential options including the following:

- Obtaining Additional AFFRCS Radios for the task force during the long weekends or throughout the summer months
- Activating the scanning function – some agencies are carrying multiple radios (i.e. handheld and truck radio) to monitor multiple frequencies
- Expanding the use of AFFRCS radios for Search & Rescue and Public Lands Officers

8.2 Coordination between Agencies

Overall the coordination between agencies was fairly successful despite challenges related to COVID-19. Although some effort was provided for the Sundre area, more coordination is required to address ongoing issues. Without working together some agencies are limited front country type patrols within cell phone service. In West Central Alberta, conference call type meetings will be implemented the week prior to each remaining long weekend in 2020 (July, Aug, Sept).

Calgary/Kananaskis area has recommended expanding planning meetings in the Ghost to acknowledge jurisdictional boundaries between RCMP – Cochrane, Didsbury, Sundre; FWEB – Cochrane, Sundre; SAR – Cochrane, Mountain View; AEP Lands – Bow, Bighorn Districts.

It was recommended by Richard Smith (Mountain View SAR) that a standard operating procedure (SOP) be developed for response to incidents. Other agencies/municipalities have developed similar procedures which have provided clearer direction.

8.3 Enhanced Shifts

Most agencies had enhanced shifts which helped provide the appropriate support to deal with the influx of people recreating. It is recommended each agency continue to request this support as resources tend to become strained while responding to other emergent issues (problem wildlife, wildfires, floods, SAR, etc.). Some of the day shifts started too early to be productive but it was also noted that some coverage in early mornings is still required if adjusted.

8.4 Other recommendations

- Discontinue the garbage bin program in the West Central Alberta Area
- Look into other options for traffic counters (i.e. Alberta Transportation)
- Use Alberta Sheriffs Mobile Vehicle Inspection Unit (MVIU) for major incidents and checkstops
- Obtain a separate budget for rotary wing to better provide reconnaissance (able to fly entire area in 2-4 hours which can better utilize resources)
- Send an update via email after conference calls for those unable to attend
- Expand coordination efforts to other long weekends
- Work with AHS to obtain Hospital Statistics and address FOIP concerns
- Set the tone earlier in the weekend (more enforcement upfront)
- If conditions allow (i.e. COVID-19 measures) re-establish check stops

9.0 Conclusion

Despite the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic these united efforts were once again successful as agencies collaborated to reduce the amount of non-compliance behaviour and fatalities. This success is also due to the commitment of each agency working together and has been noticeable by others throughout the Province. Those agencies involved also have key players who come with a wealth of experience and knowledge as well as those who are true “Champions” of these efforts.

The majority recreationists perform their activities in a safe and responsible manner but there are still those who defy the rules and are a public nuisance. Although some injuries occurred over the long weekend, fatalities were minimal but still have a severe impact on friends, family and first responders. Through working together as a united force we are better able to respond to problems and help provide preventative messaging before issues are escalated.

As the amount of people recreating on public lands increases over the long weekends there needs to be a level of additional support to deal with this influx. We recommend to continue support for enhanced shifts, overtime and other preventative messaging so those recreating on Crown Lands can do so in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

Appendix 1 – Photos



Photo 1 – STARS Rescue – Burnt Timber Area



Photo 2 – STARS Rescue – Crowsnest Pass



Photo 3 – CVEB/Sheriffs Patrolling along Hwy 11 near Abraham Lake



Photo 4 – Pet Pig. You never know what you'll find!



Photos 5 – Camping with a small trailer along Abraham Lake



Photos 6 – Random Camping in Crowsnest Pass Area



Photo 7 – Vehicle stuck next to Forestry Trunk Road near James River



Photo 8 – Vehicle at Brazaeu Dam



Photo 9 – Messy site with campfire from previous evening in the Saunders Area near Nordegg



Photo 10 – Messy site found in the Crowsnest Pass area



Photo 11 – Educational/Information booth with COVID-19 messaging in the Crowsnest Pass Area



Photo 12 – Dumpsters provided by AEP being utilized in Crowsnest Pass Area



Photo 13 – Busy area west of Nordegg (Siffleur Falls trail head) with staging area overflowing. Picture does not do justice and this was taken on the way home after the area cleared out.



Photo 14 - Patrol done by Lands Officers in the Crowsnest Pass Area

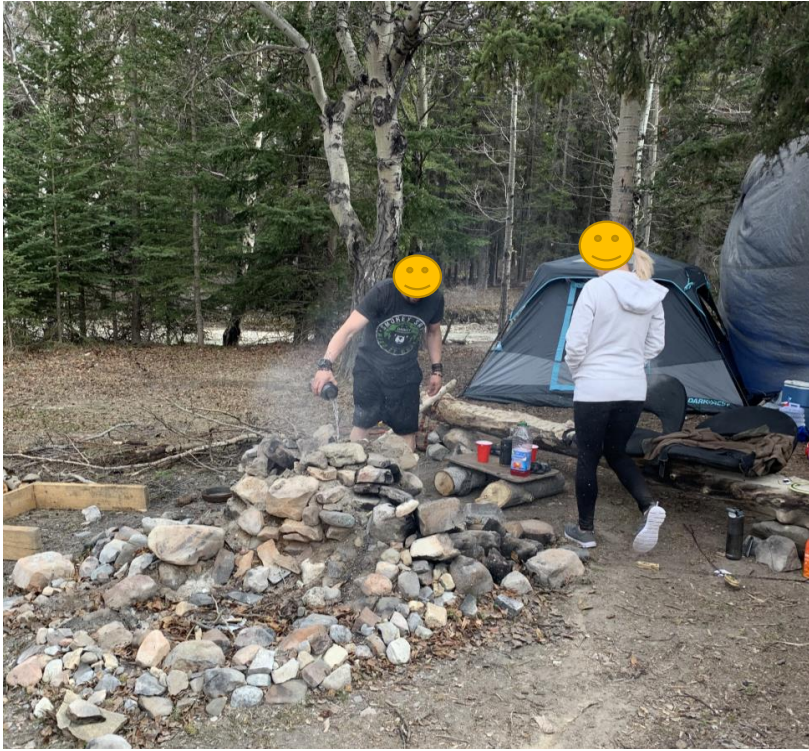


Photo 15 – One of the many illegal campfires observed over the weekend. NOTE: T-shirt reads, “Smokey Says Keep it Green”



Photo 16 – Apparently the name of this machine is “Swamp Donkey”



Photos 17, 18 – Monster Trucks that were part of larger group and found some mud



Clearwater County and Rocky Mountain House Peace Officers working together



Agenda Item Report

Regular Council Meeting

AIR Type:	Request for Decision
SUBJECT:	Support for Âsokêwin Friendship Centre's June 21, 2020, National Indigenous Day Event
PRESENTATION DATE:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020
DEPARTMENT: WRITTEN BY: REVIEWED BY:	Agriculture & Community Services Anne-Marie Bertagnolli, Community Services/Agricultural Production Supervisor Matt Martinson, Director and Rick Emmons, CAO
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funded by Dept <input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Legislation <input type="checkbox"/> County Bylaw or Policy
COMMUNITY BUILDING PILLAR (check all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Social Growth	
ATTACHMENTS:	
None	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council supports allocating funds from the Agriculture and Community Services 2020 operating budget, in the amount of \$2500, as well as use of the County Sasquatch vehicle for the Âsokêwin Friendship Centre's National Indigenous Day event on June 21, 2020.

That Council retroactively approves councillors' attendance at the National Indigenous Day event on June 21, 2020.

BACKGROUND:

At the June 15, 2020, Strategic Planning Committee Meeting, the Committee heard from Mr. Kirby Bigchild, with the Âsokêwin Friendship Centre delegation, requesting support of local activities planned to celebrate National Indigenous Day. The Committee recommended that sponsorship be allocated from the Community Services budget in the amount of \$2500 to help fund the event which included a parade, barbeque and fireworks. The Committee was also in favour of councillors attending the event as well as the County Sasquatch vehicle participating in the parade.

As requests to Council cannot be officially approved at Strategic Planning Committee meetings, Administration is now requesting that Council retroactively approve these requests for support for the event which was held on June 21, 2020.



Agenda Item Report

Regular Council Meeting

AIR Type:	Request for Decision
SUBJECT:	Capital Equipment Budget Relocation to Operations Budget.
PRESENTATION DATE:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020
DEPARTMENT:	Agriculture & Community Services
WRITTEN BY:	Matt Martinson Director, Ag and Community Services
REVIEWED BY:	Rick Emmons, CAO
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Funded by Dept <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reallocation
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Legislation <input type="checkbox"/> County Bylaw or Policy
COMMUNITY BUILDING PILLAR (check all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input type="checkbox"/> Governance Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Community Social Growth	
ATTACHMENTS:	None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council reallocates \$602,700 from the Agriculture and Community Services capital equipment budget; \$26,000 to the Agricultural and Community Services operations budget; and \$576,700 to contingency.

BACKGROUND:

Clearwater County's capital equipment purchases include tractors to provide services for various vegetation management and reclamation work. Historically, the manufacturer's equipment purchase program allowed the trade-in of a tractor, at the end of each year, on a new tractor purchased at the beginning of the year. This provided opportunity for the County's Agriculture and Community Services department to operate up to six tractors during the peak growing season.

The manufacturer is cancelling this program, which will create a shortage of equipment that the department needs to complete services scheduled for the summer. The Agricultural Service Board discussed the impact of this change and recommended that for the short term, two additional tractors are rented to maintain current service levels. A longer term plan will be further discussed with the ASB and presented to Council during the 2021 budget process.



Agenda Item Report

Regular Council Meeting

AIR Type:	Request for Decision
SUBJECT:	Nordegg Manufactured Home Subdivision - Lot Purchase Prices
PRESENTATION DATE:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020
DEPARTMENT:	Planning & Development
WRITTEN BY:	Keith McCrae, Director, Planning and Development
REVIEWED BY:	Rick Emmons, CAO
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Funded by Dept <input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Legislation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Bylaw or Policy (Nordegg Lot Purchasing Policy)
COMMUNITY BUILDING PILLAR (check all that apply):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Community Social Growth	
ATTACHMENTS:	
Schedule A - Nordegg MH Lot Prices (2)	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the lot purchase prices for the Nordegg Manufactured Home Subdivision as shown on attached Schedule "A" and, offer a 5% discount off the purchase price if the purchase is concluded by December 31, 2020.

BACKGROUND:

The County has created 30 fully serviced manufactured home parcels in the Hamlet of Nordegg. The parcels range from 0.034 to 0.069 hectares in size and are zoned Nordegg Manufactured Home Residential District "NMH" under the County's Land Use Bylaw.

Now that the land is subdivided and ready to sell, Administration is recommending that Council set the purchase price for these parcels based on a market evaluation by Lorna Moore with Tamarak Trail Realty which sets a price range of \$55,000 to \$75,000 based on parcel sizes. (see below)

- 0.034 ha. to 0.039 ha. - \$55,000 (8 lots)
- 0.040 ha. to 0.042 ha. - \$60,000 (6 lots)
- 0.043 ha. to 0.044 ha. - \$65,000 (6 lots)
- 0.045 ha. to 0.046 ha. - \$68,000 (1 lot)
- 0.048 ha. to 0.050 ha. - \$70,000 (4 lots)

0.056 ha. to 0.057 ha. - \$72,000 (1 lot)
0.062 ha. to 0.069 ha. - \$75,000 (4 lots)

Attached Schedule "A" illustrates the purchase price for each lot. This represents a total value of \$1,910,000 for the 30 lots. Lot purchase prices are subject to GST. The Nordegg Lot Purchasing Policy would apply, with a 3 year time limit for development.

Nordegg Manufactured Home Subdivision Lot Prices - Schedule "A"

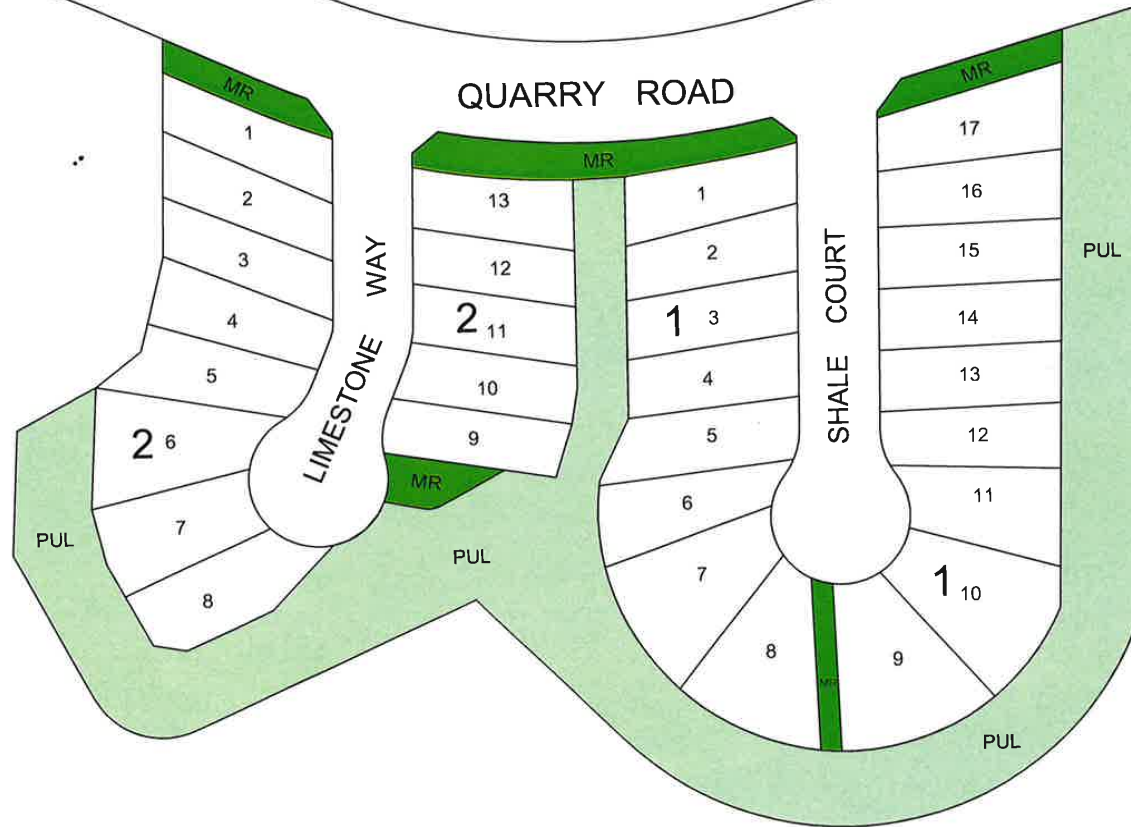
LIMESTONE WAY

<u>Lot Legal</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Lot 1, Block 2	0.039 ha	\$55,000
Lot 2, Block 2	0.040 ha	\$60,000
Lot 3, Block 2	0.038 ha	\$55,000
Lot 4, Block 2	0.041 ha	\$60,000
Lot 5, Block 2	0.043 ha	\$65,000
Lot 6, Block 2	0.056 ha	\$72,000
Lot 7, Block 2	0.048 ha	\$70,000
Lot 8, Block 2	0.048 ha	\$70,000
Lot 9, Block 2	0.038 ha	\$55,000
Lot 10, Block 2	0.039 ha	\$55,000
Lot 11, Block 2	0.037 ha	\$55,000
Lot 12, Block 2	0.034 ha	\$55,000
Lot 13, Block 2	0.039 ha	\$55,000

SHALE COURT

<u>Lot Legal</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Lot 1, Block 1	0.042 ha	\$60,000
Lot 2, Block 1	0.040 ha	\$60,000
Lot 3, Block 1	0.039 ha	\$55,000
Lot 4, Block 1	0.040 ha	\$60,000
Lot 5, Block 1	0.045 ha	\$68,000
Lot 6, Block 1	0.043 ha	\$65,000
Lot 7, Block 1	0.063 ha	\$75,000
Lot 8, Block 1	0.062 ha	\$75,000
Lot 9, Block 1	0.069 ha	\$75,000
Lot 10, Block 1	0.065 ha	\$75,000
Lot 11, Block 1	0.048 ha	\$70,000
Lot 12, Block 1	0.041 ha	\$60,000
Lot 13, Block 1	0.043 ha	\$65,000
Lot 14, Block 1	0.043 ha	\$65,000
Lot 15, Block 1	0.044 ha	\$65,000
Lot 16, Block 1	0.044 ha	\$65,000
Lot 17, Block 1	0.050 ha	\$70,000

June , 2020





Agenda Item Report

Regular Council Meeting

AIR Type:	Presentation
SUBJECT:	Return of the Regionalization Debate
PRESENTATION DATE:	Tuesday, June 23, 2020
DEPARTMENT:	CAO Office
WRITTEN BY:	Rick Emmons, CAO
REVIEWED BY:	Christine Heggart, Director/Murray Hagan, Director
BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Funded by Dept <input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation
LEGISLATIVE DIRECTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Legislation <input type="checkbox"/> County Bylaw or Policy
COMMUNITY BUILDING PILLAR (check all that apply):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal Responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Community Social Growth	
ATTACHMENTS:	
2020_05_26-CorrforInfo-CouncilLettertotheHonourableMinisterMaduRERegionalMunicipalGovernance_Redacted_85d0ff9127 Regionalization - RMA Member Support Document Premiers response to Mayor Chichak re Regionalization by Specialized Municipality	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receives Rural Municipalities of Alberta's *Regionalization - Member Support Document* for information as presented.

BACKGROUND:

As Council is aware, several municipalities, including Town of Rocky Mountain House, are lobbying the provincial government to consider forced regionalization of local governments. The rationale used by these municipalities is that regionalization will provide efficiencies and cost-savings for service deliveries and governance; eliminate fiscal disparity and economic growth competitiveness between urban and rural communities; and, reduce provincial workload and costs.

Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) provided the attached *Regionalization - Member Support Document* to support neighbouring municipalities in their discussions with the urban municipalities that are engaged in this lobby initiative. The document provides links to previous studies and reports on the subject and outlines counterpoints to debate the six arguments, as listed below, being used to support regionalization:

- Argument 1: Province-wide restructuring will produce the fairest results
- Argument 2: Larger regions will attract investment by limiting tax rate and service level inconsistencies
- Argument 3: Larger regions will attract investment by reducing red tape
- Argument 4: Larger regions will reduce disparities between "have" and "have-not" municipalities
- Argument 5: Regionalization will reduce costs and red tape for the Government of Alberta
- Argument 6: Loss of community identity is not a serious consideration associated with regionalization

On June 9, Premier Jason Kenney responded (letter attached) to the renewed call from urban municipalities for regionalization by saying: 'A mass municipal restructuring was not part of our mandate from Albertans, and I believe such a significant shift in direction, affecting all Albertans, would require broad-based public dialogue and should not be undertaken hastily'. He also encourages municipalities who support regionalization to initiate discussions through the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the RMA. To date, Administration is not aware of any response from AUMA.



TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

P O BOX 1509 5116 50 AVENUE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE AB T4T 1B2

May 26, 2020

The Honourable Kaycee Madu
Minister of Municipal Affairs
132 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Email: minister.municipalaffairs@gov.ab.ca

RE: REGIONAL MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE

Dean Minister Madu,

Albertans are facing a very challenging time ahead and both municipal and provincial funding is going to be strained in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is time for us to coordinate and pool our governance resources to ensure the utmost efficiency to re-establish our province as a strong and vibrant leader in Canada.

On the municipal level, this is a time for regionalization. Through the creation of specialized municipalities we can achieve the greatest efficiency of resources and effectiveness of government. We have been divided into wealthy versus poor, urban versus rural, for too long. This spurs intermunicipal conflict, and only serves to hinder each municipality's growth. The economic growth of Alberta relies on cooperative regions with minimal or no red tape; having one local government to work with an open for business attitude versus competitive municipalities.

A specialized municipality would naturally focus on regional governance, planning, economic development and services. All of this would allow for greater economic outcomes, a more efficient municipality and possibly cost savings. This would also reduce the workload on the Province. In using our west central region as an example, three MSI grant applications would be condensed to a single application. Three financial and statistical information returns would be consolidated into one; assessment reporting if reduced by two thirds, and the list goes on.

The reduction of municipalities has long been a discussion point in our province. The economic and financial effectiveness of specialized municipalities has been recognized, but the need to act has never been so urgent. While the ICF process was created to encourage this regional cooperation, it has led to more conflict than cooperation. For the sake of our province's future, now is the time to take a bold step for the better and require regional specialized municipalities.

Regionalization also addresses the long conflict of linear taxation. These taxes would be better collected regionally, and thus dispersed to benefit both urban and rural citizens. The majority of linear property is located on Crown land and the property taxes collected from them should not benefit one municipality over another. Rather, these property taxes should benefit the entire region of villages, towns, cities and rural municipalities whose residents support the related industries. This is a fairer approach than the current system for collecting linear taxes. Regional specialized municipalities would accomplish this and end the decades-old dispute on linear taxation.

In conclusion, it is time for municipalities and the provincial government to work collectively and in cooperation to return Alberta to a strong economic status. Specialized municipalities would be a significant step in that direction by creating effective, efficient, non-competitive and financially stable regions.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any questions or wish to discuss this further. My cell number is 403-846-8129. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Redacted under Sect. 17 of the FOIP Act.

Mayor Tammy Burke

CC: The Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta and President of Executive Council
Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks
Honourable Travis Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Mr. Barry Morishita, President, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
Town of Rocky Mountain House Council
Town of Rocky Mountain House, CAO Dean Krause

Telephone 403-845-2866 Fax 403-845-3230
Webpage: www.rockymtnhouse.com E-mail: town@rockymtnhouse.com



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Regionalization – Member Support Document

Recently, several municipalities have submitted letters to the Minister of Municipal Affairs requesting a complete restructuring of Alberta’s current municipal structure and boundaries to create large regions (referred to as “specialized municipalities” and “super-regions) that would combine rural and urban municipalities. The letters provided a variety of justifications for this request, including the following:

- Restructuring would eliminate competition among municipalities and enhance economic recovery by providing greater stability to investors related to tax rates and service levels.
- Restructuring would eliminate or reduce wealth inequality among municipalities.
- Fewer municipalities would reduce administrative costs and eliminate red tape by allowing for fewer councillors, staff, bylaws, policies, etc. and would allow the province to process fewer municipal grant applications, reporting, etc.
- Although mandatory, regionalization should be accompanied with grant funding for new regions to determine service delivery methods, the creation of a regional sustainability plan, and the development of an appropriate governance structure.
- Linear tax revenues would be fairly distributed under the model and benefit entire regions.
- If regionalization is not made mandatory, (rural) municipalities will continue to resist voluntary amalgamation due to their sense of protectionism of what they consider their “territory.”

This document is intended to support RMA members near urban municipalities known to have sent such a letter to engage in meaningful local commentary on the issue of regionalization and ensure that the rural municipal perspective is heard. It is crucial that members are supported to advocate effectively, and it is RMA’s hope that this document will assist in that process.

Below are considerations and counterpoints that members can utilize in relation to the common arguments used in the restructuring letters.

Argument 1: Province-wide restructuring will produce the fairest results

- Municipalities operate based on principles of autonomy and local decision-making. Requesting the Government of Alberta to make sweeping province-wide changes based on issues identified by a small number of municipalities sacrifices local autonomy and implies that municipalities are unable to address local and regional issues with the tools currently available.
- Alberta is a diverse province, and economic conditions, intermunicipal relationships, and other factors vary by region. Province-wide restructuring would be unable to consider the various existing agreements and relationships and would produce unintended outcomes.

- Both RMA (in its 2015 report titled *Examining Municipal Government Models from the Alberta Perspective* and its 2011 report titled *Finding Local Solutions: Examining the Impacts of Forced Regionalization*) and AUMA (in its 2009 report titled *Future of Local Governance*) support local decision-making regarding regionalization. The support for top-down, province-wide restructuring contradicts the positions of Alberta's two municipal associations.

Argument 2: Larger regions will attract investment by limiting tax rate and service level inconsistencies

- While it is important that municipalities and the Government of Alberta work together to seek solutions to the economic challenges facing the province, implementing drastic changes to Alberta's municipal structures is a poor approach to addressing short-term economic issues. Other tools and incentives can be created that are more transparent, better linked to economic development, and can be easily modified or discontinued if they are no longer required.
- The letters argue that inconsistent tax rates across municipalities create a disincentive to investment in some municipalities. However, this argument does not consider the link between tax levels and service delivery; rural municipalities typically have lower tax rates than their urban neighbours, but also provide a lower level of service.
- The service needs of rural and urban residents and businesses differ significantly. Alberta's current municipal boundaries and definitions align well with service level differences. Combining geographically large, sparsely populated rural areas into a single entity with densely populated urban areas would create complexity in administration and taxation.
- Creating regions for the sake of tax rate uniformity will have unintended consequences for residents and businesses currently operating in municipalities with relatively low tax rates and will produce one of two outcomes:
 - Such property owners will pay a higher tax rate to subsidize the higher service levels in urban areas of newly formed regions, without receiving service delivery benefits.
 - To increase service levels across the entire regional municipality (including in rural areas where service delivery costs are much higher), all property owners will see an increase in property tax rates, defeating the purpose of creating tax rate uniformity.
- Considerable research exists that questions the importance of municipal tax rates in where companies choose to locate. Examples include:
 - A 2012 study by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities titled *Major Industrial Property Taxation Impacts* indicates that property taxes are not a major competitive issue under typical operating conditions, and that based on an

analysis of a range of industries, all indirect taxes (including property taxes) account for an average of 0.57% of operating costs.

- A Fraser Institute report titled *Effective Tax and Royalty Rates on New Investment in Oil and Gas* argues that the marginal effective tax and royalty rate (METRR), which includes taxes and royalties charged to companies in various jurisdictions, is less significant to the oil and gas industry than to other industries. New investment in the oil and gas industry is more impacted by factors such as energy (carbon and fuel) taxation, infrastructure and industry regulations.
- A **2018 study** on economic development tax incentives found that for many large industrial projects, property taxes were often one of the last criterion considered, following geography, climate, resource availability and real estate costs in importance.

Argument 3: Larger regions will attract investment by reducing red tape

- The letters provide no evidence that significantly reducing governance and administrative capacity by merging multiple municipal councils and administrations into one will reduce red tape and simplify administrative processes for businesses.
- Regionalization in other jurisdictions has almost always taken the form of multiple tiers of municipal government to address the reality that some services are more effectively provided on a smaller scale. This appears to align with the argument in some letters calling for the formation of regions and “super-regions.”
- RMA’s 2015 *Examining Municipal Government Models from the Alberta Perspective* report identifies the two models most closely resembling the region/super-region proposal (models 7 and 8) as being relatively weak in governance and accountability due to confusion about what tier of local government is responsible for various services, as well as challenges in balancing local priorities with regional priorities.

Argument 4: Larger regions will reduce disparities between “have” and “have-not” municipalities

- ICFs are intended to improve intermunicipal collaboration related to service delivery without requiring administrative restructuring. Municipalities should have an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the ICF approach prior to any discussions on regionalization.
- Although differences in the fiscal health and economic state of municipalities across the province continue (as they would across larger regions), many rural municipalities are facing much more challenging economic circumstances than they were several years ago. In many cases, rural municipalities are not able to enter into the complex and costly process of regionalization, and the potential benefits of “regionalizing” resource revenue that may have existed several years ago have disappeared in many cases.

Argument 5: Regionalization will reduce costs and red tape for the Government of Alberta

- The restructuring process requires significant upfront costs. A common request associated with calls for restructuring is for the Government of Alberta to provide municipalities with grant funding to address costs associated with determining service delivery methods, creating regional plans, and developing new governance structures. In the current economic context, provincial grant support should be directed to infrastructure and capital investment, rather than supporting structural change.
- Alberta Municipal Affairs operates based on the municipal structures currently in place. Fewer, larger municipalities may reduce provincial costs in the long-term, but would require significant changes within the Ministry which would carry short-term costs.

Argument 6: Loss of community identity is not a serious consideration associated with regionalization

- Community identity is an important component of Alberta's current municipal structure that would be compromised through regionalization. Many rural municipalities have adopted a "code of the west" and have reflected rural values through their bylaw and planning processes. This rural character is an important aspect of Alberta's history, present and future, and is reflected in the planning and governance of Alberta's rural municipalities.
- Depending on the combination of municipalities combined into a new regional municipality, the identity of some communities within the new municipality may not be properly reflected in municipal governance and decision-making.
- Existing examples of regionalization elsewhere in Canada have demonstrated that if intentional mechanisms are not built into new governance structures to preserve local community identity, local character may be lost through regionally-focused land use planning and service delivery decisions.



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6

June 9, 2020

Her Worship Maryann Chichak
Mayor
Town of Whitecourt
5004 - 52 Avenue, Box 509
Whitecourt AB T7S 1N6

Dear Maryann,

Thank you for your June 2, 2020, letter with your suggestion to explore a provincial regional municipal restructuring strategy.

Alberta is facing unprecedented difficulties. We know that the current challenges affect municipalities enormously. I appreciate that you, along with other leaders, are helping us look at a variety of solutions that could support our economic recovery and return to prosperity. Please be assured that the Government of Alberta is assessing a number of options and opportunities to strengthen our economy. We are also committed to ongoing dialogue with municipalities.

Our government is steadfast in the commitments we made to Albertans through our election platform. Although we have had to be agile due to the public health emergency, energy market crisis, and emergent economic challenges, we intend to remain focused on and to fulfil the commitments we made to Albertans, to the greatest extent possible. A mass municipal restructuring was not part of our mandate from Albertans, and I believe such a significant shift in direction, affecting all Albertans, would require broad-based public dialogue and should not be undertaken hastily.

If there is broad support from municipal leaders, I believe our municipal associations, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, should play a key role in this conversation. I encourage you to work with your municipal colleagues and the municipal associations to initiate these discussions. There are also important lessons Alberta can glean from other jurisdictions that have undertaken broad municipal restructuring.

Given the current circumstances, we know that we will need to be bold—we simply cannot continue on the way we always have. This applies to municipalities as well, and municipal leaders have all the tools they need to advance these discussions about and within their communities.

.../2

I know many municipalities have risen to the challenges and are demonstrating their agility and innovation. Municipalities may now be more willing to explore and create solutions for the barriers that have prevented restructuring in the past. Municipal leaders are in the best position to create tailored solutions for their communities and regions throughout the province.

The Honourable Kaycee Madu, Minister of Municipal Affairs, has shared that his department is available to provide supports to municipalities in exploring restructuring, including advisory assistance and funding support through the Alberta Community Partnership program.

Thank you for your leadership and for sharing your thoughts on this important matter. Please accept my best wishes for good health during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Jason Kenney PC
Premier of Alberta

cc: Honourable Travis Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
Honourable Kaycee Madu, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Honourable Grant Hunter, Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction
Martin Long, MLA, West Yellowhead
Town of Whitecourt Council
His Worship Barry Morishita, Mayor of Brooks, President of the AUMA
Al Kemmere, President, Rural Municipalities of Alberta

*P.S. Thank you for the constructive suggestion,
and your strong leadership during challenging
times!*



Councillor and Board Member 2020 Remuneration Statement

Name of Councillor / Board Member:	Jim Duncan
Date:	June 9, 2020
Signature (Councillor / Board Member):	

PAYMENT PERIOD

January	February	March	April
May	June	July	August
September	October	November	December

Council Supervision Rate	\$1,105.00 / Monthly
Reeve Supervision Rate	\$2,054.00 / Monthly

Date	Type of Meeting Attended	First 4 Hours \$174.00	Next 4 Hours \$137.00	Next 4 Hours \$137.00	Regular Council Meeting \$311.00	Breakfast \$11/ Lunch \$16/ Supper \$21.50	Mileage (km)
May 5	CTI Red Tape Reduction	X					0
May 11	CTI Red Tape Reduction	X					0
May 12	Regular Council				X		40
May 13	NSWA Board Meeting	X					0
May 13	FCSS Board Meeting	X					0
May 15	MDP Review	X					40
May 19	MDP Review	X					40
May 21	Headwaters Alliance	X					0
May 26	Regular Council				X		40

PAID

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Remuneration Calculation (for office use only)					
	Meetings @ 94.00 =		160	First 5000 Kms @ \$0.59 =	94.40
7	Meetings @ 174.00 =	1218.00		Over 5000 Kms @ \$0.53 =	/
	Meetings @ 137.00 =			Lunch @ 16.00 =	
2	Meetings @ 311.00 =	622.00			
	Supervision =	1116.00			94.40
	TOTAL =	2956.00		TOTAL =	



Councillor and Board Member 2020 Remuneration Statement

Date	Type of Meeting Attended	First 4 Hours \$174.00	Next 4 Hours \$137.00	Next 4 Hours \$137.00	Regular Council Meeting \$311.00	Breakfast \$11/ Lunch \$16/ Supper \$21.50	Mileage (km)



Councillor and Board Member 2020 Remuneration Statement

Name of Councillor / Board Member:	Cammie Laird
Date:	May 10, 2020 <i>June 1</i>
Signature (Councillor / Board Member):	<i>C. Laird</i>

PAYMENT PERIOD

January	February	March	April
May	June	July	August
September	October	November	December

Council Supervision Rate	\$1,116.00 / Monthly
Reeve Supervision Rate	\$2,075.00 / Monthly

Date	Type of Meeting Attended	First 4 Hours \$174.00	Next 4 Hours \$137.00	Next 4 Hours \$137.00	Regular Council Meeting \$311.00	Breakfast \$11/ Lunch \$16/ Supper \$21.50	Mileage (km)
May 7	Mtg: RMH Airport Com. (Via Virtual) @ CC Office (09:30-12:00 Hrs.)	1					26
May 12	Mtg: CC-C Reg. Council & LUB Hearing (08:30-16:30 Hrs.)				1		26
May 13	Mtg: Safety Codes Fire Sub. Council (Via Virtual) @ (09:00-12:00 Hrs.)	1					
May 14	Workshop: CC MDP Review: @ CC Office (08:30-15:00 Hrs.)	1	1				26
May 19	Workshop: CC MDP Review: @ CC Office (08:30-12:30 Hrs.)	1	1				26
* May 20	Mtg: RMH Sen. Housing (Via Virtual) @ (08:30-10:30 Hrs.)	1					
May 20	Mtg: ICISFC – Form. ACISC (PTSD) (Via Virtual) @ (16:00-17:00 Hrs.)		1				
May 26	Mtg: CC-C Reg. Council (08:30-18:00 Hrs.)				1		26
May 27	Mtg. RMH Library (19:00-21:00 Hrs.)(Zoom)	1					

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Councillor and Board Member 2020 Remuneration Statement

Remuneration Calculation (for office use only)						
1	Meetings @ 94.00 =	94.00 ✓		130	First 5000 Kms @ \$0.59 =	76.70 ✓
5	Meetings @ 174.00 =	870.00 ✓		0	Over 5000 Kms @ \$0.53 =	0
3	Meetings @ 137.00 =	411.00 ✓		0	Lunch @ 16.00 =	0
2	Meetings @ 311.00 =	622.00 ✓				
	Supervision =	1116.00 ✓				
	TOTAL =	3113.00			TOTAL =	76.70

PAID