

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



An Initiative Designed to Keep YOU Better Informed of Council Decisions and Initiatives

September 30, 2019

Intermunicipal Development Plan with Birch Hills County – Council gave first reading to Bylaw 3125, the County of Grande Prairie and Birch Hills County Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). A public hearing for the Bylaw will take place at a future Council Meeting. More information on the IDP between the County of Grande Prairie and Birch Hills County can be found at www.countygp.ab.ca/BirchHillsIDP.

IDPs guide future planning and development, manages growth, facilitates environmental initiatives, and supports collaboration around infrastructure and vital community services. As part of the updated Municipal Government Act (MGA), these agreements are required between neighbouring municipalities.

Tax Relief for Shallow Gas Producers – The County will cancel 35 per cent of 2019 property taxes, including related late payments and penalties, for qualifying shallow natural gas well producers identified by the Province, as requested by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The total of cancelled revenue for the County is \$73,152. The County will be reimbursed by the Province in 2019 through a reduction in our Education Requisition payment.

Council will send a letter to the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs, copying the Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction and local MLAs outlining concerns about the administrative process of shallow gas well tax cancellation and erosion of the general municipal assessment base.

Funding Request from STARS – Senior Municipal Relations Liaison for Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS) Alberta, Glenda Farnden, updated Council on the organization's operations for 2019.

The County has provided funding to STARS through grants and fundraisers since 2007, contributing a total of \$1.5 million by the end of this year. In the 2019 budget deliberations, Council approved \$200,000 per year in operational funding for 2019 to 2021 through the Community Assistance Grant program. STARS is requesting an additional \$500,000 in total over five to ten years for the Grande Prairie Fleet Renewal Campaign. Council deferred the request to fall budget deliberations.

Physician Attraction and Retention – Council approved an incentive of \$10,000 to Dr. Mohamed Elgaoud through the Physician Recruitment and Retention Incentive Policy. The full-time family physician will be working out of the Hythe Medical Clinic and serving residents in the Hythe and Beaverlodge area.

The County, along with the towns of Sexsmith and Beaverlodge and the Village of Hythe, are members of the South Peace Physician Attraction & Retention Committee (SPPARC), which works with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to attract healthcare professionals to practice in our area.

As a follow-up to the recent request from the Town of Sexsmith to support their efforts to recruit physicians, Council will invite Mayor Kate Potter and representatives from AHS and the Rural Health Professionals Action Plan (RHPAP) to meet with Council about physician recruitment.

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Five Mile Community Hall – Council directed that \$30,000 of the 2019 Facilities Operating Budget be carried forward to 2020 to allow for the roof of Five Mile Community Hall to be re-shingled. Council directed Administration to bring options to contract operations of Five Mile Community Hall as a community events venue to the next Council Meeting for consideration.

In September, the County hosted a workshop to design a blueprint for the site surrounding Five Mile Community Hall. The proposed plan will be presented to Council in late 2019.

FCSS Contract with the Town of Beaverlodge – The Town of Beaverlodge will end the contract for the County to provide FCSS services in Beaverlodge. Starting in 2020, the Town of Beaverlodge will manage their FCSS services. There may be minimal disruption in service for clients located in the Town of Beaverlodge and no change for clients located in the County. The County previously provided contract FCSS services to the Town for 15 years.

County Library Board Appointments – Council directed that Administration draft a policy to be presented at a future Council Meeting on recruiting and appointing members for the County of Grande Prairie Library Board. The County is seeking members of the public to appoint to the Library Board for 2020 and 2021 and will begin advertising.

Request for Proposal Award – Council awarded the contract for External Audit Services for Fiscal Years 2019 to 2021 to Metrix Group LLP from Edmonton.

Public Hearing – Council commenced a public hearing for Bylaw 2680-19-046 to redesignate 5.41 acres of land, located 5 miles northeast of the Town of Sexsmith, adjacent to Range Road 53 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a Country Residential (CR-5) District to allow for the subdivision of one lot for the existing country residential use. Council recessed the Public Hearing to the October 21 Council Meeting to allow time for Administration to review the newly proposed site plan as requested by the landowner.

International Day of Older Persons – Council declared October 1, 2019, as International Day of Older Persons in the County of Grande Prairie.

ARDN Annual General Meeting – Members of Council attending the Rural Municipalities of Alberta Conference in Nisku on November 12 – 15 can consider also attending the ARDN (Alberta Rural Development Network) Annual General Meeting in Nisku on November 15.

ARDN is a not-for-profit organization that supports rural development in Alberta, supporting their growth through research and learning.

Emergency Management Training for Elected Officials – Council directed Administration to bring back options for dates to facilitate emergency management training. As per updated Emergency Management Regulations, this updated training is required to be completed by Municipal Elected Officials by April 2020.

Staff Introductions – Council welcomed Alex Shepherd to a new role with the County, as an Asset Management Specialist with the Corporate

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Services department. Alex has been with the County since 2017 as the Project Support Lead with Public Works.

Next Regular Council Meeting will take place on October 7, 2019.

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