

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS



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

August 10, 2020

Major Tax Impacts of Proposed Assessment Review Model – Council accepted a report from Administration about the impacts of changes to the assessment model proposed by the Province.

The proposed changes could result in the need to increase residential tax rates in the County by as much as 54 per cent (estimated at \$955.50 per average household), or 15 per cent for non-residential (estimated at \$3,384.98 per average non-residential property).

The County currently spends over 45 per cent of its annual budget on roads and road related infrastructure. The roads infrastructure is the County's asset majorly used by oil and gas companies. Council discussed other possible impacts of these proposed models, including reduced services and capital investment from the County, all without a guarantee of increased jobs and investment in the region.

Council has started discussions with local MLAs and applicable ministers to discuss the proposed changes and the impacts to the County. If residents and businesses have questions or concerns about the proposed changes, they are encouraged to contact their local MLA.

County Invests \$10 Million in Provincial Highway 40 Twinning & Bridge Project – Council approved a contribution of \$10 million to the Highway 40 Twinning and Bridge construction project. This is one of two major investments from the County in Provincial highway improvement projects approved at today's Council Meeting, totaling \$12 million.

These contributions support a high quality and safe transportation network for industry in our region. The County will contribute \$3.333 million in 2021, 2022 and 2023 to the Municipal District of Greenview, which is contributing the remaining funds of the total municipal portion of \$60 million.

On February 20, 2020, the Province announced a cost-sharing agreement with the MD of Greenview and County of Grande Prairie for the project, which includes twinning 19 km of Highway 40 from Grande Prairie to south of the Norbord Wood Panel Plant, including a second bridge across the Wapiti River and other improvements.

Partnering with the Province to Pave Highway 724 – Council approved a cost-sharing agreement with the Province of Alberta to pave a 9.8 km stretch of road on Highway 724 north of the Hamlet of La Glace.

The project will include base paving from Highway 59 to County limits at an estimated total cost of \$8 million, which includes engineering design, land acquisition, utility relocation, environmental compensation, and construction. The Province will be covering 75 per cent of the cost, with the County responsible for 25 per cent to a maximum of \$2 million.

This cost-sharing project is the second of two significant contributions from the County to Provincial highway improvement projects, totaling \$12 million, in support of a safe and high-quality transportation network for industry. This project will enhance the safety of motorists, with a focus on the industry traffic who use travel the highway regularly.

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County Connector Service Discontinued – Council voted to discontinue the County Connector public transit pilot project due to consistently low ridership. Transit service has been suspended since April due to COVID-19.

Details about the decision can be found by reading [*County Council Votes to Discontinue County Connector Public Transit service.*](#)

Five Mile Hall School Site – Council gave first reading Borrowing Bylaw 3139 to borrow just over \$6.5 million to fund water and sanitary servicing at the Five Mile Hall School site. The Bylaw will be advertised for public feedback then presented at a future Council Meeting for final approval.

Council approved a contract of \$160,782 with Beirsto and Associates Engineering Ltd. for engineering services for water and sanitary servicing at the Five Mile Hall School site.

Submissions to the Municipal Stimulus Grant Program – Council will submit two County projects to the newly announced Provincial Municipal Stimulus Program; servicing the Five Mile Community Hall Site for future schools; and an additional cell at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling and Waste Management. The County is eligible for \$2,674,793 of funding through the program.

More Options for Parents as Council Approves Additional Playschool Class at Whispering Ridge Community School – Council approved the addition of a fourth part-time playschool program at Whispering Ridge Community School, due to a high demand in the area.

Teepee Creek Stampede Association Receives Funds for Urgent Repairs – Council approved \$34,675 in funding for the Teepee Creek Stampede Association to assist with urgent repairs needed for their hall due to mold and moisture. These repairs are required to rent out the hall next season.

Insurance Support for Local Non-Profits – Council approved paying the liability portion of insurance policies for non-profit organizations that fall under the County's Additional Named Insurance program. Revenue of community organizations across the County have declined due to COVID-19. The County will assist with renewals from November 1, 2020 to November 1, 2021 at a cost of \$25,000.

Regional Fire Service Planning & Service Provision – Council directed Administration to include a review and long-term planning process for Regional Fire Service in 2021 at upcoming budget deliberations.

County Historic Resource Committee – Council approved the establishment of a Historical Resource Committee to advise on historical resources to County Council. Council approved a Terms of Reference for the committee and appointed the following committee members:

- Deputy Reeve Harris and Councillor Sutherland for a term to expire in October 2021 due to municipal elections;
- Historian David Leonard for a two-year term to expire October 2022;
- Two public positions to be advertised, as per the Public Appointments policy, with applications to be presented for approval at the October 2020 Organizational Meeting.

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Installation of a Fence along Valhalla Trail – Council tabled a decision to the next Council meeting and requested additional information.

Drainage Policy – Council directed Administration to amend the draft policy and bring it back to a future Council meeting.

Public Hearings – Council held a public hearing for Bylaw 2680-20-014 to redesignate 12.6 acres of land, located two miles northeast of the Hamlet of Clairmont, adjacent to Township Road 732 and Range Road 52 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a Country Residential (CR-5) District to allow for the subdivision of one lot for residential use. Council gave the bylaw third reading.

Council held a public hearing for Bylaw 2680-20-015 to redesignate 9.9 acres of land, located half a mile north of Highway 59 adjacent to Range Road 115 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a Country Residential (CR-5) District to allow for the subdivision of one lot for residential use. Council gave the bylaw third reading.

Council held a public hearing for Bylaw 2680-20-016 to redesignate 22.98 acres of land, located one mile south of the Town of Beaverlodge adjacent to Range Road 101 and Highway 667 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a Country Residential (CR-5) District to allow for the subdivision of two lots for residential use. Council recessed the public hearing to a future Council meeting.

Road Improvement Projects – Council approved a tender to pave a section of 162 Avenue, from north of the Westlake Village subdivision to Range Road 63, for a total of \$2,080,123.

Council approved the use of gravel lock on two rural roads, Township Road 750 from Range Road 80 to Range Road 83 and Range Road 85 from Highway 59 to Township Road 750 at the cost of \$403,500 from the Division 8 Road Bonding fund.

Council directed Administration to draft a policy related to road bonding, including how funding is collected and allocated.

Local Improvement Petition – A petition to pave in Meadow Brook Estates subdivision was deemed insufficient as less than 2/3 of the owners who would be liable to pay the local improvement tax signed the petition.

Equipment Replacement Plan for 2021 – Council will delay the procurement process for equipment slated to be replaced to 2021 Interim Budget deliberations, scheduled for December. The exception is for a loader, which may require \$70,000 of additional funding if there is delay in ordering.

Final Report on Construction of the La Glace Fire Hall – Council accepted a report for information summarizing construction of the La Glace Fire Hall. Council directed that Administration draft administrative guidelines for Project Management.

Properties for Tax Sale – Council accepted current assessment values as reserve bids for five properties to be included at the September 25 tax sale.

Resolution for Future Rural Municipalities of Alberta Meeting – Council accepted a resolution to present at the August 14 Rural

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Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Zone Meeting regarding timely reimbursements through the Provincial Disaster Recovery Program.

Audit of Network Infrastructure – Council approved moving an audit of the County’s network infrastructure to this year from 2021 for budgeting information. The following audit will take place in 2022.

Letter of Support for Grande Spirit Foundation – The County will support the Board’s plan to borrow funds to build a seniors’ complex in Spirit River

County Council Tour – Council and Administration selected dates to tour ongoing capital projects in the County this fall.

Staff Updates – Council welcomed new staff to the Corporate Services department. Aaron Forsey joined the Facilities team as a Janitor, while Information Systems welcomed Austin Appleby as an Integration Analyst and Michael Diaz as a co-op summer student.

Next Regular Council Meeting will take place on August 24, 2020.
A Committee of the Whole Meeting will take place on August 20, 2020.

Council and Committee meetings can be accessed electronically through the events calendar on the County website.

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