

July 7, 2020

**Joint Media Release**

### **City and County Establish Protocols For ICF Mediation**

Protocols to govern mediated discussions between City and County of Grande Prairie Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) negotiation teams will be presented to the respective Councils for ratification over the next week.

The mediation protocols will be deliberated by City Council at a special Council meeting on July 8, and by County Councillors on July 13.

The Municipal Government Act requires that municipalities sharing a common boundary must create an ICF. The municipalities have agreed to mediated negotiations to complete an ICF by March 31, 2021. The date for finalizing frameworks was extended by the Provincial Government with the onset of COVID-19. Negotiations have been underway since May 2019.

ICFs document what and how services are funded and delivered with municipalities that share a common boundary. The goal in these negotiations is to produce an agreement that can pave the way for high-quality and affordable programs, services and opportunities that are sustainable and in the long-term best interests of residents of the City and County.

Each framework must:

- describe the services that benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities
- identify which municipality is responsible for providing these services
- outline how the services will be delivered and funded
- include a process for resolving disputes that occur while the framework is in effect
- ensure municipalities contribute funding to services that benefit their residents

The City of Grande Prairie negotiating team is composed of Mayor Bill Given, Councillors Jackie Clayton and Eunice Friesen, and City Manager Horacio Galanti. Reeve Leanne Beaupre, Deputy Reeve Peter Harris, Councillor Ross Sutherland, and CAO Joulia Whittleton represent the County. Together, they form the negotiating committee with mediators Bill Sutherland and Bill Diepeveen.

“This type of collaboration is important as it recognizes our interconnectedness as neighbours, while supporting our autonomy as separate municipalities,” says Reeve Leanne Beaupre. “It’s important we proceed with professional mediators to ensure focused discussions in good faith on how we best serve residents of our municipalities for years to come. These protocols are key in guiding our dialogue toward success.”

“Our goal is to reach a fair and equitable Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework that addresses the needs of residents and businesses who depend on services across both municipalities,” says Mayor Bill Given, City of Grande Prairie. “We are committed to working with the County and welcome the mediator’s assistance in helping us achieve a reasonable agreement.”

The protocols lay out the terms of confidential and respectful discussion toward a mediated agreement. They cover representation from the municipalities, participation of observers from Councils and Administrations, the role of external advisors, scheduling of meetings and how they are conducted, setting of agendas, resolution of issues, reporting to Councils, information sharing, public engagement, communication with the media, cost sharing, and decision-making authority.

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