

## **Policy and Priorities Committee Meeting**

April 7, 2015

The Policy and Priorities Committee is a standing Committee of Council responsible for reviewing policies, bylaws, plans, studies and other County activities that are in a draft or planning stages in order to provide Administration with direction. Recommendations may be made during Policy and Priorities (POP) meetings, but final decisions regarding bylaws and policies must be referred to future Regular Council Meetings.

### Local Improvement Practices in Alberta

- At the January 7, 2015 Special Council meeting, Council directed Administration to bring forward information regarding local improvement practices at municipalities in Alberta, in order to implement a fair and equitable framework to finance paved and surface structure improvements in the County.
- A local improvement is a project that benefits one neighbourhood—sidewalk construction or reconstruction, road surface paving or water/sewer installation, for example—instead of the municipality as a whole. Local improvements are often paid for in whole or in part by the benefitting landowners via a local improvement tax.
- Administration compiled a report of the local improvement practices at several other municipalities in the province.
- Council directed Administration to expand research to include local improvement practices for urban and rural jurisdictions, including multi-lot subdivisions and downtown commercial zones.
- Administration will return with expanded information regarding local improvement practices at a future Council meeting.

### Allocation of Surplus to Capital Reserves

- Both Council and Administration have identified the need for sizable investments in infrastructure (roads, utilities, equipment and buildings) to continue to enhance the growth and development of Lac La Biche County over the coming years. These investments will be made in partnership with the federal and provincial governments.
- In the 2014 and 2015 budgets the County economized on operations in order to increase surpluses for use in future infrastructure investments.
- The County's 2015 Capital Plan identified over \$112 million for future spending and investment in new infrastructure and equipment purchases to be put in capital reserves.
- As part of the 2015 budgeting process, Council agreed to allocate unrestricted accumulated surplus to specific infrastructure objectives for the future. Council will begin the process to decide which future projects to allocate capital funds in the next few months.

Event Permitting

- Administration brought forward tentative recommendations for an event permitting policy and procedure for the County.
- As the County is host to many large events throughout the year, to ensure sufficient municipal and emergency services are available, the County is looking to implement an Event Permitting Bylaw with a supporting policy and procedures for large events. This will ensure that the municipality is aware of large events and will be able to plan accordingly.
- The bylaw would address large events held on public land, or public events held on private land, like concerts, dances, rodeos, trade shows and festivals.
- Council advised Administration to ensure that the permitting process was not onerous or unnecessarily restrictive for community events, as the County moves forward with the development of this bylaw and its policy and procedures. Council also directed Administration to create a list of triggers which would need to be met before event permitting would be required (attendance over 300, for example) to ensure that events like family reunions and other private functions would not necessarily require an event permit.

Review of Council-Related Policies

- Council-related policies, such as the Councillor Code of Conduct Policy and Council Remuneration Policy have been identified for review.
- Council approved a motion which would see a subcommittee of Council review all Council-related policies that are in need of updating. Administration will prepare a Terms of Reference for the group before Council appoints three to five Councillors to the subcommittee at a future Council meeting.

Economic Development Authority Terms of Reference

- Council discussed the need to review the Terms of Reference for the Lac La Biche Regional Economic Development Authority (EDA), a committee which was created in 2011 to create the Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- The Economic Development Strategic Plan was completed in 2013 and all member-at-large appointments to the EDA expired March 31, 2015.
- Council directed Administration to schedule a Strategic Session where Council will review all internal and external committees, in order to ensure that all committees are up to date and populated.