



Council Highlights

Agricultural Service Board Bylaw Updated

Council approved an updated Agricultural Service Board Bylaw outlining the board's roles and responsibilities. Changes were minimal and mostly administrative in nature. Most notably the meeting schedule was formalized in the new version of the bylaw—the board will meet at least seven times a year.

Secure Access to Natural Gas

The County belongs to the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC). The AAMDC represents many of these province's municipalities at the provincial and federal level. Every year member municipalities develop resolutions on various issues and present them to the AAMDC. A handful of these resolutions are chosen for the AAMDC to advocate with the provincial and federal governments. (For example, some resolutions for 2014 included requesting improvements to Alberta's highway system and the reinstatement of funding for water and wastewater systems.)

In June of 2015 Council identified access to natural gas pipelines as an important issue for the County. The current system is not regulated—privately-owned natural gas pipeline companies can charge the municipality any price to tap into a pipeline, and, in fact, do not have to allow municipalities and gas co-ops to tap in at all. In addition, aging pipelines are being decommissioned and abandoned, putting municipalities and gas co-ops in the position to replace or repair pipelines in order to keep providing service, at a very high cost.

After discussion, Council directed Administration to combine these two issues into one resolution, requesting that the AAMDC lobby both levels of government to enact legislation ensuring pipeline access for municipalities and to provide funding toward the replacement or repair of abandoned

natural gas pipelines.

The proposed resolution will be brought forward for consideration at the Zone 5 AAMDC meeting on Friday, January 29, 2016.

Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) Grant

The ACP grant program (which replaced Alberta's Regional Collaboration Program) is designed to strengthen partnerships among municipalities by offering grants for projects that involve various components, including intermunicipal collaboration.

The ACP offers funding to develop or expand regional municipal service delivery. Funding in the amount of \$40 million has been set aside for the ACP grant. The maximum grant that can be accessed per project is \$350,000.

Administration is proposing a partnership between the County and neighbouring Metis Settlements with whom the County has mutual aid agreements. The idea is to jointly purchase wildfire response equipment with the grant funding—should it be awarded—for mutual use.

Council approved the plan. Administration will contact the settlements to propose this grant application partnership.

2016 Councillor Operating Budget

At a recent budget meeting, Council directed Administration to cut an additional five per cent from the County's 2016 Operating Budget.

In the interest of leading by example, Council approved a motion directing Administration to cut five per cent from the 2016 operating budget for Council.



Delegations

Delegations are individuals or groups who request permission to appear before Council about a particular issue, or with whom Council requests to speak.

2015 Citizen Satisfaction Survey

A representative from Marcomm Works, the third-party consultant that conducts the County's Citizen Satisfaction Survey every other year, met with Council to discuss the results from the 2015 survey.

In November, 2015, 400 random residents were contacted by phone to provide their outlook on County programs and services. This survey is one of the ways the County connects with residents to better understand and respond to the needs of rate payers.

The complete survey report can be found online at laclabichecounty.com.