

Regular Council Meeting

May 13, 2014

- Council began the meeting by observing a minute of silence for Dave Evans, the Rich Lake District Fire Chief who tragically passed away from a suspected heart attack while fighting a grass fire on his property on Monday.
- Council appointed Ward 7 Councillor John Nowak to the Deputy Mayor position until such time as the Mayor's vacancy is filled.
- Council made decisions regarding the upcoming Mayoral by-election. Council set the date of the by-election for Monday, July 21, 2014. Nomination day will be held on Monday, June 23, 2014 between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. (noon). Melanie McConnell, Manager of Legislative Services, was appointed Returning Officer for the by-election. Advanced voting will be available on Wednesday, July 16. Council also voted to allow special ballots for residents who will be unable to attend either the advanced voting or by-election dates. A \$20,000 budget was set for the by-election.
- Council passed this year's rural and urban service area tax rate bylaws. The General Municipal tax rate went down slightly this year—for residential, taxes went down 3.8 per cent, for non-residential, just under 2 per cent—and the tax rates for the Alberta School Foundation Fund and the Greater North Senior's Foundation also went down. While there was a decrease in the total tax rate for 2014, if your property value is assessed higher than last year, then your tax bill will increase. Tax notices will be sent out before the end of May. The deadline for tax payment is June 30, 2014.
- Council met with the Portage College Board of Governors to discuss long-term programs and initiatives. During the hour-long meeting, Council talked about mutual ventures and keeping programming in Lac La Biche with Portage Board Chairman, Ray Danyluk, and Portage President and CEO, Trent Keough.
- Residents and developers attended a public hearing about proposed amendments to the off-site levies bylaw. Residents told Council that while they were opposed to the amendments in the current form, they were not against levies all together, as long as they were applied fairly. Offsite levies are up-front fees paid by developers in lieu of the property taxes they do not pay while their land remains undeveloped. Levies ensure the municipality will have the funds to build infrastructure like roads and water/sewer systems to these parts of the County in the future. In response to the public hearing, Council deferred approving the bylaw until the equations which were used to create the levies could be more closely examined. Council

plans to meet with the consulting firm that created the formulas and fees proposed in the off-site levies bylaw, in order to learn the science behind the cost to developers.

- Council approved the creation of honorary road signs for the Hylo/Venice Centennial Event this summer. The signs will be placed alongside the existing rural addressing signs. The names of the streets honour the seven original settlers of the Hylo/Venice region. In Hylo, the honorary street names are Manca Road, DeAngelis Drive, Michetti Drive and Marini Road. In Venice, the street names are Piemonti Road, Biollo Road and Bonifacio Drive. Council approved a \$1,250 budget for the creation of the road signs as well as street banners for the celebration.
- Due to the request of a constituent, Council discussed the cost, benefit and feasibility of recording Council meetings—audio which could then be accessed by residents on the internet. Council agreed that recorded meetings might clarify some issues and concerns in the community; however they did question how large the audience might be for the audio of lengthy council meetings, and the resulting cost-effectiveness. Council decided to revisit the possibility in the future, and noted that all Council meetings are open to the public.