



Town of High Level

Monthly report to Council

June 2021

Administration and Finance

CAO

General Administration

Worked with Boreal Housing Foundation on planning for the transfer of Heimstaed Lodge to La Crete Municipal Nursing Association. The LCMNA continues to work with AHS on their 'due diligence' report and with Alberta Seniors on the operating license.

Worked with BHF on the funding and planning for the relocation of social housing units in Fort Vermilion. BHF has been provided a grant to relocate social housing units out of the flood plain in Fort Vermilion. Boreal Housing will work with Mackenzie County to manage this project.

Coordinated logistical support for fire fighters at the West Fraser log fire.

Continued to work on strategies for funding of multipurpose facility and finalized options for land exchange with the Fort Vermilion School Division. Meetings have been facilitated with Olivier Jarda from Minister McKenna's Office. Administration is working on detailed grant applications. Meetings with Provincial and Federal ministers and departments will continue through July.

Met with Alberta Environment and Parks (along with Jeri Phillips and Ruth Rolfe) to discuss use of the Tolko burner variance funding. Administration will be submitting a detailed request for use of the funds as per Council's direction.

Met with representatives of the Dene Tha' to discuss housing options in High Level.

Assisted Council during Regional Service Sharing Agreement negotiations with Mackenzie County.

COVID-19

Kept abreast of developments with COVID and assisted with planning related to the Province's Public Health Order and amendments and communications to the public.

Reviewed updated COVID Protocols based on changes to the Public Health Order.

Worked with Town departments to plan for Stage 3 of Alberta's post-COVID reopening.

Finance

2021 taxes were due June 30.

Advertising for Tax Pre-Authorized Payments was successful and administration had numerous residents' sign up and more awareness to sign up in January for 2022 taxes.

It has been one year since we launched our Virtual Terminal for automatic credit card payments for utilities. It has been very successful we currently have 130 accounts set up and can see this growing throughout the year.

2020 Audit was successful with 2020 financial statements accepted June 28th by Council.

Planning and Development

NWSAR accepted 2021 State of the Region Report – will be circulated to Municipalities in July 2021.

Collaborated with Mayor McAteer on the socio-economic interview with Nicholls Applied Management (for AEP) for the Draft Bistcho Sub-Regional Plan regarding TOHL, including regional stakeholder concerns.

Completed infographic one-pagers for Land Use Bylaw 1018-21 – public communications for release on social media, and local newspaper.

Option to Lease documents for a potential Telus Communications Tower were developed and signed for Plan 142TR; Block 27; Lot C.

Land Use & Planning Officer completed Safety Codes Permit Issuers Course and Exam.

Bylaw Enforcement Officer processed and sent out new Clean Up Orders, and completed regular patrols.

Six Development Permits and two Building Permits were approved in June 2021.

Digitizing existing building blueprints, and miscellaneous mapping requests.

IT

IT systems have been relatively stable for the month of June but intermittent disruptions to internet connectivity particularly at the RE Walter Memorial Aquatic Centre have continued and we experienced an issue with the email system when an upgrade to the mail filtering system did not go as planned. The filtering system error was corrected quickly by the system management service provider with no incoming email lost. Scheduled changes were made to servers at Town Hall early in June and expanded file system storage capacity and reorganized hosting of the shared printing equipment has been achieved with only slight disruption to operations. Further upgrades will be made to the systems including updates to the email server and the database application server in the next few months. These are both larger and more complicated migrations and specifically the database application server upgrade will require coordination from multiple system providers.

With the assistance of the internet service provider, upgrades to the internet connections at the RE Walter Memorial Aquatic Centre, the High Level Sports Complex and Water Treatment Plant are scheduled for the first half of July.

As at June 30, the \$ 2.75 billion Universal Broadband Fund has selected 93 projects, serving approximately 58 632 households and cellular connectivity along 252 kilometers of highway, with funding allocations total of \$ 69 411 154. Eight of these projects, serving approximately 12 259 households, with funding allocations of \$ 6,489,618 are located in Alberta. This is the same number for Alberta located projects as reported in May and June 2021. Feedback was requested from the three service providers who applied for funding that would be used in and around High Level. Responses were received from two of the applicants. Both believe that their applications have not yet been evaluated but expect the Fund will be considering them in the forthcoming weeks.

HR

There is one new full time permanent vacancy for the month of June and the Airport Equipment Operator position has been advertised and applications have started to come in. We hope to fill this vacancy in July. Recruitment for Community Services and Public Works positions are ongoing.

Vacancies for the positions of five Summer Maintenance Crew, one Visitor Center/Day Camp Assistant and one Lifeguard have been filled and we welcome Gerald Bulldog, Karisa Pittman, Kingsley Rodney, Corey Wilkening, Evelyn Glover, and Benjamin Walsh to the team. Zachary Braun has transferred from Community Services to Public Works. Bill Schnarr's role with the Fort Vermilion School Division has ended and he is now committed full time to the Town of High Level. Sarah Hume has resigned from her casual position at the Aquatic Centre and we wish her every success in her future endeavours.

There are currently no protected positions being covered by acting staff.

Communication

Two high-priority events at the end of the month resulted in the highest rates of community engagement on the Town Facebook page as long as those statistics have been monitored. By 2 p.m. on Friday afternoon, the Town of High Level Facebook page had reached about 108,000 people (+372 per cent), had more than 60,000 engagements (+367 per cent), and had 124 page likes (+300 per cent) between June 4 and July 4 – with almost 90 per cent of that engagement taking place between June 25 and July 1.

The twice-daily content updates for the West Fraser log yard fire and regular Canada Day were the two biggest drivers of this engagement on top of overlapping messaging campaigns resulting in higher-than-usual posts.

The two-a-day brief updates with dynamic graphic content have shown to be a very effective way to get community messaging out, and we are now looking at how this format could be implemented in the event of a large-scale emergency.

Community Services

Administration

We applied on a Canada Healthy Community Initiatives Grant with the Friendship Centre that, if successful, would fund a cultural outdoor park that would be in the adjacent lot to the Friendship Centre with access from the back of the museum, with a history walk from the museum to the cultural park.

We rewrote and re-submitted a grant for lights on the current trails in High Level under Canada Healthy Community Initiatives Grant.

Working on a grant for Green and Inclusive Community Building Grant for the construction of the multipurpose facility.

Worked with legal and the Manager of Lands and Development to complete a contractual agreement for land transfer with the Fort Vermillion School Division (FVSD), for the lands that the multipurpose facility will be located, swapping for Town land, where the current arena and ball diamond are operating.

We have been collaborating with public works mechanic, and Enersys, to find a solution following the receipt of the analysis of the batteries on the Engo Ice Resurface.

Had several meetings with Early Childhood Educators, to look at options for licenced care in High Level.

Reviewed the MOU with the library manager and will bring it Council in August with suggested changes.

Arena /Parks

In June, Alberta Forestry, FVSD, and the Monthly Market used the curling rink pad.

The Splash Park was opened up with new hours, now operating 9am-8pm instead of 9am-9pm.

The arena staff assisted FCSS staff with setting up for National Indigenous People's Day at Jubilee Park as well as moving equipment for Day Camp from Town Hall to the Arena Hall.

Arena staff worked on the baseball fields behind the arena for Slo Pitch and they will continue to work on the parks and have them ready for Canada Day.

Pool

The pool resumed operation June 20 and we were open seven days of the week. With scaled back COVID restrictions in place, facility was open for rentals by appointment only. Rental groups were either one on one for fitness/lesson rentals or household only rentals.

Re-painted parking lanes and handicapped decals.

Stingrays started June 14 swimming three hours a day Monday - Thursday.

Pool Supervisor completed her NLS Instructor Certification and both Pool Supervisor and Senior Guard recertified their Water Art aqua fitness.

We now have six casual staff and have lost two staff, one to grass crew and the other for university, but we are planning for NLS Course and we have 12 potential candidates. We also hired one more Senior Guard, returning for the summer – Ben Walsh. We have an offer out to a casual Jr. Lifeguard just waiting on acceptance.

Planning to run a couple more First Aid Courses with Health and Safety, to get our staff up to date

FCSS

Family Community Support Services (FCSS) continued with our COVID assistance line, during the month we assisted 15 clients with grocery, mail, and food bank pick-ups.

June 7 to 13 was Seniors Week; we held a “Meals on Wheels” event this year in partnership with Alberta Health Services and High Level Native Friendship Centre. Together we delivered 115 meals to seniors.

We are in the process of planning our summer day camp program. This year we have 9 weeks of camp. We have opened registration and have spots for 30 youth a week. We have approximately 18 youth registered each week at this time.

We have registered with Indigenous Sports Council of Alberta (ISCA) to run a blue jays baseball camp, this camp will be 8 weeks and ran by our recreation leader and volunteers. The ISCA will provide all the equipment needed, we currently have 38 youth registered for this free program.

June is also Parks and Recreation month; we highlighted parks in the community and had families post photos in the park for a chance to win. We had 13 families participate in this challenge.

The FCSS and Recreation staff assisted with Indigenous Day.

Tourism/Museum

The Mackenzie Crossroads Museum and Visitors Centre opened on June 14 and we have had 206 people visit the museum and outdoor seating area in the month of June. The gift shop has done \$4239.49 in sales this month.

The summer staff have been busy cleaning, archiving, creating scavenger hunts, and planning art attacks. We sold 20 take home art attack kits this month.

We hosted a logo refresh contest and received 25 logos, Council will select their favourite, and we will announce the winner publicly.

Our summer events coordinator has been busy helping plan Canada Day. We are also working with the Farmers Market, they will be starting July 3 and run each Saturday until September.