

Mayor's Report January 24 - February 26

Jan 24, 2022 Regular Council Meeting

- Council met with MLA Dan Williams to discuss issues and projects for the Town of High Level which include the following:
 - Broadband
 - Multi-Purpose/Evacuation Centre
 - Infrastructure projects (paving of 92nd and 114 ave., Wastewater, and Highway pedestrian crossing).
 - Disaster Recovery Fund
 - Mental Health and health care
 - TOLKO Variance Funding

Jan 25, 2022 Roundtable for Canadian Northern Corridor Research Program

Jan 25, 2022 Wildfire and Forestry Dialogue

- The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers organizing a national dialogue on wildland fire prevention, mitigation and resilience.
- The Canadian Dialogue on Wildland Fire and Forest Resilience will take place as a series of virtual roundtables this coming February and I have been invited to be one of the panelists on one of the roundtables.
- The event is being co-chaired by Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Natural Resources Canada, and Mike Holland, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Development for New Brunswick.
- I had a preliminary discussion with Stacey Sankey and Mike Norton, Director General with the Canadian Forest Service to discuss the goals of the dialogue and what they would like me to contribute
- The roundtable is set for February 10th.

Jan 27, 2022 Boreal Housing Regular Meeting

- Board requested two budgets (one for January to July and one for July to December) as the facility is not operating at full capacity.

- The board would like to request a meeting with Minister Pon, to ask the province to fund the Makenzie House budget instead of residents of this region until July, as it is not fully operational at no fault of Boreal Housing.

Jan 31, 2022 Landscape Architecture - History Walk /

Cultural Park HLNFC

- Met to listen to the plans that administration is proposing for the Museum History Walk as well as the plans that the High Level Friendship Centre has for their Culture Park.
- The ideas are fantastic and will provide a great tourist attraction for residents of the region and tourists.

Jan 31, 2022 Strategic Plan 2022 Preliminary session

- Council discussed its preliminary (draft) areas of interests, concerns and goals, to help prepare CMR for their in-person Strategic Planning Sessions with Council in March.

Feb 2, 2022 Dene Tha'-TOHL Regular Meeting

- Group met to discuss advancements in:
 - Water/Wastewater
 - Joint Regional Emergency Plan
 - Multi-Purpose/Evacuation Centre

Feb 2, 2022 Meeting with Minister Glubish

- Council met with Minister Glubish to let him know that the TOHL does not meet CRTC recommended definition of broadband which is (connection of speeds of at least 50 Mbps download and at least 10 Mbps upload and unlimited data).
- **2000 to 3000** people in our community have very poor internet access...at an extremely high cost!!
- We also expressed our concern about The INTERNET Availability map which we believe is extremely inaccurate as many residents only have a high of 2.6mbps and experience a low below 1 mbps.
- The TOHL requested that Service Alberta include the town in the 2022 funding allocation under the MOU between the Federal Government and the GOA.

Feb 2, 2022 Meeting with Minister Sawhney

Infrastructure Project

- The TOHL asked for funding support to resurface 92nd street and 114 avenue the two main arterial roads in the industrial area of HL.
- We also respectfully requested that should we be successful in our application that the province also contribute to the cost of the industrial road remediation over and above the cost of STIP, as a contribution for the heavy use of these roads as a bypass during highway bypass construction.

Wastewater Funding

- To meet the future growth requirements of the TOHL and the Dene tha' the TOHL requested that First Nations communities be recognized as partners when applying for funding.

High Level Multi Purpose Evacuation Centre

- Discussed the centre and asked for Minister Sawhney's support.

Feb 4, 2022 Boreal Housing

- Meeting to pass the two budgets for Makenzie House

February 10 Panelist Canadian Dialogue Wildland fire

- Panel discussion was about severe wildland fire events that are increasing in frequency, intensity, and costs and placing growing risks on communities and infrastructure; business and financial sectors; individual and public health and well-being; and long-term forest health.

Purpose and outcomes

The purpose of the Canadian Dialogue on Wildland Fire and Forest Resilience is to energize public discussion and engagement on wildland fire, with an emphasis on prevention and mitigation.

Expected outcomes include:

1. Mobilization of the whole-of-society, encouraging diverse sectors to own, lead, and collaborate on wildland fire resilience
2. Identification of tangible activities, at multiple scales, to increase wildland fire prevention, and mitigation.
3. Better understanding of the unique challenges, complexities, and variances of wildland fire across provinces, territories, and different sectors of society;
4. Strengthened partnerships between stakeholders and fire management agencies;

Issues in the Dialogue That I Addressed?

Vegetation Management

- is a key component of Firesmart and Fire Resilient communities but if put in perspective, relying only on managed vegetation immediately against your community boundary without looking at the other elements basically leaves your community at risk from fire impingement with no back up.
- The Chuckegg Creek Wildfire was at times spotting 1-2 km ahead of the fire.
- The Town's Fire Smart areas were approximately 100 meters deep around the community.
- While still an important element in FireSmart, vegetation altering such as fireguards, thinned areas and managed grounds can only be one piece of the puzzle.
- FireSmart at the individual home level is far more effective such as dealing with buildup of leaves around homes, removing combustible piling of materials, prepping the immediate areas around the homes to reduce ember traps is far more effective.
- The Town firesmarted 1500 homes prior to the approach of Chuckegg in 2019. This took over 200 firefighters a day and half to complete.

Interagency Cooperation.

- This is a key element in our success in 2019.
- The Town has worked hard on interagency cooperation for years prior to Chuckegg.
- The development of working relationships, joint training, cooperative response and regular communication laid the groundwork for expanding our organization together during Chuckegg.
- The HLFD already had a working relationship with much of the AB Wildfire Staff in the province due to multiple deployments to other communities since 2011.
- Prioritizing response procedures with Wildfire staff and improving communications over the years meant that we already knew each other's business.
- **The Town's involvement in the development of the All Hazards Incident Management Teams (AHIMT)** in the province laid the groundwork for a successful Unified command system during the event where municipal process and wildfire process were worked on together.
- The Town also developed the **Northwest Alberta Emergency Resource Agreement** tying together over 30 municipalities for emergency assistance in Northwest Alberta.

Cross Training:

- The HLFD cross trains with AB Wildfire every year.

- This includes live training, table tops, demos and responses.
- This also goes towards improving relationships but also provides a good understanding of each others' capabilities during an event.
- During Chuckegg, an incredible amount of cross assistance occurred between Structural Departments and Wildfire Crews because at the command level, there was sharing of each other's capacities.

Education:

- The Town provides education materials through social media regularly during fire season.
- This includes:
 - evacuation plans
 - FireSmart info and general preparedness.
- Two weeks before Chuckegg, a Wildfire Preparedness Day was held in Centennial Park to educate the public on town plans.
- This led to an increased knowledge of the public on our procedures and resulted in a smooth evacuation of around 5000 people in less than 6 hours.

Legislation and Planning:

- The Town has standards in our **Community Standards Bylaw regarding FireSmart**.
- This was not the case prior to Chuckegg.
- As a result of firesmartering so many homes, this was put into play following the fire.
- **Legislation and Planning is the most difficult element for communities** as built up areas already exist and it is difficult to change what is there.
- The challenge is areas to be built in the future in the Wildland Urban Interface need to meet building standards to make them resilient to fire.

Emergency Planning:

- This element was likely one of the largest reasons that High Level is still here following Chuckegg.
- The town had invested time and funds to develop a comprehensive
 - auto order lists for equipment,
 - plans for water supply,
 - evacuation routes,
 - ECC Layouts,
 - involvement of the AHIMT,
 - Sprinkler plans and firesmart areas.

- All of these assisted greatly with the execution of the plan to protect the community.
- The Town had plans for critical infrastructure such as the two mills, and worked hard on coordinating the arrival of resources and had strong organization ahead of the fire.

Feb 14, 2022 **Council (Virtually)**

Feb 21, 2022 **Committee of Whole**

Feb 22, 2022 **Growing the North**

- Growing the North got off to a very rocky start because of technical difficulties
- Kendal Netmaker was the keynote and he spoke about personal and professional challenges and how it takes energy and perseverance to overcome these obstacles.
- The forestry presentation with Jason Krips of AFPA was quite interesting as he discussed the current forestry situation, as-well-as trends and opportunities in the Forest sector.

Feb 23, 2022 **Growing the North**

- The day began with Mr. Doom and Gloom Todd Hirsch and he talked about new ways to think about Alberta's economy in 2022.
- He talked about how COVID is still with us, climate change is even more pressing and global trade remains unsettled.
- He feels that Alberta's economy is transforming, but we need new ways to think about our economy in order to thrive in a permanently uncertain world.

Government of Alberta Round Table

Hon. Travis Toews, Minister of Finance

Hon. Dale Nally, Associate Minister of Natural Gas and Electricity

David Hanson, Chair, Northern Alberta Development Council

-I need to follow up with David about how they recruited students in Cold Lake to become doctors, and pay for their education for return to service. (Of course it was his son).

- Jesse Hirsh had a very interesting talk on how technology is having a transformational effect on the agricultural sector, enabling greater accuracy, responsiveness, and precision when it comes to managing crops and livestock.
- Farmers are using sensors, robots, smarter weather forecasts, and data analytics to enable smart farms that are becoming increasingly automated, with greater yields.

Feb 24, 2022

Growing the North

- Danielle Vlemmiks spoke about how Alberta tourism's future success hinges on accelerated growth in the first three years coming out of the pandemic.
- Joe Jackman's discussion was on embracing change in the Retail World Remade by COVID and how only the business leaders who learned and adapted will survive in this new operating environment because of shifting consumer behaviour

Feb 24, 2022

Boreal Housing

Purchasing a house in High Level under the SRHI (Sustainable Remote Housing Initiative).

Feb 24, 2022

Minister Glubish (Services Alberta)

- Discussion on his budget and how he has more federal money to mix with provincial money but no announcement. Stay tuned as to which communities are chosen for round one.

Feb 24, 2022

Minister McIvor (Minister Municipal Affairs)

- Discussion on his budget and how it never got better, but it never got worse. Status Quo?

Feb 24, 2022

Minister Sawhney (Minister Transportation)

- Discussion on her budget and how there is more STIP funding, but no announcements.

Feb 26, 2022

Firefighter Awards

- Congratulations to Chief Schmidt and the amazing volunteer fire department on a wonderful evening.