



# Town of High Level

## Monthly report to Council

April 2020

### Administration and Finance

#### CAO

Finalized Emergency Reception Centre/Multiuse Facility concept and brought forward to Council for approval. Forwarded copies of concept to MLA Williams and MP Warkentin.

Compiled Unfunded Capital Project presentation for Council approval and forwarded to Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Joined Alberta Municipal Data Sharing Network. Allows the Town access to updates to GPS and other mapping platforms

Reviewed asset management platforms

Met with administration and communications staff to review revamp of Town's website

Worked with Mackenzie County to welcome Fort Vermilion/Buttertown evacuees to High Level.

#### Finance

On April 29, Administration received the receivership amount of \$33,482.15 per Council Resolution #138-20.

Finance is continuing to communicate with Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) regarding the Disaster Recovery Program funding for the Chuckegg Creek Wildfire. The total advance received to date is \$5,702,544. In April, the Town formally requested a fourth advance of \$1,500,000 in light of the provincial government's request for municipalities to defer the receipt of various revenue streams due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The deadline for municipal audited financial statements has been extended from April until October. Finance is anticipating completed financial statements for the late-May or early-June Council meeting as there have been delays related to the Disaster Recovery Program expenses, landfill liability, and COVID-19 crisis.

## **Planning and Development**

On behalf of the NWSAR Committee, working with external groups developing options for the habitat ground-truthing component for NWSAR's Caribou Ranges Research Project.

Developed an edited, "tracked-changes" version of the Land Use Bylaw #944-13, and the content for ten one-pager communication documents – delivered to chosen consultant.

Developed written content for seven Development Department, permit application forms – delivered to chosen consultant.

Assisted with multiple Administration tasks, including closed landfills project, development permit applications, construction economic multipliers, and miscellaneous mapping.

## **IT**

While IT systems have been stable for the month of April with no critical disruptions to operations, two electricity supply interruptions that had the potential to impact on operations were experienced. Recovery to full operation in both cases was quick and in one case required no intervention. No data was lost. A planned survey to identify potential high speed WiFi internet points of presence has been postponed to the second week in May due to COVID-19 concerns.

## **HR**

Three seasonal positions have been filled and alternate work plans have been developed for seasonal and casual staff to enhance retention and mitigate lost revenue. There are currently two protected positions being covered by acting staff and two full-time vacancies (one at the Aquatic Center and one at the Airport). Applications for the Airport vacancy have been shortlisted from over 50 applications down to three and we expect to be able to hire soon.

## **Communication**

In April, the Communications Coordinator issued 48 ToHL messages to the public through traditional and social media. While the vast majority were COVID-19 related, there were several messages dealing with "regular" news – such as a release on the pouring of the Richardson grain elevator, road sweeping, and the Mayor's 15-year service award. The Town's Facebook page has been averaging nearly 7

The Communications Coordinator has been working with the IT Manager and Municipal Secretary on establishing and strengthening Council's online council meetings – this included several public messages made from Council decisions as well as continued expansion of the Town's Youtube channel as community moves to include more video and find new ways of reaching local residents.

The Communications Coordinator has been working closely with Community Services to ensure their messaging is reaching the public, and has had a hand in direct messaging with the public by engaging residents one-on-one with their questions and comments.

## **Health and Safety**

There was one report for the month of April. A close call was reported when an employee was removing ceiling tiles and a brick that was placed on top of the tile fell nearly striking the employee in the head. The employee caught the brick before it could fall any further, preventing any damage or injury.

The Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee held its monthly meeting. During this meeting, the Safety Meeting Administrative Directive 22-07 was reviewed and changed to reflect updated reporting requirements. The Committee also completed facility inspections, on the Arena, Aquatic Center, Town Hall, Public Works Shop, Airport, Museum and Visitor Information Center, and the Water Treatment Plant. No major concerns were noted on the inspections. Revision of the Town's Safe Work Practices/Procedures is underway, and is expected to be completed by the end of May.

Health and Safety Management System stats for each Department/facility were compiled and delivered to the respective Supervisors, and Directors, as well as the CAO.

## **Municipal Secretary**

In April, the Municipal Secretary was involved in ongoing Bylaw and Policy research while handling day-to-day administrative duties. The Municipal Secretary was also involved in work planning for the Town's administrative university summer student.

## **Community Services**

We have been working with Human Resources and other departments to develop a plan to reallocate recreation staff, both full-time and summer and casual staff, with facilities being closed. We assisted Mackenzie County as a virtual reception centre for Ft Vermillion evacuees.

### **Arena /Parks**

During the month of April, the arena staff have completed painting the town hall lobby hallway along with Room 150. Park inspections and clean up have commenced. Other work includes assisting public works with garbage pick up around town and starting work on community gardens at parent link centre.

### **Pool**

Pool is filled and circulating, at low temperatures. Staff working on gutting and refitting first aid room. Fulltime pool staff currently painting at the airport terminal building.

### **Events and Programs, FCSS**

Assisted with flood evacuees from Fort Vermillion, AB. We provided Family Fun Kits (partnership with Mackenzie County Family Resource Network and Supports to early learning and childcare). We also provided communication boards with regular updates, positioned at seven hotels.

### **Tourism/Museum**

Continue to working on a display for the Museum for the Chuckegg Creek Fire anniversary and working on the museum cleaning and organizing and a plan for archiving.

## **Operations**

Continued to work with the CEDI technical water and wastewater task force to finalize the Custody Transfer Point Details and Wastewater Study Terms of Reference.

Completed the utility right of way agreement Suncor Energy to provide utility access to the Pinnacle Pellet Project at Tolko Site.

Finalized multiple project tender and design specifications with WSP engineering.

Worked on establishing a water diversion allocation framework and Footner Lake hydrological assessment with AEP and Mackenzie County.

Reviewed potential summer staffing requirements, and potential new projects to provide interim work for Recreation and Aquatic Centre Staff.

Worked on the municipal sidewalk tractor and Hydrovac Specifications and tender options.

## **Airport**

Spring operations are well underway with runway lighting and markers alignment, sand removal from runway, and all other airside areas.

The Runway was inspected and crack filling requirements were identified with quotation request sent out.

Completed SMS report and safety case for COVID-19 and returned completed continuity of operations questionnaire from Transport Canada.

Flooding occurred within the airside area and around housing areas. No damage occurred to municipal property, but a drainage review with Operations and BGIS Management.

Airport activity started to increase near the end of the month with Helicopters arriving for fire season operations, and Canwest relocated aircraft to High Level before the major flooding occurred in Fort Vermillion

## **Cemetery**

Nothing to report.

## **Public Works**

Annual storm water and culvert thawing was the focus for most of the month, these operations were hampered by refreezing of lines during the cold weather changes. Pothole filling proceeded as soon as the weather allowed and washing of the downtown sidewalks and medians was completed.

Amber Heights lift station had a pump fail due to plugging, the plug turned out to be a piece of rebar stuck in the impellor. No damaged was caused to the pump and the source of the rebar remains unknown?

The Dogwood sewer pump was installed after it returned from being overhauled.

Mechanics prepared summer operations equipment and completed minor repairs to the old sweeper for spring cleaning. The new sweeper is expected mid May.

## **Utilities**

The Chlorine Dioxide trial continued with the focus on benefits while using our primary coagulant of Aluminium Sulfate. The results showed a fair response to CLO2 addition but is not worth the capital investment. The CLO2 trail was changed to use a new coagulant, aluminium chlorohydrate, and will run for three weeks to test the effectiveness of the new combination.

LED lighting changes were completed in the main plant area, with the removal of 500-watt bay lights. This will achieve a 90 per cent reduction in overall lighting energy costs.

Staff completed the relocation and install of the online process analyzers for the streaming current monitor and chlorite residual.

## **Protective Services**

### **Community Policing**

High Level Enforcement Services received 47 calls for service to their dispatch centre during the month of April.

Peace Officers conducted 41 total investigations, resulting in four arrests. Year over year caseload was reduced because of a late winter and COVID-19.

For 60 per cent of the month, the department was required to run at half strength due to COVID-19 isolations. Access to RCMP cellblock for lodging prisoners has been heavily restricted due to COVID-19 restrictions – meaning arrests and processing has heavily impeded accounting for a significant reduction in arrests.

Peace Officers conducted extensive high-visibility patrols and performed coaching and awareness duties pertaining to the Public Health Emergency Order. Seven formal and extensive investigations were conducted under the Public Health Act with charges being laid in 2 investigations and a warrant for arrest issued in a third. One of the investigations resulted in the seizure of drugs under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Peace Officers were successful in locating a male wanted on 17 criminal charges operating a motor vehicle while impaired by cannabis. The accused was arrested and further charged for five additional serious Traffic Safety Act offenses and an impaired driving suspension was issued.

## **Emergency Response**

Activation of ESS Plan for Fort Vermilion Flood

HLFD assumed responsibility for Fire Services in all areas north and west of the Peace River due to the flood. Protective Services assisted the County by deployment of ABTF1 to assist in Emergency Management

Supported ABTF1 by phone from High Level with daily updates and coordination with AEMA

## **Fire Department**

Eighteen calls in April: six medical, six alarms, two Wildland, one MVC, and three Structure Fires.

Prepared Wildland Equipment for Wildland Season.

Online Training for Wildland Season prepared by WUI Team and distributed to HLFD members for home training.

Officer Selection process complete. Officer organization meeting held in April.

WUI Team delivered two on line Webinars on WUI response reaching approximately 350 people in Western Canada.

Two WUI Team members worked from home for a period due to isolation requirements for COVID-19 and then returned after testing.



# Town of High Level

## COVID-19 Response Planning

To April 30, 2020

### Community Services

- All recreational facilities are closed. We removed the ice surface from the arena, cleaned the building and had it sanitized with a Clorox 360 sanitizer. The building was turned over to AHS on Tuesday March 24, 2020, for use as an assessment/treatment centre for the region.
- We have developed an information/registration database (MS Access) and have staff trained to operate an assistance/registration line for seniors and isolated community members. Some of the features are offering a daily call back for someone that is alone, isolated, or ill, and for seniors who do not use a computer. We also offer grocery and prescription delivery.
- Cancelled all programming and facility bookings until the end of May.
- Created Identification cards for any staff that will be delivering groceries or prescription drugs, and set up a process for identification with the pharmacy for Town staff that are doing deliveries.
- Signage was made up for the Town Office (Closed on Tuesday March 24, 2020) for online and phone interactions only.
- Reallocated staff to run the assistance line from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.
- Creating virtual programming to assist families and youth who are self isolated.
- The playground equipment was closed to the public in early April.
- FCSS, Recreation and Arena staff have been developing and delivering community programs virtually and physically delivering activity boxes and providing essential service deliveries, and in addition partnered with the foodbank and school division and provided food hampers and delivery for families. We enhance the hampers from the foodbank with fresh food (milk/eggs/cheese etc.) also any personal needs (diapers/toiletries etc.) when requested. There were also family kits provided with hampers with mental health information and games.
- You've been egged, Easter treat bags for children (we gave our 580)
- Lego Contest, create your best lego creation for a chance to win a prize
- Spring Family Kits, skipping Ropes/Chalk/Bouncy Balls for families (CN Donation)
- Families Busy Bins, 3 different bins for different age groups (0-6 Loose Parts Play, 6-11 DIY Puppet Kits, 11 plus DIY Science kits 450 kits total) Partnership with Mackenzie County Family Resource Network (old Parent link) & CN Donation
- Bird House Kits for Families partnership with High Level Public School (300 kits)
- Senior Outreach, deliver workout kits to seniors in our community along with coffee donated from Tim Hortons (100 seniors)
- Partnered with The Great North Cabin Fever Photo Contest" to offer four draws with local business being promoted, themed "Town of High Level Spirit" "Town of High Level Landmarks" "Town of High Level Wildlife" "Town of High Level Events"

## **FB Post**

- Mental Health Monday
- TikTok Tuesday or Take out Tuesday
- Workout Wednesday
- Throw Back Thursday (History Book posts)
- Family Friday, Family Activities for the weekend

## **Operations**

- Reduced contact between water treatment staff and all other Public Works Staff. Eliminated sharing of open foods in coffee areas.
- Staff will spend additional time disinfecting equipment at the end of the sewage jobs and cleaning anything they have touched which may be transferred to other operators during the next job or shift.
- Cancelled all in-house appointments – for example, water meters and sewer inspections.
- Reviewed manuals, alarm codes, and door codes or keys so any contractor or other municipality can easily maintain the water system in the event of a major staff loss.
- Planning for possible shift work to reduce contact.
- Reached out to Landfill Operations and established backup operations for sanitary landfill. Will be in contact as required.
- In weekly contact with L&P Disposal regarding potential disruptions in residential garbage pick-up and possible use of neighborhood bins.
- Maintain adequate levels of PPE operational and treatment materials. Keep in contact with suppliers for essential products.
- Reached out to our neighbouring municipalities regarding potential mutual aid needs and stayed in contact as required. (First contacts have been made.)
- Staff will follow social distancing procedures, which will produce a slower work pace, but routine snow removal, culvert thawing, street sweeping, and pothole filling can all go ahead with minimal disruption.
- Purchased 36 20-litre pails of hand sanitizer; 26 pails have been sold at cost to various organizations.

## **Airport**

- Restricted entry signs were outside both front entrances to allow entry of only passengers and essential workers to the facility.
- All equipment (including vehicles) is cleaned before and after each use to avoid spread to other individuals using the equipment.
- Staff will follow social distancing with all tenants (including airline staff, rental agencies, fuel providers, cleaners, contractors, pilots, etc.)
- Cancelled all tenant meetings and/or gatherings of large groups in the terminal building.
- Cleaning contractor has been providing extra cleaning at no additional cost.
- Ensured there is adequate stock of PPE for airport staff.

## **Administration/Finance**

- Effective March 24, 2020, the Town Office is closed to the public. Business at the Town Office will be done over the phone, and in-person requirements will be done to reinforce physical distancing and limiting public access.
- A VPN system has been set up to allow staff to work from home if necessary.
- Administrative Directive 44-20 has been put in place to deal with COVID-19 (attached).
- Increased sanitation efforts have been underway.
- Finance has been asked to refrain from using other employee's workstations, and to frequently wipe down common areas (i.e., credit card machine).
- All staff with purchase order books have been asked to write "C-19" on expenses related to COVID-19 efforts.
- All staff working overtime due to the hotline have been asked to indicate reason for overtime on the timesheets (this is actually already done, but it was reiterated).
- Finance staff have been informed of Council's resolution to waive utility penalties until our July 2, 2020, penalty run – will provide the communications for this.
- Working with the local newspaper and area communities to provide communications for businesses that are continuing operations during the pandemic. This will focus on public information regarding businesses that provide remote ordering and home delivery.
- Finance proposed various changes to Council throughout April related to changes that the Government of Alberta has requested municipalities to implement due to the COVID-19 crisis. Significant changes have been made to the Town's 2020 utility penalties, the 2020 tax deadline, 2020 property tax penalties, and the Pre-Authorized Tax Payment Plan. All changes were approved through Town bylaw.
- Finalized Town's planning for COVID response including plan for transition of arena into an AHS assessment/treatment center.
- Attend semi-weekly meeting with AEMA and as-called meetings with Alberta Municipal Affairs
- Attend weekly regional COVID response planning meetings

## **Protective Services**

- Email to all HLFD staff in regards to updated infection control standards in effect.
- Department at Level 2 of Pandemic plan:
  - Fire Station closed to the public
  - Increased sanitization
  - Restricted gym use
  - Cancellation of in-person training sessions – online training being sent out.
- On line training being conducted by HLFD members. On line training also being sent to Fort Vermilion, La Crete and Rainbow Lake Departments
- Finalized planning for seclusion of fire crews to maintain staffing levels. Ready for 6-person crew on four-day shifts starting after cases announced in area. Possible use of camp trailers to be set up to house crews.
- Examination of security plan for facilities completed – no need for implementation (CPO's)
- Review of enforcement plan for CPO's
- PPE issued to CPO's
- Shift changed for 7 day per week single shift coverage.
- Weekly check in with EMS in regards to staffing. No problems encountered
- Assisted Community Services in posting playground structure closures

## **Safety**

- Several Safe Work Practices/Procedures written by FCSS were reviewed and approved.
- Noted SWPs include FCSS11-00 Pandemic Client Deliveries and FCSS12-00 Office Space Sanitization Practices.
- The Health and Safety department was in attendance for all Daily COVID update meetings.
- Staff were reminded to ensure that they are practicing best social distancing practices – especially when posting pictures to the Towns social media platforms.