



Town of High Level

Monthly report to Council

March 2021

Administration and Finance

CAO

General Administration

Worked with Boreal Housing on planning for the transfer of Heimstaed Lodge to La Crete Municipal Nursing Association. Boreal Housing has passed the motions required to begin the lodge transfer. The LCMNA is working on their lodge operating license and it is expected AHS will complete the due diligence process on the nursing contract by mid-June.

Worked with senior administrative team on asset management strategy. The initial inclusion strategy has been set and implementation begins mid-April.

Developed strategies for funding of multipurpose facility and reviewed options for land exchange with the Fort Vermilion School Division. Several meetings have been facilitated with members of the provincial cabinet and the federal outreach strategy begin in April. The land exchange is expected to be complete by the end of June.

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. The rapidly changing numbers, both locally and provincially, have required the Town to modify its programming to ensure public protection.

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

Finance

2021 Assessment Notices were mailed on or before March 11 with assessment complaint deadline date of May 18.

Year-end audit commenced March.

Administration and Finance met with Lane Quinn to review benefits renewal; decision made to proceed with RMA as new benefits provider.

On March 22, the 2021 Final Operating Budget and Capital Project Budget was approved.

2021 Arrears List was submitted to land titles by March 31st.

Finance is very sad to announce Tim DenOudsten leaving the Town of High Level; we wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Planning and Development

Completed Appendices for NWSAR's SOR Report/started final SOR regional content

Completed 7 interviews for the Land Use & Planning Officer position

Assisted several internal projects, including Asset Management System, Multi-Purpose Facility and proposed annexation

Completed 2020 Safety Codes Council Internal Review

Compiled an inventory of relocatable industrial camps and temporary bunkhouses

Processing business license payments and updates from business owners

Completed regular bylaw patrols

Processed annual staff driver's license abstract as per Policy 214-06

IT

IT systems have been stable for the month of March with no critical disruptions to operations. The internet gateway upgrade in November 2020 has had some unexpected side effects and we are currently working on resolving issues with remote access to the Building Management System at the R.E. Walter Memorial Aquatic Centre and the Trinus hosted Asset Management System server.

The deadline for Universal Broadband Fund applications was been extended to March 15. As at April 7, the \$ 1.75 billion fund has selected 32 projects, serving just short of 20 000 households, with funding allocations total of approximately \$ 30 million. Eight of these projects are located in Alberta.

HR

Two new vacancies have been created by the resignation of a Sports Complex Operator and a Community Peace Officer and we wish Laverne Pierrot and Mark Rushton every success in their future endeavours.

Recruitment for summer Community Services positions has begun and all vacant positions, with the exception of the Community Peace Officer position as at April 7, have been advertised and applications have been received. We will be shortlisting and conducting interviews during the month of April.

The recruitment process for the Land Use and Planning Officer is almost complete and we will be making an offer to a candidate as soon as we have completed the reference checks.

There are currently no protected positions being covered by acting staff and we are looking forward to welcoming Rob Shulman back from his leave of absence.

Communication

Highlights for March included a snow removal video, a new crosswalk outside Spirit of the North Community School, and the Community Garden expansion.

The snow removal project highlighted the work that goes into snow removal – particularly this year, when there was more snow than usual. The crosswalk video and news release were particularly well received as good news for the community. The Community Garden project included a photo shoot on site and garnered some media interest.

March 29 was the last day for our Communications Assistant; we wish her all the best as she moves on to a job in her chosen field.

Health and Safety

In March there were four incidents; two damage, one injury (report only), and one close call. All facility inspections and health and safety meetings were completed and submitted on time. Organizational training compliance for March was 94 per cent. The Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee have started the Employee Health and Safety Recognition program – first monthly awards will be issued in April.

Community Services

Administration

Worked with the contracted surveyor, and a geophysicist, that was sub contracted by Imperial Oil, to determine the exact location for well casing from 1950, with electromagnetic conductivity meters and ground penetrating radar instruments.

This was part of the original geotechnical, topographical and environmental surveys for subdivision, and engineering design for the new multi purpose facility as well as to ensure adequate setbacks for connection of the new multipurpose facility to the Public High School.

We also had surveyors out to try to determine ditch depth and breadth for drainage for the multipurpose facility, but we were/are still fighting with weather, and we were unable to complete any testing.

Worked on determinants for back up power for the new multi purpose facility – met with civil engineer and discussed loads, costs of diesel generators, other power sources, phased in power, and then working with architect to analyze space requirements.

Met with contractors, engineers, architects, and pool managers, on pool mechanical and circulation. Sent the applications for the subdivisions to the surveyor to initiate.

Put out a request for proposal (RFP) for land clearing at Community Park and had just under six hectares of land cleared. In the process of developing a RFP for the geotechnical and topographical before moving onto the next phase of scraping and tilling and having soil brought to the site.

Advertised for all the jobs for the summer positions as well as the new position for events coordinator.

Arena /Parks

There has been issues with the battery cells with the Engo iceresurfacers, and it was out of service for a week. The technicians were down from Edmonton and three water injectors in the cells, were found to be faulty, as well as the main cable going to the post that had previously melted showed signs of overheating. The copper wire was discolored as well as the insulating sheathing. The cable was cut back and two connections repaired. After the repairs, the battery was charged to approximately 98%.

We closed the skating paths and outdoor rink mid March. We kept them open as long as possible, but with warm weather, the surfaces were melting during the day and we were no longer able to keep the ice in a safe condition.

The arena is taking “household” only bookings for the last few Saturdays in March and April.

Pool

The facility was open five days of the week Wednesday – Sunday, during March. Towards the end of the month, we opened up four more rental spots on Tuesday afternoons. With COVID restrictions in place, facility was open for rentals by appointment only.

Rental groups were either one on one fitness/lesson rentals or household only rentals. For the joint use, schools were given the opportunity to book spots and then the High Level Christian Academy scheduled in time for their students.

We are currently working towards creating summer program opportunities if restrictions allow. We have also created a NLS Interest list to generate enough candidates for a course, to work on ongoing recruitment and training for perspective lifeguards.

The E-commerce merchant contract is finalized and set up, we are currently awaiting training from Open Edge/Global payments so we then can launch our online component and continue to cross train our Community Services Team.

We had meetings with the architects and service providers discussing the filtration and mechanical components for the new Multiplex.

FCSS and Recreation

Family Community Support Services continued with our COVID assistance line, during the month of March, we assisted 18 clients with grocery, mail and food bank pick-ups.

Our after school program Groovy Kids club is full with 18 youth. We hosted a Groovy Kids Day Program from March 29th to April 1st, 16 youth were registered. We currently have 20 seniors and people with mobility issues using our snow angel program.

After receiving a \$30,000 grant from Community Foundations for Community Gardens, we were able to provide 13 new plots, 4 of which being mobility accessible and 2 green houses to the community garden association.

We were also able to host a gardening 101 class, which 41 people attended. They each received a gardening starter kit. Our FCSS leader is registered with the CRA volunteer income tax program and has completed 14 returns in March. Our Easter scavenger hunt giveaway was a huge hit, we gave away 235.

Tourism/Museum

Our Museum and Tourism staff has continued to work on the planning of the new wilderness display for the museum that will feature information from the Northwest Species at Risk (NWSRA) and animal mounts from local hunter's. We hosted an art attack but due to the COVID restrictions it was all at home craft kits, we sold 30. The gift shop is open by appointment, in March our sales were \$694.99.

Operations

Administration

The Director of Operations continued to work on 2020 -2021 Capital Projects and started the summer work plans for Operations

Airport

The Airport Manager hosted the quarterly Tenant and User group meeting to update everyone on the general operations and safety of the Airport facilities. Attendance was good, and meeting minutes were sent to all participants.

The heavy snowfall and high winds at the end of the month created some challenging snow removal and runway maintenance.

The warmer weather and melting conditions caused the runway light pull pits to fill with water then turn to ice. This icing situation later caused an open circuit and failure of the primary runway lights. Each light pit had to be cleared of ice and checked for a short in the circuit. After many days of testing and isolating it, it was located in a 400 m section of buried line. A temporary cable was installed above ground until the ground thaws for a permanent fix.

Public Works

Snow removal operations continued as usual for most of the month. The sudden warm snap and light rain did create some ice problems around town.

Sidewalk drainage along the curbs and snow melting off adjacent properties continues to create icing on walkways. Regular sanding and removal of curbside snow with the sidewalk tractor are proceeding as required.

Thawing of catch basins and storm sewers has started, but the colder evening temperatures refreeze the surface fixtures and require daily thawing to keep them open.

A new illuminated crosswalk sign was installed at the 102 Street crossing by Spirit of the North School, and the signal light seems to be working well, with people activating it regularly.

The sewer flusher / hydro-vac primary heating coil for the boiler washed a hole through the pipe. We replaced the heating unit and put the truck back in service.

The mechanics serviced both the new and old street sweepers, and minor repairs were completed to prepare for spring street cleaning.

Utility Operations

The pump replacement at the Footner pump house has been completed, and we are on track to replace the building in early summer, thus completing the project.

Aquatech, a reservoir maintenance company, performed an internal inspection of primary treated water storage using a submersible rover camera system. The Structure appeared to be in excellent condition, with only minor cleaning required. The cleaning will be completed this summer by a Diving team from Aquatech.

Water Treatment Plant staff are continuing to provide mutual support to the Paddle Prairie Metis Settlement. The WTP Team covers on-call support and weekly facility inspections to meet provincial regulatory requirements while the settlement seeks out certified staff.

Additional Enzymes and Bacteria concentrate are being added to the Sewage lagoon to assist with lowering nitrates before spring discharge.

Protective Services

Community Policing

Enforcement Services conducted 42 investigations and received 38 calls for service in March 2021.

A major emphasis was placed on COVID19 investigations and assisting Public Health with duties. Twelve investigations under the Public Health Act with charges under the Act for failing to comply with the orders being laid in three occurrences. One individual was arrested on an arrest warrant that included Public Health Act charges laid by High Level Peace Officers and was convicted along with other charges resulting in the individual being fined and remanded into custody.

Twelve arrests were made by Peace Officers in March.

Investigations by Peace Officers, which in partnership with the High Level RCMP resulted in impaired driving sanctions being laid and multiple firearms and weapons being seized.

Peace Officers are working at a half capacity as a result of injuries. Return of other officer slated for April 6th.

One CPO resignation received in March effective April 10th.

Emergency Management

No Activations

Continued communication with DTFN on assistance if required.

Completed Phase 3 of the Regional Plan Project

Phase 4 funding from Alberta Community Partnerships Grant denied.

Fire Department

22 calls in March

Call of Note – Structure Fire in Keg River assisted by Manning Fire

Six MVC's

Six Firefighters completed the FMR program – 120-hour program covering Basic Emergency Medical Care

Started Wildland Training in preparation of the 2021 Season

WUI Program Grant from Municipal Affairs concluded and we have received word from Agriculture and Forestry about a 1-year extension for the 2021 season.

WUI team began readiness of Wildland gear for Fire Season.