



Town of High Level

Monthly report to Council

July 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 has completed their 'due diligence' report which has been accepted by AHS for transfer of the nursing contract and has been accepted for an operating license by with Alberta Seniors. Boreal Housing's nursing contract and operating license at Heimstaed Lodge will end at the time of transfer to the LCMNA.

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. The grant has been amended to match the scope and term of the work by Mackenzie County.

Continued to work on strategies for funding of multipurpose facility and options for land exchange with the Fort Vermilion School Division. Meetings at the federal level slowed due to the expected election and are now on hold. Administration has submitted a grant application under Green and Inclusive Community Buildings. Meetings with Provincial ministers continued through July and August.

Facilitated and attended in-town meetings with several provincial Cabinet Ministers:

Tyler Shandro, Minister of Health

Prasad Panda, Minister of Infrastructure

Tanya Fir, Associate Minister of Red Tape Reduction

Dale Nally, Associate Minister of Electricity and Natural Gas

Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Transportation

Nate Horner, Associate Minister of Rural Development

Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs

Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Children's Services

Attended Community Town Hall meeting with Kaycee Madu, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General.

Submitted request to Alberta Environment and Parks to use of the burner variance funding for engineering and preparation associated with the Multipurpose Facility. Administration has had discussions and has forwarded additional requested information to Albert Environment and Parks regarding this project.

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.

Finance

Finance was happy to participate in the Canada Day activities. Great work Community Services with the organization of this Town event. There was only positive feedback from residents and surrounding area visitors that took part in the park activities!

The 2020 Financial Information Return (FIR) and 2020 Statistical Information Return (SIR) was submitted to Municipal Affairs.

Notice of Public Auction advertising went out July 14th and the auction was held July 29th. There were three parcels of land offered for sale subject to a reserve bid. We had one successful bid.

Planning and Development

NWSAR 2021 State of the Region Report Release:

<https://albertanwsar.ca/state-of-the-region-report-release/>

Planning and Development Permit and Subdivision notices were all updated to reflect the MGA updates and new formatting, with a revised letterhead.

All Development Permit and Subdivision approval conditions were updated.

Developed and submitted a letter to Imperial Oil Ltd. enquiring about collaboration on a potential project.

Review of the Designated Smoking Areas at all Town facilities began.

Bylaw Enforcement Officer processed and sent out several new Clean Up Orders with a focus on vacant parcels, and Operations' work orders were issued and completed for four properties.

Six Development Permits were approved and issued in July 2021.

One connection to the North Footner Waterline was approved by the IMPC.

Training Workshop 1 was completed for Asset Management Maintenance Manager with select internal staff.

IT

IT systems have been relatively stable for the month of July but we experienced an issue with the email system when an upgrade to the mail filtering system did not go as planned (similar to the issue experienced in June). The issue was handled quickly by the system management service provider with no email lost.

With the assistance of the internet service provider, upgrades to the internet connections at the RE Walter Memorial Aquatic Centre, and the High Level Sports Complex have been completed. The planned upgrade at the Water Treatment Plant has been postponed until early August and cabling changes are needed at the Sports Complex.

As of August 26, the \$2.75 billion Universal Broadband Fund has selected 132 projects, serving approximately 73,056 households and cellular connectivity along 252 kilometers of highway, with funding allocations total of \$103,061,960. 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 through July 2021. On July 22, Minister Nate Glubish announced a \$150 million investment in rural Alberta broadband. This announcement has likely delayed selection of Alberta projects as the Federal and Provincial governments work on how the UBF and the provincial investment will collaborate. We remain in contact with the UBF applicants but have no new information at this time.

HR

There was two full time permanent vacancies for the month of July and interviews have been held for the Airport Equipment Operator position with a final decision to be made soon, applications have been received for the Sports Complex Operator position. Recruitment for Community Services positions are ongoing. Vacancies for the positions of three Summer Maintenance Crew have been filled and we welcome Stacey Auger, Gea Bengil, and Jordayna Krahn to the team. Rob Shulman has resigned from his position as Community Peace Officer in Protective Services and we wish him every success in his future endeavours. Rob's last day as an employee is August 13.

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

Communication

Communication in July consisted of 38 projects. Highlights included Canada Day on July 1, resulting in continued high engagement on social media. An information campaign on cleaning of a water tank at the Water Treatment Plant was a useful way to show the public an area of maintenance that is not often highlighted. Several visits with provincial ministers were relayed to the public. The news of two men found deceased in a wooded area in town resulted in a high engagement from the community and highlighted a need for the Town to receive news of these events in a timely manner. High Level RCMP were very accommodating and Town Communications have been added to the RCMP provincial media network, now receiving an average of 5-10 news releases per day from across the province.

Health and Safety

In July there were three injuries (no lost time, WCB or medical attention/treatment) and two close calls reported. All facilities completed and submitted their inspections and meetings on time with all relevant material reviewed. Five New employees received Health and Safety orientations. The Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee is focusing on working with facilities and management to ensure compliance with the Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act and Regulation. The winner of the monthly quiz for July was Stephen Butler from Public Works.

Community Services

Administration

We received quotes for the museum cameras, doors, and exterior. The tender was put out for the parking lot asphalt overlay.

We completed a grant for Community Park, under the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (\$750,000).

We were successful in an Expression of Interest (EOI) for Electric Ice Resurfacer under the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre, and will now have to get quotes and complete the grant application.

We put out a request for quotes and awarded the contract for the dog park fence for Canfor Park.

Blue Jays Baseball program, we applied for a grant for laptops, and funds for a Zombie Walk and for a food security program, and we were successful in this funding (details to come).

Had an open information session for day home licensing.

Had an ice users meeting and the regular season will begin Sept 13, and we anticipate being ready for bookings on the 10th.

We are collaborating with the Friendship Centre to assist with an event for September 30th.

Arena /Parks

Arena staff picked up some perennials and seasonal flowers from Sunscape Gardens and planted in the flowerbed in the middle of Centennial Park playground. Staff pruned and removed stakes from trees around Centennial Park.

Red shale was ordered for the baseball diamonds. The diamonds behind the arena were topped off with shale and patches of grass by the backstops were removed along with weeds circling the infield. Ball diamonds in Community Park were sprayed by Absolut Vegetation to kill weeds and arena staff worked on removing some of the dead weeds inside the infields.

The Splash Park & bathrooms were shut down on August 23, for the season and was prepared for winterizing.

Outdoor rink boards were repaired.

Staff cleaned the arena pad and boards to prepare for ice making. CIMCO arrived on the 24th to install new brine tanks for the ice plant and started the plant.

We had compliance reports completed on all the playgrounds, and have initiated minor repairs.

Pool

For July, the Stingrays ran Monday – Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Public Swim in July and the first half of August was seven days a week, family swim twice a week, and lane swim seven days a week. The last two weeks in August, we are operating five days a week.

Lesson Sets started July 6th we were able to offer 14 Classes for the month of July and for August lessons Tuesday – Friday 4:00-6:00pm.

Family Resource Network sponsored three swims. We are planning for a National Lifesaving Course (NLS) in September as we have 12 potential candidates, and will operate with a minimal number of public swims slots, until these courses are complete.

There were some maintenance issues this month that resulted in the automatic feed for chemicals not feeding properly, and we had to drain the hot tub and clear patrons from the pool and shut down temporarily. It ended up being an electrical issue and there was the electrical panel battery replacement and the M5 Panel for pool controller replacement.

FCSS

Family Community Support Services continued with our COVID assistance line, during the month of July and August we assisted nine clients each month with grocery, mail, and food bank pick-ups. We have started two new programs in partnerships with the Village; Cruz and Play is a program where children aged 0-6 get to play on our ride on toys and Art in the Park where parents and children get to do a different piece of art each week in the park. We have had great attendance for these programs, so far, 81 people have attended Cruz & Play, and 62 have attended Art in the Park. Our Awesome Adventure day camps have started and we have an average of 25 children a week. Our Blue Jays baseball program has 50 youth registered; this has been a very successful program. We held our first in person Teen Night event on July 23rd, we had 40 youth attend. The youth went swimming followed by a BBQ and making Tie Dye t-shirts at the Town hall.

Town of High Level staff hosted a Canada Day celebrate on July 1st. The day started with a Colour run, we had 100 people attend. In the afternoon, we had different events happening around the community. In Jubilee Park, we had kite flying, wind chime making, bike parade and a concert. In Canfor Park, we had tie dye t-shirts, bubbles and Hula Hoop contests. In Centennial Park, we had water activities and a basketball tournament.

Tourism/Museum

In July, the Mackenzie Crossroads Museum and Visitors Centre has had 658 people visit and the gift shop had \$4943.98 in sales. In August, 918 people visited and the gift shop had \$5,582.49 in sales.

We hosted our 30th anniversary event this month, which include a free BBQ, balloons, outdoor market, and bouncy houses we had more than 600 people attend. We also hosted a paint and wine night and

had 30 people register. We are currently working with High Level Slo-pitch to plan a baseball tournament.

We had a meeting for Banners of Remembrance, reviewed the applications, and discussed format for unveiling.

Operations

Administration

The High Level Agricultural Society relocation project is now 99 per cent complete. Site drainage, final grading, and finishing of the site were completed in May. Initial seeding was completed, and since then, some of the grass seed has been developed, but large areas remain bare. This poor germination was caused by dry conditions and the use of areas for Rodeo operations. The final step is to lightly harrow the entire site in September and apply seed for germination in the spring.

The new spray patcher arrived, and the supplier provided initial training. However, the unit could not function correctly due to a missing suction system in the tack oil tank. Parts were ordered and will arrive on Sept. 1. The supplier provided no explanation as to why this was not discovered as part of the pre-delivery inspection.

The Gateway Boulevard project is near completion. The final course of gravel is underway and paving operations will be completed by mid-September.

The Footner Raw Water Pumphouse is at 90 per cent completion. However, the contractor is waiting for the delivery of the steel doors to finish the project.

The 92st / 114 Avenue study is near finalization. WSP engineering has to complete the final design drawings for the widening of 114 Avenue. This project will be submitted the first week of October to the Alberta Transportation Strategic Infrastructure Program for possible funding in 2022.

The new sidewalk for 97 Street design was completed and tendered. Some additional sidewalk and curb work were sent out locally for quotes, and replacement of these damaged sections will be completed in September.

Airport

SMS Reporting: A small aircraft (Bush Pilot) decided not to use the main runway and land on the west grassed area. The pilot also failed to notify the Nav Can (Tower) of his intentions and could have caused an incident due to that area not being maintained as a grass strip with mowing operations only.

Maintenance: Summer hay lease operations started with an orientation of the leaseholder and his staff. Annual runway crack sealing tender was awarded, and the contractor was scheduled to complete the project in August. Airport staff continues to work on the filling of pond five, which is now 60 per cent full. This will reduce the potential areas for waterfowl activity.

Funding (RATI & ACAP): RATI funding of \$348,000 was awarded to the Town for airport operation assistance. We are working with the funders to clarify how this funding can be applied and any reporting requirements needed. The ACAP funding application for airport runway lighting project is near completion with final reviews and submittal to be completed by Aug. 1.

Roads, Greenspace, and General Operations

Operations removed more than 120 trees around Town utilizing the loader, mounted shear, and some general handwork. However, dead or dying trees continue to cause concern in various areas of the community. Operations will bring forth a plan to reduce these risks through in-house and contracted operations.

The remainder of the summer green space maintenance crew was hired and orientated in the first week of July. Although there was a slow start with summer operations, staff has done an excellent job maintaining Town properties.

The street sweeper has been out when time and weather allowed. The new sweeper has performed well with only a couple of minor repairs.

This month, the mechanics were busy performing CVIP inspections and ongoing maintenance and repair of summer green space equipment.

The large snow blower from the airport required annual maintenance, and the main auger drive needs to have the bearings and safety shear pins plates replaced. The parts required are long delivery items with expected completion in September.

Utility Operations

Operations staff had to remove and clear a large number of rags from a pump at the Amber Heights lift station. The disposal of rags and non-biodegradable materials continue to cause issues at various stations around Town.

The New Hydrovac and excavation shoring systems are in service. Operations have used the new equipment for a few excavations, and both systems performed very well.

Twelve hydrants were repaired or serviced. In addition, some internal components required replacement, and drain hole plugs were added to stop the infiltration of groundwater into the barrels.