

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT BONNYVILLE NO. 87

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS August 12, 2020

Keeping you informed of the services, business and development that affect YOU!

□#1 Council Expresses Concern Regarding Assessment Changes – The Municipal District of Bonnyville Council is voicing its profound concern over the proposed Alberta Government changes to the assessment model for oil wells, pipelines, and machinery and equipment.

The Province is considering changing how oil and gas property is assessed, from the current model of asset replacement value to a new model of market value. Under the four possible scenarios being considered, the M.D. would lose hundreds of millions of dollars in assessed value in oil and gas properties.

If approved, the assessment model changes would impact all residents and businesses in the M.D., either by significantly higher municipal taxes, reductions in services, or a combination of both. For example, the potential tax impact on a \$500,000 assessed residential property would result in an additional \$2,550 - \$3,950 per year in property taxes should the residential assessment class cover the created deficit.

“If the M.D. was to shift this loss of tax revenue to our residential landowners, that would mean a 286 percent property tax increase for every residence in 2021,” says Reeve Greg Sawchuk. “We are about to lose 14 to 22 percent of our total tax revenue.”

Sawchuk says that while the M.D. can appreciate the province’s support of the energy sector, changes to the assessment model represent a step too far. “We’ll be forced to either cut important core services such as road building and maintenance, or pass on substantial tax increases to our landowners at a time when our residents are already feeling the pinch of a strained economy.”

Council is contacting the Premier of Alberta and government ministers to express its concerns in advance of the final decision, expected in late-August.

The M.D. is encouraging residents and business owners to share their views on this issue by contacting Premier Kenney and the following Ministers:

Premier of Alberta, Jason Kenney

premier@gov.ab.ca

Minister of Municipal Affairs, Kaycee Madu

minister.municipalaffairs@gov.ab.ca

Minister of Energy, Sonya Savage

minister.energy@gov.ab.ca

□#2 Police Funding Model Update – Over the next five years, the M.D. will spend an estimated \$4,283,977 on funding for RCMP service in the Bonnyville/Cold Lake region. The phased in approach starts with the M.D. paying 10 percent of the cost in 2020 (\$407,789), 15 percent in 2021 (\$612,122), 20 percent in 2022 (\$815,578) and 30 percent in 2023 and 2024 (\$1,224,244 each year). A letter from Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, Doug Schweitzer, advises the province will pick up the cost of a GIS (General Investigation Section) officer in Bonnyville. However, three additional GIS positions in Cold Lake were not included in the model. Council has directed administration to inquire about the positions, and ask that those positions be considered under the enhanced police modifier credit. Council also directed administration to write a letter to the Minister of

Justice and Solicitor General to request the ability to enhance the powers of M.D. Peace Officers, enabling them to answer some of the same calls as the RCMP, acting as a municipal police force.

☐#3 Kinosoo Ridge Adventure Park Contract Awarded – Council awarded the tender for the design/build of an aerial adventure park at Kinosoo Ridge to Rigging Specialties. The budget is not to exceed the budgeted value of \$1.5 million (plus GST), which will be funded from the 2020 Kinosoo Ridge capital budget. The M.D. has applied for a grant of \$800,000 from the federal government to help cover the cost of the project, and is currently waiting to hear if the application was successful.

☐#4 – Agriculture and Waste Services Update –M.D. residents who use the Riverhurst Bin Site will be able to give their feedback on the site, and possible relocation when a survey is distributed later this month. The current bin site has outgrown its home at the Riverhurst Community Hall, and Waste Services is looking into alternative locations/services. Council agreed to spend an unbudgeted \$50,000 (to come from unrestricted surplus) on a Waste to Energy Feasibility Study. The study would identify if it would be beneficial to the M.D. to acquire micro-gasification technology to deal with Class 2 and 3 waste, which is currently stored and/or trucked to a landfill in Thorhild.

☐#5 Infrastructure Services Tender Awarded – Council awarded the tender for the reconstruction project for Township Road 630 between Range Roads 444A and 475A to Knelsen Sand and Gravel in the amount of \$2,988,147 (plus GST), to be funded from the 2020 Capital Budget. Council directed staff to come back with a report on the scope of work required for the reconstruction of Rge. Rd. 475A, south of Twp. Rd. 605. The project will be considered during the 2021 budget deliberations.

☐#6 BRFA Fire Trucks Update – Council approved the sale of two 2004 Superior Pumper trucks to the Town of Gibbons for \$80,000 plus GST. Two new trucks for the Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority were scheduled for purchase in 2021. Council has postponed the purchase until an age life analysis of all fire equipment can be completed later this year.

☐#7 Funding Support – Council approved a \$132,000 funding request from North Shore Heights and Shay Cho Bay Community Society for the installation of two paved pickleball courts, parking stalls and walkway at Bert Layh Memorial Park. The project will be funded through the M.D.'s Legacy Fund.

☐#8 Bonnyville Airport Improvements – While the transfer of the Bonnyville Regional Airport will take a few months, Council agreed to take over the capital construction works required immediately, so the work can be completed this year. The capital projects include site drainage, additional taxiway, anchored parking and taxiway overlay at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. Administration is proposing that work will be done with a combination of contract and in-house equipment and labour. Council agreed to fund improvements at the airport through the Legacy Fund as the oil and gas industry are major users of the facility.

☐#9 Briefly – Council approved the closure, sale, and consolidation of a portion of a laneway in Fort Kent. By consolidating the laneway, it will make for a more favourable building envelope. The developer will pay fair market value for the land, with a price tag of \$4,800. Council received a letter from TC Energy informing them the Saddle Lake Lateral Loop project would be moving ahead this year. The loop is scheduled to be completed in the first half of 2021, and should come online by the end of 2021.

For more information, contact Diane Jenkinson, Marketing and Communications Manager at 780-826-3171. Our website is a useful way to get the information you need. **Visit:** www.md.bonnyville.ab.ca Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @MDBville.