

**Minutes: FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF NOBLEFORD HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 906 HIGHWAY AVENUE, NOBLEFORD on March 1, 2016 at 6:30 pm**

Council Mayor Don McDowell, Councillor Don Holinaty, Councillor Marguerite Wobick, Councillor Pete Pelley, Councillor Don Vincent

Staff Kirk Hofman, Chief Administrative Officer; Lisa Wiebe, Recording Secretary

Call to Order Mayor McDowell called meeting to order at 6:41 pm

Gallery One citizen in attendance from 7:15 pm – 8:30 pm; Ryan Dyck of ORRSC in attendance from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**March 1, 2016 Agenda #60-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Vincent to accept the agenda for the March 1, 2016 regular council meeting.

CARRIED

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**February 16, 2016 Minutes #61-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Pelley to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2016 regular Council Meeting with amendment of Councillor Pelley's report, stating his assessment review board training is a 4-day course from March 7<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>.

CARRIED

**DELEGATIONS**

**Member of Parliament Rachael Harder and Assistant Becky Dykshoorn, 6:44 pm**

- MP Harder thanked council for having her join the meeting and shared that her objective is to listen and learn about Nobleford. She is in the process of meeting with each municipality within the riding to find out their objectives and priorities. She is particularly interested in finding out some of their needs pertaining to funding, especially in regards to infrastructure, so that she can go through the budget to find what is applicable to this riding and how to obtain that funding.
- CAO, Ms. Harder, and Ms. Dykshoorn met before the meeting for supper. CAO updated council that they briefly discussed the changes in Nobleford in the past 10-12 years. Council tries to keep in mind whether their decision will be good for Nobleford or not and try to keep the village thriving. Nobleford has a very content citizen base now, which wasn't the case many years ago. In 2000-2004, Council realized they had to do something significant to turn the village around and the population and size has doubled since then, with a significant increase in young families. Starting in 2004, Council made some very fundamental goals and objectives; current Council does the same and continually focuses on results. CAO commented that the objectives are on one page and posted on the wall and web site. Mayor stated that the turnaround from declining population, high taxes, and low service started in 2006-2008 and the future now looks bright.
- Councillor Wobick stated that she feels it's important to promote the village's positive attributes and to take time to hear to the citizens. She commended Mayor McDowell for his public relations and openness to visit with people.
- CAO commented that Federal Government distribution of funds should be fair and equitable in all of Canada. Councillor Holinaty shared that in regards to FCM, he felt people from the cities don't care about rural communities and rather want to push the money towards bigger cities.
- Mayor McDowell shared about the planned centennial tax-free year and how they have budgeted towards that by placing money in reserve years ago. Nobleford doesn't just increase taxes if they want to do something. They try to keep costs low whenever possible and also look into where the money could come from if there is something that needs to be done.
- MP Harder observed that Nobleford plans preemptively, as opposed to simply reacting to the circumstance, and thinks for the long term. Mayor McDowell credited CAO Hofman for that and for how he has helped council look to the future. Nobleford is set up well and has the infrastructure to support additional residents and part of that includes knowing the limits. An example of this is the traffic circle; it is not part of Nobleford's jurisdiction but the village lobbied for it because of the significant safety issues and deadly collisions, as well as how the Nobleford fire department is largely affected by any accidents occurring there. MP Harder asked about visions for the future and where they plan to be in 5 years. Discussed was the additional land within the boundary of Nobleford that was not going to be developed in the near future, but the village was recently approached by a church who is interested in developing it, and a private residential developer and so this is now a option to consider. The village plans to keep going along the road they are now, keeping taxes low, services high, and offering a high quality of life.

- Mayor McDowell mentioned that Nobleford is aware that the water treatment plant will need an update in the future as it is currently approximately halfway through its life expectancy. It has the capacity to be expanded easily but with growth, the village would need to have additional storage for treated water. The village didn't have enough quality water up until 2005 when the water treatment system was up and running. They then had an abundance and have been able to share it with others, resulting in a reduction of costs and utility rates.
- MP Harder mentioned it is not impossible for smaller municipalities to access funds but it is hard. MP Harder asked how much future funding (in 10 years) the water treatment plant and a treated water storage facility would require. A storage facility is estimated at 2 million dollars and to update the plant in the future would cost 5 million. The village plans to save 1 million by the time the updates are needed. Because of Nobleford's conveyance of water via pipelines, Barons and Lethbridge County will be expected to pitch in but some needs to come from the province and federal government. Roads are also always an issue. Nobleford tries to produce good value for any money that is received.
- Lethbridge County needs to maintain roads and bridges and they are considering putting a tax on some of the larger operations to help pay for this. Feedlot operators have been a huge benefit but they do understand that they are putting greater wear and tear on the roads and that it would be fair to pay into it. It will have to be a community effort to find a solution to this; the concern is that it should have been looked at years ago already but it does need to happen now.
- Nobleford is getting fibre optic internet at the moment with a minimum 25 mbps up to 1 gbps. Great for residential, businesses and bigger companies who can now be located in Nobleford and remain connected to the world. Nobleford looks into all avenues and tries to explore all options. The bottom of the pyramid is built here in Nobleford with it having the majority of the infrastructure required to support all the other things that will come along with growth of the village.
- Councillor Holinaty shared that municipalities have to start looking out for themselves, not just depend on the government to fix things for them when it gets bad.
- Mayor stated Nobleford has sustained the lowest residential property tax in Alberta for a number of years, possibly Canada. In 2015, a \$325,000 home was taxed \$100 by the Village and \$900 by the province for mostly education tax. Total taxes are about 25% of Lethbridge rates.
- Mayor referred to the Canadian Federation of Business (CFIB) reporting Nobleford as the second most sustainable municipality in Alberta.
- Heritage Days has been moved to July 30 and an invitation was extended to MP Harder to attend this event.
- CAO stated: "Before any Government can give, they must first take", and encouraged MP Harder to encourage Government to act responsibly and always ask what things will cost financially, time-wise, environmentally, and socially.
- MP Harder thanked council for again having her in attendance and sharing with her.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### Emergency Services Meeting, March 30 at 7:00 pm in Coalhurst with Coaldale, Coalhurst, Picture Butte, Nobleford, and Lethbridge County

Council discussed the Agenda items for the March 30 emergency services meeting with other Councils and CAO's. It is important that only CAO's attend and not fire chiefs or support staff. There has been very limited communication coming from the county so the hope is to find out some additional information as far as their plans for emergency services. The current regionalization via agreements seems to be working well at a cost to the County of approximately \$120,000 per year each for Nobleford, Coalhurst and Picture Butte. If the County intends to have their own Fire Department, it is likely that Nobleford, Coalhurst and Picture Butte would then bill County for service much the same as Alberta transportation is now billed at \$615 per truck per hour. It would be good to have a plan to keep the meeting on track and Mayor McDowell suggested that having an all councils meeting might become a bit difficult and lengthy. Coalhurst Mayor suggested having only Mayors and CAOs at this meeting, to start, to help keep on the topic of emergency services. Would still want to have all councils meeting as well but consider keeping this meeting smaller so it doesn't get out of hand: this is a governance issue for now. It was suggested that Mayors meet prior to the all Councils meeting on March 30. The agenda is to find out what the county's plan is and it comes down to: Does the county plan to have its own fire department? If yes, then Nobleford would need as much lead time as possible to figure out what we can do. Also need to have on the agenda that the county is not coming to the municipalities and instead putting information in the media. Mayor McDowell should chair the meeting. An introduction letter, including news clips, is to be sent out with agendas. Nobleford's position is in the minutes and those minutes are on the website. Clarify that only one administrator is to attend for each municipality. No fire chiefs, no assistant administration, etc.

#### #62-2016

MOVED BY Councillor Pelley to approve the agenda items for March 30, 2015, Joint Emergency Services Meeting at Coalhurst Community center, between Coaldale, Coalhurst, Picture Butte, and Lethbridge County, with Mayor Don McDowell chairing the meeting of Councillors and one Councillor



Agenda:

for the Emergency Services, joint meeting of Mayor, Reeve, Councilors and CAO from Coaldale, Coalhurst, Lethbridge County, Nobleford, Picture Butte, to be held in the Coalhurst Community Center, at 527, 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue Coalhurst, on Wednesday March 30, 2016, 7:00 pm.

1. Call to Order. Nobleford Mayor Don McDowell
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA , CHANGES / ADDITIONS TO THE Agenda.
3. Does the Lethbridge County intend to have their own fire department?
4. There are concerns regarding a lack of official communication to the municipalities while articles continue to appear in the media. Media reports such as Sunny South news paper article and County Connection implying the Services Municipalities provide to the County are not sustainable, this could be considered hear say. (Attached news clips)
  - 4.1 Does County elected body sanction these news articles?
  - 4.2 Why is there no official communication such as a letter from County Council or CAO?
5. Coaldale, Coalhurst, Picture Butte and Nobleford manage and operate their Emergency Service departments effectively and efficiently. Regional agreements to provide service to the Lethbridge County are in place and work fine.
  - 5.1 Is the County satisfied with these agreements?
6. Other:
  - 6.1 Why should we support the County?
  - 6.2 How can we support the County?
7. What Next?

CARRIED

**Centennial Park Group Project**

The Legion, Parks and Recreation Society, Centennial Society, Agriculture Society, and Village of Nobleford CAO met on February 26 to discuss plans for Centennial Park Projects. All the societies liked the ideas of the other societies. Plans include a Centennial Park pavilion, legacy displays, park lighting, electrical service, and general excavation with an estimated cost of over \$100,000.

**#63-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Holinaty to receive as information the minutes from the February 26, 2016 Centennial Park Group Project meeting.

CARRIED

**Letter of Support for Nobleford Parks & Recreation Society's CFEP Grant Application**

**#64-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Wobick to provide a letter of support for Nobleford Parks & Recreation Society's application for a CFEP grant, on behalf of the Centennial Park Group Project for Centennial Park improvements.

CARRIED

**Letter of Support for Nobleford Parks & Recreation Society's Lethbridge County Land Trust Fund Grant Application**

**#65-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Vincent to provide a letter of support for Nobleford Parks & Recreation Society's application for Lethbridge County Land Trust grant, on behalf of the Centennial Park Group Project for Centennial Park improvements.

CARRIED

**Ratify Letter of Support for Nobleford Parks & Recreation Society's Application for Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southern Alberta, Communities Priorities Grant Program**

**#66-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Holinaty to ratify the letter of support for Nobleford Parks & Recreation Society's application for Community Foundation of Lethbridge and Southern Alberta Community Priorities grant program, on behalf of the Centennial Park Legacy Project.

CARRIED

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Accounts Payable for Approval**

Council reviewed AUMA's \$1725 annual membership, its benefits, and convention attendance by at least one Council representative rather than all Council. Council can make better use of funds and benefit from varied political presence and education of Council. In 2016, Council will send some Councilors to AUMA convention and other Councilors to various conferences, workshops, and training, providing these activities best benefit Nobleford. As long as Councilors provide diligent reports, there is benefit to Village attendance at 5 different events rather than all 5 at only one.

**#67-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Wobick to approve the proposed payments to Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA membership) and Rocky Mountain Phoenix (fire department's breathing equipment) in the total amount (GST included) of \$67,119.15.

CARRIED

**Accounts Payable for Ratification**

Discussed water treatment plant maintenance expenses; everything so far has been paid out of the operational budget and no funds have been taken out of the reserve yet.

**#68-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Vincent to approve the Accounts Payable ratification in the amount of \$16,947.44.

CARRIED

**Financial Statement**

**#69-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Pelley to receive as information the January 2016 financial statement showing a balance of \$2,903,237.08.

CARRIED

**ATB Statement**

**#70-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Wobick to receive as information the ATB statements.

CARRIED

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Recess**

Mayor McDowell declared a recess at **8:07 pm**. Mayor McDowell and Councillor Holinaty left the meeting.

**Subdivision Approval Committee Meeting**

Councillor Wobick called to order the meeting of the Subdivision Approval Committee. MW, PP, DV.

**Subdivision Approval Committee Review of Application, ORRSC File 2016-0-012**

Ryan Dyck of ORRSC was in attendance to present the draft resolution of a subdivision application to the subdivision committee of Councillor Pelley, Councillor Vincent, and Councillor Wobick. He mentioned that the land owner does not necessarily have to remove the garage which he has planned for demolition but that there are 4 conditions on the resolution that have to be met.

**#71-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Pelley to approve the resolution ORRSC File 2016-0-012 regarding resident subdivision of Plan 6394BS, Block 1, Lot 10 & 11 (303 King Street) with the suggested conditions, as presented by Ryan Dyck of ORRSC.

CARRIED

Councillor Wobick adjourned the meeting of the Subdivision Approval Committee.

Mayor McDowell declared the regular council meeting back in session at **8:18 pm**.

**Subdivision Authority**

Ryan Dyck shared regarding subdivision development authority and recommended updating the bylaws to be clearer. A councillor cannot sit on both the appeal board and the approval committee. The bylaw could state that all the councillors could sit on the subdivision authority as long as none then sit on the appeal board. Ryan requested permission to draft a new bylaw that would be in place by the village's next organizational meeting. The bylaw would combine the subdivision authority with the development authority.

**#72-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Vincent to support ORRSC drafting an updated bylaw for Nobleford that combines the subdivision authority and the development authority.

CARRIED

**Property Tax Rate on Farm Land**

The Municipal Government act allows for Municipalities to set separate tax rates for each class. In the past, farm land has been assessed at the same rate as residential. An example of farmland assessment is the 100 acres annexed east of Nobleford where the tax assessment value of the land is \$300 per acre. The 2015 tax was \$108.04 in total. The market value of this farm land is \$2000 per acre or more. The current asking price of the land is significantly more. Currently available for purchase are 50 acres of this land at \$25,000 per acre. If it does sell at that price, the assessor may very likely decide that the remaining 50 acres have a value greater than the current \$300, which would increase the taxes paid. To avoid this being a drastic change for the landowner, recommended was to consider increasing it slightly before a sale goes through. Council has imposed minimum tax levies on Residential and Non-residential properties for 2016 as follows;

- *the 2016 tax bylaw section regarding minimum levy on non-residential parcels to read \$480 per parcel or \$1.20 per square meter, whichever is more.*

- *the 2016 tax bylaw section regarding minimum levy on residential parcels of \$100.00 (one hundred dollars) and shall be applicable to all Residential parcels*

Considering the village is allowed to set a separate mill rate for farm land if they want, or to charge a minimum levy, council discussed a minimum levy of \$25 or \$50 per acre to start with in 2016.

**#73-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Vincent to set a minimum tax levy of \$35 per acre on farm land for 2016.

CARRIED with one opposed

**REPORTS**

**CAO written Report:** High Level Law Lawyer Visit, 2 Step grant application VON 2 P&R, Audit in process, Industrial property clean up letters, Gas contract rates update, NCS Grad at Coast Hotel, AXIA 25mbs up to 1 gbs installs, RCMP meeting with SAWS. Just Energy. Get well for County CAO RR.

**#74-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Peley to have the CAO send a card to Lethbridge County CAO Rick Robinson as he recovers from surgery.

CARRIED

**Mayor's Written Report:** Feb 22/16. Community Futures meeting.

- Verbally shared that there is a Canadian Badlands meeting coming up, and that Bassano has dropped out of this.

**Councillors' Written Reports**

**M.W. written report:** NONE – 2 meetings in the coming weeks

**P.P. written report:** NONE – Assessment review board training coming up next week, March 7 - 10

**D.V. written report:** NONE – Southgrow recognition night in Lethbridge on March 30 but deadline was missed, Nobleford should make applications in the future

**D.H. written report:** Feb 19th- interview committee all day for fcss director position.

Feb 24th - hiring interview for fcss director. We have a successful candidate. No other committee activities.

- Council suggested a request be made to FCSS for funding assistance for 2016 summer fun similar to 2015. The new FCSS Director, Zach, and the current director, Brett, are planning on visiting all Municipalities and possibly attend a council meeting

**#75-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Holinaty to receive the CAO, Mayor, and Councillors' reports.

CARRIED

**INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE**

**Fortis LED**

Effective March 1, 2017, Fortis will be using LED as the lighting standard in any streetlight installations.

**#76-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Vincent to receive as information the letter from Fortis regarding the March 1, 2017 change of their streetlight standard to LED lighting.

CARRIED

**Meeting dates, Regular Council meeting are at 6:30 pm.**

**21 regular Council meetings in 2016. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays**

- Mar 15* 6:30 pm, Regular Council Meeting
- April 4 (Monday)* 6:30 pm, Regular Council Meeting --- CAO away 5<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Conference.
- Apr 19* YPM audit presentation
- May 3 and May 17*
- June 7 and June 21*
- July 5*
- Aug 16*
- Sept 6 and Sept 20*
- Oct 4 and Oct 18*
- Nov 8 and Nov 22*
- Dec 6*

**#77-2016**

MOVED BY Councillor Wobick to accept the meeting dates with the change of moving the April 5, 2016 meeting to Monday April 4, 2016.

CARRIED

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor McDowell adjourned meeting at 9:24 pm



Mayor



Administrator