

**BIG LAKES COUNTY
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
April 29, 2020**

Minutes of the Big Lakes County Special Council Meeting held at the County Administration Building and Zoom in High Prairie, Alberta on Wednesday, April 29, 2020 beginning at 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT WERE: Reeve: Richard Simard, Jousard
Deputy Reeve: Ken Matthews, N. Gilwood/Triangle
Councillor: Donald Bissell, Enilda/Big Meadow
Donald Charrois, HP East/Banana Belt
Ken Killeen, Kinuso
David Marx, Prairie Echo/Salt Prairie
Robert Nygaard, Faust
Ann Stewart, S. Sunset House/Gilwood
Fern Welch, Grouard

Administration: Jordan Panasiuk, CAO
Pat Olansky, Director of Planning & Development
Heather Nanninga, Director of Corporate Services
Vic Abel, Director of Public Works
Jessica Martinson, Recording Secretary
Brett Hawken, Acting Director of Community and Protective Services
Eunice McCauley, Human Resources Manager
Balaji Selvaraj, IT Administrator
David Sturgeon, Fire Chief
Sheila Kaus, Agricultural Fieldman

CALL TO ORDER: Reeve Simard called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

**ADDITIONS TO
THE AGENDA:** In Camera – Personnel Matters

2020-09-189 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARX** that the April 29, 2020 agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

**2020 OPERATING &
CAPITAL
BUDGETS:**

Ms. Nanninga presented Council with the 2020 operating budget.

Ms. Nanninga noted the following key points:

1. Tax revenue includes a 1.5% mill rate increase for residential and farmland properties, and no mill rate change for non-residential properties. Overall revenue decreased from interim budget due to a change in final assessment numbers.
2. Lower revenue expected for user fees and sales of goods due to elimination of user fees for Seal Lake Road as this will offset lower expenses.
3. Change in government transfers for operating from 2019 budget is due to non-recurring projects being eliminated.
4. Reduced oil well drilling tax revenue, as limited new drilling activity is expected in 2020.
5. Reduced budget for penalties and costs on taxes – assuming that uptake on tax installment payment plans will reduce penalty revenue assessed.
6. Reduced travel, mileage, accommodations and membership costs.
7. Reduced professional and contracted services.
8. Reduced fuel costs
9. Reduced projects by delaying or cancelling projects including the Little Smoky Gravel pit reclamation, Seal Lake Road maintenance, grading and gravelling.

- a. Council requested that the allocation for the Little Smoky Gravel pit reclamation be placed back in the 2020 budget.
10. Salaries and benefits have been adjusted to include:
 - a. COLA roll back
 - b. Elimination of step increases effective May 1, 2020 until April 30, 2021.
 - c. Temporary layoffs
 - d. Elimination of summer seasonal positions
 - e. Part-year vacancies
11. Eliminate capital grants to both Town of High Prairie & Town of Swan Hills.
12. Repairs and maintenance scaled back – non-essential spending removed.
13. Utilities costs increased slightly for the new Jousard water treatment plant.
14. Net withdrawal from reserves for operating activities.
15. Overall department cost increased due to the inclusion of the reclamation project.
16. Overall department cost decreased due to smaller boards, as well as the elimination of grants to external organizations.
17. Seniors requisition increased due to Heart River Housing capital expansion plan.
18. Multi-year tax increase is based on estimated growth in assessment and in mill rate.
19. Multi-year budget assumes bad debt expense decreases in 2021 and 2022.
20. Multi-year budget assumes resumption of capital grants in 2021.

Council requested that administration be directed to bring back different options for Council to look at reducing their Council honorarium.

Discussion was held on the operating budget for Agricultural services and it was request that the \$50,000 removed for organizations be added back until an opportunity has been held to discuss with the ASB board.

The meeting recessed for lunch break at 12:15 p.m. and reconvened at 12:50 p.m.

Ms. Nanninga continued to present the 2020 operating budget.

Administration noted they would be bringing back any policies that are related to level of service at the next Council meeting to be amended as per the 2020 budget being passed.

2020-09-190

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR NYGAARD that the 2020 final operating budget be approved with the following totals:

- Operating revenue \$33,001,966
- Operating expenses \$35,040,600
- Repayment of principal on long-term debt \$472,385
- Contributions to capital reserves \$1,607,500
- Contributions to operating reserves \$52,000
- Withdrawals from capital reserves from operating activities \$250,000
- Amortization expense \$8,621,575

CARRIED

Ms. Nanninga presented Council with the 2020 capital budget.

Council request that administration add \$50,000 to the 2020 capital budget for potential work at the Spruce Point Park Marina.

Councillor Welch requested that the Hilliard's Bay Road Pavement be moved up to the 2021 budget year rather than 2022 and that the Grouard Waterline project be moved up to the 2023 budget year rather than the 2024.

2020-09-191

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARX that the 2020 final capital budget be approved as a total of \$10,631,714 with the following allocations:

- Administration - \$513,240
- Economic Development - \$30,260
- Fire Projects - \$176,000
- Public Works – Bridge projects - \$3,773,942
- Public Works – Drainage Projects - \$0
- Public Works – Facilities Projects - \$139,000
- Public Works – Land Projects - \$60,000
- Public Works – Roads Projects- \$1,797,486
- Public Works – Shop and Equipment Projects -\$1,366,000
- Public Works – Waste Management Projects - \$123,306
- Public Works – Airport projects - \$446,227
- Public Works - Utilities Projects - \$2,206,253

CARRIED

A break was taken from 3:18 a.m. to 3:33 p.m.

MILL RATE BYLAW 06-2020:

2020-09-192

MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MATTHEWS that first reading be provided to Bylaw 06-2020 Mill Rate Bylaw.

CARRIED

2020-09-193

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR WELCH that second reading be provided to Bylaw 06-2020 Mill Rate Bylaw.

CARRIED

2020-09-194

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR KILLEEN that unanimous consent be approved to proceed to third and final reading for Bylaw 06-2020 Mill Rate Bylaw.

CARRIED

2020-09-195

MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MATTHEWS that third reading be provided to Bylaw 06-2020 Mill Rate Bylaw.

CARRIED

TAX DEADLINES, DEFERRALS BYLAW 07-2020:

2020-09-196

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR STEWART that first reading be provided to Bylaw 07-2020 Amending Bylaw - Penalties.

CARRIED

2020-09-197

MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MATTHEWS that second reading be provided to Bylaw 07-2020 Amending Bylaw - Penalties.

CARRIED

2020-09-198

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR CHARROIS that unanimous consent be approved to process to third and final reading for Bylaw 07-2020 Amending Bylaw - Penalties.

CARRIED

2020-09-199

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARX that third reading be provided to Bylaw 07-2020 Amending Bylaw - Penalties.

CARRIED

TAX INSTALLMENT PAYMENT PROGRAM, BYLAW 08-2020:

2020-09-200 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR WELCH** that first reading be provided to Bylaw 08-2020 Tax Installment Payment Plan Bylaw.

CARRIED

2020-09-201 **MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MATTHEWS** that second reading be provided to Bylaw 08-2020 Tax Installment Payment Plan Bylaw.

CARRIED

2020-09-202 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MARX** that unanimous consent be approved to proceed to third and final reading for Bylaw 08-2020 Tax Installment Payment Plan Bylaw.

CARRIED

2020-09-203 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR BISSELL** that third reading be provided to Bylaw 08-2020 Tax Installment Payment Plan Bylaw.

CARRIED

CLOSED SESSION:

2020-09-204 **MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MATTHEWS** that the meeting go into closed session at 3:59 p.m. to discuss personnel matters as per section 27, Freedom of Information and Protection Act.

CARRIED

2020-09-205 **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR CHARROIS** that the meeting come out of closed session at 4:06 p.m.

CARRIED

2020-09-206 **MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MATTHEWS** that the personnel report on the operational budget be received for information.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT:

2020-09-207 **MOVED BY COUNCILOR BISSELL** that the meeting be adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

CARRIED

Richard Simard, Reeve

Jordan Panasiuk, CAO