

**BIG LAKES COUNTY  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

April 19, 2023

Minutes of the Big Lakes County Special Council Meeting held at the County Administration Building and Zoom in High Prairie, Alberta on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

**PRESENT WERE:**

Reeve: Robert Nygaard, Faust  
 Deputy Reeve: Jim Zabolotniuk, N. Gilwood/ Triangle  
 Councillors: Tyler Airth, HP East/ Banana Belt  
 Jeff Chalifoux, Grouard  
 Roberta Hunt, Kinuso  
 Richard Mifflin, Jousard (Zoom)  
 Lane Monteith, Enilda/ Big Meadow  
 Ann Stewart, S. Sunset House/ Gilwood  
 Garrett Zahacy, Prairie Echo/ Salt Prairie

Administration: Jerry Gautreau, Chief Administrative Officer  
 Kevin Cymbaluk, Director of Public Works  
 Brett Hawken, Director of Community & Protective Services  
 David Reynolds, Director of Corporate Services  
 Eunice McCauley, Human Resources Manager  
 Jessica Plante, Recording Secretary  
 Pat Olansky, Director of Planning and Development  
 Ian Willier, Utilities Manager

Press: Richard Froese, South Peace News

**CALL TO ORDER:** Reeve Nygaard called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

**PUBLIC DELEGATION:**

***D. BISSELL:*** Donald Bissell attended before Council to express his frustrations regarding the key job system used for the fire departments and suggested that Council consider spending money in different areas.

**2023 OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGETS:**

Mr. Reynolds presented Council with an outline of the 2023 Operating Capital budget meeting.

Mr. Reynolds presented Council with the 2023 Operating Budget changes that have been requested since the Interim Budget was approved by Council on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

A break was taken from 10:01 a.m. to 10:10 a.m.

Council was presented with a Operating Budget Summary, as well as the 14 Operating Budget Functional areas within the municipality, which include:

- Administration
- Protective Services
- Fire Services
- Agriculture
- Tourism / Economic Development
- Planning & Development
- Family & Community Support Services
- Emergency Services
- Public Works Administration

- Roads
- Airport
- Water Services
- Sewer Services
- Solid Waste

Councillor Chalifoux requested that Council consider investing money within the next year for Economic Development. Administration will add this discussion to the next Economic Development Committee meeting.

The meeting recessed for a lunch break from 11:58 a.m. to 12:34 p.m.

Mr. Reynolds presented Council with information on the cost-sharing agreements with the Town of High Prairie, the Town of Swan Hills, and Little Smoky Ski Hill.

A discussion was held on the 2023 Capital Grant applications.

Mr. Reynolds presented Council with the 2023 Capital Budget.

Mr. Cymbaluk advised that Bridge File 78832 – Bridge Rehabilitation is a new capital project, based on funding source changes, from County Operating funds to the Canada Community Building Fund. Bridge File 70286 – Culvert Replacement, Spruce Point Mark Marina Repair/Upgrades, and Vehicle and Equipment listings were revised with the most up-to-date financial information.

Council agreed to hold a Fire Services Level of Service Review Workshop on Thursday, June 8, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. in the Big Lakes County Council Chambers.

Mr. Hawken presented Council with the Faust Fire Truck Replacement, which was approved during the February 8, 2023, Council meeting.

Mr. Reynolds presented Council with an update to the Council Chambers Audio/Video System. Council agreed to postpone this Capital Project request until the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget deliberations.

Mr. Reynolds presented the Operating and Capital Reserves.

Council discussed the mill rate increase for the County. It was noted that the budget reflects a 5.9% mill rate increase. Council requested Administration to provide additional information on alternative mill rate percentage increases.

A break was taken from 1:50 p.m. to 2:59 p.m.

Mr. Reynolds provided Council with a mill rate increase comparison between 4.5% - 5.9%, which detailed the respective changes to Property Tax revenue, as well as the amount of funding that would be allocated to Operating Reserve savings.

**2023-09-189**      **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR STEWART** that the 2023 Mill Rate increase be set at 4.5%.

**CARRIED**

**MILL RATE BYLAW 09-2023:**

**2023-09-190**      **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR STEWART** that first reading be provided to Bylaw 09-2023 Mill Rate Bylaw.

**CARRIED**

**2023-09-191**      **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MONTEITH** that second reading be provided to Bylaw 09-2023 Mill Rate Bylaw.

**CARRIED**

**2023-09-192** **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MIFFLIN** that unanimous consent be approved to proceed to third and final reading for Bylaw 09-2023 Mill Rate Bylaw.

**CARRIED**

**2023-09-193** **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR HUNT** that third reading be provided to Bylaw 09-2023 Mill Rate Bylaw.

**CARRIED**

**2023-09-194** **MOVED BY REEVE NYGAARD** that the 2023 Final Operating Budget be approved with the following totals:

- Operating revenue \$34,983,898
- Operating expense \$32,177,001
- Repayment of principal on long-term debt \$543,300
- Contributions to capital reserves \$1,762,500
- Contributions to operating reserves \$501,097
- Withdrawals from reserves for capital activities \$9,923,322
- Withdrawals from operating \$0
- Amortization expense \$8,890,000

**CARRIED**

**2023-09-195** **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR ZAHACY** that the 2023 Final Capital Budget be approved with the following totals:

- Administration projects - \$123,750
- Fire projects - \$132,000
- Public works – Bridge projects – \$3,966,798
- Public works – Land projects – \$12,000
- Public works – Land projects (Spruce Point Park Marina) – \$547,015
- Public works – Roads projects – \$12,323,319
- Public works – Hamlet Upgrades - \$201,272
- Public works – Vehicles and equipment – \$3,854,210
- Public works – Airport projects – \$14,663
- Public works – Utilities projects – \$201,272

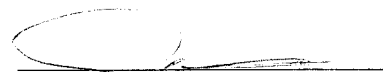
**CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**2023-09-196** **MOVED BY COUNCILOR CHALIFOUX** that the meeting be adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

**CARRIED**

  
Robert Nygaard, Reeve

  
Jerry Gautreau, CAO