

Background Notes from the Mayor's Desk - August 31, 2016

What does Council need to accomplish in the next year prior to the election in 2017?

We are approaching the end of the third year that the current Council has been given the honour of governing in Sundre. Prior to the last election in 2013, Councils served a 3-year term. The last election saw a change in that municipal councils across Alberta were given a 4-year term. How have we done? What do we need to accomplish in the next year prior to the election in October of 2017? Each of us on Council would like to hear from you about what you see as immediate needs in the upcoming year. Please let us know your thoughts and priorities.

I ask for your input now because we are heading into a 2-year budget cycle that will carry us, and the next Council, through the first year after the next election. We need to hear from you soon about whether there are issues that we should be dealing with so we can be sure there is consideration to try and accomplish your requests in the next **two** years. Every year, there is always a public open house set up to get community thoughts and input, but it is not well attended typically. Wednesday November 16th from 6:00 - 8:00 PM will be your formal chance to come and see what the budget plans are, but every Councillor wants to hear from you between now and then :)

What is happening with Broadband?

There has been a lot of work done by staff over the summer to gather information to present to Council and the public about bringing Broadband to Sundre. In upcoming Council meetings you will see lots of detail reported. Council will be struggling with decisions about Broadband for two reasons:

- Firstly, we have an opportunity to take on the responsibility of providing Broadband like our gas system utility, and similar to the way O-Net works in Olds. The risks are that we have to invest a great deal of your money, build a business case that is financially sound, and count on "buy in" from more than 35% of the residential and business community. Although there would be risk, the rewards would be better, and it would potentially provide cheaper service to those who subscribe. Plus, the system's future profits would stay in Sundre and be used to subsidize taxes; similar to the way we operate our own gas system. We would keep the "profit" those big service providers like Telus and Shaw take out of our community.
- Secondly, on the other hand, as a Council we are "risk averse". No Council wants to make a business decision with risk that proves to be a burden to tax payers in the future. It is easier to let a big company like Telus or Shaw come in to town, provide the service, take all the risk, and, as a consequence, not subsidize our taxes by having all the "profit" money leave the community to go to shareholders who don't live in Sundre.

There will be a public meeting scheduled for you to learn more, consider the options, and provide your opinion as to what you think Council should do about making Sundre a Gigabit community. The date hasn't been set yet, but again, please talk with any of us on Council if you have questions or ideas.

As always, call me at home (403-638-3535) if you have any questions, ideas or suggestions about the topics above - or any other topics.

Terry Leslie, Mayor
Town of Sundre