

Background Notes from the Mayor's Desk – November 2017

Thank you to all of you who took the time to vote so that the current Council could serve you and our community for the next 4 years. Voter turnout was about 43%. I am most impressed with the optimism, enthusiasm and the positive attitude I have seen from your new Council. You have chosen a great balance of both experience and "fresh eyes" to deal with issues coming forward in the next four years - and beyond. The next four years promises to be exceptional for our community.

Your new Council was sworn in on October 23rd, and more than 25 committee assignments were done. Even before the swearing in of the new Council, all Council members hit the ground running with a compulsory regional Orientation that lasted all day on Wednesday October 18th at the Olds Legion. Councillors learned what they can and can't do, the purpose of municipalities (and that there are about 400 municipalities in Alberta), we reviewed the Municipal Government Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation, learned about municipal taxation, budgets and finance, roles and responsibilities, personal liability, governance, assessment, safety codes regulations, environmental protection, offsite levies, and land use classifications, to name just some of the topics. There was also time to ask questions of lawyers and municipal government specialists. Councillors from Sundre, Olds, Didsbury, Cremona, Carstairs and Mountain View County were in attendance so there was a chance for all of us to meet many of the people we will be working with for the next 4 years.

After your Council was sworn in, all Councillors were given the opportunity for a "local Councillor Orientation" session all day on Tuesday October 24th. This session focused on local issues that everyone needs to be "up to speed" on, and reinforced some of the topics we heard about in Olds, but with more practical local examples. Feelings of being overwhelmed in this new role are common, but these two days are intended to reduce that anxiety with some information, time to talk, ask questions and become better informed about the issues before us, past, present, and future. There are hundreds of pages to read, and to think about. The learning curve will be steep, but these are good people with the best interests of the community at heart. You have done a great job in electing your Council :)

Have you ever heard that Town of Sundre Council and Mountain View County Council don't get along? That reputation is not the case. Did you know that Mountain View County has recently agreed to cover costs associated with the operation of the Recycling Centre? Did you know that Mountain View County recently asked to come before Town Council as a delegation to offer to increase the Mountain View County contribution to recreation and culture - by 40%? I point out these two recent developments to illustrate that, as two neighbouring municipalities, we are constantly in talks and discussions about issues in "our community." Both our borders and our responsibilities within our community are shared. We sometimes disagree about issues, because we have different responsibilities and different views on issues. I want to assure everyone that we are always talking to try and find solutions to the complex issues before us.

I mention this because inter-municipal cooperation is a new requirement in the upcoming Modernized Municipal Government Act. Your new Council is committed to working together with Mountain View County, and continually improving the planning, coordination and cooperation as our community moves forward. The two examples above are part of a long list of agreements and projects where we have worked very well together. As a new Council, we intend to work better together with all our regional partners.

As always, please call me (403-559-7352) if you have questions or comments about any of the information above.

Terry Leslie, Mayor
Town of Sundre