



Council Brief of the

December 16, 2021 Regular Meeting

This document is provided for informational purposes only and is not the approved minutes of the Lethbridge County Council meeting.

CALL TO ORDER:

Reeve Campbell shared the following highlights from 2021:

- Council awarded \$2,000 in post-secondary bursaries to local students for the second year in a row
- A new online business directory was launched in early 2021 to provide a space for customers to find information on County businesses
- In the spring, Council approved the County's first-ever Asset Management Plan for infrastructure and physical assets
- A new public engagement platform called *What's Happening Lethbridge County* was launched in June
- A new rural living and agriculture extension newsletter was launched in the summer
- Lethbridge County won an international financial award for our financial publications, an accomplishment shared by only 11 other municipalities in Canada
- Several capital projects were completed, including road reconstruction in the Sunset Acres subdivision, Fairview stormwater pond construction, paving a portion of the Broxburn industrial park as well as Readymade Road. A bridge was replaced north of Iron Springs in the fall.
- The municipal election was held in October, with two new Councillors being elected in Divisions 3 and 4. A By-election was held in Division 5 in December and a new Councillor was elected.
- Public Works Level of Service documents were approved by Council, which provide a guide for maintenance operations in the County over the next year.
- Council and CAO attended the provincial Rural Municipalities of Alberta convention in Edmonton in November, where they had the opportunity to speak with ministers on issues important to the County.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Reeve Campbell stated the following:

We acknowledge that we are on territories in Alberta of many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1) MUNICIPAL SERVICES

- a. Shaughnessy Phase 4 Engineering and Land Purchase - Request for Additional Funding**
Council approved an additional \$26,000 from the Municipal Sustainability Initiative towards the Shaughnessy Phase 4 Engineering and Land Purchase Project for a total budget of \$116,000. Since beginning the project, the County has identified items that needed to be included, such as additional replacements of sewer, waterline, lagoon transfer structure, as well as stormwater outlet piping.
- b. 2022 Agricultural Service Board Conference/Westin Hotel Edmonton January 25 – 27, 2022**
Council approved that any member of the Agricultural Service Board be authorized to attend the event.

c. Request from MD of Taber – Grant Funding Support

Council approved support for the MD of Taber's application for the Alberta Community Partnership Grant Application under the Intermunicipal Collaboration component, for the purpose of developing options and implementation of formalizing the South Regional Storm Water Drainage Committee partnership.

2) COMMUNITY SERVICES

a. Repeal of Establishment and Operation of Fire Department Bylaw #771

Council approved first, second, and third readings of *Bylaw #21-022 - Repeal of Inactive Bylaws*, which in turn repeals *Bylaw #771 - Establishment and Operation of Fire Department* as it is no longer relevant to County operations as it does not operate its own fire department.

b. Economic Development - 2021 4th Quarter Report of Major Projects and Activities

Council received an update on economic development activities in the County this quarter, which include:

- Notable increase in new business and investment inquiries, as well as several existing businesses indicating they are planning for expansion of their operations
- Economic Development Officer working on new business/investment files with a total estimated value of over \$500 million and potential for 600-800 new regional jobs
- Continued work on improved broadband for Lethbridge County with possible improvement/enhancement projects that may be ready for implementation in 2022
- Ongoing promotion of Lethbridge County on social media, investment pitch forums, online, and through regional initiatives such as the Canada's Premier Food Corridor and Canada's Western Gateway

c. Invitation for Lethbridge County Councilors to Attend 2022 EDA Xperience Annual Conference and Alberta Economic Development Leaders' Summit from April 6-8, 2022 in Kananaskis

Council approved that any member be authorized to attend the event.

d. SouthGrow Regional Initiative

Council approved the membership fee of \$1.00 per resident and that a member be appointed as Lethbridge County's representative on the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. A report appointing a Council member will be brought forward to the January regular Council meeting.

e. Cor Van Raay LINK Pathway Update

Members of the Pathway Committee provided Council with an update of the project. Council provided conditional approval for MPE to investigate the 800m stretch of the route within the County right of way.

3) CORPORATE SERVICES

a. Tax Penalty Waiver Request Roll #54330100

Council declined the request to waive penalties in the amount of \$99.23 as requested.

b. Fire Services Response Fees Waiver Request

Council declined the request to waive the Fire Service Fees in the amount of \$3,087.50 per Invoice #113684 as requested and directed that any unpaid balances on the invoice be added to the related property tax roll as of December 31, 2021 per the Municipal Government Act if a payment plan is not accepted.

c. Bylaw 21-021 - 2022 Utility Rates

Council approved first, second, and third reading of the bylaw, which includes a 1.5% increase to water, sewage, and garbage rates to reflect operational cost increases.

d. Quarterly Financial Report - August to October 2021

Council received an update on the County's third quarter financial position. A surplus of \$379,249 has been projected. Council approved that:

- Surplus wages, per diem and travel rates in the Council budget as of December 31, 2021 be transferred to the Council Discretionary Reserve
- Additional revenues earned in the Planning & Development Department as of December 31, 2021 be moved to the Tax Equalization Reserve
- Additional revenues earned from Fire Services and Fines as of December 31, 2021 be transferred to the Emergency Services Contingency Reserve
- Funds received for the Municipal Operating Support Transfer to assist with the cost increases and reduced revenues in 2020 due to COVID in the amount of \$1,053,334 be transferred to the Tax Equalization Reserve

e. 2022 - 2024 Operating & 2022 -2026 Capital Budget

Council approved the following Operating Budget expenses:

- 2022 - \$28,532,195
- 2023 - \$28,895,285 (approved in principle)
- 2024 - \$29,313,538 (approved in principle)

Council also approved the following Capital Budget expenses:

- 2022 - \$9,877,500
- 2023 - \$11,555,000 (approved in principle)
- 2024 - \$11,535,000 (approved in principle)
- 2025 - \$6,846,000 (approved in principle)
- 2026 - \$8,193,000 (approved in principle)

The full budget document is available at <https://whatshappening.lethcounty.ca/budget-2022>

CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1) **National Police Federation**
- 2) **Royal Canadian Mounted Police**
- 3) **Coaldale-Lethbridge Growing Project Canadian Food Grains Bank**

CLOSED SESSION:

- 1) **Land Matter (FOIP Section 16 - Disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party)** No resolution was made.
- 2) **Utility Company Discussion (FOIP Section 16 - Disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party)** No resolution was made.