



November 2023



I had the pleasure of attending the Stirling Fire Rescue Association's Pig Roast and Luau Fundraiser on November 3rd. There was an incredible range of items up for grabs in the silent auction. Wolf Creek Colony did an amazing job as always of catering. I appreciate the hard work of all the volunteers who

helped organize the event. Funds raised by the association directly support equipment purchases, training costs and other programs for the Fire Department. It was great to see many neighbours and friends enjoy an evening together.

Nicole Mrak was promoted to the role of Deputy Chief of the Stirling Fire Department. Chief Birky can be seen in the photo making the ceremonial changing of the epaulets to reflect the new rank. The ceremony took place in front of Council at our November 15th meeting. Deputy Chief Mrak has demonstrated considerable leadership in advancing the department's training program.



I'm grateful to all those who were involved with our Remembrance Day Ceremony. It was important to have a full house at the Community Centre as many of us took a moment to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made to ensure the freedoms we enjoy today. Special thanks to the Stirling Elementary School Choir for their musical number and to Major Mitch Montminy from the 20th Independent Field Battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery who provided his perspective on the importance of keeping the memory of past

global conflicts alive. Unseasonably warm November weather also made for a pleasant gathering at the cenotaph for the laying of wreaths.

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Our Council meetings this month were heavily focused on reviewing and approving both the interim operating as well as capital budgets for 2024. I'm thankful for an administrative team that is working hard to offset inflationary pressures and look for creative solutions to control our costs of providing the services that residents rely on. Council's goal is to avoid any increase to property tax mill rates again in 2024. *(Remember your property tax amount may go up based on your assessed value or the provincial education mill rate even if Stirling's mill rate stays the same.)* We are waiting for clarification from the Government of Alberta about provincial transfers to municipalities. The final budget and corresponding tax rate bylaw will be up for discussion early in the new year once it is clear what Stirling can expect from the provincial government.



Council approved the Fees, Rates and Charges Bylaw for 2024. There were some minor adjustments to water rates for institutional users like the school and church. A new category for internments was added to reflect that the cemetery now has a columbarium for cremated remains as a new service. Costs for passes at the pool also increased slightly to reflect the increasing costs of maintaining and operating the facility.

Council was shown a report to see the positive impact of opening the pool on Sundays as a pilot this past summer. Concession and admission revenues from Sunday exceeded the corresponding labour costs for lifeguards. The pool is a key amenity during the summer months and increasing access to residents to be able to use the facility appeared to be quite popular based on attendance numbers.

Fortis Alberta is the distribution service provider for power in our region. A representative of Fortis updated Council on their plans for future equipment upgrades in our region to meet growing demand for electricity.

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We were also reminded that residents can use the Fortis app or their website to report any broken or flickering streetlights → <https://service.fortisalberta.com/streetlights>.

The Community Events Committee will once again be hosting “Christmas at the Kiosk” on Saturday, December 2nd beginning at 4:30pm. Come out for hot chocolate and donuts along with Christmas carols.

It’s hard to believe we are almost in December and the end of another year.

We live in troubled times. The news is an almost continuous parade of doom and gloom. The pressure of inflation and higher interest rates continue to bite.

If there was ever a time where we needed to work together... A time to be closer to one another... to lift each other up... This is the time.

I hope as we head into the festive season that the spirit of Christmas will bring you closer to your neighbours, family and friends.

Trevor Lewington

“The duty of helping one’s self in the highest sense involves the helping of one’s neighbors.” – Samuel Smiles

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