



Mayor's Monthly Message

April 2021



One of Council's key discussions this month has been with respect to the operation of the pool this summer. At present, current public health restrictions would only allow for a) youth swim lessons for up to 9 students with 1 instructor at any one time, b) private family rentals for up to 6 people from the same household and c) approved school related programs. Participants in lessons would still be required to maintain physical distancing of 2 meters. Masks would be required for all patrons while using the facility including change rooms. (And yes, technically,

masks are still required under the current regulations when in the water unless you are swimming lengths or engaged in underwater components of lessons.) These Alberta Health requirements make the financial viability of the 2021 pool season very challenging with limited opportunities for revenues and further create some significant operational and scheduling challenges for staff. A decision must be made now based on the information we currently have available as it takes time to hire and train staff as well as complete all the necessary mechanical work to get the pool ready. Given all of these factors, Council has determined that the **pool will remain closed again this summer**. We are painfully aware of how unpopular this decision will likely be but also acknowledge that we must be fiscally responsible. The savings from this year's pool season will help offset a needed replacement (approximately \$100,000 capital expense) and other expanded outdoor activities this summer.

Council approved 3rd and final reading of the 2021 Tax Rate Bylaw this month. There were no increases to the municipal tax mill rate. The province, however, has increased the mill rate on the education portion of your property taxes. It's also worth pointing out that property taxes are based on the assessed value of your property which does fluctuate from year to year with market conditions. You can expect property tax notices in your mail box in the coming week. If you have question or concerns about your tax notice, please contact the Village office. Please note that when you receive your tax notice each year, you always have the right to appeal to the Clerk of the Assessment Appeal Board. (You can also contact the Village office if you need assistance with that process.)



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Council also reviewed and approved the 2020 audited financial statements that were presented by a representative of MWG CPA. Council had the opportunity to ask the auditors questions about their finding. Once again, the Village received a “clean” audit opinion meaning there were no deficiencies found in our financial controls. Municipalities are required to file third party audited financial statement with Alberta Municipal Affairs each year. Council appreciates the hard work of our administrative team to keep our accounting and record keeping processes working smoothly.

Administration has been reviewing and updating rural water agreements. The Village operates and maintains a rural water network outside of our municipal boundary to make water easily accessible to former users of a water co-op. The Village sometimes has difficulty collecting unpaid service fees and water charges from rural water users; changes to the contracts will help us address this. In addition, many of the old contracts do not properly reflect the current arrangement and still make reference to the former water co-op so it is time to clean up the contracts and bring them into line with how the system operates today. All rural water users will be expected to enter into new contracts to continue using the system.

Crime Type	2020	2019	2018
Persons Offences	3	8	4
Property Offences	2	4	5
Criminal Code Other	1	1	3
Drug Offences	0	0	0
Federal Statutes	1	0	0
Prov Stats (not traffic)*	3	7	4
Prov Traffic	5	2	0
Criminal Code Traffic	0	0	0
Collisions	0	1	0
Sum	15	23	16

Council was able to hear from Sgt. Kevin Wright from the Raymond/Magrath RCMP this month who shared the statistics from the 4th quarter of 2020. We have seen the number of crimes drop in 2020 after a bit of an upswing in 2019. We appreciate the increased patrols in our community by the RCMP as well as the continued work of our Peace Officers with the Ridge Regional Public Safety Services Commission.

Emergency Preparedness Week is May 2nd to 8th this year with a theme of “Be Ready for Anything.” While being prepared for disruption is important year-round, Emergency Preparedness Week provides us a unique opportunity to strengthen our efforts to take simple steps to become more prepared. A number of helpful checklists and other information can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/emergency-preparedness-week.aspx>. Residents are also encouraged to download the Alberta Emergency Alerts to their phone.



The Stirling Historical Society is currently planning for the return of the Community Garage Sale on May 28 and 29th. Look for more details and registration forms coming soon!

Trevor Lewington