



Mayor's Monthly Message

November 2019

Council remained focussed on learning more about the potential implications of the provincial budget for our community moving into 2020. There were some wins in that funding for libraries was maintained as were provincial transfers for operational expenses. The province also did not shift to a new funding model for policing that would have increased costs for our community significantly. (At least for now, it seems likely that changes around police funding will be forthcoming in future provincial budgets.) There were, however, reductions in capital grants under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative or MSI that will directly affect the kinds of projects and improvements we will be able to afford. Another potential pinch point increases the costs of our summer/student staff in parks, public works and for the pool as the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) grants were eliminated by the province.

Speaking of budget process – A huge thank you to everyone who completed our community input survey. We had 175 responses with some very detailed and specific written suggestions provided. Council will be incorporating the range of feedback collected from the survey as we review community priorities and build the 2020 municipal budget. The survey results will also be posted on the Village website. The interim municipal budget must be approved in principle before the end of the year. The budget is then re-adjusted slightly in the first few months of the new year as needed to accommodate changing circumstances. Council plans to host a Town Hall type meeting early in the new year to review the budget in detail and answer your questions.

We were pleased to hear from Sgt. Kevin Wright from the Raymond/Magrath RCMP detachment who provided an update on the third quarter crime statistics. There were 13 incidents in Stirling during the third quarter of this year compared to 25 incidents in the same time last year. We are pleased to see a major drop in criminal complaints this year.

There have been a number of national media stories in recent weeks about potentially dangerous levels of lead in drinking water. Stirling is fortunate to obtain its water from the Ridge Reservoir and a modern water treatment plant managed by the Ridge Water Services Commission. (Stirling's representatives to the Commission jointly manage the water treatment plant operations with our regional partners.) Regular monthly testing results of our water can be found online from the Government of Alberta website here:

<http://environment.alberta.ca/apps/regulateddwq/Detail.aspx?id=288141>

Testing for lead is done on different frequency as compared to the regular monthly testing. Here is an excerpt from an email I received from the Manager of the Water Commission to help clarify our local testing protocols. He notes: "The RWSC tests for lead twice a year. Once between Dec-Feb and once between Jun-Aug of each year. Regulations state that lead levels cannot be above 0.005mg/L. Our most recent test (Aug 13, 2019) showed our lead content was below 0.0002mg/L. That numbers is the lowest possible level they can monitor and our sample was below that level, so they just gave us that



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score. The CBC story highlighted the use of lead pipes in their distribution system. Historically out east they used lead pipes as part of their distribution systems and as such their concentration levels were much higher than we would expect to have out here. Our systems are much newer and to the best of our knowledge, we have very little to no lead pipes in our systems. The closest exposure we would have are where some of our older copper pipes had lead solder on their joints, but the amount of lead used to solder the joint vs an entire lead pipe is almost negligible. Our users should be feel very confident in the quality of the water we produce.” If you have an older home, you should check to ensure lead pipes and joints were not used as part of the construction of your internal water piping. If you have other questions or concerns, feel free to stop by the office and make an appointment to discuss with the Public Works team.

Council is exploring options for a regional approach to emergency management. A new bylaw has received first reading and it would allow Stirling join the County of Warner and other partners in a joint Emergency Management Agency. New regulations from the Government of Alberta have increased the training and planning requirements for Alberta municipalities when it comes to dealing with natural disasters such as floods or tornados as well as other potential emergencies like train derailments. A regional approach allows us to better share resources and coordinate among stakeholders. This potential move to a regional approach does not impact the operation or autonomy of our fire department.

Our Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is supporting the Town of Milk River on an interim basis. Milk River is currently searching for a new CAO. Stirling is sharing Bob’s talents for a few hours each week during the transition to assist Milk River with their administrative needs while at the same time not taking away from the work required in our community. Stirling will receive a fee for service reimbursement to offset any potential costs for Bob’s time.



The Stirling Wind Project has finally broken ground. Early civil works to accommodate roads within the site as well as clearing land for the electrical sub-station have begun. Representatives from Potentia Renewables recently met with land owners in the area and communicated that they intend to have all 28 turbines in place and operational by the end of 2020. Next summer will see a heavy construction period over the summer months in particular. Our Fire

Department has been directly involved in the development of an emergency response plan for the project. A number of local businesses are actively bidding on work related to the construction and ongoing maintenance of the wind farm. You can follow ongoing updates on the project’s website at: <https://stirlingwind.com/>



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November saw the official grand opening of Village Dental in Stirling. Congratulations again to Dr. Brad Cornish. You can call 403 756 3570 to book your appointment for most dental services and save yourself a drive! To open a clinic in Stirling is no small undertaking and the best way for us to encourage new services and options in our community is to actively support the local businesses we have.

Gail Sheehy noted once that, "If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living." We bid a fond farewell to Laraine Dean as she relocates to pursue other opportunities. Laraine's Light Lunches has been a mainstay for home cooked meals and baking in the Village. But as one door closes, another opens...

Devynn Bohn is the Smoker-in-Chief behind the savoury treats at Hickory Street that will soon have a store front location beside the Fire Hall. From brisket, ribs and pulled pork to some of the best Mac n'Cheese around... This restaurant is certain to become a favorite destination along Highway 4. You can check out their menu and other details on their Facebook page or you can send your questions by email to info@hickorystreetfood.com.



Trevor Lewington

Have a comment? Question? Idea? Suggestion?

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