

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN OF STETTLER COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2013 IN THE MUNICIPAL OFFICE,
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Present: Mayor Dick Richards

Councillors A. Campbell, D. Bachman, W. Brown, M. Fischer,
S. Nolls & K. Sernecky
CAO R. Stoutenberg
Assistant CAO G. Switenky
Executive Director, Stettler Regional Board of Trade A. Brown
Director of Operational Services M. Robbins
Director of Parks & Leisure Services L. Penner

Press (2)

Absent: None

Call to Order: Mayor D. Richards called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1/2. **Agenda Additions/Approval:**

Motion 13:12:01 Moved by Councillor Bachman to approve the agenda as presented with the following addition:

13(b) In-Camera re: Land Matter

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

3. **Confirmation of Minutes:**

(a) Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council held November 18, 2013

Motion 13:12:02 Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council held on November 18, 2013 be approved as corrected on Page 9 to change wording to Mayor Richards.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

(b) Business Arising from the November 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

None

4. **Citizen's Forum:** (a) No one was present at the Citizen's Forum

5. **Delegations:** (a) 7:15 P.M. – Atco Electric re: Franchise Agreement

This item was dealt with later in the meeting.

6. **Administration:** (a) Memo re: Interim Operating Budget 2014

Councillor Sernecky entered the meeting.

CAO R. Stoutenberg advised that Section 242 of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* requires Council to adopt an operating budget for each calendar year. Section 242 further states that a Council may adopt an interim operating budget for part of a calendar year. Since the Town's 2013 Operating Budget will not be adopted until March/April 2014, an interim operating budget is required to provide legal expenditure authority per Section 248 of the *MGA*.

The interim operating budget is not used to set property tax rates; rather it is used as the authority to provide services, programs and overall corporate continuity. It is used by Council to justify the setting of all utility rates for the subsequent year. An interim operating budget ceases to have any effect when the operating budget and tax/mill rate bylaw is adopted.

Council and Senior Administration held an operating budget session on November 26th, 2013 at which time Council reviewed the financial impacts on three consecutive years of organizational activities 2014–2016. Administration has adjusted and recalculated the forecasts as directed and now requires Council to adopt an Interim Operating Budget for the year 2014.

The three-year Interim Operating Budget forecasts the following property tax increases for municipal purposes:

2014 3% (subject to further detail review in May 2014)
2015 3%
2016 3%

And also forecasts the following municipal utility bylaw rate increases effective in 2014:

- In-Town Water consumption: +\$0.07 per m³ to \$2.59 per m³
- Flat Water fee: \$0.00 per month to remain at \$10.00 per month
- Flat Sewer fee: +\$1.00 per month to \$19.00 per month
- Residential Garbage pick-up: +\$1.00 per month to \$19.00 per month
- Residential Recycling pick-up: +\$0.00 per month to remain at \$6.00 per month

The 2014 interim operating budget estimates the combined amount available for capital expenditure purposes to be \$969,430 (General \$407,930 & Utility \$561,500).

Motion 13:12:03

Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Town of Stettler Council adopt, per Section 242(2) of the *Municipal Government Act*, the First Draft 2014–2016 Operating Budget Estimates with expenditures totaling \$14,817,975 and Revenues totaling \$15,787,405 for the year 2014 as an Interim Operating Budget for that part of 2014 prior to the Operating Budget being adopted by Council.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

(b) Memo re: 2013 Staff Christmas Bonus

Assistant CAO G. Switenky presented Council with a memorandum highlighting some of the many organizational accomplishments in 2013.

He further highlighted the importance of staff appreciation and recognition for their commitment to providing excellence in their jobs. Retaining employee knowledge and experience is a priority to protect our most valuable assets.

In past years Council has rewarded its employees with a \$250 to \$300 bonus at Christmas to recognize their efforts towards achieving our organizations goals, and collectively many other successes beyond regular expectations.

Discussion ensued regarding the many accomplishments throughout the organization in 2013.

Members of Council individually expressed their sincere appreciation for the dedication and hard work of our staff, and requested that Senior Administration pass on their heartfelt thanks for jobs well done.

Discussion continued regarding the determination of an appropriate bonus for 2013.

Motion 13:12:04

Moved by Councillor Fischer that the Town of Stettler Council recognize the efforts of its entire team of valued employees through the award of a \$325 Christmas Bonus to be paid in (local) Heart of Alberta Dollars per full time employee (prorated for part time employees) as an appreciation for their continued effort, commitment and loyalty, as well as appreciation for the overall level of organizational accomplishment and dedication in 2013.

And further to direct the Chief Administrative Officer to close as many operational/non-emergency functions of the Town as possible on Friday, December 27th, 2013; to allow as many employees as reasonably possible a family orientated Christmas Season break of 5 consecutive days (most regular employees will receive 3 days with pay and 2 weekend days).

MOTION CARRIED (6-1)
Opposed: Councillor Campbell

(c) Memo re: Snow and Ice Control Update/Policy XV-1(b)

Mayor Richards welcomed Director of Operational Services Melissa Robbins to the meeting.

Director of Operational Services M. Robbins advised that the Snow and Ice Control Policy XV-1(b) – outlines how the Town manages snow removal and ice control; and sets priorities for streets, lanes and sidewalks/pathways.

The last review of the snow and ice control policy was completed in 2011 and included a detailed review of the sidewalks the Town was clearing and changes were made to the policy to return the responsibility of snow removal on sidewalks back to the adjacent landowner. The exception to this is adjacent to the highways in Town, where no boulevard exists. The review also included the annexed areas and new roads were incorporated into the policy.

There have been or will be upcoming changes that affect our current policy and require review:

- The Town has since expanded the pathway network to include a loop around the hospital and a connection from West Stettler Park to the Meadowlands Sport Park.
- The curling rink parking lot has been paved and is currently not identified in the policy. The adjacent Community Hall parking lot is not identified in the policy.

- The Peters have donated the corner lot on 50 Street and 50 Avenue to the Town and the adjacent sidewalk becomes our responsibility to clear.
- The SRC is including the Senior's Center into the facility and there is an increased liability risk with respect to pedestrians navigating the parking lot.
- There have been duplex/fourplex style residential developments where the only access to the lot is from the back alley.
- The snow removal at the airport has been turned over to the County of Stettler, with the exception of requiring the snow blower at times to remove windrows when they get too high.

Council reviewed the attached amended policy, with modifications made to reflect needed changes.

It was noted that the snow removal route/priority map has been updated to include the lots that have back alley access only.

Currently no changes have been made to the sanding route priorities map.

The pathway priority clearing map has been modified slightly to improve efficiency while clearing and to include the newly constructed pathways along the hospital and 70 Street.

Discussion ensued regarding various locations and priorities, as well as a review of the maximum trigger points for various priorities.

Discussion continued regarding the logistical challenges associated with having a limited amount of equipment, contractors, and resources available (both owned and rented) to address a major snowfall when all trigger points for all priorities have been met.

During and following major snowfall events some residential areas of Town will have to be patient waiting for 15 or more (working) days to allow clearing in other areas to be completed.

Administration respectfully recommends that Council updates the currently policy XV-1(b) as presented.

Motion 13:12:05

Moved by Councillor Fischer that the Town of Stettler Council approves the amendments to Policy XV-1(b) as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

- (d) Memo re: Snow from Private Property in the Industrial Subdivision

Director of Operational Services M. Robbins explained that during the winter, some businesses in the Industrial subdivision push snow from their parking and storage lots into the adjacent ditches. Our current bylaw XV-1(b) – Snow and Ice Control states:

Snow clearing on private property will not be allowed to push snow across public right-of-ways or deposit snow onto streets or lanes.

This snow hides the culverts and catchbasins. If we get a warm spring and the snow melts quickly, the Town thaws culverts and catchbasins to prevent flooding of properties. If Town crews cannot find the culvert ends because they are buried in snow, it wastes valuable time and increases the chance of properties being flooded. Culverts that are full of gravel and sand take three times longer to flood. In many cases, it takes crews half a day to thaw a culvert that is full of mud.

The gravel and silt deposited from the parking lots also causes drainage issues as the material fills the ditches and culverts. When the ditches hold water, cattails grow, and then the adjacent property owners struggle to mow and maintain the ditch, compounding the drainage problem.

Director of Operational Services M. Robbins explained that letters have been sent to some property owners asking for their cooperation. However, without enforcement, no change has been seen.

Administration would like to address this snow concern in the same manner that sidewalk clearing is handled. Letters would be mailed to every business in the industrial areas and snow removal companies, an advertisement would be placed in the paper, and Bylaw would talk with business owners who are still not complying. If businesses were continuing to place the snow in the ditches and across public property, offenses would be ticketed starting late January 2014.

Businesses are able to use the snow dump facility at no charge if they choose to have someone haul the snow offsite.

Discussion ensued regarding the responsibility for local businesses finding better solutions for removing and relocating snow from their properties to an appropriate location.

Administration respectfully recommends that Council upholds Policy XV-1(b) and supports Bylaw becoming involved with properties that are not acting in accordance with the bylaw.

Motion 13:12:06

Moved by Councillor Brown that the Town of Stettler Council upholds Policy XV-1(b) as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

- (e) Memo re: Red Deer River Watershed Alliance Funding Request for 2014

CAO R. Stoutenberg advised that in 2013 the Town of Stettler contributed an annual financial contribution of \$2,921.50 (5843 X \$.50) to the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance. As attached the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance is again requesting an annual financial contribution.

The Town is very pleased that their annual membership assists in promoting a healthy watershed which helps ensure a healthy water supply for Stettler and area.

Motion 13:12:07

Moved by Councillor Campbell that the Town of Stettler Council approve the 2014 funding request to the Red Deer River Watershed Alliance in the amount of \$2,921.50.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

(f) Memo re: 2013 Bad Debt Write-Offs

Assistant CAO G. Switenky noted that Policy VII-5(b), Collection of and Write-off of Bad Debt Accounts require that a Statement of the Bad Debt write-offs is presented to Town Council prior to December 31st each year. Town Council is required to authorize the write-off of all accounts in excess of \$300.

For 2013 there are bad debts totaling \$12,732.46 to be written off. He explained there are 12 accounts totaling \$9,040.84 that should be expensed under Council's authority as bad debts in excess of \$300, and there are another 36 accounts totaling \$3,691.62 that will be expensed under Administration's authority as bad debts under \$300.

It was noted that collection activity procedures will continue after an account has been written off.

It was noted that the majority of the total amount to be written-off (\$9,622.77) are for closed municipal utility accounts that are considered uncollectible. These specific utility accounts cannot be transferred to property tax accounts as these customers are not the property owners. 2013 uncollectible utility accounts represent a relatively small amount (approximately 0.36%) of the annual revenues generated by the four municipal utility services.

Discussion ensued regarding the Town's ongoing collection process after an account is written-off, and the Town's utility service cut-off policy/procedure.

Assistant CAO G. Switenky advised that only utility services used by property owners can be added to taxes and collected in similar manner. A utility account in the name of a renter cannot be added to an owner's tax account.

Town policy currently allows utility accounts to be in the renter's name. Some other municipalities do not allow this practice; however previous Councils were cognizant that there would likely be rate and deposit impacts in the rental market to reflect the assumption of this financial risk by owners.

Assistant CAO G. Switenky also advised that all Town customers have at least two months consumption before any current payment is due. Thereafter the billing clerk works with unpaid customers for a period of time attempting to collect. And further when the economy is down our uncollectable accounts increases due to hardships in the community.

Discussion continued respecting the relatively low amount of accounts considered uncollectible in 2013. Members of Council expressed their appreciation to utility account staff for their perseverance.

Motion 13:12:08

Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Town of Stettler Council approve the 2013 Bad Debt Write-Off of twelve (12) accounts, each in excess of \$300, totaling \$9,040.84, and further acknowledges that an additional thirty-six (36) accounts, each under \$300, totaling \$3,691.62 will be written-off under Administration's authority.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

5. **Delegations:**

(a) 7:15 P.M. – ATCO Electric re: Franchise Agreement

Mayor Richards welcomed Bryon Schwartz, Customer Service Supervisor along with three other ATCO Electric personnel to the meeting, and expressed his appreciation for the value that ATCO and its employees add to our community.

B. Schwartz provided an overview of ATCO's presence in Alberta and in the local area. He highlighted some of ATCO's community involvement and investments, and stressed that it is important that ATCO builds strong relationships in the communities they serve.

B. Schwartz further provided an overview of the following: Why have a Franchise Agreement, Benefits to the Community and to ATCO, The new standard Franchise Agreement template coordinated by AUMA, Options for franchise fees and Comparables with other are municipalities.

He stated that the Town's current approved fee collection rate is 7.5% which generated a payment to the Town of \$354,274 in 2013. A 1% increase would generate approximately \$50,000 in additional fees for the Town.

Discussion ensued regarding next steps involved in the renewal process which must be completed by June 1, 2014.

It was mutually supported that this matter be referred to Administration for further coordination of the required renewal process.

Mayor Richards thanked members of the ATCO delegation for their informative presentation.

Delegation members departed the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

6. **Administration Cont':**

(g) Heartland Beautification Committee (HBC) 2014 Budget

Mayor Richards welcomed Director of Parks & Leisure Services Lee Penner to the meeting.

Director of Parks & Leisure Services L. Penner explained that the HBC working group has been very active and successful in their projects and endeavors to improve the community of Stettler.

Discussion ensued regarding the HBC's involvement in the planning and design process for the new park in the downtown core (donation from the Peters Family). It is estimated that this park may cost \$30,000 to complete.

It was noted that should the HBC require additional funding for a project in 2014, then they have the ability to approach Council for additional funding consideration based on the merits of the project.

Discussion continued regarding the \$5,000 budget allocation for Travel & Subsistence and the need for further identification/clarification of the costs associated with the competition (judging etc.) and the costs for attendance at the National Awards Ceremony.

It was noted that the requested \$22,000 HBC budget is consistent with prior years.

Motion 13:12:09

Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Town of Stettler Council approve the Heartland Beautification Committee 2014 Budget in the amount of \$22,000 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

(h) Discussion re: SRC Cogeneration/Energy Efficiency

Discussion ensued regarding various alternative energy options that may be economically desirable and beneficial when considering future mechanical renovations at the SRC.

It was noted that the Town would need to undertake a qualified due diligence process to confirm realization of efficiencies and to quantify ultimate savings based on current contract values prior to consideration of any conversion from traditional energy procurements.

This item was presented for awareness and information purposes.

Mayor Richards thanked Director of Parks & Leisure Services L. Penner for his valuable presentations.

Director of Parks & Leisure Services L. Penner departed the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

(i) CAO Report

CAO R. Stoutenberg highlighted the CAO's monthly organizational report to Council.

Motion 13:12:10

Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Town of Stettler Council accept the CAO Report for the month of November as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

(j) Accounts Payable in the amount of \$869,119.25

Motion 13:12:11

Moved by Councillor Campbell that Accounts Payable in the amounts of \$527,068.85 & \$342,050.40 for the period ending November 29, 2013 for a total amount of \$869,119.25 having been paid, be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

7. Council:

Mayor and Councillors outlined highlights of meetings they attended.

(a) Mayor Richards

- Nov 19-22 - AUMA Convention.
- Nov 22 - Town Office.
- Nov 25 - Town Office.
- Nov 26 - Operating Budget Meeting.
- Nov 28 - Elementary Tea and Partnership Presentation on Leadership.
- Nov 29 - Rotary cheque presentation.
 - Light up Main Street Christmas Tree.
 - Thank you letter sent to family for donating the tree.

(b) Councillor Bachman

- Nov 21 - Library Board Meeting and workshop.
- Nov 26 - Operating Budget Meeting.
 - Ag. Society Meeting.
- Nov 27 - Federal Gas Tax Fund Event at Town Office.
- Nov 29 - Regional Collaboration Grant Applications and Golden Hawk Development Review at the County of Stettler.
 - Rotary Presentation of \$20,000 to the Library.
- Dec 3 - MPC Meeting.

(c) Councillor Brown

- Nov 18-22 - AUMA Convention.
- Nov 26 - Operating Budget Meeting.
- Dec 3 - MPC Meeting.

(d) Councillor Campbell

- Nov 19-23 - AUMA Convention.
- Nov 26 - Operating Budget Meeting.
- Nov 27 - Federal Gas Tax Fund Event.
 - IDP Referral.
- Nov 28 - Red Deer River Municipal Users Group Meeting.
- Nov 29 - Joint Collaboration Meeting at the County of Stettler.

(e) Councillor Fischer

- Nov 19-22 - AUMA Convention.
- Nov 25 - Member of portfolio panel evaluations at the Wm. E. Hay High School.
- Nov 26 - Operational Budget Meeting.
- Nov 27 - Federal Gas Tax Fund Event.
 - IDP Referral.
- Nov 28 - Met with dance club reps for tour of the SRC.
 - Festival of Lights wine and cheese.

- Nov 29 - Presentation to Grade 6 students.
- Met walking club reps for tour of SRC.
- Met with SML Entertainment in Red Deer re: pool table move.
- Dec 2 - Spoke at the Seniors Drop-In Centre and attended their Christmas dinner.
- Dec 3 - MPC Meeting.
- Met with Seniors Drop-In Centre members and pool club member for tour of SRC.
- Campus Alberta Meeting.

(f) Councillor Nolls

- Nov 20-21 - AUMA Convention.
- Nov 26 - Operating Budget Meeting.
- Nov 27 - Attended CAEP awards dinner.
- Nov 28 - Stettler Housing Authority Meeting.

(g) Councillor Sernecky

- Nov 18-22 - AUMA Convention.
- Nov 26 - Ambulance Union Negotiations.
- Operating Budget Meeting.
- Nov 29 - Presentation to Grade 6 students.

8. Minutes:

- (a) Stettler District Ambulance Association Meeting of November 18, 2013

Motion 13:12:12

Moved by Councillor Sernecky that the Town of Stettler Council accept the minutes, item 8(a) as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

9. Public Hearing:

- (a) None

10. Bylaws:

- (a) 2045-13 re: Waste Control Bylaw – Increase Residential Premises Fee from \$18.00 to \$19.00/month

Mayor Richards explained that Bylaw 2045-13 is to amend Bylaw 1706-94 – Waste Control Bylaw as follows:

- (a) In Schedule A – the Residential Premises Fee be changed from \$18.00 to \$19.00 per month.

Motion 13:12:13

Moved by Councillor Brown that the Town of Stettler Council give first reading to Bylaw 2045-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:14

Moved by Councillor Nolls that the Town of Stettler Council give second reading to Bylaw 2045-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:15

Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Town of Stettler Council give permission for third and final reading to Bylaw 2045-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:16

Moved by Councillor Fischer that the Town of Stettler Council give third and final reading to Bylaw 2045-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

- (b) 2046-13 re: Sewer Service Rates – Increase from \$18.00 to \$19.00/month

Mayor Richards explained that Bylaw 2046-13 is to amend Bylaw 1604 for the levying of sewer service rates and for the collection thereof as follows:

2(a) Single Family Residential Dwellings – Flat Rate \$19.00 per month.

2(b) All Other Sewer Services – 40% of water bill/month or \$19.00 per month whichever is greater.

In the case of a property where no meter or other exact means exist to determine the quantity of water used, or where a meter ceases to operate, the Town shall make an estimate of such quantity for the purpose of determining the sewer charge.

Motion 13:12:17

Moved by Councillor Sernecky that the Town of Stettler Council give first reading to Bylaw 2046-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:18

Moved by Councillor Campbell that the Town of Stettler Council give second reading to Bylaw 2046-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:19

Moved by Councillor Brown that the Town of Stettler Council give permission for third and final reading to Bylaw 2046-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:20

Moved by Councillor Nolls that the Town of Stettler Council give third and final reading to Bylaw 2046-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

- (c) 2047-13 re: Water Rates (Increase from \$2.52m³ to \$2.59m³)

Mayor Richards explained that Bylaw 2047-13 is to amend Bylaw 1856-02, being a bylaw relating to the water system of the Town of Stettler, including the fixing of rates, charges and conditions for the supply of potable water.

Motion 13:12:21

Moved by Councillor Bachman that the Town of Stettler Council give first reading to Bylaw 2047-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:22 Moved by Councillor Fischer that the Town of Stettler Council give second reading to Bylaw 2047-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:23 Moved by Councillor Sernecky that the Town of Stettler Council give permission for third and final reading to Bylaw 2047-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

Motion 13:12:24 Moved by Councillor Campbell that the Town of Stettler Council give third and final reading to Bylaw 2047-13 as presented.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

11. **Correspondence:**
- (a) Canadian Badlands re: General Meeting and 2014 Annual Levy
 - (b) Reynolds Mirth Richards & Farmer re: Understanding the Potential Liability of Municipal Councillors Under the MGA & Obligations for Candidates Following a Municipal Election

Motion 13:12:25 Moved by Councillor Nolls that correspondence items 11(a) & 11(b) be accepted for information.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous

12. **Items Added:** (a) In-Camera Item 13(b)

13. **In-Camera Session:**
- (a) Memo re: Compliance Order Updates
 - (b) Land Matter

Motion 13:12:26 Moved by Councillor Campbell that the Town of Stettler Council proceed into an In-Camera Session with the CAO and Assistant CAO present to discuss the In-Camera items.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous at 8:34 p.m.

Motion 13:12:27 Moved by Councillor Fischer that the Town of Stettler Council return to the regular meeting.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous at 8:55 p.m.

14. Adjournment:

Motion 13:12:28

Moved by Councillor Campbell that this regular meeting of the Town of Stettler Council be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED
Unanimous at 8:55 p.m.

Mayor

Assistant CAO