

Town of Drumheller

COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES



October 4, 2004 5:30 PM Council Chambers, Town Hall
703 - 2nd Ave. West, Drumheller, Alberta

PRESENT:

MAYOR:

Paul Ainscough

COUNCIL:

Karen Bertamini

Don Cunningham

Larry Davidson

Brent Pedersen

John Sparling

Harry Stables

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/ENGINEER:

Ray Romanetz

DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES:

Wes Yeoman

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES:

Michael Minchin

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Scott Blevins

RECORDING SECRETARY:

Linda Handy

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 MAYOR AINSCOUGH'S OPENING REMARKS

2.1 Mayor Ainscough advised that he along with Ray Telford, Economic Development Co-ordinator attended the Economic Development Conference held in Hinton from September 26th to 28th. He presented highlights from the workshop discussions: business retention and expansion, local economics, key components of business development and development of action plans, work force skill development, job creation, improved community competitiveness, cluster development and working together with other communities. Dan Chug from the Alberta Film Industry provided information for municipalities to become involved in the movie industry. As well, information was

provided on “Sustaining Prosperity Together” – Alberta has enjoyed a decade of economic growth driven by key competitive strategies – low taxes, low debt, business friendly policies and low-cost business environment however municipalities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain these competitive strategies with a declining revenue base. This has a detrimental impact on municipalities and they are no longer able to maintain these key competitive advantages to sustain ongoing economic growth. He noted that municipalities do not receive a fair equitable share from other governments to sustain their infrastructure and services.

2.2 Mayor Ainscough advised that he along with Councillor Brent Pedersen and Michael Minchin, Director of Corporate Services attended Health Symposium held in Consort on September 30th. He stated that information was provided on two agenda items: Parental Link Program and Ambulance Services. He explained that the purpose of the Parent Link program is to support Alberta’s parents in their role as their children’s first and most influential teachers and to link Alberta’s parenting programs and services through a province-wide network. Alberta Children’s Services currently spends approximately \$5 million on parent or family resource programs in communities across the province. In 2004-2005, under the Parent Link program, Alberta Children’s Services will provide \$6 million – in addition to the \$5 million currently allocated – to establish Parent Link centres in communities across the province. He explained that more information will be presented by the Province shortly. Councillor Pedersen will present comments relating to the Ambulance Services discussion later in the meeting.

2.3 Mayor Ainscough asked for a motion to change the Council Committee meeting scheduled for October 12th to a Council meeting. CAO explained that the reason for the change is to allow for finalization of several items with the current Council.

MO2004.184 Davidson, Pedersen that the Council Committee Meeting scheduled for October 12th be changed to Regular Council Meeting. Cd.

3.0 PUBLIC HEARING

4.0 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

5.0 MINUTES

5.1.1 ADOPTION OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – Sept. 20, 2004

MO2004.185 Cunningham, Davidson moved the adoption of the Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented. Cd.

5.2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS PRESENTED FOR INFORMATION

5.2.1 Municipal Planning Commission – August 19, 2004

5.2.2 Municipal Planning Commission – Sept. 9, 2004

5.2.3 Management Meeting Minutes – Sept. 28, 2004

5.3 BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6.0 DELEGATIONS

6.1 Communities in Bloom Results

Mrs. Bonnie Pedersen and Mrs. Trish Parker presented the Provincial evaluation results following the judges' tour on August 18th. The Town received a rating of 4 out of 5 blooms. The municipality was judged based on the effort in management planning, maintenance, improvement and innovation in the following categories: Tidiness effort – 77/100; Environmental Awareness – 78/100; Community Involvement – 87/100; Natural and Architectural Heritage Conservation – 87/100; Urban Forestry – 103/150; Landscaped Areas – 120/150; Floral displays – 111/150; Turf and Ground Cover Areas – 116/150 for a total score of 779/1000 (increase of 46 points over last year).

The judges provided the following comments and recommendations:

- Drumheller Valley's success stories are a result of many unique partnerships between various local groups; projects include Petro Canada Park (Munchie the Minersaurus), the Year of the Coalminer, Cultural Capital of Canada, Nacmine Memorial Miners' Park, etc.
- Drumheller's dinosaur theme is showcased throughout the Town;
- Navigating through Drumheller is facilitated by excellent directional signs;
- Impressed with how clean the ditches were and general condition of the Town;
- Tourist radio station serves to inform visitors and residents of current and upcoming events in the Valley;
- Banners, floral displays and trees make the downtown core very inviting.
- Town has many challenges due to its size and difficult environment, however Drumheller seems to be able to rise above these challenges;
- Heritage House tour and Light Up the Night should continue to promote winter activities;
- Recognized the Fossil Shop in North Drumheller as a good standard for other business;
- Cemetery well maintained;
- Town may wish to consider the upgrade of resources in the Parks Department in order to cope with the demands of such a large service area;
- Addition of more irrigation systems;
- The Town would benefit from strategic placement of additional recycle and compost collection deposits throughout the entire community;
- Recommend the development of pest management program (weed control);
- Tree farm operation is a bonus however the Town needs an ongoing inventory of tree species and a program for re-planting and pruning; and
- Recommend that all unsightly properties are sheltered by a fence.

Next year the Committee would like to implement a contest with welcome signs at each

community entrance and a "Showcase Your Space" competition for floral displays.

Mayor Ainscough and Council thanked Mrs. Pedersen and Ms. Park for their presentation and for their commendable efforts with Communities in Bloom.

Discussion held on the implementation of a recycling compost program. Councillor H. Stables advised that this program was in place several years ago however residents were disposing of other items into the bins. The cost to separate the items was significant. R. Romanetz advised that the volumes for recycled items have been increasing annually and discussions are ongoing with the Institution for their partnership on a plastics recycling program.

7.0 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 REQUEST FOR DECISION REPORTS

8.1 CAO

8.1.1 RFD – Alta Gas Franchise Agreement and Bylaw 14.04

R. Romanetz advised that he presented information at the last Committee Meeting of September 27th on the new 10 year natural gas distribution system franchise agreement with Alberta Gas Utilities Inc. He advised that the proposed agreement would replace the previous five year agreement with Alta Gas which expired on December 31, 2003. The agreement is based on the template agreement developed by Alta Gas and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. The franchise rate under the new agreement will be 27% instead of the current 7% to reflect the reduction in the revenue base (energy and delivery) to the new revenue based on delivery charges only. The new agreement also makes provision for the payment of property taxes in addition to the franchise revenue. The new agreement reflects minor changes to the definitions of municipal area and municipal core. He further noted that the package includes a bylaw and a listing of various riders as they relate to current franchise fees (based on revenue including energy and delivery costs) and tax charges and franchise fees based on delivery charges only. In reviewing the comparisons of those municipalities with franchise tax calculated on both energy and delivery charge, he noted that the range is between 4%-7% and under the new system the range is 10%-42%. For the 2004 franchise fee Administration is recommending 27% for the franchise fee excluding the property tax rider. He recommended that Council proceed to first reading to bylaw 14.04 which authorizes the Town to enter into the franchise agreement. The next step would be to apply to the Alberta Energy Utilities Board for approval. Following the public advertising and AEUB approval, Council could then proceed to second and third readings. He further noted that the municipality has the option to negotiate any extra services. Administration proposes to begin negotiations with Big Country Gas Co-op for those customers on the east side of the Red Deer River and Midland Provincial Park area. The other rural franchise agreements (Rosebud and Dalum) will remain as is until there is an opportunity for them to be incorporated into Alta Gas or Big Country Gas Franchises.

MO2004.186 Bertamini, Stables that Council give first reading to Bylaw 14.04 which is a bylaw to enter into a Natural Gas Distribution System Franchise Agreement with Alta Gas Utilities Inc. as presented.

Clarification on Motion

Councillor Bertamini asked if the 27% is locked in and secondly, asked if the comparison information is franchise fee only or does it include franchise fee and property tax. R. Romanetz advised that property tax does include the former linear assessment on pipelines and generally this equates to 3-4%. In comparison with other communities, one should subtract this amount from communities that include property tax rates in their overall percentage. In response to the first part of the question, R. Romanetz advised that the amount is not fixed as there is provision in the franchise agreement to request an amendment on an annual basis, which would require public advertising. Councillor Davidson expressed concern that Drumheller is on the higher end and requesting 1/3 of a mill from the residents seems inappropriate. The Town should try to attract businesses not discourage businesses from moving here because of the high utility rates. R. Romanetz stated that Council previously provided direction to Administration to equalize the rate for the community as a whole and for all customers to be treated alike. He further explained that the increase in revenue results from the incorporation of the former area of M.D. of Badlands into the franchise agreement. He further noted that the new structure throughout the municipality reflects policy established during ATCO Electric franchise agreement negotiations. Councillor Davidson stated that if the Town is equalizing rates, then a rate reduction should be considered. R. Romanetz stated that Council had previously provided direction regarding this matter however Council may chose to implement a franchise rate decrease.

Vote on Motion: Cd.

8.1.2 Affordable Housing

Mayor Ainscough stated that a portion of the discussion will be held in camera this evening.

Councillor Bertamini advised that she attended a Housing Task Force meeting in Edmonton on September 30th. A representative from Alberta Seniors was in attendance and she provided the following information: Currently the federal government contributes \$683 million into a pot and this amount is divided between provinces – Alberta was the first province to receive a share of \$67 million dollars. Alberta Seniors has matched this amount. These dollars were suppose to last for three years however the federal government has since added \$320 million with Alberta's share of the additional funding of \$13 million. Alberta Seniors may match these dollars. The federal government is not certain if they will extend the program and the Province will be out of funding by 2005. 80 projects have applied for funding and 31 have received approval. The program is in year two of a three year program and Alberta has allocated \$51 million to date. If Drumheller

wishes to access some of these dollars, there must be a strategy and application in place as soon as possible. Councillor Bertamini stated that the Province is asking municipalities to focus on a target group where there is a shortage of housing and use this as the basis for building a strategy – this is not subsidized housing but appropriate affordable housing and must meet one of the goals to assist individuals to move up on the housing continuum. Drumheller needs to develop a housing strategy which identifies the gaps within our community, design a site plan and a business plan for submission with our application.

8.2 Director of Infrastructure Services

8.2.1 Water Treatment Plant – PLC & SCADA Project Tender

W. Yeoman advised that he provided information to Council at their Committee Meeting of September 27th. The project was publicly tendered and closed on August 23rd with only two tenders received. Both tenders are significantly higher than the engineer's estimate and the Town's budget of \$137,000 for this portion of the project. He recommended that both tenders be rejected and the project be re-tendered by invitation only. The Town has received an interest free loan under the ME-First Program through Alberta Municipal Affairs for this project. New bids will be brought to Council on October 12th.

MO2004.187 Davidson, Pedersen that Council reject all tenders and direct Administration to pursue new bids for the Water Treatment PLC and SCADA Project. Cd.

8.2.2 Water Treatment Plant – Master Plan Budget

W. Yeoman advised that Council agreed in principle to awarding the comprehensive Master Plan for the Drumheller Water Treatment Plant to Stantec Engineering at their meeting of Council Committee Meeting of October 4th. Of the four qualified submissions received, Stantec was the lowest bid in the amount of \$23,830. As the approved budget for this project is \$20,550, Council approval to proceed is requested pursuant to the Town of Drumheller Purchasing Policy. The Master Plan is needed prior to proceeding with future plant upgrades. The Terms of Reference for this Master Plan has been reviewed by Alberta Environment and approved for funding under the Alberta Municipal Water and Wastewater Partnership Program. R. Romanetz advised that the Master Plan is a regional plan which will identify upgrading requirements. The Master Plan recommendations will be implemented over a ten year period and will be cost shared with the Province based on a regional formula.

MO2004.188 Sparling, Cunningham that Council approve the awarding of the Engineering Services contract for the WTP Master Plan to Stantec for the proposed amount of \$23,830.00. Cd.

8.2.3 Installation of New Pumping System – Nacmine Sanitary Sewer Lift Station

W. Yeoman advised that the existing pumps and associated works have been in place at the Nacmine Sanitary Sewer Lift Station since 1985 and are in need of replacement. The original plan (as determined prior to last year's budget approval) was to simply replace the

existing pumps with new ones with a budget approval of \$26,000. Upon closer examination of the project, it was realized that the electrical system requires upgrades as well – therefore Administration is requesting an additional amount of \$24,000. He advised that there are sufficient funds in the capital plan as a number of projects will not move forward in 2004 - the total project cost is \$50,000.

MO2004.189 Pedersen, Sparling that Council approve installation of the new sanitary sewer lift station pumps and apparatus at the Nacmine Sanitary Sewer Lift Station in accordance with the new revised budget. Cd.

8.3 Director of Corporate Services

8.3.1 RFD – 2004 Tax Recovery Public Auction

M. Minchin advised that as part of the tax recovery process under the Municipal Government Act, properties with a tax caveat registered against them in 2003 must be offered for public auction one year after the date of the tax caveat. Council must set the terms and reserve bids for the properties in question. In the past, the terms have been cash and the reserve bid for each property has been equal to its current year's assessment. He recommended that the auction date be December 10th, 2004.

MO2004.190 Davidson, Cunningham that Council use the property assessment as the reserve bid price for properties for the tax recovery auction on December 10, 2004. Furthermore, the successful bidder must pay via cash, money order or certified cheque. Cd.

8.3.2 Financial Statements to August 31, 2004

M. Minchin presented the financial statements to August 31, 2004. He noted that the operations to date are in line with budget expectations. He further noted that discrepancies for electrical charges have been corrected with ATCO and the current retailer and the Town is responsible for \$80,000 resulting from wire services on street lights not being billed.

8.4 Director of Community Services

Mayor Ainscough and Council welcomed Scott Blevins to Drumheller.

9.0 PRESENTATION OF QUARTERLY REPORTS BY ADMINISTRATION **(Quarterly Reports to be presented November 15, 2004)**

- 9.1 CAO
- 9.2 Director of Infrastructure Services
- 9.3 Director of Corporate Services
- 9.4 Director of Community Services

10.0 PUBLIC HEARING DECISIONS

11.0 DELEGATION DECISIONS

12.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

13.0 NOTICES OF MOTIONS

14.0 COUNCILLOR REPORTS

14.1 Councillor K. Bertamini acknowledged the successful gala hosted by the Drumheller Library Board on October 2nd. She commended the efforts of the board for their excellent fund raising project.

14.2 Councillor B. Pedersen provided an update on the ambulance services workshop offered at the Health Symposium. He presented the following information:

- The purpose Ground Ambulance Transfer Committee is to advise Alberta Health and Wellness on a province-wide planning/transition/implementation issues; inform AH&W on progress of RHA transition plans; communicate with health regions and municipalities. It was noted that the Committee does not advise on redesign of the system;
- Gene Graham, Chair of the DTH Region (Rocky Mountain House) and also appointed to the Ground Ambulance Transfer Committee (policy group) representing the Health Regions; meetings will be held once per month until the transfer on April 1st, 2005;
- M. Minchin has been appointed to the AUMA Transition Tool Kit Task Force (technical group);
- The Province will assume full responsibility for funding; there will be no comprise to patient care service – quality and access; AH&W to work with stakeholders for standards development;
- DTHR activities to date: data collection completed on financial requirements, service levels, call volumes; position recruited to support transition and operations,
- DTHR Responsibilities – Service levels vary from EMR to ALS (Advanced Life System – paramedic on ambulance); DTHR will be taking ambulances out of service for transfers;
- Regional Authorities overseeing issues should reduce administrative costs, standardized over the province,
- Response areas large – urban versus rural.

M. Minchin stated that the role of the Commission is to set standards and hear complaints – they have no real authority to make decisions. He also noted that the level of service is a major concern as there are 17 different providers for 24 municipalities – counties. The issue of how service levels are funded is yet to be answered. He noted that the Badlands Ambulance Society is scheduled to meet on October 8th.

14.3 Councillor Bertamini expressed concerned that West Ward residents are not certain

whether they vote on the two questions because there is no election in their ward. She recommended that Administration prepare an advertisement clarifying that the West Ward has voting stations for responding to the two questions on the ballot. M. Minchin noted that the election map, which will be advertised shortly, will show west ward voting stations.

15.0 IN-CAMERA MATTERS at MO2004.191 Pedersen, Cunningham to go in camera at 6:47 PM. Cd.

15.1 Affordable Housing

MO2004.191 Sparling, Bertamini to revert to regular Council meeting at 7:00 PM. Cd.

15.1 Affordable Housing

MO2004.192 Bertamini, Stables that an additional \$5,000 be allocated to the Affordable Housing Project for preliminary site planning and cost estimates; and further that this be funded from the Special Projects Portion of the Economic Development Operating Budget. Cd.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 7:03 PM.

MAYOR

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER