



Council Highlights



REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING - December 28, 2017

Uncollectable Property Taxes

- County Council discussed writing-off seven property tax roll accounts that have been deemed uncollectable. Four of the accounts are abandoned gas stations and three are owned by oil companies that no longer exist. Considering potential costs of owning the properties and environmental remediation costs, Council agreed the best option was to write-off the outstanding balances.
- If the County takes title of the properties it would then be responsible for the clean-up of the lots. Writing them off means the amount owing will still be on the financial records of the County and will still have to be addressed if ownership of the properties ever change hands.

Strategic Plan

- County Council reviewed a Strategic Plan developed as part of several planning sessions held in the latter part of 2017. It is comprised of a list of goals that both Council and Admin will work towards completing over the next year. Council decided to accept the Strategic Plan as amended.
- As priorities change, some of the goals may be revisited to fit operational needs.

Cost of Living Allowance

- The Budget and Finance Committee reviewed a Cost of Living Allowance adjustment for the 2018 Budget at its December 14th meeting and asked to have the item added to the Council agenda.
- Council considered Statistics Canada information that said the Consumer Price Index in Alberta for October 2017 compared to October 2016 showed a 1.3% increase in the cost of a variety of items consumed by Albertans. A motion approving a 1.3% increase for Athabasca County employees for the 2018 budget year was carried.

Wandering River Info Meeting

- An Open House to share information about the work being undertaken in the Wandering River area and County will take place in the new year.
- The suggestion was brought forward by Councilor Penny Stewart as a way to update residents on projects underway and those planned for 2018. The evening meeting will take place in Wandering River at a date yet to be determined.

Highway 63 Road Rescue

- Members of Council reviewed the need to take a closer look at the agreement between Athabasca County and the Government of Alberta to provide Hwy 63 Emergency Road Rescue services. An existing agreement is expiring soon and Council is examining the costs of providing this service to both residents and commuters along Hwy. 63.
- Council agreed to discuss the issue further with the Director of Emergency Services. In recent years the services have cost the County approximately \$100,000 annually.

Canada Post update

- Athabasca County Council received correspondence back from Canada Post regarding changes to post office boxes for County residents. The e-mail outlined how residents who paid for their post office boxes to be relocated to the Colinton Post Office will be reimbursed and those wishing to move back to Athabasca can now do so.
- An official letter from Canada Post is expected in the new year. The change in direction follows significant lobbying efforts made by Athabasca County Council and Administration to have concerns of residents addressed with Canada Post.