



Council Highlights



REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING - February 26, 2018

Cannabis regulation concerns

- The Government of Alberta released a framework that says it will be left up to municipalities to set regulations for cannabis sales and use in communities and facilities.
- Council felt the proposed guidelines for cannabis regulation are misplaced and out of line with existing tobacco and liquor regulations.
- Council moved to lobby the government to regulate cannabis consumption under the Liquor and Gaming Act; and further, to forward this motion to the upcoming Pembina River Zone meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

RCMP Annual Performance Plan

- Priorities for the RCMP Annual Performance Plan have been set as the result of a discussion between RCMP detachments in Athabasca/Boyle and municipal councils.
- The Annual Performance Plan provides a focus for the RCMP as they conduct their work over the coming year.
- The following priorities were identified:
 - Seniors Programs
 - Police Community Relations
 - Repeat Offender Checks

The specifics of the Annual Performance Plan must be universal enough to include the priorities and concerns of numerous municipalities in the area patrolled by the two detachments.

Music Festival Support

- Council received and considered a sponsorship request from the Athabasca & District Music Festival Association as it plans the 45th Annual Festival for April 16-20 in Athabasca.
- A Diamond sponsorship of \$300 was authorized in support of the festival.

Supporting Rural Schools

- A delegation from the Aspen View Public School Division shared the beginning steps of a new effort to lobby the provincial government to address shortfalls in the funding formula for rural schools.
- Superintendent Mark Francis says rural populations are declining in all of the prairie provinces and lower school division enrolments are a reflection of that decline. Student enrolments fell across the school division from 3,500 students in 2005 to 2,750 in 2017.
- Aspen View faces a tough financial situation given the funding formula attached to these reduced enrolments and is lobbying Alberta Education for changes to it. Next year Aspen View faces an estimated deficit of \$1 million.

The school division is calling for:

- an immediate freeze to operating cuts for rural schools with declining enrolments until Alberta Education fixes the funding model;
- a fully funded plant operation and maintenance model for schools that are not at a full complement of students because their facility costs are fixed;
- creating a single education system and funding framework, down from four in Alberta; and,
- additional funding for rural municipalities to put roads and infrastructure in place for new schools.

Aspen View asked Athabasca County Council for support in their lobbying efforts by mentioning these concerns with provincial government officials when the opportunity presents itself.

Later in the meeting a number of opportunities to mention the school division's concerns were identified. County officials will be helping to express not only the decline of school enrolments but the effects of funding reductions to rural communities in general.