

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE NO. 23

ANNUAL RATEPAYERS MEETING

LA CRETE COMMUNITY HALL

April 17, 1997

PRESENT:

Reuben Derksen	Reeve
Betty Bateman	Deputy Reeve
Elmer Derksen	Councillor
Ernest Dyck	Councillor
Bill Fedeyko	Councillor
Bill Neufeld	Councillor
Jake L. Peters	Councillor
Frank Rosenberger	Councillor
Walter Sarapuk	Councillor (7:50 p.m.)
Reg Scarfe	Councillor

ALSO PRESENT:

Dennis Litke	Chief Administrative Officer
Eva Schmidt	Recording Secretary
John Maine	Manager of Corporate Services
Roger Borchert	Manager of Public Works
Gerald Loewen	Accounting Consultant
Paul Driedger	Development Officer
Chris Kelland	Agricultural Fieldman
Approximately 200 Ratepayers	

CALL TO ORDER:

1 a) Call to Order

Councillor Peters called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

MOTION RP97-35

MOVED by Frank Wiebe that the video camera that is set up to record this meeting be removed from the meeting.

CARRIED

The video camera was removed.

1 b) Introductions

All Council members and M.D. staff introduced themselves.

MINUTES:

2 a) Election of a Chair for this Meeting

Councillor Peters called for nominations for a chairperson for this meeting.

1st call: Peter Enns nominated David Froese.
David Froese declined.

2nd call: Jake K. Wiebe nominated Raymond Knelsen.
Raymond Knelsen accepted.

3rd call: There were no further nominations

MOTION RP97-36

MOVED by Jake Froese that nominations cease.

CARRIED

Raymond Knelsen took the Chair.

Raymond Knelsen asked if there were any additions to the agenda.

MOTION RP97-37

MOVED by Peter Neudorf that the agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

MINUTES

3. Minutes of 1996 Ratepayers Meeting

The Chair asked if there were any errors or omissions from the Minutes of the 1996 Ratepayers Meeting.

3 b) Adoption of Minutes

MOTION RP97-38

MOVED by Herman Driedger that the Minutes of the 1996 La Crete Ratepayers meeting be adopted as presented.

Second: Abe Banman

CARRIED

REPORTS

4 Annual Reports

Raymond Knelsen asked if the Ratepayers wanted the reports read. The consensus was that all reports be summarized.

4 a) Municipal District Report - Reuben Derksen, Reeve

Reeve Derksen read the Municipal District Report noting the beginning of construction of the Zama access road, the agreement made with the Town of High Level for the operation of the High Level Airport and the agreement made with the Province for the Municipal District to operate the Tompkins Landing Ferry. The Reeve reported that a Development Appeal Board Hearing had been held in regard to a liquor store in La Crete, this matter appears to have been stalled at this time, a meeting was held in Zama regarding the development of lots, advising that the lots would have to be presold before development would take place and to date no lots have been presold. Reeve Derksen reported on road construction and flood control projects, paving projects in the hamlets of La Crete and Fort Vermilion, and the success of the brush control project.

MOTION RP97-39

MOVED by Reeve Derksen that the Municipal District Report be accepted as presented.

Second: Peter Enns

CARRIED

4 b) Council Member Reports

The Chair asked Council members to present their individual reports.

Councillor Peters reported on the street paving project in La Crete, and discussed his involvement in the Housing Management Board, Family and Community Support Services, and gave a report on culvert clean up.

Councillor Fedeyko reported that in 1996, the La Crete Chamber of Commerce asked the Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23 Council to cooperate with them on development of the Hamlet streets. The Chamber had hired engineers and would contribute \$10,000 to the project. This cooperation was turned down by Council. Councillor Fedeyko stated that at the March 1, 1997 Public Meeting in La Crete, the topic of his residence had been discussed. He told the Ratepayers that his home is in the rural district of High Level, although he does own property in St. Albert.

Councillor Bateman thanked the people of La Crete for supporting the Zama access road project and reported that the first stage was well on its way, and the second stage is to commence in June, 1997.

Councillor Dyck reported that he represents Council on the Frontier Seed Cleaning Plant and Agricultural Service Board and reported on road side clean up and brush control.

Councillor Dyck informed the Ratepayers that a Seed cleaning project in the amount of \$92,000 is to commence this summer.

Councillor Neufeld attempted to clarify the letter written to the Forest Advisory Committee, withdrawing their support of the Ainsworth proposal for the Aspen Mill, and signed by himself, the Reeve, and Councillor E. Derksen. Councillor Neufeld read the letter and stated that it had never been his intention to sabotage the Aspen Mill project and drew the public's attention to the portion of the letter that states that they are withdrawing their support until the issue is cleared up. There are a number of smaller sawmills in the area that will suffer the consequences if the mill goes ahead without protection for the smaller sawmills. Councillor Neufeld stated that he never had anything against Ainsworth and that Ainsworth has stated that the issue will be worked out. Councillor Neufeld reported that the decision in question had been made in the fall of 1996 when Councillor Fedeyko sat on the Forest Advisory Committee. Councillor Neufeld called on Councillor Fedeyko to discuss his position in this matter.

The Chair asked that all rebuttals be handled in the question period.

4 c) **Manager's Report - Dennis Litke, C.A.O.**

Manager Litke summarized the Manager's report noting the change in administration in 1996, closure of the High Level office, Wadlin Lake campground, reduced time spent "winging" winter roads, and the Amateur Sport Grant that was distributed to the various recreation boards.

MOTION RP97-40

MOVED by Dennis Litke that the Manager's report be accepted as presented.

Second: Frank Wiebe

CARRIED

Councillor Sarapuk entered the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

4 **Public Works Report - Roger Borchert**

Roger Borchert summarized the 1996 Public Works Report noting the modifications to the utility systems, waste management, drainage and flood control projects, Tompkins Landing Ferry, Tompkins Landing Ice Crossing, road construction, and capital equipment purchases.

MOTION RP97-41

MOVED by Roger Borchert that the Public Works report be accepted as presented.

Second: Peter Neudorf

CARRIED

4 d) **Planning & Development Report**
Kevin Smith / Paul Driedger, Development Officers

Paul Driedger summarized the Protective Services report noting Zama's new members on the fire and ambulance department and the purchase of an almost new ambulance. The E-911 service is expected to be in operation in late summer or fall of 1997.

Development Officer, Paul Driedger, summarized the Planning and Development Report, noting development permit applications and appeals and subdivision applications and appeals.

MOTION RP97-42

MOVED by Paul Driedger that the Protective Services report and the Planning and Development Report be accepted as presented.

Second: Dave Froese

CARRIED

4 e) **Agricultural Service Board Report**
Chris Kelland Agricultural Fieldman

Chris Kelland summarized the Agricultural Service Board Report.
Mr. Kelland thanked Russell Friesen for his years of service as Assistant Agricultural Fieldman and stated that Martin Fehr would be taking over the brush control project.

Chris Kelland summarized the Agricultural Service Board Report noting the members of the Board, Training and Awareness, Pest Control, Agricultural Sustainability, Diversification and Marketing , and Support Services.

MOTION RP97-43

MOVED by Chris Kelland that the Agricultural Service Board report be accepted as presented.

Second: Corny Neudorf

CARRIED

4 f) **Financial Report - Gerald Loewen, Financial Consultant**
1995 Audited Financial Statement
1996 Draft Financial Statement

Gerald Loewen presented highlights of the financial report.

MOTION RP97-44

MOVED by Gerald Loewen that the Financial Report be accepted as presented.

Second: Herman Driedger

CARRIED

6 **Snowplow Flags for Seniors**

Roger Borchert explained the portion of the Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23 Bylaw 065/96 pertaining to the Senior and Handicapped Snowplow Flag service, and requested public input during question period.

7 **Proposed Bylaw 053/96 - To Regulate and Set Business License Fees for Non Resident Hawkers and Peddlers Engaged in any Business in the Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23**

Councillor Peters explained that the proposed Bylaw 053/96 - to regulate and set business license fees for non-resident hawkers and peddlers engaged in any business in the Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23, is being brought forward for public input during question period.

8 **Annual General Ratepayer's Meeting Format**

The Reeve explained that the issue of changing the format of the Annual Ratepayers meeting to an open house format was discussed at the Council level and was being brought forward for public input during question period.

The Chair asked the Ratepayers if they wanted to take a coffee break or continue with the meeting. Due to the excessive number of people in attendance, making it difficult to move around, the general consensus was to continue the meeting without a coffee break.

QUESTIONS

9 **Question Period**
Questions and discussion on all reports are welcomed

6 **Snowplow Flags for Seniors**

A Ratepayer stated that this program be continued.

Q: Why is this an issue when we did not have an input in grader purchases? We have elected this Council to act on our behalf.

MOTION RP97-45

MOVED by Maarten Braat that the Senior/Handicapped Snowplow program be continued.

Second: Corny Neudorf

CARRIED

7 Proposed Bylaw 053/96 - To Regulate and Set Business License Fees for Non Resident Hawkers and Peddlers Engaged in any Business in the Municipal District of Mackenzie No. 23

Q: Our stores are charging us to the hilt, the trucks that come into town have good fruit and are reasonably priced.

A: The proposed Bylaw only proposes a \$100 annual license fee which the peddlers are willing to pay and it would regulate the type of peddlers that come in.

Q: There is a concern that the fruit prices will be jacked up if the bylaw is in place.

A: Councillor Bateman stated that the Zama residents are against the bylaw because they have a lot of peddlers come in from High Level. Her opinion is to let the consumer dictate, if the ratepayers don't want the peddlers they should not buy from them.

Councillor Fedeyko explained that this is basically a tax on peddlers coming into the M.D. Councillor Fedeyko pointed out that a lot of other municipalities have such a bylaw and peddlers do not object to paying the fee.

The Chair asked for a show of hands for those in favour of the proposed bylaw and a show of hands for those opposed.

The Chairperson declared that the majority was in favour of Bylaw 053/96.

8 Annual General Ratepayer's Meeting Format

Q: What is the reason behind changing the format of the Ratepayers meetings?

A: The Reeve stated that to have an open house type of meeting would be more one on one.

Q: It would deflect issues from the Councillors, it is in the ratepayers best interest to continue with the current format.

The Chair asked for a show of hands for those in favour of changing the format for the Ratepayers meetings and a show of hands for those opposed.

The Chairperson declared that the majority was in favour of keeping the current format.

Q: The waste disposal site in La Crete should be open every day and in the evenings.

A: It would cost the ratepayers more to man the waste disposal sites on a daily basis.

Q: Buffalo Head Prairie's waste transfer station is open and unfenced.

A: Buffalo Head Prairie's waste transfer station is on private property. Do you want unmanned stations?

Q: I had to come out three times to dump one load, then I had to wait a couple of days before it opened again.

A: We are attempting to get a Regional Land Fill Site within the area. We've talked to the Minister and he sounded positive, it is our intention to develop a land fill site when we get a positive answer from the Minister.

Q: Could we get a video surveillance instead of manned stations?

A: We are operating under regulations put out by Alberta Environment, and they require us to man the stations to ensure that we are licensed to accept the stuff that is dropped. It is also more workable to have someone there to help unload.

Q: Where will the land fill be placed?

A: We must place it in an area that has good drainage with a fair clay base, which limits us substantially. The provincial government is willing to research more sites, they have already researched four.

A: Last year a lot of gardening debris was dropped off at the Buffalo Head Prairie Waste Transfer Station. The ratepayers should use their own judgment as to what is brought to the station.

Q: Are all ratepayers paying the same rate of taxes? Why are some waste transfer stations open 24 hours a day and some are not?

A: We will be advertising for contracting out of the waste transfer stations and it would be quite difficult for contractors to put in a bid for more than one site if they were all open during the same hours, however, it could be considered by council.

Q: Why were the transfer station hours changed from time to time?

A: The Blumenort transfer station hours were changed at one point but have stayed the same since then.

Q: Why are contractors not paid at regular intervals?

A: A cheque run is done once a week, however, invoices must be signed by the department head and if there is a problem with the invoice, payment is held up.

Q: What is the funding formula for Family and Community Support Services and recreation grants, and where are the boundaries?

A: The funding for Family and Community Support Services comes from a per capita basis that the provincial government takes from the 1991 census. What population do you think that FCSS serves?

Q: According to the Northwestern Health Services Region, La Crete area has a population of 4,500.

A: Grants are still based on the 1991 census, that is all the Province recognizes.

Q: Is the boundary used for calculating funding for Family and Community Support Services the same as for recreation?

A: Last year's funding was calculated according to the old recreation boundary.

Q: Is the 1997 budget ready?

A: No.

Q: Will the taxes go up?

A: The Municipal tax will not go up but we cannot predict the Fort Vermilion School Division tax.

Comment by the Chair: The 1997 budget should have been presented at this meeting. Fort Vermilion School Division does not requisition the M.D., the provincial government requisitions for the school divisions.

A: That is right, just because you pay school tax does not mean the Fort Vermilion School Division gets all the money.

We have been working on the budget since November, it is a slow process because we are dealing with a large budget.

Q: Revenues are quoted as less than expenditures, where is the extra revenue coming from?

A: Road projects are funded 75% by the government.

Q: Some of last years contractors got double pay, is that money back in the budget for this year?

A: There were two contractors that were issued a second cheque but both were given back within the same fiscal year.

Q: Have the petitions been responded to?

A: The M.D. received one petition, given to the C.A.O., and one was given to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The petition received by the C.A.O. is being reviewed and the Minister will deal with the petition received by Municipal Affairs.

Q: When will the proposed Land Use Bylaw be passed?

A: The proposed Land Use Bylaw is subject to rewording and revamping according to public input. Public hearings will be held in all areas of the M.D. beginning tomorrow night in La Crete, and then it goes to Council.

Q: At the March 1, 1997 public meeting in La Crete, Council expense figures were taken from the Mackenzie News letter. At that meeting the Reeve quoted his T4 slip at a lessor amount than appears on the expense claims presented at this meeting.

A: The Reeve explained that the Councillor T4 slips represents 2/3 of the honoraria.

Q: There is a deliberate attempt made by Council to mislead the people as to what rates are charged.

Q: Lets not waste time asking questions on all this minor stuff. What does the Council rate work out to on an hourly basis?

A: The Reeve quoted the rates of \$100 for a meeting under four hours and \$200 for a meeting over four hours.

Q: Is \$25 an absorbent amount to pay the Councillors? What are the rates paid to other Councils in the province?

A: The Manning honoraria was quoted.

Q: Do we want the service Manning is getting? This is a growing area and represents lot of different nationalities, we should work together and not be fighting. Too many Councillors are getting in by acclamation, for all the people that we have here tonight, present yourselves as councillors at the next election.

Q: The letter written by the Reeve and two Councillors to the Footner Forestry Advisory Committee, could we hear a response from Councillor Fedeyko?

A: Councillor Fedeyko stated he had served on the Footner Forestry Advisory Committee from October 1995 to October 1996. If he had still been representing the public on this committee he would have called a meeting to discuss the approach to be taken. Councillor Fedeyko said he doesn't agree with the procedure that was taken.

Q: I agree with Councillor Neufeld, there was a discrepancy, however, the Derksen's and Neufeld were delegated by Council to sit on the committee and they decided, without consulting Council, to withdraw support.

A: We withdrew our support on the same authority we had to sign the letter of support, we withdrew under the same condition and we withdrew our support because we did not know the situation. As soon as the issue of the incidental timber is cleared up we will support it again.

Q: What letterhead was used?

A: It is a Footner Forest Advisory Committee not a Council Committee, therefore, no letterhead was used.

Q: Smaller sawmill operators asked not to have them sign the support in the first place. There is not one sawmill operator on that board. Why was Councillor Fedeyko allowed to sit on the board? We do not have fair representation and it is our livelihood at stake. Our M.D. should emphatically state to the government that we do not want jobs displaced we want jobs added.

A: Councillor Fedeyko responded that it was not his intent to displace jobs. He supports small sawmills at all times and he was asked to sit on the board as a member.

A: This can be worked out with Diashowa. You're right, it should not have been signed in the first place.

Q: Why does Councillor Fedeyko not support the grain terminal, not support the sawmills and is determined to split the M.D.?

A: Councillor Fedeyko responded that he tried to convince the board on the grain terminal and he supports every business in this area. However, the Footner Forestry Advisory Committee is made up of a very fragile group, we could not make any conditions on the agreement. There were three native groups involved and the Paddle Prairie group was making overtures of quitting.

Regarding the M.D. split, I like fairness and honesty. I did sign the petition asking for the split I have been involved in a lot of representation of our area and have brought both Federal and Provincial Ministers to La Crete, but honestly, the way the M.D. is being run right now will not work. I don't want the M.D. to split, but unless we change the way we are doing things it just might happen.

Q: The Councillors took a lot of heat last night because the Footner Forestry Advisory Committee members did not bring the issue to Council before withdrawing their support.

A: Councillor Neufeld read a letter from Gary Peterson, and had a letter from Dianne Pawlik asking them to attend the meeting. The Committee members had the discretion to support or withdraw support.

Chair: There were mistakes made but they are being resolved.

Remark from the public: Let's change the subject everything has been said on this issue that there is to say.

Q: A few years ago I had a grader contract with the government and they did not interfere at all.

A: In contracting out, the key is to focus on the limited of the unknown. We have not purchased graders but have leased them with a five year warranty. The lease was put to tender, then to bid. The prices were extremely cheap at that time. I cannot say that we can put our graders on the roads as well as the contract graders, but we can put new leased graders on the road for a comparable price, lessening breakdown time. The M.D. does have a responsibility to grade the roads in the most cost effective way.

Q: If the contractors had a three year contract they could possibly do it cheaper.
A: I agree with you, a longer contract would be cheaper.

Q: Why do you want your own graders, to collect dust? We have poor roads in the Fort Vermilion area.

Q: I have an older grader and have not had breakdowns but the M. D. sat on my money for three months. I was grading the roads for 60% of the government rates, how can you run it cheaper than that?

Q: Unionized grader operators don't work on the graders, they call the mechanic. Were the contractors offered a new contract if they got a new grader?

A: No offer was made, there were bids put out for contract work and this issue has been referred to the budget.

Q: The public does not want the M. D. to purchase new graders, we need to have a course of action that if Council makes a decision the ratepayers don't agree with, that Council would have to back out of it.

A: No grader lease has been signed.

Q: How much machine experience do the Manager and Manager of Public Works have on operating equipment?

A: Dennis Litke replied that he has operated a grader.

A: Roger Borchert replied he has not operated a grader.

Q: You cannot have a good man on hand if you don't pay them a high enough wage. I.D. 21 said the cheapest rate is owner/operator.

Q: The M.D. has some real good operators who worked for Alberta Transportation. Give the owner/operator responsibility for his area.

A: Council has noted that the majority of the public is in favour of owner/operators. The province is now coming back and saying that privatization is not the way to go.

Q: Try it, we will not condemn you for it.

Q: What will happen with Reinland Park?

A: It will be referred to Council at budget time.

Q: Are there any plans for dust control on the Highway 88 connector?

A: The road needs paving. The M.D. only has a dust control policy regarding the schools.

Q: Alberta Transportation's paving projects, where are they getting the gravel from?

A: The gravel has already been stockpiled and the pavement is to come right down to the river.

Q: Regarding Reinland Park, why not use the money in lieu that is received on development? Parks and recreation is being denied.

A: Money in lieu is used to purchase land for schools, parks, and any public facilities, we also take land in lieu in the residential areas.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION RP97-46

10. Adjournment

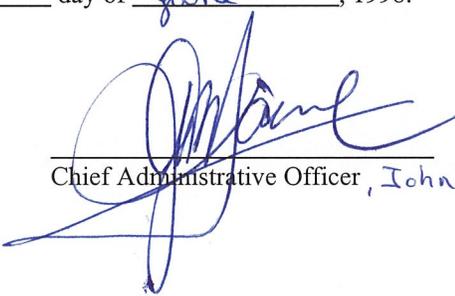
MOVED by Jake K. Wiebe to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Second: Jake Peters

CARRIED

These minutes were adopted this 16th day of June, 1998.


Chairperson, Raymond Knelsen


Chief Administrative Officer, John Maine