

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE NO. 23

ANNUAL RATEPAYERS MEETINGS

**HIGH LEVEL RURAL HALL.
APRIL 24, 1996**

PRESENT

Bill Neufeld,	Reeve
Betty Bateman,	Deputy Reeve
Frank Rosenberger,	Councillor
Walter Sarapuk,	Councillor
Bill Fedeyko,	Councillor
Elmer Derksen,	Councillor
Reg Scarfe,	Councillor
Ernest J. Dyck,	Councillor
Reuben Derksen,	Councillor

ALSO PRESENT

Dennis Litke,	Chief Administrative Officer
Roger Borchert,	Manager Public Works
Hugh Dennis,	Treasurer
Paul Driedger,	Senior Development Officer
Kevin Smith,	Recording Secretary
Chris Kelland,	Agricultural Fieldman
Russell Friesen,	Agricultural Fieldman
Dave Wiens,	Maintenance Supervisor
Martin Fehr,	Public Works Assistant
Kevin Morrison,	Maintenance Supervisor
Cameron Donald,	Taxation Clerk
23 Ratepayers counting staff	

CALL TO ORDER

1.a) Councillor Fedeyko called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM

b) Introductions

All Councillors and M.D. staff introduced themselves.

ELECT CHAIR

2. Election of a Chair for this Meeting

Councillor Fedeyko asked for nominations for a chairperson for this meeting.

1st Call: Peter Chomiak nominated Peter Hawryliuk
Peter Hawryliuk accepted.

2nd call: There were no other nominations.

3rd call: There were no other nominations.

Debbie Brewster moved nominations cease

CARRIED

Peter Hawryliuk took the chair.

MINUTES

3.a) Minutes of 1995 Ratepayers Meeting

Manager Litke read the minutes of the 1995 High Level Ratepayers meeting.

b) Adoption of Minutes

Chairman Hawryliuk asked if there were any errors or omissions.

MOTION 96-01

Jay Lanti moved to adopt the 1995 minutes as read.
Paul Steffanson seconded the Motion

CARRIED

REPORTS

4. Annual Reports

a) Municipal District Report, Bill Neufeld, Reeve

Reeve Neufeld read his report noting changes taking place in the M.D. with the take over of the airports, the Tompkins Landing ice crossing and ferry operation, the paving of the loop on Highway No. 697 and the plans for the construction of the Zama access road.

MOTION 96-02

Moved by Reeve Neufeld to accept the report as presented.
Ernie Lanti seconded.

CARRIED

b) Council Member Reports Flood Control Projects, Other Reports

Chairman Hawryliuk asked if there were any reports from Councillors.

Councillor Dyck said these items will be covered in Manager Litke's Report.

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

Manager Litke read his report pointing out the various administrative changes that have taken place since incorporation on January 1, 1995. The Manager briefly described the construction of the Waste Transfer Stations, the East Fort Vermilion Sewer Line, a Raw Water Reservoir in Fort Vermilion, and the new Treated Water Reservoir in La Crete.

MOTION 96-03

Moved by Manager Litke that his report be accepted as presented.
Pat Kulscar seconded the motion.

CARRIED

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

Paul Driedger presented the planning and development report noting the number of building and development permits that were issued in 1995, the number of subdivisions applied for and the number of Land Use Order Amendments received.

MOTION 96-04

Moved by Paul Driedger that the Planning and Development report be accepted as presented.
Margaret Pietsch seconded the motion.

CARRIED

e) Agricultural Service Board Report, Chris Kelland / Russell Friesen, Agricultural Fieldmen

Russell Friesen presented the Agriculture Service Board report mentioning Training, Education and Awareness, Pest Control, Agricultural Sustainability, Diversification and Marketing, and Provision of Supportive Services.

MOTION 96-05

Moved by Russell Friesen to accept the report as presented.
Beth Kepplar seconded the motion.

CARRIED

f) **Financial Report, Hugh Dennis, Treasurer**
1995 Unaudited Financial Statement

Treasurer, Hugh Dennis, presented the 1995 unaudited report.

MOTION 96-06

Moved by Hugh Dennis that the financial report be accepted as presented.
Debbie Brewster seconded the motion.

CARRIED

5. **Emergency 911 Phone Service**

The Reeve asked Paul Driedger to explain the Emergency 911 service.

Paul Driedger presented a report on the emergency 911 service and gave a brief overview on cost saying it would be under \$1.00 per phone line per month. AGT is planning on setting up a 911 system if that is what the communities want. There are various ways of setting it up. One option of cost recovery is a flat rate on each phone line. Right now that would be 44 cents per line plus 42 cents for answering and dispatch, making a total of 86 cents per line.

It was pointed out that the dispatch center is never tied up, calls always go to the next dispatch center.

Chairman Hawryliuk opened this portion for questions about the Emergency 911 number.

Question: Chairman Hawryliuk asked how the ambulance people feel about 911, are they in agreement with it?

Answer: Paul Driedger said yes they are definitely interested. Aeromedical has put in a proposal to provide dispatch services out of High Level. The M.D. Fire Departments dispatch themselves.

Question: If Aeromedical did not get this contract who would?

Answer: Paul Driedger said almost anyone trained in that field is eligible.

Question: Could a 24 hour answering service do this?

Answer: Paul Driedger said yes but Aeromedical and other trained people are more qualified to answer inquiries.

Question: Is there any cost to the Municipality?

Answer: Paul Driedger said none at all.

Statement: Councillor Fedeyko said you will not get a busy signal, after 3-4 rings you will be forwarded to the next call answer center.

Question: Are the RCMP on-line also?

Answer: Paul Driedger said yes, when the call comes in they take the information and the emergency is being responded to while they are talking.

Question: Will the dispatch center go out to tender?

Answer: Paul Driedger and Manager Litke said that is up to Council.

Chairman Hawryliuk asked if there were any further questions, and there were none.

Chairman Hawryliuk asked for a show of hands to give direction to the MD.

There was no opposition by show of hands.

The meeting recessed for coffee break at 8:21 PM

QUESTIONS

6. Question Period
Questions and discussion on all reports are welcomed.

Chairman Hawryliuk reconvened the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Question: Council said they would have a breakdown of taxes presented at this meeting. Can they have the information presented at this time?

Answer: Manager Litke said he does not have the breakdown at this time.

Question: When will this information be presented?

Answer: Manager Litke said this was an involved process and would take some time.

Question: Was Mr. McAskiles removal from his job necessary?

Answer: Clark McAskile was asking for \$150,000 as a severance package. As per the Human Resources Policy the buyout entitlement was approximately \$40,000.

Question: Property Taxes changed from 65% to 100%, there should have been a 35% drop in mill rate. The mill rate only dropped 15%, therefore there should be a surplus, can you explain this?

Answer: Manager Litke said the figures were comparable to the period from 1994 to 1995.

Answer: Treasurer Dennis said the total school taxes increased by \$200,000 dollars. We looked at the total mill rate and found we paid more as an I.D. when money came out of the municipal mill rate.

A discussion followed concerning a surplus that was transferred to reserves, and the rate dropped only 15% instead of 35%.

Statement: Reeve Neufeld said we will have to do a General Assessment every year after 1997.

Question: Has Council made any decisions on the 1995 mill rate as the assessments were received late?

Answer: The budget still has to be completed so Council has not addressed the assessment yet.

Question: What strategic thinking was there to the closing of the High Level Office?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld explained about opening an office in Zama to better serve residents.

Question: Mrs. Pietsch asked for a breakdown of taxes by ward to determine taxes received versus taxes spent. Is it possible to set this up on computers for future breakdown?

Answer: Dennis Litke said it's nearly impossible at this time. We can have that information available for next year.

Question: The ratepayers want to know where the money comes from and where it goes.

Answer: Councillor Bateman said computer software will have to be modified.

Answer: Treasurer, Hugh Dennis, said expenditures are broken down by the areas of Fort Vermilion, La Crete, and Zama and a further breakdown would require modifications to the computer system.

Councillor Scarfe said a big percentage of the money is coming from farmers.

Question: A questionnaire was sent out, why was it only sent out to some residents of ward 8 & 9 and not all residents?

Answer: Manager Litke addressed some questions and advised that people who wrote letters got the first response. If a husband and wife each wrote a letter they both got a letter and a questionnaire. Councillor Fedeyko said he did not see that list.

Question: Why was the questionnaire requesting only High Level Rural residents to respond?

Answer: Manager Litke said Council would review their decision once all questionnaires have been completed.

Question: What is Council's problem with the Town of High Level to cause the move of the office to Footner Lake or the High Level Rural Hall?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said there is no problem with the Town of High Level.

Answer: Councillor Bateman said negotiations with the Town of High Level for the Airport are ongoing.

Question: Why is the \$41,000 stated at the Council meeting now down to \$17,000 in the letter?

Answer: \$41,000 is what the M.D. was paying for rent before the Finance Department was moved to Fort Vermilion. The M.D. is now paying \$17,000 because of down-sizing, and before a motion was made to close the High Level office.

Question: Why don't we change wards to run east and west, not south and north, then we have to work together?

Answer: Councillor Bateman said she works for 409 farmers, 53 in Rural High Level, with a total tax base of \$1,438,40 million, \$104,384 is generated out of farms.

Question: Lester Brewster asked if Council is using the amount of \$41,000, to justify their decision to close the High Level office.

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said that was not the intent.

Question: How many Government buildings do we have to pay for? Discussion followed about buildings in Fort Vermilion and La Crete. Reeve Neufeld stated that two thirds of the population is located in the La Crete area.

Question: Why not have one office in Fort Vermilion?

Question: What is the procedure on making motions?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said it all depends on how formal council wants to be. Council is developing a rules and procedures bylaw and it will be followed.

Question: Does council have any kind of consensus on Public Opinion of questionnaire that was sent out?

Answer: Dennis Litke said that the information is not available yet.

Question: What are the policies and guidelines on building roads?

Answer: Manager Litke said the M.D. has adopted a policy but he does not have it with him at this time.

Question: What policy did the M.D. follow to build the Krahn Connector that cost over \$200,000.

Answer: Councillor R. Derksen said the road cost the M.D. \$70,000, the remaining two thirds came from the infrastructure program. The two miles of road saves eight miles of traveling time and serves a dozen families.

Question: What is the average cost to build one mile of road?

Answer: Kevin Morrison said on an average \$40,000 per mile.

Question: Why was this two mile convenience road built to service a dozen families?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said we were asked to look at the upgrading.

Question: Why did Mr. Smith's house burn down during -43 degree weather?

Answer: Manager Litke stated that there is a policy in place whereby the Fire Chief makes the decision as to whether it is safe to operate the fire truck in extreme temperatures.

Question: Will the M.D. look into the situation?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Dwayne Foster asked why does the M.D. not allow 30 to 40, acre, subdivisions near town? Council should allow acreage's.

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said the public had input in this decision and several people said no. Once allowed, the M.D. would be expected to provide water and sewer to those subdivisions as well as the upkeep of roads.

Statement: Dwayne Foster said leave it up to the developer to build a road.

Answer: Paul Driedger said we are in the process of reviewing the Land Use Bylaw and the M.D. will be holding a public hearing.

Question: Why was the Zama road not built when there was a 100% funding from the provincial government?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said the oil company held a License Of Occupation and they did not want to deal with road bans.

Question: Who's fault is it, the oil companies?

Answer: Council is still trying to get 100% funding

Councillor Bateman gave a brief history on local road.

Question: Council has procrastinated on issues to the point of costing taxpayers huge amounts of money. Why did Council not act on reclaiming landfills?

Answer: Councillor Bateman said they are negotiating with a gentleman from Manitoba to clean up the landfill sites.

Question: What guidance and direction is given to committees to ensure the transfer of Family and Community Support Services is successful?

Discussion followed.

Question: On expenses paid for La Crete doctor's housing, did council waive taxes for the past four years?

Question: Who is the society answerable to? How will they pay their GST bill?

Discussion followed.

Question: Is there a conflict of interest regarding Councillor Bateman and the peddlers license?

Answer: Councillor Bateman said she is not in conflict on this issue. She has a license to sell her fish, there is no special license required in the M.D.

Answer: According to the MGA Councillor Bateman is not in conflict.

Question: Pat Kulscar re: M.D. review, what is the opinion of this document?

Answer: Manager Litke said council addressed this at two separate council meetings. The document has been referred to him to follow up on.

Question: Pat Kulscar asked what is being done to correct the matter of Council not being able to work as a team for the entire M.D.?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said you cannot get all Councillors to agree on the same issues at all times.

Question: What work is being done to meet the challenge as stated in the post incorporation review?

Question: Pat Kulscar pointed out that she does not recall seeing the bylaw on the agenda of the last three meetings.

Answer: Manager Litke said there has been one reading and council has requested changes which will be completed by staff as soon as possible.

Question: Kevin Morrison asked if the utilities are still self sustaining in the hamlets.

Question: Was the original water and sewer put in for the hamlet?

Answer: Roger Borchert said the Province put in the cheapest system possible and the M.D. now has to bring the system up to standards.

Question: Why are meeting dates only advertised in The Northern Pioneer and not The Echo.

Answer: Manager Litke said M.D. is trying to cut costs for advertising and legally we only have to advertise in one paper.

Question: The Council is the highest paid in the province, yet they voted a pay raise. What is your motivation for being on council? Is it monetary gain?

Discussion followed.

Question: Why does this council, as a whole, hide from the Public, and always go "In Camera"? What is your problem with expressing views publicly?

Discussion followed.

Question: Was this meeting advertised in the Echo?

Answer: Chairman Hawryliuk and some Councillors said it was.

Reeve Neufeld gave a final closing and thanked everyone for coming out.

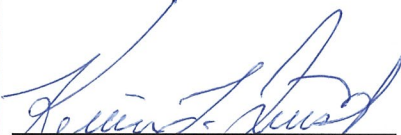
ADJOURNMENT

7. Adjournment

MOTION 96-07

Moved that the High Level Ratepayers Meeting adjourn at 10:36 PM

The minutes were adopted this 16 day of April 1996


~~Reeve, William Neufeld~~
Kevin Quist chairman


Manager, Dennis Litke