

**MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE NO. 23**

**ANNUAL RATEPAYERS MEETING**

**FORT VERMILION COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTRE**

**April 23, 1996**

**PRESENT:**

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

**ABSENT:**

Jake Peters, Councillor

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Dennis Litke, Chief Administrative Officer  
Joanne Mitchell, Assistant Manager  
Hugh Dennis, Treasurer  
Roger Borchert, Manager of Public Works  
Kevin Morrison, Maintenance Supervisor  
Kevin Smith, Development Officer  
Paul Driedger, Development Officer  
Chris Kelland, Agricultural Fieldman  
Russell Friesen, Agricultural Fieldman  
Cameron Donald, Assessment & Taxation Officer  
Approximately 25 Ratepayers

**CALL TO ORDER**

**1. a) Call to Order**

Councillor Rosenberger welcomed everyone and called the Ratepayers meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**b) Introductions**

All Council members and staff introduced themselves.

**ELECT CHAIR**

**2. Election of a Chair for this Meeting**

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

1st call: Agnes Rosenberger nominated Maartin Braat.  
Maartin Braat indicated his acceptance.

2nd call: Stan Smith nominated Billy Ducharme.  
Billy Ducharme declined.

3rd call: There were no other nominations.

Councillor Rosenberger declared Maartin Braat elected as Chairman by acclamation.

Mr. Braat took the chair.

**MINUTES**

**3. a) Minutes of 1994 Ratepayers Meeting**

Manager Litke read the minutes of the 1995 Fort Vermilion Ratepayers meeting out loud.

**b) Adoption of Minutes**

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

on page 1, 1st call for nominations, delete "Jake" and replace with "Jack"  
on page 2. c) delete "Paul Driedger" and replace with "Kevin Smith".

**MOTION RP96-01**

**MOVED** by Marilyn Eek to adopt the 1995 minutes as corrected.

**CARRIED**

**REPORTS**

**4. Annual Reports**

**a) Municipal District Report, Reeve, Bill Neufeld**

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 #697 and the plans for the construction of the Zama access road.

Stan Smith asked what the plans are for the Fort Vermilion Airport and Reeve Neufeld assured him it will remain open. There are no plans to close the airport.

**MOTION 96-02**

**MOVED** by Reeve Neufeld, to adopt the Reeve's annual report.

**CARRIED**

**b) Council Member Reports**

No Council Member reports were given.

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

Dennis Litke reported on the administrative changes since incorporation on January 1, 1995 noting the M.D. staff is now responsible for all the accounting system, administrative support as well as public works, utilities, agricultural services, community services and safety services.

An agreement has been reached with Alberta Environment for the construction of the Waste Transfer Stations and closing of the modified landfill sites in the M.D. The heavy snow fall this winter has resulted in increased snow plowing costs.

The M.D. had some major utility work completed in the past year. In Fort Vermilion we completed the Fort Vermilion East sewer line extension, old water lines were replaced, and a new raw water reservoir was constructed. In La Crete we did some ditch clearing and modification to improve drainage and constructed a new treated water reservoir. We made some modifications to the plant in Zama to help alleviate water shortages and plan some major work on the system in 1996.

We have experienced some problems with the sewage lift stations in both Zama and La Crete and hope to have them operating properly in 1996.

The M.D. is involved with drainage programs along with the Department of Environment in La Crete East, Machesis Lake, High Level East and High Level South.

1995 was a busy year for the M.D. and so far, 1996 is shaping up with lots of work as well.

**MOTION RP96-03**

**MOVED** by Dennis Litke to accept the Manager's report.

**CARRIED**

**d) Planning & Development Report**

Development Officer, Kevin Smith reported the M.D. no longer issues Building Permits for Alberta Labour. Alberta Labour has contracted out the Safety Services to an Accredited Agency who now issue permits and conduct inspections for them. A list of the Accredited Agencies may be obtained in any one of our offices or from Alberta Labour.

In 1995 a total of 245 development permit applications were received with 243 approved, 2 refused and 3 appealed. Of the 3 appealed, 2 were refused and 1 appeal was upheld.

48 subdivision applications were received with only 2 refused and one appealed.

11 Land Use Bylaw amendments were received with 10 approved and 1 refused.

**MOTION 96-04**

**MOVED** by Development Officer Smith to adopt the Planning and Development report.

**CARRIED**

e) **Agricultural Service Board Report**

Agricultural Fieldman, Chris Kelland reported on membership of the Ag Service Board and the staff employed in this department.

The goals and objectives of the A.S.B. for 1995 were:

1. Training, Education and Awareness
2. Pest Control
3. Agriculture Sustainability
4. Diversification and Marketing
5. Provision of Supportive Services

1996 should be similar to last year, however the A.S.B., budget permitting, will add a program of Roadside Vegetation Management to their list of goals and objectives.

**MOTION 96-05**

**MOVED** by Chris Kelland to adopt the A.S.B. report.

**CARRIED**

f) **Financial Report, Hugh Dennis, Treasurer**

Treasurer Hugh Dennis presented the 1995 unaudited financial report.

Agnes Rosenberger asked why we had \$73,000.00 left over from last year and Mr. Dennis replied there were some corrections made to these figures and the budget is for a calendar year. The figures reported were for the 1995 budget. The 1996 budget is being worked on now and should be ready for presentation to Council fairly soon.

**MOTION 96-06**

**MOVED** by Treasurer Hugh Dennis to adopt the financial report.

**CARRIED**

5. a) **Emergency 911 Phone Service**

Paul Driedger reported on the proposal to have the emergency 911 system in M.D. #23. AGT is planning on setting up the E911 system throughout the Province if that's what the communities want. There are various ways of setting it up and the one option that is being considered here is a cost recovery system where a flat rate is charged on each phone line. Right now it appears to be \$0.44 per line plus \$0.42 cents for answering dispatch service.

He asked for a show of hands to see if the community is in favour of the E911 service. If enough people are in favour, we will advise A.G.T. and make arrangements for the dispatch.

Marilyn Eek asked if the M.D. has analyzed how effective it would be and Paul Driedger replied it should be the same as in the city or anywhere else in the Province. They would use the same soft ware so a call could be dispatched immediately.

Coleen Kerr said this means the local emergency services have to be able to respond fast too. Reeve Neufeld said yes, but the difference is that it will mean a small child can know how to dial 911. It does depend on your emergency services but the responses time is improved.

Paul Driedger said if it's a 911 call, its impossible to hang up the phone; if you do, the line isn't disconnected. That's one of the features of the service.

Billy Ducharme said there's no point in calling the Fort Vermilion Fire Department if it's past -35 degrees.

Dennis Litke said that part of the fee is for the software so it tells the answering parson who is calling; the name, address etc.



Bill Fedeyko added that the call is not answered in 4 rings, it's automatically picked up by the next E911 service that's available. E911 is province wide so there's no reason for the phone to ring more than 4 times without being answered. It's beneficial when you dial 911, you keep the line open. When you phone the fire department, you give them the information and then you must hang up. With 911 the line stays open.

Dennis Litke said the Council needs to know if the public is willing to pay an extra \$1.00 per month on their phone bills for this service. If they are, then Council will make the arrangements with A.G.T. for the service. The M.D. would be responsible for making sure the answering service works and they would contract it out at no cost to the M.D. The users would pay through the added cost on the phone bills.

E911 has specially trained operators and surveys have shown that it saves lives.

Chair Braat asked for a show of hands of those in favour of the E911 service and all those in attendance were in favour.

Chair Braat called a coffee break at 8:38 p.m. and reconvened at 8:50 p.m.

#### **COFFEE BREAK**

#### **QUESTIONS**

#### **6. Question Period**

Nick Flooren - What does a guy have to do to get a job on all the work you said you have to do this year?

Manager Litke - we accept all applications.

Coleen Kerr - Question for Councillor Rosenberger or Scarfe - Have you done anything about getting lights put up at the entrance to Fort Vermilion? In winter you would miss the turn off or be scared to come in because it's so dark.

Councillor Rosenberger - That's a Provincial Transportation area and we can't do anything in their property. We will keep trying.

Marilyn Eek - Why can't you just put them in; why wait for government?

Councillor Bateman - It's Alberta Transportation and Utilities highway and we have to get their permission first.

Joe Rosenberger - Where are you going to start the back sloping on ditches?

Russell Friesen - Once we see how many are interested. Alberta Power will cost share or sponsor some of the work with us. The farmers will have to donate the land. The program has not been developed yet but we'll play it by ear and start as soon as possible.

Nick Flooren - The Waste Transfer Stations are a mess. Is this the ravens or the people? If there's no one there to look after them, then there's junk all over. Does someone look after these sites all day or do they just open them and then leave?

Roger Borchert - He will check into the complaint and see what can be done. Some of the sites are manned but not all of them.

Joe Rosenberger - What kind of garbage is allowed at the transfer stations and what can't you put in?

Roger Borchert - We are allowed only domestic or household garbage. We are not allowed to accept dead animals, no chemicals, paints etc. but only household garbage.

Joe Rosenberger - What do we do with the garbage that you don't take?

Roger Borchert - Dead animals is an issue that we are working on right now. It's a real problem and the M.D. needs a way to dispose of carcasses that are found along the road sides. There are regulations to follow. One approved way is a rendering plant but we don't have one here. You are allowed to bury them but it must be within 48 hours and that doesn't work for us in winter.

Joe Rosenberger - Where do we take metals?

Russell Friesen - Right now, you can't dispose of them at any of the M.D.'s sites. This is legislated heavily and there are not many options open to us. The Province has been encouraging recycling programs but up here, it's not working that well because of distance.

Stan Smith complained about the Blumenort site saying the gate is always open in the morning and there is a creek running through that goes right to the river. He said it appears that everything is being dumped there and he fears the creek, which empties into the river, is contaminating the water. He said a beaver dam has just made matters worse. People are still burning at this site

Dennis Litke - The work at this site has not been completed yet. There are dikes to be constructed and we will go inspect it.

The local press has reported that the High Level Airport has a major deficit. is the M.D. going to absorb that debt?

Bill Neufeld - The Town of High Level will take over the operation of the airport. There will be some transition funding from the Province to the Town, over the next three years. The M.D. will contribute \$33,000.00/yr. for the operation and rest the Town will have to find ways to run it on that amount. Part of the agreement is the equipment transfer.

Marilyn Eek - Why is there no report on community housing and the Mackenzie Housing Management Board which is now part of the M.D.'s responsibility?

Reuben Derksen - The M.D. is operating the housing program but the Province still owns the houses. We have two local committees set up; one in Fort Vermilion and one in La Crete. Two members from each committee are appointed to the Mackenzie Housing Management Board, as well as one from Council. We have had had some meetings with the Metis Association who would like to participate with us in the local boards and the opportunity is there for them to participate. They asked that we expand the committee and we did.

Joanne Mitchell - We have just received a letter from them and it's on the Council agenda for Thursday and Fridays meeting.

Coleen Kerr - A question for all members - do you fund the fire department here and if so, how much money goes into the Fort Vermilion Fire Department? As a rural resident, can we get the fire truck insulated so we can use it in winter? She would hate to see her house burn in winter. We live in an area that goes to -58 degrees below zero so why don't we have equipment that can be used in that weather?

Dennis Litke - The manufactures produce the equipment for severe weather but it's a call the Fire Chief has to make on when you respond in those weather conditions.

Coleen Kerr - There is no excuse for a truck not to go out when it's kept in a warm building with warm water in it. There is no excuse for something like that when you build for a fire and them not go out.

Coleen Kerr - Will any money be spent to make sure this doesn't happen again? What would happen if someone was in that place? People with small children would want to know that the Fire Department would respond to a fire.

Dennis Litke - How often do get such severe weather conditions? It's up to the person in charge to decide if you're going to roll that equipment and there can be several reasons; how many people are available, the weather, the machine, etc.

Coleen Kerr - A report of a fire should be well worth trying for. When you say no, you didn't even give it a chance.

Reeve Neufeld - You're asking Council to check if the equipment is adequate in that weather and council can do that.

Discussion continued on the number of people who must be in attendance to move the fire truck, the importance of having volunteer fire fighters and if these volunteers should be paid.



Marilyn Eek - What happened to the mobile home licensing program? Mobile home owners haven't got licenses and property owners are charged for something that's not theirs.

Manager Litke - Changes in legislation have been made so no more Mobile Home Licenses are required. The mobile home is assessed with the property unless it's in a trailer park.

Marilyn Eek - How does the property owner know how much to recoup so the renter can pay all of the taxes?

Councillor Bateman - It's up to the owner to make sure he charges enough so he can recover it. Any property owner can phone the assessor and ask him. If you have a specific concern, please call the office and we'll help you calculate the amount.

Nick Flooren - Will there be any new roads built around Fort Vermilion this year?

Councillor Scarfe - No, no new roads were requested in Ward 6.

Manager Litke - If you wish to request a road, please ask at one of the offices or contact your councillor.

Nick Flooren - Was any money allotted in the budget for this year and if no roads will be built, what happens to the money? Is it saved for next year?

Councillor Rosenberger - If you don't use it in your area, it's spent somewhere else.

Maartin Braat - Has the M.D. made any arrangements for street lights this year? Last year the same question was asked and nothing has happened.

Councillor Bateman - The same thing happened at the High Level Airport between people who use it and live near there. They put the pressure on and they got it. It doesn't just take Council; it takes people in the community too. Join forces and put some pressure on.

Agnes Rosenberger - We asked for signs in town and wrote several times but we still don't have any signs. We don't have the resources to do this on our own.

Manager Litke - We have reviewed the street names bylaw and are just waiting for the maps to go along with it, so some progress is being made.

Agnes Rosenberger - We need the street lights and the signs now because we are getting the boat dock.

Manager Litke - We have to request the street lights from Transportation & Utilities and then order them and the street numbering bylaw has been given first reading. Once the maps showing the street numbering are received, we will advertise the bylaw so residents can have some input into it.

Agnes Rosenberger - We tried to get permission from Transportation to move our sign to the corner and you'd think there was gold there, the way they protect that corner.

Coleen Kerr - If we want to put any signs up on Transportation's right-of-way, we have to pay them and they limit us to the size of the signs.

Councillor Rosenberger - All of the roads in Fort Vermilion that were dug up last year will be fixed up this year. Several specific road and ditch problems were discussed and both Roger Borchert and Kevin Morrison made note of them so they could arrange for repairs as needed.

Manager Litke reported that no paving is planned for streets in Fort Vermilion this year as those streets that were dug up last year need time to settle.

Councillor Scarfe - If any residents of Ward 6 are interested in ditch clean-up, please contact him as the M.D. has a cost sharing program for backsloping and ditch clean-up.

Marilyn Eek - extended a bouquet to the M.D. for taking good care of the roads over the past year. She said she has had to go over fewer bumps, especially on the hill west of the car wash.

Marilyn Eek - The extension of the water and sewer lines by the Experimental Farm has been worked up over too long a period. The projected cost over 15 years was astronomical and she suggested if the M.D. worked it out over a longer period, people could afford it.

Manager Litke replied that it was calculated over 20 and 25 years and it was less but not that much less and ended up double the cost.

Ena Simpson - asked Council if the Library is being taken over by the M.D.

Manager Litke - replied that the Province is changing the Library Act and the M.D. will have more responsibility but it is not law yet.

Bill Ducharme - He appreciates the increase in the water pressure to satisfy the residents at the top end of the hamlet, however it also increases the pressure at the lower end. Each time you increase pressure, the temperature in the hot water tanks increases as well and results in a serious danger in scalding water. The School Division hired him to install pressure regulating valves in their properties and he asked if anything has been to control water pressure in homes in Fort Vermilion.

Roger Borchert replied that it's very difficult to control pressure on uphill grades as the higher levels need more pressure. He suggest an education program to have residents turn down the water heaters. He said he has never seen a problem with too much pressure.

**ADJOURNMENT**

7.

**MOTION 96-07**

**MOVED** by Councillor Joe Rosenberger adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

**CARRIED**

These minutes were adopted the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 1997.

  
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Chairman

  
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Manager