

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE NO. 23

ANNUAL RATEPAYERS MEETING

LA CRETE COMMUNITY HALL

April 25, 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
Jake L. Peters, Councillor

ALSO PRESENT:

Dennis Litke, Chief Administrative Officer
Eva Schmidt, Recording Secretary
Hugh Dennis, Treasurer
Roger Borchert, Manager of Public Works
Dave Wiens, Maintenance
Paul Driedger, Development Officer
Chris Kelland, Agricultural Fieldman
Russell Friesen, Agricultural Fieldman
Cameron Donald, Assessment & Taxation Officer
Rita Bueckert, Utilities Clerk
43 Ratepayers

CALL TO ORDER

1. a) Councillor Peters called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

b) **Introductions**

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

ELECT CHAIR

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

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

1st call: Councillor Ernest Dyck nominated Raymond Knelsen.
Raymond Knelsen declined.

Councillor Jake Peters nominated John Krahn.
John Krahn declined.

Councillor Jake Peters nominated Abe Harder.
Abe Harder accepted.

2nd call: There were no other nominations.

3rd call: There were no other nominations.

Councillor Peters declared Abe Harder elected as Chairman by acclamation.

Abe Harder took the chair.

MINUTES

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

Manager Litke read the minutes of the 1995 La Crete Ratepayers meeting out loud.

b) Adoption of Minutes

MOTION 96-01

MOVED by Dennis Litke to adopt the 1995 minutes.

SECONDED: Corny Driedger

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 No. 697 and the plans for the construction of the Zama access road.

MOTION 96-02

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

SECONDED: Dave Zacharias

CARRIED

**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, to adopt the Manager's Report as presented.

SECONDED: Henry Boehlig

CARRIED

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

Paul Driedger read his planning and development report noting the number of development and building permits that had been issued in 1995, how many subdivisions were applied for and the number of Land Use Order Amendments received.

MOTION 96-04

MOVED by Development Officer Paul Driedger, to adopt the Planning and Development report as presented.

SECONDED: George Bueckert

CARRIED

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

Russell Friesen gave his report touching on Training, Education and Awareness, Pest Control, Agricultural Sustainability, Diversification and Marketing, and Provision of Supportive Services.

MOTION 96-05

MOVED by Agricultural Fieldman Friesen to adopt the A.S.B. report as presented.

SECONDED: Carl Derksen

CARRIED

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

Treasurer Hugh Dennis presented the 1995 unaudited financial report.

MOTION 96-06

MOVED by Hugh Dennis to accept the financial report as presented.

SECONDED: George Derksen

CARRIED

5. Emergency 911 Phone Service

Reeve Neufeld explained that a report on the installation of an emergency 911 would be presented after which the audience would be asked for a show of hands to give Council some direction. Cost of service is approximately \$1.00 per month per phone line charged directly by the telephone company.

The Reeve asked Paul Driedger and Councillor Fedeyko to give a report.

Paul Driedger reported on the emergency 911 system. AGT is planning on setting up the 911 system if that's what the communities want. There are various ways of setting it up, one option of cost recovery is a flat rate charge on each phone line, right now it would be 44 cents per line plus 42 cents for answering and dispatch, making a total of 86 cents a month per phone line.

Councillor Fedeyko pointed out that the dispatch centre is never tied up, calls always go to the next dispatch centre.

Reeve Neufeld asked for a show of hands to find out if the community is in favour of the 911 service, if enough people are in favour, we will advise AGT.

Question: What happens if this community and all other communities are in favour, do we then get 911?

Answer: That is right.

Question: What if the 86 cents is not enough to cover the cost, what happens then?

Answer: Approximately 20,000 lines are needed before this service will be installed. The service that is setting this up already has 911 in service in some areas.

Question: Is there an initial cost to the M.D.?

Answer: No there is no cost to the M.D., AGT is covering the set up cost.

Question: Does this have to be reviewed every year?

Answer: It has to be reviewed every five years.

Question: What if you phone from a truck phone?

Answer: I don't know how that works but you will be transferred to 911.

Question: How many services are involved - RCMP, Ambulance, and Fire Department?

Answer: That's right.

Reeve Neufeld then asked for a show of hands.

CARRIED

Chairman Harder called a coffee break at 8:30 p.m.

COFFEE BREAK

Chairman Harder called the meeting back to order at 8:54 p.m.

QUESTIONS

6. Question Period

Question: Where was the ferry designed? Can't haul a lowboy or holiday trailers onto the ferry.

Answer: We don't know who designed it, but Alberta Transportation still owns the ferry. We can write a letter to request changes. Council would have to make a motion to write this letter.

Question: For what reason can we not use the old land fill sites for the transfer stations?

Answer: The Department of Environment has changed their standards over the last few years and they are saying that any land that has access to land water has to be abandoned. They also changed the standards on how landfills are operated. They have to be operated according to the new legislation. It was taken out of Council's hands by Alberta Environment and the Health Inspector.

Question: From where are they getting their authority?

Answer: By provincial legislation.

Question: About revenue sharing with the town of High Level, are we still sharing?

Answer: Yes, the Fire Department.

Question: Are they sharing their services with the M.D.?

Answer: Yes, High Level is servicing High Level Rural.

Question: How do we get rid of motor oil?

Answer: Oil companies put it in 45 gallon tanks and take it to Swan Hills.

Question: Why do we have hours at the transfer station if there is no one manning it? Can we have them cleaned up?

Answer: I have taken a lot of flack in every district as to the mess, I will look into it. When we have manned stations there should be someone there.

Question: Last year ratepayers asked for a regional land fill site, has anything been done about that?

Answer: Yes, we have looked at some sites and have had them evaluated, then winter came on. We will be looking at other sites.

Question: Why was the Tompkins transfer station closed?

Answer: Because the people who own the land that the bins were on don't want them anymore. If you can come up with some names as to someone who wants it on their land we will be willing to take a look at that.

Question: The Agricultural Service Board has always had even representation on north and south side of the river. Why has that been changed?

Answer: That is because of the change in legislation.

Question: How can we get rid of dead animals?

Answer: Domestic or farm animals can be buried on your own land. As for dead wildlife, ask Fish and Wildlife to clean it up if you come across any.

Question: How can you refuse an appeal?

Answer: An appeal can be refused or approved.

Question: Have you made up your budget yet? What time of the year do you make up the budget, after your taxes are collected?

Answer: No, we have to have the budget in place before the tax notices go out.

Question: Shouldn't the public approve the budget?

Answer: That is why the Council is elected.

Question: Public Seed Cleaning Plants are inspected, don't you inspect the private ones as well?

Answer: Yes, we do inspect them at times.

Question: Why not keep our own seed in our own area, so as not to get more weeds and blackleg into the area?

Answer: The seed raised in this area does remain here to a certain extent.

Question: Do you have a job description for the manager?

Answer: Yes we do have job description for the manager, and the manager has job descriptions for the employees.

Question: Is the Veterinary Clinic transferred to Dr. Stickney now?

Answer: Dr. Stickney owns the building.

Question: We should have more control over the clinic.

Answer: The property was assessed and they paid the price that it was worth, his workers also have a share in it. If Dr. Stickney sells the M.D. has the first crack at it. On behalf of the A.S.B. that contract has never come to our attention. The Vets are running a private business, but we can ask for the information.

Question: How far has the brush control been done, up to the powerline?

Answer: Alberta Power does not want any of it. We will brush control on backslopes of ditches.

Question: Who pays the taxes on the community pastures?

Answer: That is through Grants in Lieu of Taxes.

Question: According to the chart that is in this agenda package, what is the average wage for Councillors? Is it more feasible for Councillors to be on a salary than to pay out mileage?

Answer: That depends on what committees they are on. The Fort Vermilion School Division did that, then they had problems that meetings were not well attended.

Question: Is there any truth to the rumour that after two terms, Councillors get a pension?

Answer: We wish.

Question: Concerning the business end of how Council members deal with other Council members. In the Blue Hills area, four way stop signs were installed without the public being aware of it. The public went to the Reeve, who advised to write letters and get signatures from the neighborhood. We got letters and signatures, Fort Vermilion School Division sent letters. How can you give us all this advice, we think you are behind us, then you vote against it. That's the main reason High Level office closed, and the A.S.B. is not fairly represented. I was told if I don't back off there would be retaliation. The public cannot afford to have Councillors that will not represent them.

Answer: I am disappointed that you would say I was ticked off, you had your mind made up. Back in 1964, when my parents homesteaded in there, we had no road. There was only a trail. Never had stop signs. Now we have seen a lot of progress, and we have added responsibilities. We have pavement, which is the main route, and we should have access to the main route.

Question: Our problem is that Reuben Derksen lives 12 miles out there. That has always been the right of way. They say they want to set a pattern for the entire M.D., and the public can't do anything about that. We can't change the stop signs, visibility is absolutely terrible. Over the last two or three years Council has been doing exactly what they want. Council is accountable to the people, Council should not be able to dictate to us. We need accountability. Why did this Council vote themselves the highest paid Council in the country? I would like to direct my question to the Reeve, you said that was an unsettled issue, what's the plan?

Answer: Reeve Neufeld said he cannot overrule what Council decides.

Question: Poor visibility is a concern, could there be a winter works program created to do some brush control?

Answer: We're doing exactly that, Kevin Morrison is starting to work on easements to clear the corners of brush.

Question: Whose responsibility is it to dig out culverts in the spring? Why are the culverts on one side of the road dug out where there is little snow and the side with lots of snow we had to dig out ourselves?

Answer: That side was dug out because the water was running across the road.

Question: When will we have our next assessment?

Answer: Our re-assessment target is 1998.

Question: Last year the assessors said it would be two years from now.

Answer: You can appeal your assessment once a year when we send out the tax notices. They will come out at the end of May. Everyone gets an assessment notice with their tax notice, this is the first year we will do it this way.

Question: Is there any truth to the rumour that after two terms, Councillors get a pension?

Answer: We wish.

Question: Manning taxes are about \$100 dollars a quarter less than here, why is that?

Answer: That depends on the value of the property, market value and assessed value.

Manager Litke briefly explained how property is assessed.

Question: Council sets the mil rate, it should not take that much more assessment to run the Manning M.D. than it takes to run this M.D.

Answer: Manning has more assessed property.

Question: Maybe the tax structure should be changed. People won't improve their property because they don't want to pay the extra taxes.

Answer: This property tax has been in place for some time, and nobody has come up with a better idea as yet. The government is looking for a smaller community to try different ideas.

Question: Has the M.D. looked at amalgamation with the town of High Level.

Answer: The town of High Level has a debt, do we want that? Fort McMurray amalgamated with the surrounding I.D. The debt stayed with the property, and the surplus stayed with the property, so the I.D. taxes went up there and city taxes went down.

Question: Are we going to pay for mowing ditches from our taxes?

Answer: The M.D. pays the service board and they take it out of the budget.

Question: We need a tax system that will look into giving an incentive to fix up your property.

Answer: We want to see the farmers look after the ditches and farm them.

Question: Do we have to pay for using the M.D. mower?

Answer: Yes, because of high maintenance there is a \$40 a day charge.

ADJOURNMENT


MOTION 96-07

7.

MOVED by Corny Driedger to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

CARRIED

The minutes were adopted this 17 day of April 1997.



~~Reeve, Reuben Derksen~~

Chairperson, Raymond Knelsen



Manager, Dennis Litke