

**MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF BIG LAKES  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
May 8, 2009**

Minutes of the Municipal District of Big Lakes Special Council Meeting held at the M.D. Administration Building in High Prairie, Alberta on Friday, May 8, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

**PRESENT WERE:**

Reeve: Alvin Billings, HP East/Banana Belt  
Deputy Reeve: David Marx, Prairie Echo/Salt Prairie  
Councillor: Violet Campiou, Faust  
Ray Dupres, Enilda/Big Meadow  
Randy Ehman, S. Sunset House/Gilwood  
Ken Killeen, Kinuso  
Guy L'Heureux, Jousard  
Ken Matthews, N. Gilwood/Triangle  
Fern Welch, Grouard

Administration: Jeff Renaud, C.A.O.  
Mike Rudkin, Treasurer  
Gary Braithwaite, Ag. Fieldman  
Cory Bronson, Community Peace Officer  
John Gould, Fire Chief  
Pat Olansky, Community Development Officer  
Len Racher, Sup't of Public Works  
Sharon Strang, FCSS Director  
Amanda Backs, Recording Secretary

Press: Chris Clegg, South Peace News  
Keith Hopper, CKVH Radio

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Reeve Billings called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**ADDENDUM  
TO AGENDA:**

Smart Board  
ATCO Electric  
Operating Room

2009-07-293

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR WELCH** that the agenda with addendum for the May 8, 2009 Special Council Meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT:*****EXISTING PLANS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES:***

Mr. Renaud reviewed a summary of revenues and expenses for municipal planning in the 2009 interim budget. He noted that there were no changes to the revenue since the interim budget. Changes in expenditures include increases for the Grouard re-plotting project, offsite levy project, and final details for the Grouard Area Structure Plan, and the South Shore Area Structure Plan. Mr. Renaud explained the process for carrying forward dedicated funds from previous years for operating projects.

Councillor Campiou joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Discussion took place on plans scheduled for 2009 for the Grouard Area Structure Plan and Grouard re-plotting projects.

**PUBLIC WORKS:*****EXISTING PLANS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES:***

Council reviewed a summary of public works expenses and revenue. Mr. Renaud noted that the purchase of a tandem truck included in the interim budget was removed resulting in a reduction in expenditures. The equipment pool saw an increase as the funds were allocated to hiring contracted equipment.

Mr. Renaud reported that special projects took a major hit due to the lack of resource road funding for the Seal Lake Road. The budget does reflect the cost of clearing that was completed over the winter.

Mr. Renaud commented that the Town of Swan Hills is currently considering an agreement to provide maintenance services at the Swan Hills Airport. He noted, however, that the cost for contracted services will likely not change if an agreement is entered into.

Mr. Renaud provided tender results for the Spruce Point Park Road flare outs.

A brief discussion took place on potential budget impacts if the Village of Kinuso dissolves.

Concern was expressed over the possibility that the hamlet water and sewer systems will become old and require major upgrades. Mr. Renaud advised that money is transferred into reserves annually, additionally repairs and replacement costs are factored in when water rates are set. Further concern was noted with the amount currently in the reserves in relation to the number of years that offsite levies have been paid to the MD. Mr. Renaud commented that the reserves may have been drawn on. Administration will conduct an audit of the Water and Wastewater Systems Reserves.

Council reviewed the supportive schedule for the 2009 Bridge Repairs/Construction Projects. Mr. Renaud noted that MD's share for the Mission Creek Bridge at Jousard was budgeted from the General Transportation Reserve because of government cut backs on MSI funding.

**NEW OR AMENDED  
PROGRAMS OR  
SERVICES:**

***Seal Lake Road:***

Mr. Renaud advised that the Resource Road funding application for the Seal Lake Road was denied and attempts are being made to have the decision reversed. Council reviewed a situation report on the project which included funding options and budget implications. Phase 1 of the project would provide all season access to the Seal Lake region by the end of this construction year at an estimated cost of \$1.15 million. Mr. Renaud advised that the MD's total share should Alberta Transportation provide 50% funding for the entire project would be \$1.15 million. Discussion ensued on the lack of financial support being provided by industry and the level of funding that the MD should provide.

A break was taken from 11:02 a.m. until 11:13 a.m.

Mr. Renaud suggested that if special funding is approved by Alberta Transportation that the project be completed without delay. He further suggested that phase two would be a valid Resource Road application; although funding would have to be matched. Mr. Renaud noted, however, that funding has been allocated retroactively by the government in the past.

2009-07-294

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR EHMAN** that the MD commit funding in the amount of \$1,150,000, regardless of government funding, to proceed with construction of phase one of the Peavine-Seal Lake connector road to provide all season access to the Seal Lake region by the end of the 2009 construction season with sources of funding as follows:  
\$380,000 – MSI Funding  
\$400,000 – General Transportation Reserve  
\$370,000 – 2009 Surplus

**CARRIED**

***Range Road 153/  
Range Road 190/  
Twp Road 750:***

Council was presented with proposals for three local road construction projects. Mr. Racher advised that the construction of 0.8 km along Township Road 750 would produce a bus route. Both Range Road 190 (Gilwood Tower Road) and Township Road 750 have appeared on the local road grading multi-year plan for a number of years and funds have been set aside in reserves. It was noted that Range Road 153 (Swamp Road) is a new project that is not included on the plan. Deputy Reeve Marx commented that Range Road 153 could be postponed with minor repairs this year. Council was informed that all projects fit the criteria for suitability for day labor.

2009-07-295

**MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX** that the construction of Range Road 153 does not proceed in 2009.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2009-07-296 **MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX** that the MD proceeds with construction of Range Road 190 in 2009.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2009-07-297 **MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX** that the MD proceeds with construction of Township Road 750 including optional additional work in 2009.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Parking Lot  
Extension:*

Mr. Racher requested that Council approve a budget of \$35,000 to extend the south parking lot at the administration building to accommodate additional staff parking.

2009-07-298

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR CAMPIOU** that \$35,000 be approved in the 2009 final budget to extend the south parking lot at the administration building to accommodate additional staff parking.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Apprentice  
Mechanic:*

Council was provided with information regarding Alberta Employment and Immigration's Workplace Training program in relation to a proposed apprentice mechanic position.

2009-07-299

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR EHMAN** that Council approves the inclusion of an apprentice mechanic position in the 2009 final budget.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Hamlet  
Sidewalks:*

Administration was requested to bring forward information regarding the possibility of extending sidewalks within the hamlets. Mr. Racher recommended that Council look at a sidewalk development program in more detail. He advised that there are areas where storm drains would be needed as there are ditches that would have to be filled in. He further noted that consideration should be given to maintenance issues. Councillor L'Heureux suggested one option for winter maintenance would be to hire a local resident with a quad and snowplow. Discussion took place on constructing asphalt sidewalks where appropriate concurrent with this year's hamlet paving program. Mr. Renaud noted that funds could be drawn from the Roadway Surfacing Fund, which would eliminate the need for additional funding. Proposals will be brought forward for approval. Fire Chief Gould commented that sidewalks would help to ensure that the hamlets' municipal services facilities are safe to access for the public utilizing FCS services.

2009-07-300

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS** that, if required, funding for sidewalk construction in the hamlets can be drawn from the Roadway Surfacing Fund.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*Hamlet Solar  
Lighting:*

Information regarding solar street lighting was presented to Council. Mr. Racher reported that the cost to light half a mile of road would be approximately \$54,000. Council discussed the costs in comparison to non-solar lighting. Mr. Racher noted that solar lighting is being installed at the landfill sites, which could provide the MD with useful information. Mr. Renaud suggested that the Public Works Committee look at developing a multi year plan for hamlet street lighting.

2009-07-301

**MOVED BY REEVE BILLINGS** that the MD does not proceed with installing solar street lights in the hamlets at this time, and further that administration investigate alternate options and obtain information regarding the lighting being installed at the transfer sites.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

*ATCO Electric:*

Councillor L'Heureux expressed concern with the waiting period for customers applying for servicing through ATCO Electric. Mr. Renaud suggested that the issue be brought forth at a regular council meeting because the topic does not pertain to the reason for holding this special meeting.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 11:52 a.m. and reconvened at 12:27 p.m.

**AGRICULTURE:**

***EXISTING PLANS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES:***

Council reviewed the summary of revenue and expenses for agriculture. It was noted that beaver control was reduced in the interim budget to \$40,000. Mr. Braithwaite advised that \$1,323 was added to the beaver control budget to cover MD labor for putting in cages. He requested that Council commit an additional \$9,000 for contract blasting.

2009-07-302

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR L'HEUREUX** that the 2009 budget for beaver control remain at \$40,000.

**CARRIED**

Mr. Renaud noted that there were no changes to ASB administration expenses. Mr. Braithwaite reviewed the rental equipment scheduled for replacement this year.

***NEW OR AMENDED  
PROGRAMS OR  
SERVICES:***

*PCBFA Funding:*

Mr. Renaud advised that funding increases to SARDA and the Peace Country Beef and Forage Association was discussed by the Agricultural Advisory Committee and considered during interim budget deliberations. No formal request for additional funding has been received by PCBFA. It was noted that an additional \$5,000 in funding was approved for SARDA.

2009-07-303

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR EHMANN** that an additional \$5,000 be allocated for the Peace Country Beef and Forage Association upon receipt of a request for the extra funding.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**COMMUNITY AND  
PROTECTIVE SERVICES:**

***EXISTING PLANS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES:***

*FCSS:*

Mr. Renaud advised that there were no changes to FCSS since the interim budget. A brief discussion took place on the MD's involvement in the MAD program.

Mrs. Strang asked that Council give consideration to moving the MD barbeque to a different venue or setting an alternate date because of the condition of the MD yard due to the road construction.

*Fire:*

Mr. Renaud noted that funds were included in the interim budget for equipment and training for the Faust and Kinuso Fire Departments.

*Peace Officer:*

Mr. Renaud advised that expenses for a second peace officer were excluded from the draft final budget as per a previous council motion. He added that expenses related to vet services and the Prairie Animal Rescue Society have been consolidated into one account.

**NEW OR AMENDED  
PROGRAMS OR  
SERVICES:**

**Add'l Enforcement  
Position:**

Reeve Billings commented that Council felt it was not an opportune time to proceed with hiring an additional peace officer given the economic times. Council was provided with a cost breakdown and correspondence from S/Sgt. Steve Daley, Faust & High Prairie RCMP, in support of hiring a second peace officer.

2009-07-304

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR L'HEUREUX** that the request to hire an additional peace officer be denied.

**CARRIED**

**Enilda Fire  
Department:**

A proposed budget for equipment and training for the Enilda fire department to conduct dangerous goods response was tabled at the December 2, 2008 special council meeting for additional information. Mr. Renaud reported on a meeting he attended with the High Prairie Fire Chief and Town of High Prairie CAO regarding the spill response kit supplied to the Town by Alberta Environment. The equipment is to be used for normal operations which includes any mutual aid agreements. Fire Chief Gould advised that the MD is still not aware of the jurisdiction that the unit will cover and how it would be transported by MD fire departments. Council suggested that the inter-municipal agreement with the Town of High Prairie address the use of the spill response kit allowing access to the unit by both municipalities and ensuring that the Enilda Fire Department would have the ability to mobilize it.

Fire Chief Gould further requested that the Enilda Fire Department be given the opportunity to purchase the Peace Officer's old truck from public works as an operational support vehicle.

2009-07-305

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR DUPRES** that a budget of \$6,000 be approved for training for the Enilda Volunteer Fire Department to safely conduct dangerous goods response, and further that the Enilda Volunteer Fire Department be approved to purchase a surplus truck from the MD to provide operational support.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Operating Room:**

Councillor Matthews requested that Council consider providing a contribution to update operating room equipment at the High Prairie Health Complex in order to help recruit a surgeon. General discussion took place.

2009-07-306

**MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX** that the MD obtain a formal cost estimate for upgrading the operating room equipment at the High Prairie Health Complex, and further that \$100,000 be allocated in the 2009 budget to contribute to the upgrade subject to the interested surgeon taking up employment at the facility if the room is up to code.

**CARRIED**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
TOURISM & RECREATION:**

**EXISTING PLANS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES:**

Council was advised of a slight increase in economic development expenses under advertising for sale of MD land. Mr. Renaud noted that the Grants Manager salary will be moved to administration, and additional funds were included under tourism for conference registration, professional membership fees and expenses for the Grant Manager position.

Discussion took place on the status of the Grouard 3D project and costs.

Reeve Billings mentioned that the Economic Development Committee should focus attention on the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake in addition to developments taking place along the north shore.

**NEW OR AMENDED  
PROGRAMS OR  
SERVICES:**

**Little Smoky  
Ski Area:**

Council considered a request previously tabled for budget consideration from the MD of Smoky River for a financial contribution in the amount of \$25,000 toward the construction of a tube run at the Little Smoky Ski Area. Concern was expressed that residents from other municipalities including the MD of Smoky River utilize recreational facilities in the MD of Big Lakes and financial contributions are not sought out from those municipalities.

2009-07-307

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR EHMAN** that a contribution be provided to the MD of Smoky River in the amount of \$25,000 toward the construction of a tube run at the Little Smoky Ski Area.

**DEFEATED**

A break was taken from 1:43 p.m. until 1:52 p.m.

**FINANCE/ADMINISTRATION:**

**EXISTING PLANS,  
PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES:**

Mr. Renaud reported that the amount for council honoraria and benefits was adjusted from last year resulting in a slight increase to council expenses.

Mr. Renaud noted that the budget for event support and donations was increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000. To date, approximately \$7,000 has been spent. It was noted that each request for support is at the discretion of Council. The consensus was to keep the amount at \$15,000.

Reeve Billings proposed that Council establish a procedure for community organizations setting a deadline for applications for capital grant funding each year for budgeting purposes. Mr. Renaud advised that once the funds under the current year's budget are expended, Council will be requested to approve funding for additional requests from the reserve.

Mr. Renaud noted that the grants to individuals/organizations are currently shown in multiple lines in the budget, but will be consolidated in future budgets. Administration was also requested to provide more detailed notes to line items that are more general in nature.

**NEW OR AMENDED  
PROGRAMS OR  
SERVICES:**

**Smart Board:**

Councillor Ehman suggested that a SMART Board be purchased for presentation purposes in council chambers. Mr. Renaud estimated that the cost would be approximately \$5,000 and funds could be drawn from the Computer Reserve.

2009-07-308

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR EHMAN** that Council approves the purchase of a SMART Board for council chambers with funds from the Computer Reserve.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

A break was taken from 2:18 p.m. until 2:30 p.m.

**CALCULATION  
OF TAX RATES:**

Mr. Renaud reported a surplus in the amount of \$55,606.77 subsequent to inputting the preceding approvals and based on the following mill rates:

Residential – 3.00, Farmland – 3.00, Non-residential including linear except electrical generating – 11.50, Non-residential including electrical generating – 11.50, Machinery and Equipment – 11.50.

Mr. Renaud noted that the school requisition was reduced, and as such the mill rates will be lower than last year.

**FINAL BUDGET  
SURPLUS:**

2009-09-309                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR DUPRES** that \$55,606.77 from the 2009 final budget surplus be allocated to the Operating Contingency Reserve.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2009 CAPITAL  
BUDGET:**

2009-09-310                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR L'HEUREUX** that the 2009 Capital Budget be approved as amended.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2009 OPERATING  
BUDGET:**

2009-09-311                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS** that the 2009 Operating Budget be approved as amended.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2009 PROPERTY TAX  
BYLAW # 11-2009:**

Bylaw No. 11-2009 to authorize and establish property tax rates for the year 2009 was presented to Council.

2009-07-312                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR L'HEUREUX** that Bylaw No. 11-2009 be approved for first reading.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2009-07-313                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR CAMPIOU** that Mill Rate Bylaw No. 11-2009 be approved for second reading.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2009-07-314                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR DUPRES** that Bylaw No. 11-2009 be given unanimous approval to proceed to third reading.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

2009-07-315                    **MOVED BY DEPUTY REEVE MARX** that Mill Rate Bylaw No. 11-2009 be approved for third reading.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

2009-07-316                    **MOVED BY COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS** that the meeting adjourn at 2:37 p.m.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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Alvin Billings, Reeve

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Jeff Renaud, C.A.O.