

## 2013 Highlights

### Council Highlights for:

The following are highlights from our last three Village Council meetings – November 12, November 25, and December 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **November 12<sup>th</sup>**

Council met with Sgt. Mike Bennett of the Beaverlodge RCMP Detachment for the quarterly report. There was some discussion regarding new officers and administrative staff who were joining the Beaverlodge detachment. Council also discussed the hours of coverage. Now that the detachment is getting back to full staff, hours of coverage can be looked at again..

Council gave three readings to Bylaw #517, which reaffirms our position regarding utility invoicing for water, sewer, and garbage.

The CAO was re-appointed as Council's representative on the Regional Municipal Sustainability Committee.

#### **November 25<sup>th</sup>**

Council met with our FCSS Director for the monthly report. The Roots of Empathy program in the school, and the "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" program at Playcastle have both been doing very well this year, with lots of participation. Outcome reports have been submitted to the provincial government, dealing with all the FCSS programs.

Council met with a delegation who were interested in having a skateboard park in Hythe. There was some discussion about funding and location. Council was in favour of the idea, as long as the cement pad involved could be used as an outdoor skating rink in the winter.

Council approved the appointment of Trina Cawston to the Hythe Library Board.

Village Council reviewed a debriefing report from GPREP. The report dealt with a municipal emergency in Sexsmith when a train derailment occurred. The purpose of the report was to analyze the response to the emergency, and see where improvements could be made.

Council discussed snow clearing priorities. It was noted that the parking spaces at and near the Arena and Curling Rink should continue to be a high priority.

## **December 9<sup>th</sup>**

Council reviewed the public works report with our Public Works Supervisor, Matthew Robertson. Council commended Mr. Robertson and his staff for the fine job they have done on snow removal this year.

It was also noted that all the sewer mains have been flushed this year. Alberta Environment was here on December 6<sup>th</sup> to do a routine inspection of our water pumphouse.

Council set a date of December 16<sup>th</sup> to do their annual Christmas lighting tour.

A detailed financial report covering year-to-date revenues and expenditures was reviewed by Council. The financial picture looks good for this fiscal year.

There was some discussion regarding the furnace the Village of Hythe had purchased for the Hythe Library.

## **Other**

Village Council and staff wish to wish all our residents and businesses a Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

---

## **Council highlights for:**

### **SEPTEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> & OCTOBER 15<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>**

The following are highlights from our last three Village Council meetings - September 26, October 15<sup>th</sup>, and October 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **September 26<sup>th</sup>**

The upgrading of 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue (the main road in the industrial area) was discussed. The design has been completed, and the necessary culverts and manhole extenders have been purchased. Because of the busy construction season we have had in the Grande Prairie area this year, the contractor may not be able to commence work until 2014.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, five nominations were received for the five Council positions. All five nominees were declared elected by acclamation. New Councillor Gordon Nicholson joins Carol Descoteaux; Cheryl Phillips, Gary Burgess, and Lyle Sipe on Council for the upcoming four-year term. We thank Brian Peterson for his past service on Council in 2012 and 2013.

Council was updated about a sewer main problem caused by grease congestion. Our bylaw #181 states that grease traps may be required for certain businesses, and we are following up on that requirement.

### **October 15th**

At the organizational meeting of the new Council, Gary Burgess was appointed by Council as Mayor for the four-year term, and Lyle Sipe was appointed Deputy-Mayor.

Meetings will continue to convene on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. If a meeting falls on a holiday Monday, then it will be held on the next day (Tuesday) at the same time. These are held in the Village Office. Councillors and staff were appointed to represent Hythe on various boards and committees. A list of these appointments is available in the Village Office if you are interested.

At the Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, Council met with three citizens who were interested in serving as our Cemetery Committee. We discussed some activities and projects the committee could be involved in. We thank Wendell Hommy, Deb Balderston, and Sheena Rule for volunteering for this committee.

Council then met with our MLA Wayne Drysdale, to discuss various issues. Council inquired about the long-vacant fourplex in Hythe which is owned by Alberta Health Services. We are hopeful something can happen with the building.

Discussion then followed about Health Care in our area, including the Family Care Centre proposed for Beaverlodge. Council has been participating in a number of local committees dealing with Health Care, as we try to stay on top with what is happening in the medical world.

We also talked to our MLA about the need for additional capital grant funding to assist our sewer main replacement program.

After meeting with delegations, Council proceeded to other matters. A motion was passed to order \$14,000 in road patch material this fall. This will ensure that we will have it ready as early as possible in the spring.

We have had difficulty finding a grader to maintain our gravel streets and alleys. The private-sector graders were all working out of town, and we weren't able to get anyone until the end of October.

### **October 28**

Council met with our FCSS Director, Monica Shaw, for her monthly report. She noted that some recreation funding may be available for Hythe through Canadian Tire's Jump Start program.

She also advised that applications for Christmas Hampers will be received between November 4, 2013 to December 4, 2013.

Our public works supervisor, Matt Robertson, advised that the pavement crack sealing project had concluded for the year. There was some discussion about the manhole in the intersection across the Arena & Curling Rink. At present there is a pylon sitting on the manhole to prevent traffic from driving over top of it. The manhole barrel there is in poor condition, and the pylon is a temporary measure until we can take other measures to protect the manhole. Village Council has reactivated our public works committee, and it will now be meeting once a month.

Council approved a proposal to upgrade our financial software, so it can send utility invoices and tax notices out through e-mail. Once this software is installed, we will be canvassing our customers to see if they want this optional service.

### **Other matters**

We often get inquiries at the Village Office from people looking for places to rent. In order to deal with these queries in a more systematic manner, our staff will keep an ongoing record of: a) people looking for places to rent; and b) landlords with places available to rent. When the snow comes, there will be snow clearing equipment working. Please stay well back from this equipment when driving. Our operators are busy with the job at hand, so do not approach them with advice or direction on what they're doing. If you do that, you will be ignored. If you have questions or concerns about snow removal, please contact the Village Office.

---

## **August & September 2013**

### **August 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Council met with Superintendent Sheldon Rowe of the Peace-Wapiti School Division. The Division has been reviewing their school bus loading procedures, and other aspects of how students get to and from Hythe Regional School. As part of this review they asked that Council remove the pedestrian bridge north of the school, and Council refused that request.

Superintendent Rowe met with Council to discuss this matter further, and Council explained their rationale. On September 9th, Council was advised that the School Division would monitor the situation for a year before finalizing their plans.

Discussion was held about borrowing some crack sealing equipment from the Town of Wembley. That arrangement was later approved. Wembley has lent us their equipment at no charge, and crack sealing commenced on Monday, Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

A proposed development agreement with the Hythe Pioneer Home Society was approved by Council. The agreement was then forwarded to the Society for their review.

A tax rate survey from other municipalities of similar size and assessment base to Hythe was reviewed by Council. Our municipal tax rates continue to be lower than many other comparable villages.

At the August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, a motion was passed to change our plans, and look at replacing sidewalk on 100<sup>th</sup> street between 101 and 104<sup>th</sup> Street. This sidewalk was rebuilt in September.

### **September 9th Meeting**

At the September meeting, there was some discussion about improving the water and sewer servicing for the campground stalls. This would result in our municipal campground having more "full-service" stalls and hopefully more usage.

Council reviewed the municipal franchise fee that is charged on power bills. Council voted to keep the franchise fee at 5.00% for the 2014 calendar year.

Two Councillors and the CAO were authorized to attend the inter-municipal meeting in Grande Prairie on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

Council had a thorough discuss about debris disposal. There has been a longstanding issue in Hythe that the rubble from demolished buildings (wood, metals, cement) gets pushed into the ground rather than being disposed of properly (i.e. hauled to the landfill). Council passed a resolution that the debris arising from the relocation of the old hospital not be disposed of within the corporate limits of the Village of Hythe.

---

## May, June & July 2013

### Council highlights

The following are highlights from the May, June, and July Hythe Village Council meetings. Our only meeting in August is on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

We start by thanking all the members of our Wild Pink Yonder committee. We appreciated the efforts of Shirley Fisher, Tracey Ferguson, Cathie Jones, Carrie Hogg, Carol Descoteaux, Betty Atkinson, and Monica Shaw, plus many others who helped support this worthy cause. We look forward to the Ag. Fair this coming weekend, another great event put on by volunteers.

- May 13<sup>th</sup> meeting

Council met with a group of citizens regarding some community issues. Concern was expressed about 99<sup>th</sup> avenue, (the industrial subdivision road) and the amount of dust generated by traffic there. A special Council meeting on May 23<sup>rd</sup> gave approval to staff to proceed with reconstruction of part of 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with dust control to be done after the reconstruction is complete.

Cost of the project is estimated to be approximately \$80,000. This includes building up the portions of the road that are too low, and extensive regravelling. At this writing, new culverts and manholes have been ordered to match the new road profile, and local firm has been chosen to do the reconstruction.

- May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting

At the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, Council met with many of the same people for further discussion. Topics included bylaw enforcement, the renewal of infrastructure, and the possibility of dissolution. Council reviewed the long-term plans for sewer main replacement, and our 2013 sidewalk plans.

Alberta Municipal Affairs have some financial and operational criteria they review before they research a dissolution. There are eight key measures in the criteria. Hythe met or exceeded the standard in all eight measures.

Also at the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, Council gave all three readings to a bylaw that formalized our participation in the Grande Prairie Regional Emergency Preparedness organization (GPREP ). Our group consists of the County of Grande Prairie, City of Grande Prairie, the Towns of Wembley, Sexsmith, and Beaverlodge, and the Village of Hythe.

- June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting

Council voted to send a letter of support for Grande Prairie County's efforts to obtain a regional collaboration grant. This grant would be used to fund the interior finish and displays at the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum.

Council also dealt with a matter concerning road damage near 101 Avenue and 99<sup>th</sup> Street. The damage was caused by a commercial trucking firm, Hy's Ventures. Council has taken the position that the trucking company is responsible for 100% of the cost of repairs.

- June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting

Council had some discussions about grasscutting. With the rainy spring and summer, it has been a challenge to keep up with the mowing. We are working with our public works staff to ensure that our present equipment is suited for the work that needs to be done. We thank Derek Peterson for lending us some equipment.

Also at the June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, Council approved a regional fire response agreement. The June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting also saw the finalization of our Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) operating grant use for 2013. Part of the provincial MSI operating grant is forwarded to our community organizations as follows:

Hythe Swimming Pool (Ag. Society)	-	\$8,000.00
Hythe Library	-	\$8,000.00
Pioneer Home Community Bus	-	\$2,000.00
Hythe Legion	-	\$5,000.00
Property insurance for Swimming Pool and Curling Rink	-	\$8,000.00

Other projects funded through MSI include – 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue dust control; the spring cleanup, tree removal and tree maintenance in public areas, upgrading the water and sewer services at the campground, plus new fencing there. More information is available at the Village Office.

- July 22<sup>nd</sup>

At the July 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Council met with several representatives of the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) regarding the former bulk fuel lot. There was some discussion about soil testing, and the results of previous monitoring. There was a good discussion about the testing process, and Council later passed a motion to allow for some further soil testing on the 102<sup>nd</sup> street boulevard west of 101 Avenue. Council voted to hire Rebel 13 Construction to undertake our sidewalk replacement project. It has taken a while for us to find a good contractor, and we are pleased to finally begin the work.

Peace Wapiti School Division had written a letter requesting Village Council remove the pedestrian bridge north of the school. Council feels the removal of the bridge is a bad idea, and requested a meeting with the School Division instead.

The public works department reported that they are looking at doing some street crack sealing this summer. They are considering renting some equipment from the Town of Wembley.

- General matters

Nomination day is Monday, September 23, 2013. If you are interested in running for Village Council, your nomination papers must be received at the Village Office between 10:00 a.m. and noon on that day. If we receive more than five nominations for Council, the municipal election will be held on Monday, October 21, 2013.

If you're interested in running for Village Council, you may wish to check out the provincial website at [www.albertaleaders.ca](http://www.albertaleaders.ca).

Council was pleased to donate the land to facilitate the relocation of the old hospital. We look forward to the development of the land west of the Village Office, and we wish the Hythe Pioneer Home great success with this project.

---

## **April 22, 2013**

Council met with Chris King of Stewart Weir Engineering to discuss sidewalk replacement. We hope to replace a substantial amount of sidewalk in 2013, if a contractor can be found. A plan for replacement was reviewed by Council, and has been tabled pending more research.

Sgt. Mike Bennett of the Beaverlodge RCMP detachment met with Council to present his quarterly report. The detachment has increased the number of traffic tickets written in Hythe, mostly for speeding violations. 28 traffic offence charges were laid in the first quarter of 2013.

Council tallied up the votes for Volunteer of the Year (the Ken Brandsater Memorial Award). We are pleased to congratulate Don and June Pearson for winning and the award, and to Marie Pearson for finishing second.

Village Council gave final approval to the 2013 operating and capital budget. This budget authorizes a 3.5% increase in municipal taxes. In 2012 we had a zero-increase budget, but as we have been trying to increase the level of service, and add some new services, Council felt that a 3.5% increase was appropriate. As there will be a drop in residential school taxes this year, your overall property taxes will not change much if your assessment doesn't change much.

A separate press release will be done to deal with the budget in more detail. We expect to be mailing tax notices at the usual time, near the end of May.

Council ratified a formal agreement with Grande Prairie County for Safety Codes services. This includes building permits, gas permits, and electrical permits. The Village of Hythe still handles development permits, and you will usually need an approved Village development permit before you can apply for the other permits noted.

### Addendums

We had 220 people attend our Volunteer Week celebration on April 24th. This was also the kickoff for the Wild Pink Yonder fundraising. Watch for the pink piggy banks at local businesses, and other promotions leading up to the August 8th Wild Pink Fandango in Hythe. More information is available on the website

at [www.wildpinkyonder.com](http://www.wildpinkyonder.com).

Spring Clean-Up has commenced on May 3rd, the bins are located across from the firehall again this year. Please use the right bin for the right material. The electronics bin is intended for electronics only. Large metal objects, plus old fridges and stoves, must be taken to the public works yard to allow for proper disposal. If you have any questions on this, please contact the Village Office at 356-3888.

The Hythe campground is open for business, effective May 1.

Our next Council meetings will be at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 13, and Monday May 27 in the Village Office.

As noted in our March Council notes, the utility charges for water and sewer will be increasing. This takes effect on the utility invoices that are mailed in early July. More information on this change will be advertised in May and June.

---

## April 8, 2013

Our auditors from the firm of MNP were present to review the 2012 annual financial statement. The statement was approved by Council and has been forwarded to Alberta Municipal Affairs.

There was correspondence from Wapiti School Division about proposed changes to the bus loading and traffic control at Hythe Central School. Council felt strongly that the pedestrian bridge north of the school should remain as a service for students.

An amendment to our unsightly premises bylaw was given final reading at this meeting. We are planning to do a derelict vehicle blitz in May, and get many old beaters removed from their residential surroundings.

We were fortunate to get an increase in our Municipal Sustainability Operating Grant this year. Some of the major projects this grant will be used for in 2013 are:

- A tree removal and replacement program – We have lot of aging Northwest Poplar on our boulevards, and we need to develop a systematic approach for removing and replacing them.
- RV Park Water and Sewer upgrading – we would like to increase the number of camp stalls that are serviced with both water and sewer. This should increase the usage of the park. We also plan to add to the fencing at the north side of the park.
- Christmas lighting – an allocation has been made to increase the number of Christmas decorations that we hang on the streetlamps.

---

## March 25, 2013

At the March 25th meeting, Council met with Hythe Pioneer Home administrator Karen Lutton to discuss the Pioneer Home bus operations. This bus provides service to the community, and is the only public transportation available in Hythe for people who need wheelchair accessible service. Over the span of one year, the bus gave 366 rides to seniors, 152 rides to residents under 65, and 19 rides to people with disabilities. At a later meeting, Council voted to authorize the annual \$2,000 contribution towards the Pioneer Home's operational expense for running the bus.

Council also met with Rebecca Dibbelt to discuss issues she has faced during the first three months of publishing the Hythe Headliner.

Council reviewed issues with sewer service lines. We have three properties in the Village who have signed up for the sewer line replacement program as noted in the policy.

Village Council declined a \$500.00 membership fee request from the Peace Airshed Zone Association.

Council has approved the acceptance of Visa and MasterCard, so residents can pay their property taxes, utilities, or other charges by either of these two cards. However, there will be a 2.0% administration fee charged for any use.

An increase in the charge for registering tax recovery caveats was sanctioned. This fee was increased from \$50.00 per caveat to \$100.00.

Council approved the placement of four-way stop at the corner of 104th street and 101 avenue. The speed of traffic using 104th street was a concern, and this was felt to be the best deterrent.

---

## February 25 & March 11, 2013

The following are highlights are from our February 25<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup> regular Council meetings.

Council discussed the plans for our Volunteer Recognition evening on Wednesday, April 24, 2013. Ads for the event and the Ken Brandsater Volunteer of the Year Award nomination are in this edition of the Headliner. Feel free to join us for pancakes and sausages.

A mock disaster has been tentatively scheduled for October 3, 2013. Watch for more details over the summer months as we develop our simulated scenario.

Council voted to purchase a promotional sign at the Hythe Speedway, at a cost of \$400.00. The 2013 racing schedule for the speedway can be found at the Peace Area Motorsports Facebook page.

We are presently having a few issues with sewer back-ups. Council is presently discussing a policy which clarifies who pays the cost for repairing sewage blockage. Property owners should check to see if their house insurance covers sewer backup damage; and if they have a backflow valve installed. The Village does have one staff member available on evenings and weekends for helping out with emergencies like a sudden sewer back-up. Call the public works shop phone at 356-2270, and the answering machine will list the phone numbers of staff on call. Councillors have been participating in discussions regarding the changes to Northern Alberta's air ambulance system. Our Mayor participated in a provincially hosted tour on March 13<sup>th</sup>. This tour visited the new treatment facility at the International Airport, and discussed the new system with members of Alberta Health Services. A large number of Mayors and Reeves from Northern Alberta attended.

A new bylaw for water and sewer rates was given first reading at the March 11<sup>th</sup> Village Council meeting. The bylaw calls for an increase of residential water rates from \$15.00 a month to \$18.00 a month. Residential sewer rates would increase from \$23.00 a month to \$25.00 a month. This is our first increase for water and sewer since 2004. It reflects the increasing cost of operating and maintaining these systems to the standards set by Alberta Environment. Rates for business customers have also been increased for sewer charges.

Our utility bills are mailed out quarterly, and are based on the past three month's use. So the changes implemented in this bylaw will not be charged until the utility bills that are mailed in early July.

Council reviewed the administrative clerk agreement for the Beaverlodge RCMP detachment. The Village partners with other municipalities in the area to costshare in additional administrative support for the detachment, so the officers can spend more time in the field and less time doing paperwork.

Council congratulates the Hythe Volunteer Fire Department on a successful presentation to County Council. We appreciate the County's \$140,000 contribution to the new rescue vehicle.

---

## **January 28 & February 4, 2013**

The following are highlights from our January 28<sup>th</sup> and February 4<sup>th</sup> Hythe Village Council meetings.

At the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, Council reviewed the FCSS report. It was noted that the Food Bank volunteers had a very busy Christmas Hamper season, 37 hampers were filled.

There has been some discussion about large truck parking near the Curling Rink. Council wants to ensure there is adequate parking for participants when bonspiels are held on the weekends.

Our public works supervisor advised Council about drainage concerns. Snow clearing done in January left large piles in places that can cause drainage problems when snow melts. Several properties along Highway #43 were of concern to Alberta Transportation. It was also noted that snow piles should not be located in areas that impede visibility for drivers. Public works staff were discussing the matter with affected property owners, and we appreciated their co-operation in resolving the problem.

Council passed a policy regarding use of our gravel truck to assist with building demolition projects. Council realizes having vacant, derelict buildings is not a benefit to our community. We felt that lending out some equipment to assist with demolition helps encourage the process. A copy of the policy is available for review at the Village office.

At the February 4<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, Council reviewed the land sales program. Council voted to discontinue the buy-back program for lots that were not developed after two years, and the rebate program was also discontinued. Our vacant lots are still quite affordable, we have eight lots available for \$15,000 each, and one lot for \$20,000. These are serviced to property line. More detailed information is available from the Village Office or from our realtor.

Council also discussed some of the changes made at the recycling depot. There were some transitional difficulties when the new bins were put in, but the regional landfill authority advises that they have addressed the problem. We will need to do some additional graveling there in the spring.

Council discussed the possibilities of doing some sidewalk work in 2013. We are presently waiting to see if a cement contractor will be available.

Council discussed a request regarding utility charges for non-occupied buildings. Our current policy is to continue charges regardless of the status of a property, and Council decided to uphold that practice.

We had a great turn-out for the Family Day celebration at the Community Centre. We thank the staff and volunteers who helped make this event successful.

---

## January 14, 2013

The following are highlights from the January 14, 2013 Hythe Village Council meeting.

Council was advised that the Wild Pink Yonder will be in Hythe on Friday, August 9, 2013. The Wild Pink Yonder is a non-profit horse riding group devoted to Breast Cancer fundraising. They will have about 30 outriders and several wagons. They start their northern Alberta trek in Hythe, and will be travelling from here to Beaverlodge, Wembley, and Clairmont (on the backroads, not on the highways) and eventually on to the Peace River Country, as their ride concludes at the end of August. We're hoping Hythe will "paint the town pink" on their behalf, and help out this worthy cause with some fundraising. If you're interested in being on a volunteer committee to organize some fundraising ideas and activities, contact the Village office or our FCSS director. More information is available on their website at [wildpinkyonder.com](http://wildpinkyonder.com).

Council held a public hearing on Bylaw #510. Bylaw #510 is a land use bylaw amendment to allow residential use of commercial buildings in areas zoned C-1. Some restrictions would apply, and a development permit is needed to start the process. The notice of the public hearing had been advertised, but no submissions were received for or against the bylaw, and no members of the public attended the hearing. Later on in the meeting Council gave final readings to bylaw 510, so it is now in effect.

The Public Works supervisor advised Council that we will be burning wood in the wood compost station near the public works shop. Burning will commence when conditions are suitable. Council and staff are aware we had some road quality issues after the very warm day on January 18<sup>th</sup>, and the cold freeze shortly thereafter. We are working on those issues.

Alberta Health is coming out with a Seniors' Property Tax deferral program. The CAO was authorized to attend a session in Grande Prairie on January 18<sup>th</sup> which outlined the program in detail. Watch for more information from Alberta Health in the near future, once the details are finalized.

Council has noticed that some residents leave their garbage containers out by the road all week long. We really dislike this practice, as it looks unsightly, and interferes with snow removal. These containers can be a target for vandalism, as some of us found out recently. Staff was instructed to make measures to ensure people put their containers back inside between Fridays, warning notices will be left on garbage containers left out too long.

Council gave all three readings to bylaw #511, which amended our dog control bylaws by adding a new section dealing with dog feces. There is now a provision forbidding owners to allow their dogs to defecate on any private or public property (except, of course, the owner's property.) Additionally, no owner shall allow the presence or odour of dog feces to become a nuisance to the adjoining residents or businesses.

Council met on January 21<sup>st</sup> to review the 2013 municipal budget. We plan to have the budget finalized once our assessment information has been finalized, and school requisitions are received from the province

For more information, feel free to stop by the Village Office between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.