



NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, April 23, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hythe Council Votes to Request a Viability Review

The Village of Hythe Council passed a motion Wednesday, April 22, 2020 to submit a request to Alberta Municipal Affairs for a viability review. The review will help determine the best course of action to ensure Hythe residents and businesses can continue to have access to quality services and infrastructure.

Faced with a combination of financially limiting factors:

- Forty (40%) percent of our assessed tax base pays \$0 as it is exempt from paying taxes (i.e., government, churches, school), as per the Alberta Municipal Government Act. This currently equals over \$500,000 in taxes that the Village of Hythe does not collect. The provincial government originally paid these taxes; however, this then shifted to a provincial grant in lieu of paying for the taxes. This grant has continually decreased to zero over the years.
- MSI grants have shrunk over the years as well and will likely continue to decrease for the foreseeable future. There is a 35% decrease in MSI Operating in this year.
- Deterioration of infrastructure with minimal revenue generation and/or funding to address the issue that is estimated at a \$10 million cost over the next 5 years.
- Increasing government regulation continually adds to operational costs (i.e. new water and sewer regulations; additional police funding requirements that will increase to \$43,000 per year by 2023; emergency radio system; etc.).
- Operating costs (i.e. insurance, fuel, power, wages, parts, equipment, and services) continue to climb year-after-year, faster than revenue.

Unfortunately, with these financial challenges the Village is no longer able to address rising operational costs and infrastructure needs. The review will assess the sustainability of the Village and through engagement with the community bring forward a vote to the citizens on whether to dissolve the Village.

“A viability review is a way to ensure we’re moving forward in the best way possible for our residents and businesses,” said Hythe Mayor Brian Peterson. “Considering the financial situation before us, we feel it is important that we take action and move ahead with the review to support our community well into the future,” said Peterson.

The review, which can take several months to complete, involves assessing governance, finances, regional cooperation, infrastructure and services.

Hythe citizens will be asked to play an active role, providing input and feedback throughout the process. Hythe citizens will also vote on the province’s review team’s final recommendations with an option for dissolution.

“We recognize the vote by Hythe residents on the recommendation of the Province’s review team is binding,” said County Reeve Leanne Beaupre. “With any relationship moving forward with Hythe, we want to create a positive environment for the citizens of the County of Grande Prairie as well as Hythe.”

Village of Hythe Council is providing several ways for the community to speak with them directly. Council invites Hythe residents to speak with them personally or through a virtual tele-town hall planned for April 28th. Please contact the Village office to schedule a one-on-one meetings April 29th and 30th with the Mayor and Council members or to register for the telephone town hall. Residents can reach the Village of Hythe Office at 780.356.3888 or by email at info@hythe.ca.

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