



**TOWN OF CLARESHOLM
PROVINCE OF ALBERTA
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 19, 2009**

PRESENT:

Mayor: Rob Steel; Councillors: Shirley Isaacson, Doug MacPherson, David Moore, Connie Quayle and Daryl Sutter, Chief Administrative Officer: Kris Holbeck, Secretary-Treasurer: Karine Wilhauk.
Absent: Councillor Don Leonard
Approximately 40 ratepayers were present.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Steel.

2. INTRODUCTION OF OFFICIALS

Mayor Steel introduced those seated at the head table.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Bob Thompson that the Agenda be adopted as presented.

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MAY 21, 2008 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Daryl Sutter that the Annual Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2008 be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

5. MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Steel spoke about how the Annual Meeting is the opportunity for the community to speak with their Council about any concerns they may have. The items to speak about are the operating budget, the audited financial statements from 2008 and taxes and the mill rate. The process of budgeting for operating began in January. There is an increase in the operating budget of 1.46% from last year. The capital budget was passed in November of last year, and it totals approximately \$1.3 million. This includes the Pine Coulee water project, the water plant upgrade, the replacement of cast-iron water mains, capital equipment purchases and sanitary sewer main project. The Pine Coulee project total is about \$18 million, with \$4 million being covered by debenture.

**6. DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF THE DECEMBER 31, 2008
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Mayor Steel opened the floor for questions.

Mary Wolfe

Who are the designated officers in the financial statements?

Mayor Steel

This refers to the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer.

Jacqui Gruber

I had asked administration for information on Animal Services expenditures in 2008. Where does this exist in the financial statements?

Kris Holbeck, CA

This is included in the financial statements under expenditures for bylaw enforcement.

Bob Macdonald

I live on Tamarack Road, and I see on page 14 there is \$125,000 listed in the Capital fund for our subdivision in 2008. I just wondered what is included in that.

Kris Holbeck, CA

This is financing that we received in the past off the sale of the Tamarack lots, and it sits in our Capital Fund Financing Available and has been sitting there since I became CAO in 2007.

Moved by Bob Vadnais to accept the 2008 financial statements as presented.

CARRIED

7. GENERAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mayor Steel opened the floor for questions.

Mary Wolfe

We live on the east side of Claresholm and we have been there for 16 years. We own two lots and I could show you some pictures. Does this look like a vacant lot? You are charging taxes on it that I don't think is fair. Mr. MacPherson will know – he used to be our neighbour. We have worked for 16 years to get it to look the way it does. It was a garbage dump, and suddenly you come up with this that we have to pay commercial on there. We have neighbours that have businesses that don't pay taxes like that. Why should we have to? This is our garden, our yard.

Mayor Steel

For the purposes of assessment, this is considered vacant land as opposed to commercial / industrial. This is the way vacant land has always been taxed.

Mary Wolfe

I think this is very unfair. We are seniors. We are on pension.

Councillor Doug MacPherson

There is one way around that. Attach it to the property where you live, it becomes a part of that property and it reduces the amount of tax.

Mary Wolfe

We don't want to amalgamate the land. The reason we kept it that way is we will never divide it, but if the day comes when we have to sell it, because we are both getting older, the people that buy it have the option and Claresholm has two lots. You're going to lose one lot. We have asked for nothing, and it is very unfair. There should have been some thought put to it. We don't want to divide it.

Councillor Doug MacPherson

It is an easy way for you to get out of the tax right now, and in the future if you sell it, it can be subdivided. This is not commercial, it is vacant land. I know what you have done with this piece of property.

Mary Wolfe

But that gets expensive, and I don't think it's fair. We have been good citizens in Town. We have asked for nothing. We are seniors. We use nothing in Town. We pay taxes on everything. I just think it's unfair, I really do. There

should have been some thought put into it before it was changed.

Mayor Steel

So is your suggestion then that we don't tax vacant land?

Mary Wolfe

No! I am just saying that it is residential land! Why is it under commercial? We are paying \$400 over and above what we were before.

Councillor Doug MacPherson

It is not under commercial, it is under residential vacant land.

Mary Wolfe

It says farmland too. Does that mean I can put chickens on there? You know, I'm sorry, it just makes me angry. We have been good citizens. You know what that place looked like Doug when we bought it. We have worked 16 years on it. That's my opinion anyway. To me, that's not doing anything good for the Town – you're losing a lot. We were going to keep it that way and when we sold out it could be divided in two and done with whatever. We don't want it divided.

Doug Kemery

When it comes to vacant lots, the owners of them have to realize they're going to end up with a profit down the road. Plus the Town doesn't get \$600 a year. The Town is in the hole \$600 right off the bat because there's no water, sewer, garbage. So it's something to consider when you look at what your taxes are.

Diana Sawatzky

I live on Tamarack Road. I would like to know why it was not disclosed to us regarding contaminated property. I also want to know if the Town has any environmental soil studies on file or what has been done and what we would like to know and find out about this.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Tamarack subdivision where it is built on the east side (according to Alberta Environment's guidelines for old landfills, we had a landfill in the Town limits many, many years ago, I think it closed down in the '70's) there were no guidelines in the '70's about how you close down landfills. When Tamarack subdivision was built, you cannot build within 300 metres of the circle of where the landfill was located. So where Tamarack ends, that last house, that's the line. That's where you are allowed to build.

Diana Sawatzky

Why was this not disclosed to those purchasers who purchased the property at that time? And why is it now brought to our attention regarding this new assessment of the Town properties? That's what I'd like to know.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

I cannot speak for former administration, I'm sorry. I came in in 2007.

Diana Sawatzky

Regardless of that, do you not feel that you would be surprised and shocked to know that you had purchased contaminated land?

Councillor David Moore

You are not living on contaminated land, ma'am. I'm not sure if it's the proximity to the area, but the rules have been followed.

Diana Sawatzky

Then why does it show up on the taxation form now? Why does it show up as a word on our assessment?

Bob Macdonald

I live on Tamarack Road. It concerns me that it shows up on our assessment as contaminated land, and it certainly will show up to a potential buyer in the future. We would like assurance that there is no health issue to occupying this property. Should this be listed in a special category? Why is it documented on this year's assessment? It is in the town's best interest to look into this further and make sure there are no potential health concerns.

Mayor Steel

We will certainly check with the assessors regarding their rationale, and where they got their documentation to put that on there.

Mary Rennie

I am wondering about if you are giving people a reduction in their water if they use less water? Seniors that don't get anything back from that. In the last newsletter from the town it says you are going to lower the water if we use less water. Seniors and others that have lower water on the second part of the water bills.

Mayor Steel

The pamphlet you are showing us is the one about how the Town is encouraging water conservation, and that's the rain barrel program. What it refers to is by recycling water or using rain water, and using rain barrels, would in turn lower your residential water use, which is a benefit to the environment. I don't think anywhere it says that if you do that, we will lower your water rates. It does say that you will save water by using a rain barrel. If you are using lots of water and you use a rain barrel, this will lower your consumption.

Councillor David Moore

If you use a rain barrel, then you will reduce the amount that you are going over your allotment. You use the water you have collected in your rain barrel rather than using the water from your tap.

Councillor Doug MacPherson

Unless you are over your allotment, you will not see a reduction in your bill.

Bonnie Gordon

No, I didn't understand that. I don't understand anything that's going on here tonight. Why weren't these things not available before the meeting? I went into Town Hall last week about my taxes and nobody said a thing, so you get here tonight and you've got a novel of papers here that most of us probably haven't had time to go through, and half the things on here need some explanation. And about the water. Rain barrels aren't going to save you anything. What are you supposed to go do? Take a bucket and water your lawn?

Mayor Steel

The rain barrel program is something that the Town is doing to encourage water conservation. It's a smart thing to do. It might not affect your water bill, but it's good for the environment.

Bonnie Gordon

I think that's what the lady was trying to get at. I just don't think this is fair. You need like a day to pour over this stuff to understand any of it. Even at that rate, it's pretty hard to understand. And so, all these people that never got a chance until we walked in the door to find this pile of paper. Well, I don't think this meeting is very fair. I don't think you really care what any of us think or what any of us are concerned about. You sit there and laugh? How dare you! I can see you sitting there smirking and laughing. It's a legitimate question. Had I have known this, I would have looked through it, but I haven't had the opportunity and I'm sure lots of people here have not. And most people are too scared to stand up and ask questions because they can't get through this crap!

Councillor Doug MacPherson

Ma'am, you raised the same question last year when you were here.

Bonnie Gordon

I wasn't here last year!

Councillor Doug MacPherson

Okay, two years ago then. Those papers are available at the Town Office. You could have gone down and got a copy.

Bonnie Gordon

Why wasn't I told that this was out? I didn't know! And it's up to the people at the front when you go in to ask about your taxes and about the meeting! You need a backhoe and a shovel to get any information in this Town!

Doug Kemery

Mayor Rob, I have had a little time to go through this sitting here. I see on page 7 of 29 the wages for the peace officer. I see that you guys have budgeted a 9% increase. Also on page 23, I wish I was the development officer because it looks like you have budgeted a 19% increase for him, and a 112% increase for his assistant.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Can I answer? Wages for the peace officer, he is a town office employee according to the contract, so he gets paid same as office staff does, and office staff this year there is 27 pay periods this year, so it is a budgeting thing for this year and there is an extra pay period this year. Doesn't mean he's getting paid any more, just that there's an extra pay period.

Doug Kemery

So you mean you shorted him last year.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Sometimes there's 25 pay periods, sometimes 26, most of the time there's 26, but sometimes there's 27 or 25. So this is one of those years where we have to budget an extra pay period because he's an hourly employee and he's within the Town Office. And also, there was a union negotiation this year and the wage increase was 4%.

Doug Kemery

Second one was on page 23, I don't think this one can be explained by the extra pay period with a 19% increase. Unless you didn't pay the development guy a full year last year.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

No, Jeff had a full year last year. He is the same kind of thing with the pay period, though. He is also an inside employee, so we have budgeted an extra

pay period and he also moved up a category in the union contract because of the time he has served at the Town of Claresholm. His wage increased to the next level on the grid. And the assistant, Jeanne Burnham is our development assistant, she did not work a full year last year.

Jacqui Gruber

Mayor Steel, I think in November of 2005 I came as a delegation to the Council concerned about animal services. I am here again tonight. I met with the CAO on Friday and I have entered a delegation motion on June 8th, so I will address the majority of the questions here. I do have a concern in regards to bylaw, and this is in preparation of for the delegation motion on June 8th. In regards to Bylaw #1416, the Dog Bylaw, are you familiar with that? What I'm concerned about is when I asked for a signed copy, it was missing the signature of the mayor, and according to the Municipal Government Act, if there is no signature on the bylaw, it has no legal effect. There was an amendment to this bylaw which you signed. I don't actually have a copy of that here with me. So I am wondering, what is the status of this bylaw? Bylaw #1416 has the signature of the former CAO, Larry Flexhaug, but is missing the signature of Ernie Patterson. So my question is as to the legal binding effect of the Dog Bylaw in Claresholm.

Mayor Steel

I can't answer your question right now. I am not a lawyer, so I don't know.

Jacqui Gruber

When would be a good time to get back to you on this issue? Is it possible that Claresholm doesn't have a Dog Bylaw right now?

Mayor Steel

Do you want the actual legal semantics of this right now? Maybe, I don't know. To answer your question, I am going to have to hire a lawyer and I can do that, and we can spend the taxpayers money to hire a lawyer to find that out. That will take time and I can't tell you when. We will look into the legal aspects of the dog bylaw.

Jacqui Gruber

While you are at it then, could you find out how much money and revenue has been collected for dog fees and licenses and tags in Town since 2002? I don't know if you need a lawyer if you read the Municipal Government Act and all the rules that are there.

Mayor Steel

I am familiar with the MGA. To be honest with you, if I had time to look into it, I might know. You are just asking now. I will get back to you.

Don Campbell

I would like to know what each of the expenses are, at the arena and so on, listed as fringe benefits are listed on each one.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Fringe benefits would encompass the employer's portion of Canada Pension, Employment Insurance. We also pay for Alberta Health Care for our employees, we pay Blue Cross premiums, and we pay Alberta Municipal Services insurance. They are simply wage benefits.

Bonnie Gordon

Revenue & expenditure report, page 24 of 29. Revenue recreation, I'm sorry but I do not understand this, if you would be so kind as to explain this to me.

Total revenue recreation for 2009, the budget is \$25,000, and the variance, I don't know what that term refers to. And the golf course debenture assistance and the golf course collections services. Please explain this to me.

Mayor Steel

Revenue recreation is the recreation grant we get from the MD of Willow Creek. The MD of Willow Creek used to give us \$15,000 every year to help with the operation of our recreational facilities. Of course, they are used by people that live in the MD that don't pay taxes to the Town. So they increased that to \$25,000. The variance is what we have already received this year and what we have yet to receive. We give the golf course \$50,000 every year to help fund their operations as a management fee. This is the golf course collections service. The golf course is owned by the Town of Claresholm and is operated by a volunteer board. Of course, their expenses are much higher than that, but they have other revenue. The golf course debenture assistance is a new one this year. The \$36,000 is to help pay off a debt they had for machinery and equipment. They have two loans. The one big loan and this one for \$36,000 that the Town has budgeted to forgive.

Bonnie Gordon

Well, I thought it was a private place because you have to pay a membership fee.

Mayor Steel

It is a municipally owned, fully public golf course. But you still have to pay to play. So you can pay once and go out with green fees, or you can be a member and pay \$600 for the year. The loan was for used equipment that was new to the golf course. It was needed because they now have 18 holes and they have much more land.

Bob Pfefferle

Is this pay off of the \$36,000 debenture, is this a one time payment?

Mayor Steel

Yes, it will not be included next year.

Bob Pfefferle

Secondly, in regards to the peace officer, I want to know why the job he was doing was cut back. Was he not more efficient working at night? Solving a lot of problems and clearing up the RCMP on nuisance calls?

Mayor Steel

First of all, as Kris said, he is a member of the CUPE Local, which they collectively bargain their wages and benefits and hours of work as part of a group. In the union contract that was negotiated was hours of work for the peace officer, which is normally 7 'til 4. As it turns out, the peace officer, is not just for writing speeding tickets, he's also the bylaw enforcement officer. A lot of times, people that require the service of the bylaw enforcement officer, 90% of the time call the Town Office during office hours. So it's important to have an office person there during office hours. The other thing too is that we are still policed by the RCMP, and it's not our intention to do their jobs for them. We have a peace officer that has a role. The role is providing bylaw enforcement services, and this is well serviced by having an office person in the office during office hours. That doesn't mean there can't be some leeway there. For example, he worked on Friday night of the long weekend a little bit, over and above what's stated in the contract. So, it's driven as much by his union as it is by his employer.

Bob Pfefferle

He has been basically pulled off the streets at night and he took care of some of the nuisance where you don't really have to bother the RCMP.

Mayor Steel

Crime does happen at night, and you can call 911. We can always revisit that, but at the same time, it would be easy if you had two officers, but we are a small town. With one peace officer, it's really a juggling act.

Pat Thiele

We live on Westover Crescent in one of the manufactured homes. Behind us there is a big development for seniors, and we have dirt and water and garbage constantly. Are they ever going to have lawns in there and fix the alley so we are not constantly in a mess?

Mayor Steel

Yes, we can certainly deal with that. They are going to be doing landscaping there this spring. This is a really good example of when we have to enforce bylaws. Also to the north, the dandelions are terrible there now. So this is the kind of nuisance bylaw enforcement that we have to do. This kind of enforcement is done in the working week, and that why we have our bylaw officer working predominantly in working hours. We will be putting an extra effort there this week to get it cleaned up.

Bob Pferrle

What about the dandelions in town?

Mayor Steel

A weed, to be philosophical, is something that grows where it shouldn't, and that's relative to anybody.

Councillor David Moore

There are weeds included in the nuisance bylaw.

Mayor Steel

Things crop up at the same time of the every year. Spring time, it's unsightly premises and weeds, so it's a good time for us to do a blitz on weeds and getting people to clean up their yards.

Mary Wolfe

Who is responsible for the downtown area? Is it the police or the bylaw officer? For the traffic and what people are doing there? Every time I go, it's the only place where I have seen people where they are going down one side of the road and decide they want to park on the other side of the road. It's dangerous, and I'm beginning to wonder if this is against the law or I'm wrong.

Mayor Steel

Both the police and bylaw enforcement. The police come to talk to because they do a business plan every year and ask 'what are your priorities?' Our priorities are generally traffic, vandalism and drugs. Those are our concerns in this community. It's their mandate to police the way the community wants them to. Our peace office can enforce the Highway Traffic Act.

Doug Kemery

On page 3 of 29, admin janitor wages. Do we have a contract with a janitor?

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

We have a union employee.

Mayor Steel

Yes, we have a janitor and she does the Town Office, the Library, the Public Works Shop and the Fire Hall.

Doug Kemery

On page 4, put everybody's mind at rest, coffee supplies. Is that for Town meetings and special functions or is it for everyday coffee in the Town?

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

That's where we put tonight's coffee. It's for staff or for people that come visit and would like coffee.

Doug Kemery

That's kind of the point. At work, we all put \$5 in per month for coffee. We don't expect the Government of Alberta to pay for our coffee. We have a girl that collects the money. I can see the Town providing it for functions such as this, but I don't see it for everyday. It doesn't make sense to use public money to pay for coffee, that's all.

Mayor Steel

It's the same for me. I work for the City of Calgary, and the City of Calgary doesn't pay for my coffee.

Councillor David Moore

Normally, it would probably fall under office supplies.

Wayne McAllister

I would like to know what is happening with that housing development at the old drive-in theatre. They were going great guns and all of a sudden, it just up and died, and we have a great water hole. Somebody went over and tried to put a fence around it, and it's a disgusting mess over there.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Jeff Gibeau, our Development Officer and myself just met with the new land owners, and they were in to discuss with Jeff and myself about a new development agreement and what needs to be finished for infrastructure over in that development, what the Town is going to want for a bond before they can step a foot onto that lot. So, we are quite excited because there are new owners and hopefully things will move forward in the division.

Wayne McAllister

There is still nothing to keep kids from falling in that big water hole over there. Can you hire somebody to put that fence back up again?

Mayor Steel

Yes, we have done it in the past and we can do it again.

Michelle Day

I just have a question. First of all, we want to thank EDC for helping out with clean up, spruce up program. We have been picking up garbage around the downtown core two times, and we are going to continue every second Friday. What we came across last time, and I'm not too sure who to ask, but there is a transmitter box that is in a little cave behind Shannon's Hair Shop and we discussed it today at Chamber. It is visually disgusting, and there are probably unwanted activities that occur at that spot. The Chamber would like to write a letter to the owner and cc it to the Town to see if we could put up a fence or a mesh. Where do I go to see how can we cover that?

Councillor David Moore

It is a privately owned building and I think it supplies power to that building. It is on the property of the landowner.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

If you have a civic address and come to the office, we can give you a legal address and you can go to the registry office with that to find out the landowner with a titles search. It's personal information so that's all we can give you.

Bonnie Gordon

Revenue & expenditure report page 7 of 29, I'm sort of unclear. The bylaw officer, is he hired by the Town or is he under the capacity of the MD of Willow Creek?

Mayor Steel

The town only. The MD has their own.

Bonnie Gordon

Okay, so his jurisdiction is within the Town limits. Under the expenses, what are the fringe benefits and the bylaw animal services, is that the same person or it that another person?

Mayor Steel

No, that's the same person.

Bonnie Gordon

So, I don't understand. His wages are up there, then what is the \$20,000 actuals for last year and the budget was \$14,000.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Last year, bylaw animal services, the Town rented the space from Pampered Pets to house the animal shelter, to hold stray and abandoned pets. We also paid them so many dollars for each animal per day as instructed in the bylaw.

Bonnie Gordon

What comes under supplies – enforcement? That's pretty expensive. And there are uniform costs.

Mayor Steel

Supplies would be forms, tickets, printing, pepper spray. Having a Community Peace Officer is not cheap. The uniform is mandated by the province that they all have to wear the same uniform and it has been changed this year, so there was an extra cost, so next year that will be lower. The whole peace officer initiative is a lot of money.

Bonnie Gordon

The breakdown here just seems quite strange. It just seems like a lot of money for these different things here. Who catches the strays, cause there are dogs and cats all over the place. They are kinda getting to be a problem. Does he do that?

Mayor Steel

The whole animal services provided by the Town of Claresholm has evolved over the years. The Town sees a great importance in that obviously. We spend a lot of money on the animals needing shelter, and it is within the bylaw officer's job description to pick up the dogs. The bylaw officer will go and pick up stray dogs and take them to the shelter.

Bonnie Gordon

I never see him doing that, but I see him parked out on the highway all the time giving out tickets.

Doug Kemery

Actually, in some of those supplies for the bylaw officer, does that include his fuel for his vehicle or not?

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

No, that goes under gas and oil.

Doug Kemery

Okay, so the question I wanted to ask was, I see physician recruitment. Are we full with physicians now? Because I see you where you have no budgeted dollars for year.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

There is actually a separate department for physician recruitment now.

Mayor Steel

We actually have an initiative with other municipalities this year. There is a Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee that advises on how we spend that money. As you can see, the bulk of it goes to housing costs, because the Town of Claresholm does have an incentive right now that if there is a physician that wants to come to Claresholm to work, we pay up to \$1,500 a month for 24 months as an incentive for housing.

Doug Kemery

So this section is new this year?

Mayor Steel

Yes.

Bob Vadnais

While we are picking on the peace officer, where is the revenue he has brought in so far with his tickets?

Mayor Steel

As you can see, the municipal fines last year were \$48,000. This was the revenue from the bylaw officer.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

That is actually money in the bank. We only recognize the revenue that we receive.

Bob Vadnais

It sounds like his job is justified with the money that he brings in.

Councillor David Moore

The mandate when Nigel first started was easy on the locals but you can generate revenue off the highway and slow these people down through Town. He gets people going through Town at over double the speed limit, 120 km/h down main street. We are definitely trying to slow that down.

Mayor Steel

The budget this year for the peace officer initiative is \$92,000, the budget for revenue is \$50,000. Does the fine revenue cover the cost of the officer? No. We'll see at the end of the year if it's 50%. It might not be, but approximately half the cost of that office is paid for by his fine revenue. It is still an expensive initiative for sure.

Jacqui Gruber

Municipal bylaw fines, projected budget for 2009 is to collect \$1,000. You are either giving everybody a break or you are not enforcing municipal bylaws.

Councillor David Moore

We meet with Nigel monthly to discuss these kinds of issues. We try to emphasize to Nigel to try to persuade people to comply rather than focus on fines.

Mayor Steel

We changed it this year to reflect municipal statue fines and municipal bylaw fines. Last year it just said municipal fines. I am all for giving people warnings and second chances, but I'm convinced that some people have just run out of time. There should be some bylaw fines handed out when we have to go back to the same property four times to say spray your weeds and shovel your sidewalk, then they should be ticketed.

Jacqui Gruber

Back to Bonnie's questions regarding animal services, the budget was \$14,000, the expenditure as I understand it was \$20,073 and the 2009 budget is \$500. I don't understand. How do we go from \$20,000 to \$500? Is there any explanation for that?

Mayor Steel

It has been our thought process from the beginning that it's better to support non-profit societies to take care of animals, like the SPCA for example. So we now have a not-for-profit society, Claresholm Animal Rescue Society. Instead of the Town paying for that, we fund the society and they do that.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

This is now under grants in the budget, and we have budgeted \$30,000 to grant to the Claresholm Animal Rescue Society. We have budgeted \$87,000 this year, and \$30,000 of that is going to CARES.

Jacqui Gruber

And where does that grant money come from? Do you apply for that grant money? Oh, this is Town operating funds. With the \$30,000 grant to CARES, if a person in this room needs to call about a stray dog or a stray cat, who do we call? Do we call the Society? Do we call the Town? Or do we call the peace officer? Cause there seems to be a big confusion on who.

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

Nigel is equipped to come get stray dogs.

Jacqui Gruber

With or without the bylaw in effect, he's still going to do it, and that is between the hours of nine and four, Monday through Friday. From 4pm to midnight, and on weekends and statutory holidays, who do the citizens of Claresholm call? The question is directed to you, Mayor Steel.

Mayor Steel

We don't have a bylaw / dog catcher working 24/7, we can't. So even if we have a bylaw guy working at nine o'clock on a Thursday night, then he wouldn't be working at eight o'clock in the morning. We can't just provide that service.

Jacqui Gruber

So what about the cats, now. Does Nigel the peace officer pick up the cats? Who picks up the cats?

Councillor Doug MacPherson

A citizen of the town can pick up an animal and take it to the animal shelter.

Jacqui Gruber

You said the animal shelter. Did you mean the facility run by the Claresholm Animal Rescue Society? Then you must have an agreement with CARES. I'll have to get a copy of that too.

The last question I have, you said, to be honest with you, this is the first time that you're are hearing me bring forth an issue regarding the determination of effect of Bylaw #1416. This letter is dated March 10th, and I submitted it March 18th, 2009. So I am just asking this question for clarification because you are telling me that you haven't heard anything about my question on this dog bylaw issue until today. Is that correct?

Mayor Steel

You have me so confused now, I don't even know what you're talking about.

Jacqui Gruber

I'm sure.

Mayor Steel

You are obviously bombarding me with this stuff. I value your concern. I don't know.

Jacqui Gruber

You said openly on the mike, honestly, I'm hearing this for the first time when I asked you a question. Did you go in camera to discuss my letters? Yes or no?

Mayor Steel

What we discuss in camera, I'm not going to talk to you about.

Jacqui Gruber

Thanks, Rob. I'll see you at the meeting. We'll talk after if you like. Face to face in cooperative, collaborative community efforts are always best.

Mayor Steel

I see you being confrontational and I don't know why. Any other questions?

Diana Sawatzky

Can you please tell us when we might be getting a Tim Horton's in Town?

Councillor Shirley Isaacson

They have taken out their development permit and they are presently working to bring in some of the services. And I believe they hope to be open by September.

Lynn Segouin

Is there any more information on the highway relocation?

Mayor Steel

No, and I think it's funny. It was four or five years ago now the government did a planning study to see where to locate the highway. If you even look on their infrastructure website, it's a 20 year thing. That's their own government infrastructure project. That's a moving target. No, to be honest we don't hear anything at all. It will have an impact on the Town in a lot of ways. There will be some negative impact on the services and such. But, it will be better for other things too. But, like I say, it's funny how a government process can get us all worked up. Five years later, 'oh we don't know'.

Bonnie Gordon

On the Revenue & Expenditure report again, page four of 29, taxi subsidy what does that entail?

Mayor Steel

We subsidize the taxi service for seniors. We have a token system where they can buy tokens.

Bonnie Gordon

At the very bottom, tax assessment contingency. What is that?

Mayor Steel

I think you are well aware that every property in Town has been reassessed and we are going through a process where citizens can meet with the assessors and possibly appeal their assessments. In regards to that, assessments might get lowered. Decreased assessments may result in decreased revenue for the Town. It was prudent for us to put in a contingency in there to account for that. I think it's safe to say that if our total assessment for our Town is \$572 million, once we get through this process, it will be lower than that. It may decrease our tax revenue. This is not what it's costing to have the assessors here as we have a contract agreement with the assessment company that is somewhere else. This is new this year because we are reassessing every property in Town.

Bonnie Gordon

One more, sorry. Perhaps next year you could make these things available ahead of time. By the way Doug, I haven't been here since 2005, so I guess I'm unforgettable. Anyway, if you could have the information available ahead of time.

Councillor Doug MacPherson

They are available. If you go to the Town Office asked at the office, they would give it to you. They aren't going to offer it to anyone who walks in the door as your time is valuable and their time is valuable. They are certainly not going to turn you away. They are readily available to anyone.

Mayor Steel

This operating budget we gave you is a work in progress. We gave the mill rate bylaw first reading, and those numbers are incorporated in this budget, but we haven't passed this budget yet. That's essentially why we have this meeting now, to get discussion on the operating budget before we pass it. It's one of the open and accountable things that we do.

Doug Kemery

One other question, because lots of people here are wondering. Page 9 of 29 on the expenses of streets and roads, what are the different kinds of wages?

Mayor Steel

That's Public Works employees. Their hours are broken down into different jobs that they're doing. They spend so much time on curb and gutter, so much time on traffic control, etc.

Christel Hutka

On page 13 of 29, I have a question on the water debentures principal. Looks like it got has gone down for 2009, but the interest has gone up. Can you explain why the interest is so high?

Mayor Steel

That reflects the new debenture, the \$4 million we have for the water project. That reflects the payment.

Councillor Doug MacPherson

Just like the mortgage on a house, you pay more interest at the start of the debenture then at the end. Most of the payment is going to interest at the start of a debenture.

Bonnie Atkinson

Do we have a final cost as to what the reassessments have cost the Town, or are we still waiting to get the final costs in?

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

We have a contract with our assessors, so we pay them on a monthly basis based on a five year contract. It is listed under Assessor in the budget. The contract states that they get \$6,000 a month for their services. For 2009 it is that much, for 2010 it stays flat, there's a small cost of living increase for the next three years. They have adsorbed the extra time put in this year. They will make up the time they have lost this year in future years.

Bob Thompson

Have you finalized the mill rate?

Mayor Steel

We haven't yet. But we did give first reading to the Mill Rate Bylaw. The mill rate in the bylaw is 6.8.

Doug Kemery

Is the breakdown on that 6.8 the same as last year?

Kris Holbeck, CA, CAO

If you come to the office Doug, I can give you that information. It's broken down to the municipal portion, the Porcupine Hills Lodge requisition and the education portion.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Bob Thompson that this meeting adjourn.

CARRIED

MAYOR – Rob Steel

SECRETARY/TREASURER –
Karine Wilhauk