



AGENDA

Regular Council Meeting held in Council Chambers at #6, 3rd Ave. W, Empress, AB
On

Wednesday April 17, 2024 commencing at 6:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order:

2. Adoption of Agenda: April 17, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Agenda

(approve agenda as is or with amendments)

3. Adoption of Minutes:

a) March 19, 2024 Regular Council Meeting

(approve minutes as presented or with amendments)

4. Delegations: a) Alicia Laird and Karlie Bell, MNP, Village of Empress Auditors

The Village auditors will be in attendance to present the draft 2023 Audited Financial Statements. It was noted during the audit that in 2023 not all staff were paid wages in accordance with the Village of Empress wage grid. The auditor requires confirmation, via a motion, that the Village does not intend to make employees, who were not paid in accordance with the grid, repay anything back to the Village.

(that Council confirms that 2023 salaries and wages paid are accepted as is and no amendments or repayments will be made retroactively.)

AND

(that the 2023 Village of Empress audited financial statements be approved as reviewed and presented (or amended) by Alicia Laird and Karlie Bell, MNP, Village of Empress Auditors)

b) Kelsey Martin, Aggregates Manager, Special Areas Board

Kelsey assists Empress with our gravel pit operations and is here to provide an update on our gravel pit, as well as discuss expansion potential.

(that Council accept the discussion for information or some other direction as provided by Council at meeting time.)



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5. Reports:

a) Committee and Council Reports

- i. Mayor Johnston
- ii. Deputy Mayor Martin
- iii. Councillor Burgess

(that the committee and Council reports, as verbally presented, be accepted, for information)

b) Financial Report

- i. Cheque Listing
- ii. Account Balance
- iii. Revenue and Expense Report

(that the financial report, as presented verbally and in writing by Chief Financial Officer, Shelley Vaughan, be accepted for information.)

c) Public Work's Report

(that the public works report, as presented in writing, be accepted for information.)

f) Chief Administrative Officer's Report

- i. Meetings, etc
 - a. Village of Empress Tour & Teambuilding, March 20, 2024
 - b. Municipal Affairs, 3-month check-in, March 26, 2024
 - c. MNP Auditor, April 2, 2024
 - d. Brownlee LLP, April 9, 2024 and April 15, 2024
- ii. Outstanding Taxes
- iii. New ATB Signage
- iv. Development Permit – Old Hospital Sign
- v. 2024 Taxes
- vi. 2023 Audit
- vii. Newsletter/Mayor's Message
- viii. Campground Improvements
- ix. Bylaw Complaints
- x. Lot Servicing

(that the CAO report, as presented, in writing and verbally, by Chief Administrative Officer Angela Duncan, be accepted for information.)



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6. Information and Correspondence:

- a) April 3, 2024 email and announcement from Palliser Regional Municipal Services regarding safety Codes permitting and inspection services
- b) April 3, 2024 email from Alberta Municipalities President, Tyler Gandam, regarding independent local elections
- c) April 2, 2024 email from Palliser Economic Partnership regarding their April 18, 2024 Housing Innovation Workshop
- d) March 18, 2024 email from Alberta Municipalities Chief Executive Officer, Dan Rude, regarding the MUNIX 2024 Annual General Meeting
- e) January 31, 2024 letter (email received March 20, 2024) from Alberta Public Safety and Emergency Services regarding our 2024 Police Funding Model invoice
- f) Letter from Municipal Affairs Minister, Ric McIver, regarding the Provincial Education Requisition Credit Program Extension
- g) March 15, 2024 letter from ATCO Energy Systems regarding Electrical Distribution System – 2023 Franchise Report
- h) March 18, 2024 letter from Municipal Affairs Minister, Ric McIver, regarding the Assessment Model Review
- i) Letter from Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, Rebecca Schulz, regarding water sharing negotiations and agreements
- j) Empress Library 2024 Budget
- k) Empress Library 2023 Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
- l) March 16, 2024 letter from ATCO regarding 2024 Franchise Fees

(that the information and correspondence items be accepted for information.)

7. Old Business: a) 2024 Operating and Capital Budget

Further to previous meetings and direction of Council, attached is the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget for Council's Approval. There have been a few changes, as previously emailed to Council, and tax revenue has been added to bring the deficit/surplus to \$0. This budget represents a 3.33% increase in municipal tax dollars collected. The minimum tax payable is set at \$325 (2023 - \$300) and both the residential and commercial mill rate has been set at 19.385738 (2023 – 18.50)



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(that the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget for the Village of Empress be approved as presented.)

8. New Business: a) Village of Empress 2024 Tax Rate Bylaw

As follow-up to the approved budget, attached is the required 2024 Tax Rate Bylaw which sets the various rates of taxation for the 2024 year, to be approved by Council.

(that Bylaw 2024-02, a bylaw to authorize the several rates of taxation imposed for all purposes for the year 2024 for the Village of Empress be given 1st reading (as presented or amended).)

(give 2nd reading to Bylaw 2024-02 (as is or as amended))

(give unanimous consent to consider 3rd reading of Bylaw 2024-02 (as is or as amended).)

(give 3rd and final reading Bylaw 2024-02 (as is or as amended).)

b) Servicing Agreement between the Rural Municipality (RM) of Deerfork and the Village of Empress

Residences on the Saskatchewan side of the border are not technically in the Village of Empress, but are instead a part of the RM of Deerforks and they pay property taxes to the RM of Deerforks. In 2015, there was an informal agreement, backed by a letter (included in your package), to provide certain services to residences in the RM in exchange for annual compensation of \$2000. In recent years, this payment has not been received, likely because new CAO's did not know to invoice for it. After discussion with the CAO of Deerforks, it was decided that we will recommend a written agreement to the Councils, to ensure that responsibilities and compensation are clearly laid out. A draft agreement is included in your package. Council should note that I have requested an inflation modifier to the \$2000 provided by the RM for services. Their CAO is bringing the agreement, including the inflation request, to their April Council meeting. Council is asked to consider if they would like to enter into the agreement and what changes (if any) that you would like to see. Unless we hear back from the RM of Deerforks prior to meeting time, regarding the request for an



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inflation modifier, I recommend that we hold off on passing the agreement until the May meeting.

(that the discussion regarding a servicing agreement between the Rural Municipality of Deerforks and the Village of Empress for houses located on the Saskatchewan side of the border be accepted for information, and further that it be brought back to a future meeting for further review and decision

Or,

that the discussion regarding a servicing agreement between the Rural Municipality of Deerforks and the Village of Empress for houses located on the Saskatchewan side of the border be accepted for information that changes be requested from the RM of Deerforks as discussed at meeting time.)

c) Village of Empress Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) Funding

FCSS is a joint initiative between the Village of Empress and the Government of Alberta, whereby the province pays 80% and the Village pays 20% based on our contract with the province. Each year the Village is responsible to allocate their funds, based on the provincial FCSS mandate and within the program parameters. Information on eligibility and the purpose of the FCSS program can be found in the FCSS handbook at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/5325399>. In 2024 Empress has a total of \$8440.99 to spend. A spreadsheet has been included in your package that shows how funding was allocated in 2023 and funds allocated to date in 2024.

A letter was received on April 3, 2024 from the Empress Library Board requesting FCSS funding for library programs in the amount of \$1000. Last year the library received \$882.31. Council is asked to consider the request from the library and if there is any other funding that they would like to allocate at this time.

(That a 2024 FCSS grant, in the amount of \$1000, be awarded to the Empress Library for library programming,

Or,

That FCSS funding for 2024 be allocated as discussed at meeting time (some of all of the funds),



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Or,

some other direction as provided by Council at meeting time.)

d) Purchase offer 430 3rd Street West

Administration is in receipt of an offer to purchase Lot 430 3rd Street West (Plan 5043AV Block 24, Lots 34-35). The lot is currently un-serviced; however, it can be serviced through an existing line. Current assessment of the lot is \$5230. This lot was recovered through tax sale in 2023; back taxes and associated penalties and costs on this lot are \$1757.09.

If Council is not amicable to the first offer, they have made a back-up offer on Lot 319-3rd Street West (Plan 5043AV Block 30, Lots 13-15). The lot is currently un-serviced; however it can be serviced through an existing line. Current assessment of the lot is \$5780. The village has owned this lot since 1965, and we are not currently aware of how the village took possession of the lot.

Offer amounts will be made available at meeting time. Administration has reviewed the titles for both lots and can confirm that there are no caveats on either. Administration is not making a recommendation as to the suitability of the offers. However, Council should consider the assessed value of the lots, taxes owing (if applicable), and the length of time the village has been in possession of the lots. Additionally, if a lot that has been recovered through tax forfeiture is sold, the village does not get to keep the funds, they are held in a trust account. The Village gets to keep the funds if the lot is owned by the Village for other reasons.

If Council chooses to accept an offer, the following motion is recommended: *that the offer of XXX will be accepted for the purchase of lot XXX. FURTHER that a non-refundable payment in the full amount plus GST and completion of purchase documents is required within 15 business days of the purchaser being notified of the decision. FURTHER that the purchase is AS IS, WHERE IS, including all faults and limitations and no access to the site will be allowed until closing. FURTHER, payment will be accepted by Bank Draft or E-transfer only. Further, the purchaser is responsible to pay*



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the equivalent of pro-rated municipal taxes for the 2024 taxation year.

(Direction as provided at meeting time.)

e) Prairie Post Advertising Opportunity

The Prairie Post reached out at the beginning of March to discuss if the Village of Empress would be interested in placing an advertisement in their upcoming "Annual Report on South-Eastern Alberta" to be released on May 25. I had asked them to send me information prior to the March Council meeting, so that you could discuss it then. Unfortunately, information regarding the issue and pricing was not received until April 5. The deadline for the issue is April 15, 2024, however, they have indicated that they will be flexible with the deadline, considering that I need to bring this to Council. As noted in the agenda package, a quarter page ad is \$599, half page is \$999, and a full page is \$1799. Also provided in the package is an ad that was previously run by the Village. This cost has NOT been included in the budget.

(that the correspondence from the Prairie Post regarding their upcoming "Annual Report on South-Eastern Alberta" be accepted for information,

Or,

That the Village of Empress take out a (1/4, 1/2, or full page) ad in the May 25, 2024 "Annual Report on South-Eastern Alberta" edition of the Prairie Post at a cost of _____ to be funded through operating surplus or reserves.)

f) New Streetlight – 212 1st St E

In late 2023 a resident requested a new streetlight be placed near 212 1st St E. A quote was obtained from ATCO to put in a new light. ATCO is willing to install the new light at no cost to the Village, the village would be responsible for ongoing operational costs (wire charges, cost of electricity, administrative fees). Note that if the location of the light is changed, there may be costs associated. Empress will need to enter into an agreement for the installation of the new streetlight. Additionally, Empress will need to sign a lighting design waiver, included in your package. It is recommended that



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municipalities comply with the Transportation Association of Canada's lighting design requirements; this would require a formal streetlight study and would likely result in more new streetlights being needed. The waiver allows us to proceed with the new streetlight without having to perform the streetlight study and bring the village into compliance. Administration has reached out to ATCO regarding the cost to operate a new streetlight, the potential to add additional streetlights, and a current burnt out streetlight in Empress. This information is available in the meeting package.

(that the Village of Empress enter into, and authorize execution of, an agreement with ATCO Electric for the provision of a new streetlight at 212 1st St E, at no capital cost to the Village and FURTHER that the village sign the lighting design waiver, provided by ATCO Electric, waiving the need for a fulsome streetlight study,

Or,

Some other direction as provided by Council at meeting time.)

g) Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation Memorial

Please refer to the April 10, 2024 email and attachment from the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation. With the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) turning 100 this year, the Foundation is offering memorial plaques to honour fallen soldiers from Empress. There is one fallen soldier from Empress who served in the RCAF, Sergeant F.J.H. Highmoor. The cost of the memorial plaque is \$300. Depending on the location, there would be additional costs for mounting or displaying the plaque. If Council is not favourable to purchasing a plaque, this could be forwarded to the Historical Society for their consideration or potential partnership.

(That the April 10, 2024 email from the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation regarding memorial plaques for Fallen Royal Canadian Air Force members be accepted for information, (and further that the request be forwarded to the Empress and District Historical Society).,

Or,

That a Memorial Plaque for Royal Canadian Air Force member Sergeant F.J.H Highmoor, a fallen soldier from the Village of Empress, be purchased from the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation and FURTHER



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that the plaque be displayed _____ and FURTHER that the \$300 for the plaque and installation costs be covered through operating surplus or reserves,

Or,

That a partnership be proposed to the Empress and District Historical Society for the purchase and display of a Memorial Plaque for Royal Canadian Air Force member Sergeant F.J.H Highmoor, a fallen soldier from the Village of Empress, from the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation,

Or,

Some other direction as provided by Council at meeting time.)

9. Closed Meeting Session:

- a) Gravel Pit
- b) Land
- c) Lagoon

(Pursuant to section 197(2) of the Municipal Government Act, that Council go into a closed meeting session at _____ p.m. to discuss the following: Gravel Pit, Legal – Privileged Information, FOIPP Act Section 27; Land – disclosure harmful to economic and other interests of a public body, FOIPP Act Section 25; Lagoon – disclosure harmful to personal privacy, FOIPP Act Section 17.)

(that the Board come out of closed meeting at _____ p.m.)

(further direction as given by the Board at meeting time)

10. Next meeting: May 15, 2024

11. Adjournment: