

M.D. of Bonnyville Media Release December 10, 2014

M.D. of Bonnyville passes 2015 interim budget

\$49.5 million allocated to road improvements and maintenance

The Municipal District of Bonnyville Council approved an \$88,562,141 interim balanced budget at its Wednesday meeting.

M.D. Council will pass the final 2015 budget in the spring, once the provincial government releases its Education Requisition. For interim budget purposes, tax estimates are based on the 2014 assessment. The 2014 estimated expenditures are funded by \$58.04 million in Taxes; \$6.67 million in Government Grants; \$11.59 million from General Revenues such as fees and partnership dollars and \$12.26 million in transfers from surplus (reserve funds from carried over projects and funds remaining from previous years' budgets).

Reeve Ed Rondeau said road improvements and maintenance is the highest priority for Council, but funds are also being allocated to improve the quality of life for residents. Council has made a commitment towards regional cooperation and has dedicated funds for neighbouring urban municipalities and organizations that provide services to M.D. residents. "Council's priority is to deliver services to M.D. residents, but as a member of our integrated communities, the M.D. collaborates and partners with community organizations and neighbouring municipalities to enhance services for all residents throughout the region."

Rondeau says the budget process was tough this year as Council is being pressured to meet a lot of expectations. "There is a misconception that the M.D. is flush with cash and can pay for everything. That is not true. It was a balancing act this year as we went through the budget line-by-line to prioritize projects. Unfortunately some projects were placed into future budget years. Council knows that roads are always the first on the list, as most of our residents travel them every day and they are taking a beating from increased traffic."

Council has allocated \$29.6 million for Road Improvements/Construction, \$13.2 million for Gravel/Oil Road Maintenance and \$3.7 million for Public Works Equipment in the interim budget. The Third Phase of the Ardmore Street Improvement Project tallies up to \$3 million and will consist of a storm drainage pond, installation of a storm sewer system, and replacement of water and sewer infrastructure.

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The M.D. continues to stockpile a large amount of gravel to lock in at lower prices. Rondeau said this affects this year's cash flow since "we have gravel instead of dollars, but it saves us money in the long term."

The 2015 budget includes a variety of projects that will improve services to our communities and build upon our recreational infrastructure, Rondeau said.

A new La Corey Fire Hall and Public Works building has been budgeted for \$2.2 million. The M.D. will contribute \$900,000 to the new Cold Lake Fire Hall, which is the capital cost of two fire hall bays for the two pieces of equipment the M.D. funds. The Goodridge Rescue Truck will be replaced for \$200,000 and the Cold Lake Fire Department Tanker Truck is being replaced for \$300,000. Council will continue to fund the Senior's Transportation Grant for \$60,000. Annual Operating Grants to the 15 Community Halls will continue for a cost of \$700,000. At Kinosoo Ridge, the parking lot is being expanded at an estimated cost of \$150,000.

Regional projects such as Landfill Operations come in at \$2.3 million; Bonnyville Centennial Centre at \$1.1 million and the Regional Community Development Agreement Grant for the Town of Bonnyville and the Village of Glendon at \$925,143 and \$136,027 respectively, serve the needs of M.D. ratepayers and urban residents. Council has also budgeted \$20,000 each for the Glendon, Bonnyville and Cold Lake Agricultural Societies. The Glendon Agricultural Society will receive an additional \$158,000 for its arena renovations. The Cold Lake and Bonnyville Museums each receive \$17,500.

Rondeau said the M.D. continues to be a good regional citizen by providing funding support for the Beaver River Regional Waste Management Commission, Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority, Bonnyville and District Family and Community Support Services and Cold Lake and District FCSS, as well as the libraries in Cold Lake and Bonnyville. "Council is committed to supporting the Regional Community Development Agreement as well as cost-sharing agreements for fire, ambulance, libraries, FCSS, airport and Part 9 Companies because these entities provide services to the residents of the whole region."

Council will take a second look at the budget in early 2015, once the year-end is complete and assessment figures are tallied.

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