

M.D. of Bonnyville Media Release April 12, 2017

M.D. of Bonnyville passes 2017 Final Budget *\$51.4 million for municipal infrastructure, roads and maintenance projects*

The Municipal District of Bonnyville Council approved a \$120,267,552 balanced 2017 budget (excluding non-cash depreciation) at its meeting on Wednesday. Although municipal tax revenues have declined, Council held mill rates at 2016 levels and continued to fund both operating and capital budgets with no change in service levels or community support.

The 2017 budget will be funded through \$64.1 million in municipal taxes, \$7.5 million in government grants and contributions, \$18.1 million from General Revenues, such as fees, equipment replacement program, and reserves. A further \$15.8 million will come from transfers from surplus (reserve funds carried over from projects and funds remaining from previous years' budgets).

To cover the requisitions for school taxes and seniors housing, the M.D. is required to collect an additional \$14.7 million through property taxes. The school requisitions are up \$950,000, representing a 7.2% increase over last year's requisition. Any savings found in property taxes as a result of keeping mill rates flat over 2016 will be offset by the increase in provincial education taxes. The Lakeland Lodge and Housing requisition increased from \$299,703 in 2016 to \$491,738 in 2017. The increase was due to the loss of 52 units while new construction is being done in Bonnyville and Cold Lake for additional housing. The requisition will be reduced in 2019 when all the new units are completed. Both the school and lodge requisitions are uncontrollable costs to Council, as they are passed on to the M.D. by other orders of government to collect and remit.

In 2017, Council is again directing the majority of the budget to key infrastructure projects including roads, water lines, and trail systems. New in 2017 is \$1.4 million for the Cold Lake Water Line and \$1.0 million has been earmarked to continue work on the M.D. trail system. As in the past, Council's focus is to improve and maintain our largest assets – roads. "Council plans on continuing to pave and oil as many roads as possible, while ensuring, especially in this economy, that the municipality is able to maintain its staffing levels," said Reeve Ed Rondeau.

The Ardmore Underground and Road Replacement Project will continue in 2017 with \$2.1 million in funding. The paving of Gurneyville Road is scheduled to go ahead with a \$6.4 million price tag.

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Additionally, Council agreed to continue to fund the Seniors Transportation Grant at \$60,000, while Community Halls and Societies will have access to \$575,000 for capital and operating costs.

The M.D. has again set aside \$5 million for the Inter Municipal Cooperation Program for collaboration with our urban neighbours, based on a per capita, equalized assessment model. The approximate distribution is; Village of Glendon \$767,000, the City of Cold Lake \$645,800 and the Town of Bonnyville \$3,600,000 (this includes some \$800,000 for the Bonnyville and District Centennial Centre). These government transfers will be adjusted when final population breakdowns are available.

Council continues to support the regional community's quality of life. In 2017 the Bonnyville Golf and Country Club will receive \$150,000 for sprinkler system improvements, while the Walsh Football Field and Extreme Mudfest will see support of \$240,000 and \$8,000 respectively.

“Council agreed to support these three projects because they are a benefit to the region, both economically and recreationally. The golf course draws an incredible number of tourists to the area to play recreationally and in tournaments. Walsh Field will serve over 1,000 youth locally and will build on our Sport Tourism initiatives. Extreme Mudfest doubled its gate numbers last year and is projecting to do the same in 2017. These tourists bring a lot of money into the area,” Rondeau says.

The M.D. continues to provide funding support for the Bonnyville and Cold Lake museums, Beaver River Regional Waste Management Commission, Family and Community Social Services (FCSS) in Bonnyville and Cold Lake, the Bonnyville Regional Fire Authority and libraries in the two major urban communities.

“This is my tenth, and last budget, as the Reeve of the M.D. of Bonnyville,” Rondeau says. “Throughout those years Council has been financially prudent, using our resources in a responsible manner. We lived within our means. The 2017 budget continues to maintain our service levels to residents without raising the Residential and Non-Residential mill rates. We have upgraded our critical infrastructure, roads and buildings, while also supporting community organizations to improve the region's quality of life. As a Council, we have established a long standing and ongoing legacy for our municipality.”

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