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NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

Applications remain open for the third member-at-large on the Vulcan District Recreation Board. Details can be found on my website as well as on the County website. Applicants must be resident within the district.

The first meeting of the Vulcan District Recreation board was on February 2nd. Town of Vulcan Community Services Manager, Chris Gauthier, provided a budgetary overview of available programs. Given that the Summer Games are funded from a County-wide expense account, the proposed programming budget is very close to what the County is already estimating for the district. The new recreation board model allows County input from the rural ratepayers into what programs are funded by the recreation levy. This board will also advise County Council on joint use facility arrangements and capital purchases where fifty percent of the County funds come from the Vulcan district.

At the February 1st meeting of County Council, Laurie Lyckman and I presented a Notice of Motion requesting support for locating unmarked graves in our rural cemeteries. As I explained in my last write-up, there are four cemeteries where a large number of unmarked graves need to be located so that surveys can be updated. New surveys will allow for better planning and utilization of these cemeteries going forward. These cemeteries are Carmangay, Travers, Lomond and East Milo. That said, we are planning to investigate other cemeteries, as needed and as resources allow, be they Bowville, Hope Lutheran or Arrowwood, etc.

Vulcan County will contribute \$7,500 toward this project. The villages of Carmangay, Lomond and Milo will each contribute \$500 with

an additional \$6,000 coming from service clubs or societies across these communities. The overall project cost is \$30,000 and 50% will be funded by the MITACS research grant because we are partnering with the Dept. of Geography at the University of Lethbridge. We anticipate the project will take upwards of one year to investigate and complete a report, using a variety of technologies that generate survey data and mapping. Very positive responses have been received from the communities and we hope to have an answer on the MITACS application by the middle of April.

Other council business in February includes:

- Additional funding for Vulcan District FCSS to support a cost-of-living adjustment for staff.
- Upgrades to the fire training tower ensuring that this important facility remains current. The tower provides a local training centre for our fire fighters as well as significant rental revenue from other jurisdictions.
- Town of Vulcan received a \$65,000 grant toward a new ice resurfer at the Vulcan arena. The County will contribute \$51,000 toward the purchase of the new machine, being 50% of the remaining \$167,000 cost.

An important new book was published this month regarding our emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic. "Canada's Covid" is produced by the Haultain Research Institute and can be purchased from Amazon or directly from their website: www.haultainresearch.org. The book examines the political question of why policy makers persist in fearmongering and the detrimental impact this had on our emergency response to the virus. Please check it out.

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott