



Christopher Northcott,
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COUNCILLOR REPORT

Councillor activities and update for first two months of 2023.

- Attended all meetings of Council.
 - Attached is my January and February write-ups, “Notes from Council,” for the Champion Chronicle and my website.
- Attended ORRSC Executive Committee Meeting on January 12th. No Executive Committee meeting in February as it conflicted with the Brownlee Law Emerging Trends seminar.
- Attended Foothills Little Bow Municipal Association meeting on January 13th.
 - Take Away:
 - First-time attendance. Impressed by the administrative support and facilitation provided by Councillor Lyckman, Lansey Middleton and Colleen Dickie.
 - Virtual attendance of the Premier, including question and answer session, very good.
 - Update on the advocacy efforts of RMA.
 - Discussion about resolutions on wastewater regulation as well as on expiration dates of conservation easements.
 - Received a copy of the RMA broadband study. The report provides an overview of rural internet speeds, an issue where our region has done quite well by comparison with other parts of Alberta. Report explains how the competitive digital spectrum market tends to shut out smaller internet service providers (ISPs). RMA is advocating for a “set aside policy” and a “use it or lose it” policy to ensure that spectrum is available for smaller ISPs and start ups. Rural internet speeds have been overstated by Government of Canada data and rural areas have, historically, been shut out of funding supports. I know that Ken Losey with Wi-Fibre has been pursuing funding opportunities to develop our region, as well as moving to deploy mesh networks that will free up his rural internet network.
- Attended Twin Valley Regional Water Commission Board Meeting on January 24th. These meetings are quarterly, it seems.
 - Take Away:
 - The Commission is operating on a very tight budget but continues to make a concerted effort to contribute to its capital reserves, contributing just over \$43,000 for 2022. However, nearly \$39,000 was drawn from reserves to cover a sleeve repair at the pump house.
 - It looks like our annual financial audit is going to get more expensive; we are looking at options as we go forward.



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- In discussions with the Town on the operating costs which have remained the same for the past five years.
 - Need to review strategic plan.
 - Need to keep open lines of communication with County on servicing of new industrial park.
- Attended Vulcan District Recreation Board meeting on February 2nd.
 - Take Away:
 - Pleased with the direction we are going on recreation in the Vulcan District, providing more direct rural input on programming, as well as on joint use and capital planning.
 - The Town's Community Services Manager provided a detailed program budget which it is not far off our initial estimates.
 - Looking forward to having three members-at-large contributing to this board.
- Attended Brownlee Law Emerging Trends in Municipal Law seminar on February 9th.
 - Take Away:
 - Back to pre-covid program, however, turnout was much smaller.
 - Review of precedent concerning "constructive takings" of private land by depriving potential business opportunities and when compensation is warranted.
 - Great presentation on the need to update planning documents and have meaningful input on planning decisions where provincial decision-making body is paramount.
 - Review of progressive P3s where private sector can help develop infrastructure at lower costs while stressing the need for pre-development agreements that mitigate the appearance of bias.
 - Review of responsibilities with respect to preventing data breaches and obligations under privacy legislation should a breach occur.
 - Review of how to manage delays with land titles and what this means for in-voluntary acquisitions, expropriation.
 - Legislative overview & Bear Pit Q&A.
- Attended RMA sponsored EOEP course on Asset Management in Lethbridge with Councillor Nelson on February 16th.
 - Take Away: Identifying service levels, development strategy and educating ratepayers on budgeting for replacement costs.
- Enrolled in EOEP evening course on Corporate Planning and Finance. Two hours on February 16th and 23rd over Zoom.



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- Take Away: Strategic planning, budgets and communication. Helpful online discussions with councillors from other communities and jurisdictions.
- Next ORRSC Board Meeting is March 2nd.
 - Board meetings are quarterly and I usually try to attend in person because of the opportunity to talk with councillors from elsewhere. Executive meetings are usually monthly, unless cancelled, and I attend over Zoom unless I'm already in Lethbridge. The Executive Committee requires three rural councillors and three urban councillors. There are fewer rural board members to choose from which is why I'm on here. ORRSC covers the expense of Executive Committee meeting attendance.
 - Take Away:
 - Fees to remain the same for 2023, except for CRA mileage rates.
 - New hires transitioning into planner roles.
 - Discussion will be had at next meeting regarding updates to land use bylaws and managing public participation. Discussion will also be had over the 15 Minutes City controversy erupting over belief that people will not be able to leave their neighbourhoods and travel will be restricted. Municipalities are planning for local services and pedestrian traffic, not to restrict mobility between neighbourhoods.
 - New periodical piece on Campgrounds.
- Constituent Matters:
 - Traver's Ridge Campground is assessing its options for getting more water to their development to meet demand. They are in contact with Alberta Environment and Alberta Parks, as well as the Village of Champion and County administration.
 - Lake McGregor Country Estates Community Association is moving forward with plans to acquire community infrastructure from developer. I do not know any details as of yet, however, the association has expressed interest in providing County Council with an update once all agreements are finalized.