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NOTES FROM COUNCIL

Dear Residents & Ratepayers,

My first meeting in March was the Vulcan and District Recreation Board. We discussed the roof on the Vulcan arena that is over 30 years old and requiring maintenance. Having had good success with a spray-on roofing product at the Vulcan Library, the Town of Vulcan has decided to use the same application on the arena. Roof Armour Inc from Fort Macleod provided an initial quote to clean, seal, and install Roof Armour acrylic elastomeric coating, as well as provide a ten-year maintenance plan, for \$156,600. By scheduling the work before the end of 2024, the Town of Vulcan was given a ten percent discount on that quote, bringing the total project cost to \$140,940. The Vulcan and District Recreation Board recommended to County Council that the County fund its share (or 50% of this cost) from the Vulcan Recreation Area Capital Reserve. This recommendation was accepted by County Council at the March 12th meeting.

On March 6th I chaired the board meeting of the Oldman River Regional Services Commission (ORRSC). After some difficult budgetary choices in 2024 for 2025, the Planning Commission is getting to work on a new service agreement for all its member-municipalities. While ORRSC has been around since 1955, a comprehensive update to the membership agreement is required because some of the members still have agreements from 1995 when the Province of Alberta ceased operating and provincial funding for ORRSC. For eight years afterwards, the organization became the Oldman River Intermunicipal Services Agency. In 2003 the organization once again became a regional services commission, but this time a service commission fully funded by its member-municipalities. Additional members have joined since 2003, so a new agreement will be more

reflective of what service is being provided and how member-municipalities are expected to fund these services. Today there are 40 planning service member-municipalities (9 rural and 31 urban) and 44 member-municipalities for the Geographic Information System (GIS) service. Our region has benefited enormously from having a regional services commission that contains costs for these core services while providing the added value of inter-municipal collaboration. Anyone who has ever taken a development permit in our region will have encountered the work that ORRSC does on our behalf.

While the County Council meeting on March 12th was largely administrative business, we did review our procedures bylaw and our agricultural services equipment rental policy. We added stipulations for the new Pro-Till high-speed disc that can now be rented from the County.

Later that same day, I was glad to see a very good turnout for the regional communications meeting at Lodge Hall in the Town of Vulcan. All municipalities in our region were able to send representatives, which is important because this meeting provides a good opportunity for everyone to discuss shared services and regional priorities. We heard from STARS Air Ambulance, as well as received an update from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. In addition to an update from the Director of Protective Services, the villages discussed the importance of working together on development and other issues where organizational capacity is a challenge.

The Firefighter Appreciation Night was on March 15th. We thanked our paid-on-call members for their service, as well as heard the remarkable response times they achieve, both as departments and as a region. The effectiveness of this service is so critical for communities in rural Alberta.

Sincerely, Christopher Northcott