

March 20, 2020

REPORT

To: Ratepayers
From: Reeve

Re: R.M. Activities

This report is to provide an update of issues being addressed by your council.

COVID-19

- Council, at our meeting of March 18, 2020, determined as follows:
- The RM office is closed to the public effective immediately and until further notice.
- RM services will continue as usual for the present. However, we ask that all communications be conducted by telephone or by email.
- Road maintenance services will continue as normal.
- Our employees will be responsible in exercising the safety measures promoted by public health authorities.
- All public meetings or gatherings for RM business and issues will be postponed until safer conditions prevail.

We ask for your patience and cooperation with these matters during this uncertain period. We will restore our regular process in servicing our contractors, suppliers and ratepayers once conditions regarding COVID-19 are conducive to the safety of all persons including our employees.

Budget

We realized a small surplus in our operations and capital works during the fiscal year of 2019. Preparation of these budgets for the fiscal year of 2020 are in progress and we hope to be in a position of determining the mill rate within the next month. Our objective in that regard is to maintain the tax value at the same level as 2019. We would welcome any comments from you as ratepayers on that matter.

Gravel

We issued the tenders for gravel crushing and truck hauling services for this year. Please inform your division counsellor of roadways that you consider in need of special attention. That will assist in developing the gravel application program.

Official Community Plan

We have had multiple public meetings to review and discuss the contents of that document as well as the Zoning Bylaw. We have now passed the first reading for those bylaws at our Council meeting of March 18, 2020. They are now presented on our website and the required Public Hearing for the final review will be scheduled at our Council meeting in May 2020.

Please take the time to review those documents since they will become the new regulations regarding land use within our municipality. Unless there are further amendments, the required second and third readings of those bylaws, which will allow them to be passed, will occur at that same Council meeting in May 2020.

Black Diamond Surface Water Project

Saskatchewan Water Securities has issued a Permit for us to clear the channel bed and provide limited dredging as specified to improve drainage in Division 5. This work has advanced during the winter months and will be completed later this spring. It is intended to lower the water levels in the upstream water bodies to enhance the capacity of those basins to receive runoff during wet years and minimize encroachment on the adjacent farmlands.

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

We have had a promising meeting between the MLCN and RM representatives with the Ministers of Highways and Government Relations. Our objective is to obtain a partnership arrangement between the provincial and federal governments, our RM and MLCN to complete the capital improvements of the Public roadways through the reserve.

We have received approval from the Ministry of Highways for the cost of engineering design services for this project and we will proceed immediately to engage an engineering firm in that regard. The design information will allow us to determine the cost for these required road improvements and assist the parties in determining the cost sharing formula. Ministry of Highways has agreed to pay the costs for design services.

This upgrade work will have significant cost and likely will require phasing through two or more years. We are looking forward to that partnership that will have four governments participating in the cost sharing.

Leask Sports Centre

This was the first season of operations and thanks to the volunteer group that accepted this challenge it was very successful. Although cut short by the COVID-19 issue, there is an enthusiastic optimism for a full activity filled season beginning this fall. Thank you to the committee members and all the volunteers for an exceptional job. This is a prime example of what smaller communities do with cooperation.

SAMA

The Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency selected the RM of Leask as a prototype to guide reassessment of resort properties for the next regular assessment throughout the province. That new assessment of resort properties in our RM was completed and will be utilized for our RM assessment in 2020.

All of the properties that were reassessed by SAMA will have notices issued not later than May 1, 2020. Be aware that if you consider the new assessments to be unfair in your opinion, it can be appealed within 30 days of receiving that new assessment notice. The process for appeal will be outlined in the Assessment Notice.

Only property owners with a change in assessment will receive a notice in that regard. All other properties will carry the same assessment for 2020 as 2019.

Please keep in touch with your division counsellor, our office and in particular our website to stay apprised of the status of RM services as this COVID-19 issue evolves. I would welcome your call to discuss or further explain any of the issues herein or any other concern that you may have regarding the services of our RM.

Len Cantin
Reeve