



MINUTES

CITY OF MERRITT

REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

7:00 P.M.

Held online due to social distancing requirements
Public access link published on City website
& social media accounts

PRESENT:

Mayor L. Brown
Councillor M. Bhangu
Councillor K. Christopherson
Councillor A. Etchart
Councillor T. Fehr
Councillor T. Luck
Councillor M. White

Mr. S. Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. S. Smith, Director of Corporate Services
Ms. S. Thiessen, Director of Finance & IT
Mr G. Lowis, Deputy Corporate Officer
Mr. W. George, Tourism & Economic Development Manager

MEDIA & PUBLIC: **Duong Trinh, TRU Co-op Student**

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7:02pm

2. LATE ITEMS

3. PUBLIC INPUT

Nil

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Regular Council Meeting Minutes - March 24th, 2020

Resolution No: 2020RC-07-01

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on March 24th, 2020 be adopted

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions

6.1 TRU Co-op Student Presentation

Presentation by Duong Trinh, 4th year TRU Bachelor of Tourism Management student.

This item was deferred from March 24th Council meeting.

Ms Trinh presented on her co-op term at the City of Merritt, including work done for the City, and her personal learning experiences.

This included the various types of work done for different social media platforms such as Youtube, Instagram, and Twitter to attract visitors, and engage with the public.

Councillors thanked Ms Trinh for the report, and Mr George talked briefly to praise the work she had done, and her engagement with the Merritt community.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Procedure Bylaw update

Oral report

Mr Smith explained that the procedure bylaw update requested by Council must have notice given in two consecutive newspapers, which was not possible for this meeting with the meeting dates exactly two weeks apart.

8. BYLAWS

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Dog Park History

Mr Smith explained staff had spent some time looking through bylaws, minutes, newspapers. There is no evidence there was a reservation bylaw, or any other decision to make it a permanent park. It appears to have been initially purchased for sewage treatment, and the remainder used as park without being so dedicated.

Councillors discussed concerns about the dog park, particularly with the current financial situation.

Recommendation: 2020RC-07-02

THAT Council receive this report for information.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.2 Community Hazard Plan Appendix - Pandemics

Ms Thiessen explained the plan was being updated due to the situation, and the Province sending out updates. This is a BC template modified for Merritt circumstances, and it explains the roles of the Province, Interior Health, and other parties during the emergency. In the current pandemic, the City is mainly playing a role supporting other agencies.

Recommendation: 2020RC-07-03

THAT Council approve the Community Hazard Plan Appendix – Pandemics to be attached to the City’s Community Hazard Plan.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.3 Financial Considerations Related to COVID - 19

Ms Thiessen spoke about the effort to get numbers on the financial impact COVID-19 is having on the City, as well as efforts to seek information from the Province on tax information, whether or not the tax sale will progress, etc. Merritt can put an alternative tax scheme into our bylaw, but other bodies would expect to be passed funding, which could create cash-flow problems.

The potential use of the City's reserves was mentioned, as was a possible meeting of the financial committee. City staff hope to learn soon if the Province will be changing reporting deadlines for Municipalities.

Recommendation: 2020RC-07-04

THAT Council receive this report for information.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.4 CAO Update

Mr Hildebrand informed Council that some 65% of City staff are currently laid off. Management and Emergency Operations are working remotely, and essential services remain operational.

Fire have had two new firefighters start, meaning firefighters can take days off.

RCMP are running smoothly, a new Commander will start June 1st.

Street sweeping is some 80% complete, line painting will be done next week. Maintenance on vehicles and hydrants will continue. Residents have reported garbage problems, and people were asked to be careful disposing eg of gloves.

The City is preparing for flooding, and has ordered 40k sandbags to add to the 60k on hand. We are working with neighbouring communities to ensure cover can be provided if people get sick.

Development services are continuing, and trying to keep Merritt's economy going and moving businesses forward.

Corporate services, HR and IT are all moving projects forward working from home. The current focus is on budget, and staff will go through the budget completely as soon as information is obtained from the Province to make a budget that makes sense going forward.

Communication is working hard to keep people informed, and the city will continue to work towards getting back to normal.

Cllr Fehr asked about the TNRD closing the dump, and asking if it was having an effect. Mr Hildebrand updated that the dump is open, but physical distancing must be followed by people dropping off rubbish and debris. The depot can only take household garbage at this time.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

10.1 Cllr Luck

Cllr Luck requested a report of litter awareness program, including a review of the City's current littering bylaws.

11. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL

Cllrs expressed gratitude towards the entire community, particularly public works, fire, police, health, stores, pharmacies, social services, and other essential services for staying open, and holding together as the current situation unfolds.

Mayor Brown said we are strong because we stand together.

12. INFORMATION ITEMS

12.1 Strategic Planning Priorities

13. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The Mayor declared the meeting ended at 8:00

Corporate Officer

Sean Smith

Certified correct in accordance with Section 124(2) (c) of the Community Charter

Confirmed on the ____ day of ____, 20__

Mayor

Linda Brown