



MINUTES

CITY OF MERRITT

REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 21, 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

Mr. W. Anderson, Financial Services Manager

Mr. D. McArthur, Planning & Development Services Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

A minute's silence was held in memory of the recent events in Nova Scotia.

2. LATE ITEMS

3. PUBLIC INPUT

Nil

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 **Special Council Meeting Minutes - April 7th, 2020**

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-01

THAT the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on April 7th, 2020 be adopted.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

4.2 **Regular Council Meeting Minutes- April 7th, 2020**

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-02

THAT the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on April 7th, 2020 be adopted

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**

5.1 **Public Hearing**

Nil

6. **GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions**

7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

7.1 **Notice of Motion**

At the 7th April 2020 meeting, Councillor Tony Luck made the following Notice of Motion:

THAT Council direct staff to provide a report on the City's litter awareness program, including a review of the City's current littering bylaws.

Councillors expressed concern about the worsening litter situation in Merritt and available resources to tackle the problem, and commended residents working to clean up the community. They also discussed the Adopt-a-Road program.

Mr Smith noted that public communication could be done without the need for a staff report. The original motion was withdrawn, and replaced:

THAT Council direct staff to provide a report on the City's litter awareness program, including a review of the City's current littering bylaws.

Withdrawn.

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-03

THAT Council direct staff to initiate an anti-litter awareness program

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

8. BYLAWS

8.1 Claybanks RV Park Rates Schedule Amending Bylaw

Mr McKeown noted that the fees had not been reviewed for some time, and explained the proposed changes.

There was some discussion about the appropriate time to be changing, and Mr McKeown noted it was generally better to have rates in place before a season started. Staff were asked to explain some of the weekly and monthly rates, and explained what they meant and why they had been chosen.

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-04

THAT Council give first reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No 2280, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-05

THAT Council give second reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No 2280, 2020;

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-06

THAT Council give third reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No 2280, 2020.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Barkman Concrete Variance

Mr McArthur explained this would allow 3 separate variances for height, parking requirements, and paved driving areas to enable an application for a building permit.

Councillors expressed support for new companies coming into Merritt, and diversifying the local economy.

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-07

THAT Council approve Development Variance Permit DVP2020-01 from Barkman Concrete Ltd. for 1104 and 1132 Midday Valley Rd., Lots 1 and 2, District Lot 166, Kamloops Division Yale District, Plan KAP26688 subject to the conditions set out in the permit.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.2 Request for Direction on Tax Rates

Ms Thiessen introduced the reports, and explained that while other sections of the budget can be amended if needed, taxes can only be set once. This is Merritt's second consecutive year of proposed tax rate cuts.

Councillors discussed the long-term impact of using reserves, and the the lack of Provincial assistance, and the challenge facing larger municipalities in particular.

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-08

THAT Council direct Staff to prepare the 2020 – 2024 Financial Plan Bylaw and the 2020 Tax Rate Bylaw using the following tax rate guidelines:

- **General Municipal Tax Rates – 5.74% decrease from 2019**
- **Transit Tax Rates – 5.74% decrease from 2019**

Against (1): Linda A. Brown

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.3 2020 Property Tax Due Date and Penalties

Mr Anderson explained that adopting a new tax scheme would allow extended deadlines and reduced penalties for residents. The penalty date proposed by staff aligns with the Provincially established due date on Commercial properties. He also introduced the utility discounts, and explained the tax deferment programs from the Province.

Councillors supported the new scheme, and praised staff for taking the initiative to look for ways to reduce the burden on residents.

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-09

THAT Council utilize Section 235 of the Community Charter to set an alternative municipal tax collection scheme for 2020, with a due date of July 2, 2020, and a late penalty of 5% to be applied on October 1, 2020.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.4 Proposed Changes to 2020 Utility Billing Due Dates and Discounts

Mr Anderson explained the utility bills, and how the increased discount would work.

Councillors clarified that this proposal was a change for 2020 only due to the Pandemic situation, and said it would aid residents in this time.

Recommendation: 2020RC-08-10

THAT Council direct staff to increase the 10% discount to 17% for residential & commercial customers, with new payment dates of July 31st & Nov 30th for residential customers in response to the current COVID crisis.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

9.5 CAO Update

Mr Hildebrand provided an update on work done in the City, including information on the City's communications, response during COVID-19, and preparations for potential spring flooding. He also reminded residents that they can always contact the City with their questions or comments.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Nil.

11. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL

Cllr Etchart asked about social distancing at restaurants, and wanted to remind all food-service places that everyone can help by following the rules set out by Dr Henry.

Mayor Brown reported the City's flag has been lowered to half mast due to the Nova Scotia tragedy.

12. INFORMATION ITEMS

12.1 Strategic Planning Priorities

12.2 Village of Hazelton

Cllr Banghu asked about writing a letter supporting Hazelton, asking the Province to extend to communities with a population under 10k the ability to apply for community gaming grants.

Councillors discussed the exact request in the letter, and expressed sympathy for the topic, but confusion about what they were being asked by Hazelton, and what the current situation of distribution of funds is.

Mr Smith announced that when Council attend the UBCM conference, staff will explicitly flag motions that have been discussed so Councillors know when the debates and votes are being held.

13. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The Mayor declared the meeting ended at 8:53pm

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