

# December 2024 Newsletter



A must read!

## Council Changes

Teresa Beets and Keith Kimball resigned from Council this year after serving on it for about 14 and 7 years, respectively, for various reasons. Their dedication and service to our municipality over those years is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to those who participated in the byelection held this summer. It was encouraging to see many candidates step forward and get the vote turn-out we did. Congratulations to Mike Bruni and Adele Poratto for being elected.

Mike, having received the most votes, was appointed as our Deputy Mayor.

The 2025 general election date for all five Sylvan Summer Villages will be on Saturday, July 25, 2025, with the nomination date set for June 7, 2025. Additional details will be provided well before those dates.

## 2025 Budget

Council approved the 2025 operating and capital budget in December with a 6.97% increase to net municipal tax revenue. Net municipal taxes don't include school taxes over which we have no control. Household garbage rates will increase about 2% while wastewater utility rates remain unchanged.

The average net municipal tax increase corresponds to about \$18 per \$100,000 of last year's property assessment value. However, not all will see the same change to net municipal taxes as updated property assessments and development activity affect how taxes get allocated. Tax and utility notices will be mailed out in May.

The budgeted tax increase in 2024, corresponding to about \$26,300, seems high on a percentage basis. However, in comparison, our budgeted share of costs being split between the five Sylvan Lake Summer Villages increased by about \$30,400; of which about \$17,200 is to add a Jr Development Officer position and hire two seasonal staff for a 16-week period, rather than hire two high school students for an 8-week period. While there were numerous other changes made, it's worth noting there was (1) an

\$9,400 increase in our Subdivision and Development Appeal Board budget expenses as appeals are expected to be more frequent and require legal representation, and (2) an \$8,500 increase to the budgeted provincial operating grant revenue.

The approved 2025 operating and capital budget may be revised before May, after we update the 5-yr capital plan and review our financial reserves situation. Council approved a reserves policy in December for several reasons, one of which is be transparent in reserve requirements.

### **Municipal Property**

Construction on municipal property should not take place by individuals, or groups of individuals, without prior approval of the municipality. Council has become aware of a concrete stairway being built without approval, which may pose safety risks and increased maintenance costs if they are not removed.

Avoid putting mulch on stairs or paths within the environmental open space along the shoreline because it will likely get washed into the lake.

### **Golf Carts and Off Highway Vehicles**

Were you aware:

- Council is considering the merits of participating in a new provincial pilot program and changing OHV rules, and that an online survey was conducted? If not, please provide your input and reconsider signing up for weekly web update emails. Lots of good feedback being considered.
- Golf carts can not be driven off private land and on public roadways under provincial rules without municipal participation in the pilot program, which requires specific municipal bylaws that are approved by the province.
- Our narrow pathway system and bylaws do not allow golf carts or OHVs to be driven or parked on our reserves for recreational purposes
- Golf cart owners' insurance policies likely don't cover driving on public roads without modification.

### **Lake Water Levels**

Declining lake levels mean our groundwater recharge is likely being impacted by drought conditions. That, combined with increasing water demand within the watershed, could affect the capacity of our water wells. Council will be working on a regional basis to assess the need for additional groundwater monitoring & study and access grant funding so construction of a water pipeline from the City of Red

Deer to the Town of Sylvan Lake can take place when needed. Council will also review the merits of implementing summer watering restrictions.

### **Docks & Mooring**

SBC first introduced a Dock & Mooring Bylaw in 2022. The bylaw and dock application forms were last updated May 2024, requiring shared dock applications to be submitted for docks and lifts along most of our shoreline.

All docks are private; none are owned by the community. Council will be reviewing the need to make further bylaw changes to address certain concerns before May 2025.

### **Wastewater**

We would remind those not yet connected that:

- all dwellings capable of generating wastewater were required to be connected by April 6, 2024 under the Wastewater Collection Bylaw,
- your curb stop will only be authorized to be opened after you or your installer has submitted the completed application form found on our website along with a safety inspection report.

Please note that the following items should never be flushed down the sewer system: Baby or cleaning wipes, feminine hygiene products, paper towels or trash of any kind.

You are encouraged to leave your grinder pump and alarm power on even if you are planning to be away an extended time, to protect your home should your check valve fail with the curb stop open. Municipal staff and our contractors are the only ones authorized to open/close the curb stops located in the road allowance because of the large cost associated with repairing/replacing them.

### **Policing/Bylaw Enforcement**

Our community police officer replacement will start in January. For bylaw infraction complaints, please use the complaint form on our website.

As always, we still have enforcement from the RCMP. Our community has been and will continue to be visited by the RCMP at least once a day (unless responding to another emergency), at random hours. The Sylvan Lake branch can be contacted at 403-858-7200.

The budget reflects using Commissionaires to assist with bylaw enforcement on summer long-weekends.

### **Shared Road Projects**

The road from Rainy Creek Road to the boat launch will be repaved in 2025. A gravel, gated emergency access road connecting Fox Crecent to Blissful Beach was constructed this summer. Costs for both projects are shared equally by Lacombe County and Sunbreaker Cove.

### **Land Use Bylaw Update**

We have engaged Municipal Planning Services (MPS) to assist Administration with a review of the Summer Village's current Land Use Bylaw, obtain public input and to prepare an updated Land Use Bylaw for Council's consideration. This is an important planning document that controls the way land may be used and developed. Tourist homes, building height and parcel coverage are some of the elements addressed in this bylaw. The objectives for this review/update project are to make the Summer Village's Land Use Bylaw consistent with current provincial regulations, consolidate past amendments, improve the readability of the document, and to incorporate (where appropriate) watershed planning and FireSmart best practices. You will have multiple opportunities to contribute your feedback during the project.

### **Ice Huts and Fires on the Ice**

It is important to keep the area around the ice shelters clear of garbage and other debris. Please participate in the "Take It Off Program" where there is no trace left on the ice when you leave, including burnt material that will pollute the lake upon spring thaw and can be a danger to persons engaged in water sports.

The municipalities around the lake are advocating for the use of portable fire pits rather than having fires directly on the ice. This measure would not only enhance safety but also contribute to preserving the pristine condition of our lake.

### **Weekly Email Notifications**

Signing up for weekly web update email notifications will keep you up to date on pertinent information within our municipality, and to provide us with a tool for communicating effectively in the event of an emergency.

**Seasons Greetings and Merry Christmas to you and yours,  
From your Council (Jim, Mike and Adele) and Administration.**