

Council's Midterm report

Message from Mayor Kathy

Hard to believe but this Council is now half way through our term. Here is a brief report on the 5 goals we set, what we have achieved in our first 2 years and what still needs to be done and the legacy we hope to leave. Council has agreed that these broad goals, laid out here in priority order, will continue to guide the rest of our term.

This is **our vision**: "To be a more sustainable, smart, fun and livable small City." And **our Mission** : "To provide cost-efficient and effective municipal services to residents, visitors, and businesses in a collaborative and cooperative fashion to ensure a well-managed, well-governed, viable community."

Here are our goals:

1. Upgrade and maintain City infrastructure and facilities.

- Upgrade aging infrastructure: This has been a key focus in the last two years. Washington St was a huge project and was very successful; upgrading Miners Hall is still underway as are improvements to the museum and the library. These last two projects are primarily funded through grants and the dedicated efforts of community groups. Water main leaks, repair of aging roads and underground utilities continue to be high priorities but now we must have grants to move forward. We are in the process of preparing an asset management plan that clarifies which projects are the most urgent, at what cost and on what timelines. This is a crucial prerequisite in the pursuit of grants, as well as being an indispensable planning tool.
- Change City facilities to meet changing demographics: We have not addressed this adequately. Doing the white paper on the museum and the arena is a step in the right direction but that work showed we really have very limited information about users in any of our facilities and we must gather it to make informed decisions. This will be done in 2017 with new software to track programs and users. We need to see the most recent census too. The Rural Development Institute reports our population is aging despite evidence of lots of young families in town.
- Increasing water and sewer rates gradually with an emphasis on conservation pricing will help maintain

the system and allow it to become self-supporting in the future.

2. Improve attractiveness of City for new investment and business competitiveness.

- Ensure that all City taxes, fees and service charges are competitive and appropriate. Have a long-term tax strategy in place. Not yet done. Now with stable staffing this project will be a priority.
- Improve the attractiveness of the City and create a competitive climate to attract investment, new residents, increase the tax base, and ensure sustainability. Our downtown core, and now the Washington corridor, are both extremely attractive; walkable, bikeable, and inviting. We support expanding broadband and tourism to improve competitiveness and attractiveness. We are increasing summer visitors by supporting the Lions Campground, trails, the skatepark and a grant application for a summer festival. We have just started working with Rossland businesses on a "best place to do business" strategy. On *regional recreation*, we have been unable to come to terms with Trail for use of their facilities. It would cost at least \$90k in the first year, rising thereafter. We have had to examine our priorities and what we can afford.
- Generate new revenue sources and/or increase senior government grants. We have received a grant to help plan the development of Emcon lot, which will generate new revenue but will be reliant on the private sector. In the past two years the City has received infrastructure grants totaling nearly \$2.5m, and city owned facilities have received significant other funds as well. Grants are essential not only for capital work in Rossland but also for work at the Regional District to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant as required by the Federal government.
- Improve the City of Rossland's environmental sustainability. We adopted the following plans: Corporate GHG Emission Reduction, Watersmart Action, and Strategic Community Energy and Emissions Plans. Now we need to focus on implementation. Increased water and sewer rates support conservation and will help us reduce the need for future infrastructure expansion costs too. We have also supported 2 wetland projects initiated by community groups and started a project that will

replace Rossland's streetlights with energy-saving LEDs.

3. Improve Staff training and strive toward a customer-driven organization.

- Improve human resource issues including staffing, training, team building, leadership, and morale. We achieved our goal to bring staffing and compensation in line with other communities our size. Improving staff training, team building, leadership and morale are now handled by the CAO.
- Improve City technology. This is a much-needed work in progress. An IT consultant has given us a roadmap, and we've approved the plan for the necessary improvements to be implemented over 24 months.

4. Adjust service levels to be more cost-efficient and effective in eyes of users.

- Change corporate culture, encourage process improvements and conduct service reviews. Culture seems positive and productive but we haven't measured process improvements or satisfaction. Moving some financial and recreation activities online will be a big improvement to increase both efficiency and customer satisfaction. Computer glitch during tax time was a mess and decreased satisfaction, but will be addressed by our IT overhaul (see above).
- Reduce operating costs by conducting service reviews and examining organizational structure: Adjustments made in Public Works increased efficiencies and reduced costs. Our new CAO is focused on finding additional savings.
- Create welcoming attitude for new ideas and acknowledge employees: While we've created a more positive work environment, we have not made enough progress in recognizing our employees for their excellence.
- Implement resource sharing with other communities: Discussions are underway to explore ideas such as shared bylaw enforcement and IT services.

5. Increase and improve communications and public engagement.

- Improve communication with stakeholders, citizens, regional partners, and people outside region: Outreach to the community has improved through newsletters, newspaper columns, focus groups, meeting with business members and

Thoughtexchange projects. We need more face-to-face events with public and Council. The Mayor has good relationship with local mayors. An emerging seniors' initiative is an opportunity for cooperation between communities. There is still a lot of concern with the Regional District due to a distinct lack of progress on big issues like the cost of fire service, on which we are working hard. Rossland rejoined the Regional Emergency Response group. We continue to support the economic development efforts of the Lower Community Initiatives Corporation representing the entire region.

- Staff has reported an *improvement in internal communications*. We need to make sure that all staff understand Council's decisions. This is the responsibility of CAO and management team working collaboratively with Council.

Other accomplishments: Most of the recommendations by the Auditor General for Local Government have been implemented; we regularly receive accurate and up-to-date financial reports and capital project reports. We have resolved past staff and compensation issues and anticipate the current senior staff will stay with us for years to come. A reasonable four year CUPE contract was negotiated with our union staff. We amended the Delegation Bylaw and reduced the amount of power vested in the CAO. We sold some surplus city properties. We set up task forces to look at fire service costs, regional collaboration and the impact of short-term rentals but no actions have been taken to date.

The legacy we hope to leave: Consistent good governance, improved management and morale at city hall, improved respect and trust in the community for Council and city employees, continued support for all our residents from seniors to youth and continuing to work towards financial and environmental sustainability.

To read more about the work Council has done and will do over the next two years go to www.rossland.ca click on Midterm Report.

Be in touch! City Hall 362-7396. Contact Council through www.rossland.ca

Next Council meeting: Monday November 28th at 6pm.

Come join us! All are welcome! Public input starts at 6 pm - Briefly share your thoughts and concerns. For longer topics, get on the agenda as a delegation. Contact City Hall to learn how.