

## ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS October 2016

Issue #19

### Message from Mayor Kathy

The most exciting news: Our Washington Street project is substantially complete and it looks gorgeous! Some finishing landscaping will be done in the spring. Council greatly appreciates all the positive comments we've heard from residents on the new "look". We are even more thrilled with the improvements to the underground services that can't be seen! This project is a big investment in our future. The pipes will last for decades and help us cut leakage and the risk of catastrophic breakage that could impact the whole town. **Come to the ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday Nov 3, 12:30pm at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Washington. We will move on to celebrate the opening of the food bank's new location at the arena at 1pm.** Many thanks to our planners, past and present, public works, ISL Engineering, Copcan Ltd and all the subcontractors for a job well done.

Councillors Greene, Cosbey and I had an informative week at the Union of BC Municipalities annual conference. As always there was a lot to learn. Rossland is one of 14 Resort Municipalities. We had some interesting meetings with Provincial staff and Minister Shirley Bond, the Minister for Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training to present a report on just how effective and profitable the Resort Municipality Initiative has been for the member communities and the Province. As a member of the Highway #3 Mayors and Chairs Coalition, I also attended meetings with provincial staff and the Minister of Transportation Todd Stone. Lots of improvements have been made to the highway in part because the local governments along the whole route from Hope to the Alberta border have set out the same priorities. Teamwork works!

### Council News:

#### Thoughtexchange results are in!

Thanks to the 126 people who contributed 263 ideas to this process. We got 9,862 reactions to those thoughts. It's great to hear from residents! Many thanks to all the good folks at Thoughtexchange for donating their time to this process.

#### Here is some of what we heard:

- Investing in our infrastructure is critical. Lots of people firmly understood this is non-negotiable.
- Trails are important to locals and visitors.
- There were lots of comments about the arena. Most seem to agree that the arena is expensive but valuable. It needs better management and increased usage. People liked the idea that the

arena should have an association to look after it much the way the library board takes care of the library, the Arts Council looks after the Miners Hall and the Tennis Society takes care of the courts. More tournaments should be organized at the arena. It should be marketed south of the border. Changes to fees and schedule were accepted as necessary by the majority of respondents.

- Focus on the needs of young families.
- Users should pay for the services they use- especially water and recreation in Trail.
- Discontinue the \$50k subsidy for Rosslanders using Trail's recreation facilities.
- Recreation takes too much of our budget.
- It's important to be as cost efficient as possible with staff, services and the conservation of energy and resources.
- We need to keep what we have in terms of arts and culture. Community support is such a small part of the budget; look for savings elsewhere.
- Make snow removal more efficient (don't handle it more than once).
- The majority of people understood that some tax increases are necessary and they trust Council to keep the increases as modest as possible.

#### Clarification of some areas of concern:

*"Want to see more information on operating costs and revenues for all facilities"*. This information is provided in our annual financial plan. Contact us for details.

*"Stop paying such high salaries to admin staff"*: With the staffing changes made over the last two years we have brought our salaries in line with what is paid in other municipalities our size. Council is very happy with the qualifications, the quality of the work and the compensation paid to our current staff. We anticipate that they will be with us for a long time.

*"Don't reduce snow clearing"*. There are no plans to change our snow removal service but we always look for ways to make it more fair and efficient.

*"What control do we have over the Regional District budget?"* Rossland has one representative on the board with one vote. Decisions with a financial impact are made by a "weighted vote" which means the number of votes depends on the population of each community: One vote for every 2,500 people. Thus Rossland has 2 votes, Warfield has 1 vote, Trail has 4 votes, etc. The RDKB has 13 representatives from local municipalities and electoral areas from Fruitvale to Big White.

*"How will the new hotel impact revenues?"* The new hotel will contribute significant property tax once it is

established. As an incentive for the development, the property received a revitalization tax exemption for the first five years starting in 2016. This is an economic development incentive for commercial property owners making significant investments in our community

*“Too much is spent on general government for a town our size”.* General government is a broad category that covers many city functions such as insurance, planning and engineering, administration, council expenses, IT, financial services, legal and buildings; not just admin.

*“Why not work on a yearly plan?”* Municipalities are required to file a 5-year financial plan every year with the Provincial government. Since the 5-year plan is reviewed and updated every year, it includes an annual plan.

*“Do tennis players pay or does the City foot the whole bill?”* The tennis courts are managed by a group of volunteers who get \$2k from the City each year. Players are asked to donate \$2 by the honor system each visit. In the near future, the courts will need substantial work that will be done through grants and fundraising.

It was gratifying to get lots of positive reactions to the Thoughtexchange process. People liked being consulted but they understand that it's up to City Council to make the final budget decisions.

To explore the results yourself go to: [moonwalk.thoughtexchange.com/mw/270344343](http://moonwalk.thoughtexchange.com/mw/270344343) Click on the “Discover” button. Please be patient, this is a new version of the software and may have some tiny bugs.

### **Other Council actions:**

Council approved a **Watersmart Action Plan**. We are working to repair and replace aging infrastructure but we still suffer a lot of leakage in our water pipes. The good news is that since universal metering has been required our overall water consumption has dropped 22%. This helps reduce the need for upsizing pipes or replacing infrastructure so it saves money now and in the future. It also reduces the amount that is sent to the wastewater treatment plant. This reduction translates into savings because we pay based on flow volume. Due to our reduced flow we received a cost adjustment totalling \$170k this year from our wastewater treatment partners. (Trail and Warfield).

Council also approved a **Corporate GHG Reduction Plan**. Both of these plans will help us conserve energy, water and work towards carbon neutrality over time. Check them out at [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca)

Council established a **Climate Action Reserve Fund** to help fund projects that will help us achieve the goals of the Watersmart and GHG Reduction plans. For every

tonne of GHG emissions we create in our corporate activities we will deposit \$25 into the reserve.

Council directed staff to look at the issue of **invasive plants**- particularly the really nasty Japanese Knotweed. It's important that this plant is properly removed because if left uncontrolled it can result in damage to foundations and infrastructure.

Council is moving towards adopting **new water and sewer rates for 2017** that will include a small increase over 2016 rates. The very few remaining non-metered properties will see their rates jump considerably and will include an additional \$100 per quarter fee levied as well.

### **Did you know?**

Air source heat pumps? Geothermal? Solar? How do they perform in Rossland? Join the Sustainability Commission for the first **Rossland Energy Crawl** on Sunday Nov 6th from 1- 4 pm. Visit homes that use these technologies and learn about the pros & cons right from the homeowners. Would you like to feature your home in the Energy Crawl? Call Ann at 250-362-5617. <http://visionstoaction.ca/rossland-energy-crawl>.

Still using old-school incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs in your home? Trade them in for energy star rated LED light bulbs and save on your electricity bills! **Bring up to 2 bulbs per household to the Rossland Library during the Nov 6<sup>th</sup> Energy Crawl and FortisBC will give you 2 free LED bulbs.**

**WildsafeBC is offering a free workshop on electric fencing** to prevent wildlife from getting into your garden. There were a lot of bear attacks on chickens recently. Please protect your birds, fruits and veggies with electric fencing. When: Saturday Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 2:30-4:30 at the curling rink. For more details: call 250-231-7996 [rossland@wildsafebc.com](mailto:rossland@wildsafebc.com)

The **Rossland Council for Arts and Culture** is a non-profit society dedicated to promoting and providing cultural and artistic opportunities that enhance the quality of life in Rossland. The RCAC is looking for an executive assistant. Maximum of 16 hours per week and a flexible schedule. See: [rosslandartscouncil.com](http://rosslandartscouncil.com).

**Be in touch! City Hall** 362-7396. Contact Council through [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca)

**Next Council meeting: Monday November 14th at 6pm.** Come join us! All are welcome! Public input starts at 6pm- Briefly share your thoughts and concerns. For longer topics, get on the agenda as a delegation. Contact City Hall to learn how.

