

## **ROSSLAND COUNCIL CONNECTS**

### **March 2015**

#### **Note from Mayor Kathy**

Hello Rosslanders- The City of Rossland is undergoing a significant change within its senior management. City Hall will be losing veteran employee Tracey Butler. Council wishes to thank Tracey for her long service and dedication to the City of Rossland. Tracey has spent her entire local government career serving our community. She has been a hard-working and dedicated employee, both well liked and respected by her peers.

In the short term, Council will be working with staff to oversee City Hall operations. Council is seeking an interim Acting CAO to take on leadership of the city's management while our current CAO Ms. Arnott is on medical leave. Council also wishes to thank all of our employees for their adaptability and willingness to step up in this time of transition.

The City has a strong crew of experienced and dedicated employees. With Council's full support they will continue to provide the high level of service that residents expect. While we do not anticipate any issues, we appreciate the community's understanding if there are any little hiccups during this time.

The past few years have been difficult. Past decisions, leading to costly long-term consequences for the taxpayers have been made. The new council, in line with its mandate to turn the page, sought to do just that: turn the page. The change in management personnel is not a reflection on Tracey, or her past contribution to the city, it is a consequence of decisions necessary to implement the changes council was elected to bring about. We were faced with an impasse, and so was Tracey. Honouring the intent of a contract entered into in the name of the city was important to both parties. In that spirit we were able to negotiate a resolution. Tracey was not required to honour the 24 month working notice period and the city was not required to give her a 24 month payout.

The agreement was for a payment of 15 months salary and benefits. We understand that in the short term this will be expensive and we won't be saving any money. Our hope is that in the long term we will strengthen our city and deliver better value for every taxpayer dollar.

This communication is intended to demonstrate that the

terms "transparency", "accountability", and "responsibility" mean something to this council and it reduces rumour mongering in the community. We know that decisions of this kind will be controversial. We are sure to be criticized but our final decision was unanimous and committed to moving forward working in the best interest of the community.

#### **Did you know?**

- The Rossland Council for Arts and Culture is the proud recipient of a CBT grant for \$300k. Congratulations! With help from the City, the dream of renovating the Miners Hall comes closer to reality. Watch for more fundraising activities.
- The Museum has winter hours: Wed-Sat. 12-5pm. Make an outing of it!
- Congratulations are due to the hardworking library board. Their renovation fundraising project is underway with a successful CBT grant for \$75k <http://www.rosslandlibraryrenewal.com>
- Excellent news: Our seniors group got a New Horizons grant for \$25k to fix up their hall. This will create a more useable community space.
- Rossland's Farmers Market was voted BC's #1 Small Farmers Market for 2015. Congrats to Miche, the volunteers, musicians and vendors for all the creativity and hard work, that goes into presenting this wonderful community event.
- The Heritage Commission has a new website! Check it out: <http://www.heritagerossland.com>
- Tourism Rossland celebrated the biggest year yet for accommodation revenue- over \$4.4m in 2014. Thanks to all our tourism partners for being such excellent ambassadors. We are on the map! Start your 2016 snow dance now.
- You can pay your utility bills on line! Contact City Hall to find out how. 362-7396
- Pacific Coastal flies from Trail to Kelowna for \$109 but if there isn't more usage the service will be discontinued.
- Regional District tipping fees are increasing to \$15 per tonne due to new Provincial regulations concerning landfill liability requirements.

#### **Be in touch! - City Hall 362-7396**

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## **Council News:**

### **Auditor General for Local Government**

The AGLG report, Part 2 focused on asset management. It concludes that the City needs to build on the work it started in 2011 and move forward to create an Asset Management Plan. The plan involves building a comprehensive list of everything the City owns, from roads and pipes to buildings and equipment. Next, assign a current value to each asset and then create and implement a lifecycle plan for replacement, renewal or disposal.

In 2011, consultants began this work by developing an inventory and a five-year Infrastructure Management and Improvement Plan. However, the AGLG observed, this work wasn't continued or built upon by the City. Due to limited resources, a comprehensive plan detailing how projects would be financed fell behind and a number of projects outlined in the infrastructure plan were unaffordable when we failed to get grants for the Columbia Ave project.

Council is proud of the work that was done in 2011. The City got off to a strong start but was hampered by lack of resources to keep going. This is a challenge faced by all municipalities but little ones, like Rossland, are hit particularly hard: We have a small number of staff, a big workload and very limited financial resources.

Another recommendation from the report is that the City needs to implement a more systematic approach to capital project decision-making. More information to justify the project should be provided to Council to ensure that each project represents the highest priority and the best value for taxpayers. We have already made changes to this process and are committed to continuing to implement the suggestions. Our city staff worked extremely hard with the AGLG and it wasn't easy being under such a high intensity microscope.

The City of Rossland appreciates the opportunity to get significant help with the thorny problems of procurement, asset and project management and hopes that other municipalities will benefit from the observations and suggestions made by the AGLG. Council appreciates the time and effort contributed by both the Auditor General's staff and of our own municipal employees.

**Zoning amendment approved:** Council approved an amendment that moves the new campground proposal, Red Arrow Station on Old Red Road, closer to reality.

**Water and Sewer Rate Presentation** at Miners Hall, Thursday March 26<sup>th</sup> 6pm. Water and sewer utilities should be self-sustaining. Ours is not. Come here the proposal to achieve a proper pricing structure.

**Policy review:** Council is undertaking a systematic review with the intention of updating policies. We have reduced allowable travel expenses for staff and council.

### **Committee News**

#### **Local Advisory Committee members needed!**

Its not too late to join a committee to advise the Steering Committee on issues related to the development of a new sewage treatment plant for our area. Details and applications are available at City Hall or contact [mayor@rossland.ca](mailto:mayor@rossland.ca)

### **Community Q & A**

#### **Q: What were the results from the Thoughtexchange process?**

**A: Come to the public event:** April 12<sup>th</sup> 4pm-6pm at the Miners Hall for an interactive session to review the results and talk about the impact on the financial plan. 307 residents participated and submitted 1300 thoughts.

#### **Q: How much will Rossland pay to the Regional District this year?**

**A:** In 2015 we will pay almost \$1.5m. Here are a few highlights: \$511k is for fire protection, \$374k regional sewer (includes borrowing for the new sewer pipe bridge), \$182k for transit, \$111k for arts and culture (predominantly to support the Charles Bailey Theater), \$108k solid waste management. Ouch.



### **What's up in the neighbourhood?**

**Next Newsletter:** In an effort to save paper, we want future newsletters to be electronic. Please go to [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca) to sign-up for newsletters in 'E-Mail Updates' on the bottom right of our

main page. But don't worry, some copies will always be available in printed form and distributed around town.

**Council Meetings:** Will generally be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month, **starting at 6pm**. See [www.rossland.ca](http://www.rossland.ca) for a complete schedule and agendas.