



Northern Alberta  
Elected Leaders

59 Leedy Drive  
Whitecourt,  
Alberta T7S 1X1  
780-778-0202

## MINUTES

June 14, 2024

Fox Creek Legion

Fox Creek, Alberta

### In Attendance (In Person)

Carolyn Kolebaba

Sheila Gilmour

Kerri Hudson

Elaine Manzer

Corinna Williams

Robert Willing

Terry Ungarian

Gerhard Stickling

Wendy Wald

Brian Peterson

Lane Monteith

Tyler Airth

Kate Potter

Vern Lymburner

Samantha Steinke

Grant Berg

Donna Buchinski

Myrna Lanctot

Dylan Bressey

Dan Dibbelt

Nick Van Rootselaar

Tom Pickard

### Chair

Town of Fox Creek

Town of Fox Creek

Town of Peace River

Northern Sunrise County

MD of Peace

County of Northern Lights

County of Northern Lights

Town of Grimshaw

County of Grande Prairie

Big Lakes County

Big Lakes County

Town of Sexsmith

Town of Valleyview

Town of Valleyview

City of Grande Prairie

Town of Falher

Village of Donnelly

City of Grande Prairie and Alberta Municipalities Representative

MD of Spirit River

MD of Spirit River

Whitecourt

Brian Panasiuk	Town of High Prairie
Margaret Jacob	Town of McLennan
Larry Davidson	Birch Hills County
????	Village of Boyle
Gary Rycroft	Town of Beaverlodge
Brian Hall	Athabasca County
Albert Poetker	Birch Hills County
David Reynolds	Big Lakes County
Jim Rennie	NAEL
Denise Baranowski	Town of Fox Creek (Recording Secretary)

In Attendance (Via Zoom)

David Janzen	Clear Hills County
Roxann Dreger	Village of Rycroft
Jay Milddleton	County of Grande Prairie
Margaret McClarty	MD of Peace
Boyd Langford	Town of High Level
Allan Rowe	Clear Hills County
Philip Kolodychuk	MD of Fairview
Robert Brochu	MD of Smoky River
Robert McLeod	Town of Manning
Josh Knelsen	Mackenzie County
Joulia Whittleton	County of Grande Prairie
Cindy Millar	
April Doll	

Registration 9:45 AM

Chair Kolebaba called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

- Greetings from Mayor Gilmour, Town of Fox Creek

Request to be allowed to record meeting

- No objections received

Adoption of Agenda

- No additions or deletions
- Moved by Tom Pickard – Mayor of Whitecourt  
APPROVED

Roundtable and Introductions:

Zoom Attendees

- David Jazen - Clear Hills County

- Rodeo this weekend was cancelled due to rain
- Ongoing projects - building firehall and development
  
- Roxann Dreger - Village of Rycroft
  - Grand opening for lodge
  - Roofing for library and admin building
  - Fiber optics construction ongoing
  - Upcoming rodeo
  - Paving phase 1 project
  - Upgrading ball diamonds
  - Grant with MD of Spirit River
  
- Jay Milddleton - County of Grande Prairie
  
- Margaret McClarty - MD of Peace
  
- Boyd Langford – Town of High Level
  - Lots of rain for farmers, seeding behind but good for fires
  - New hotel being built this fall
  - Possible pulp mill being built
  - Optic fiber construction is still ongoing
  
- Allan Rowe – Clear Hills County
  - New firehall in Cleardale
  - Development of commercial lots
  - Drilling second well
  - Three local road projects
  
- Philip Kolodychuk MD of Fairview
  - Father's day breakfast
  - Bridge project
  - Airport paving project
  
- Robert Brochu – MD of Smoky River
  - Honeyfest
  - Windmill still ongoing
  
- Robert McLeod – Town of Manning
  - River is flowing, lots of rain
  - Aurora school is progressing, opening in 2025
  - Del-Air Lodge is in the final stages, opening in July

- Josh Knelsen - Mackenzie County
  - Mental health concerns and the need for Northern Alberta Communities

#### In Person Attendees

- Samantha Steinke - Town of Valleyview
  - Getting a new K-12 school which will be attached to Greenview Multiplex
  - Ag society is active in building a new building
  - Airport host to wildfire management operations
  - A business owner donated the use of two water tanks so residents could fill water containers to water their plants due to water drought bylaw
- Sheila Gilmour – Town of Fox Creek
  - Registered daycare opening in fall 2024
  - Hired a Communications and Economic Development Coordinator
  - Census ongoing
  - Building of the new Administration office is still ongoing and on schedule
  - New doctor was hired for a permanent contract
- Robert Willing – MD of Peace
  - A fire on April 23 in Peace Valley burned 1000 hectares but was contained fairly quickly
  - Area has been approached by nuclear power company and they have partnered with four other municipalities to advocate for the development
- Grant Berg – City of Grande Prairie
  - Stormwater – extensive work to shift from tax base fee to user base fee, put on hold right now
  - Actively exploring ways to increase the number of secondary suites
  - RCMP transition to a municipal police force, going very well
- Corinna Williams – Northern Sunrise County
  - Minister Sigurdson met with ASB Board to discuss weed control and mental health
  - Started a new youth council and will be part of the Economic Development
  - Road maintenance ongoing
  - Advocating for Highway 686
- Gary Rycroft – Town of Beaverlodge
  - Summer maintenance programs – sidewalks & curves
  - Groundbreaking new health facility will continue
- Brian Peterson – County of Grande Prairie

- Meeting with Minister Sigurdson, partnership with enterprise group talked about drought relief funding since some residents didn't qualify and find ways to improve weather stations.
  - Economic corridor funding
  - Funding to upgrade and import rail system
  - Mental health of agricultural participants
  - Economic Development staff are in Houston
  - Council going to NW Pacific
  - 75 bed long-term treatment center for addictions to service northwestern Alberta will open in two years
  - Highway 40 improvements moving along
  - Taxes increased 2.9%
  - Concerns on homeless and training new doctors
  - Clairmont police detachment underway and expected to be completed in 2028
- Elaine Manzer - Town of Peace River
    - Monitoring water level intakes
    - New francophone school K-12 opened
    - July 5 & 6 Plaid Days
    - Working with the homeless population
    - Neighborhood improvement finishing up
    - Study on indoor pool to look at life span
    - Airport has asked for financial assistance
    - Alberta Infrastructure is hopeful that the bridge will be finished next year
    - Taxes increased
    - Grande Prairie doctor training program is helpful
- Wendy Wald - Town of Grimshaw
    - Splash park ribbon cutting June 14
    - Organizing another doctor finding
    - Hired new nurse
- Dan Dibbelt CAO & Nick Van Rootselaar Deputy Reeve – MD of Spirit River
    - Opening of Pleasant View Lodge excellent housing for seniors, Spirit River and AHS own facility, difficult finding low-cost housing for AHS so look at repurpose old senior lodge to house AHS staff
    - Did not have to raise taxes
    - Fundraiser led by AG Society for seniors lodge raised \$500,000
- Tom Pickard – Whitecourt
    - Meeting with Minister Rajan Sawhney regarding student rural seats in post-secondary
    - Pending rail strike, will have devastating effects on local businesses

- Would like to thank CAO's and their support from other communities who did not accept the Whitecourt paving crew in their community until Whitecourt Dahl Drive was repaired correctly
  - Firesmart implemented into Whitecourt town policy bylaw
  - Living allowance not reflected in grants for contractors on contracts 10-15% above bid.
- Myran Lanctot – Village of Donnelly
    - Gave Economic Development study to team
    - Ag Society
    - Canadian Fiber Optic coming in the summer
    - Local soccer team ramping up
    - Healthy Aging Alberta Grant – how to support to initiate new programs
- Donna Buchinski – Town of Falher
    - Canadian Fiber Optic is installing fiber
    - Lift station is getting an upgrade this summer
    - Landuse bylaw completed, open house last week, great turnout, public heart at the end of June
    - Honeyfest this weekend
    - Completing census
    - The Economic Development Board is five municipalities and has youth on it
    - AUMA summer caucus
    - Big slide in the process of repairs
- Brian Panasiuk - Town of High Prairie
    - Have a donor that will donate to splash park, looking at 2025 possibly
    - Recall of counsellors and code of conduct was concluded
    - Water treatment plant upgrade this year
    - Citizens on patrol started up
    - Issues with the youth assessment center, which is currently shut down due to a fire last year and trying to get it reopened
    - Treaty signing of 125<sup>th</sup> next week
    - Old hospital sold reserve, pending sale
- Terry Ungarian, Reeve & Gerhard Stickling, CAO – County of Northern Lights
    - Calcium dust control and re-gravel starting
    - Formed a regional committee regarding nuclear power plant
    - Water sources are low and watching stream flows
    - Upswing in residential development permits
    - Committee work in progress – NW Species at Risk, community rail alliance, bylaw enforcement, U of A and Northwest Polytechnic touring next week regarding doctor training program

- Appointed to the Northern Alberta Council
- ??? - Village of Boyle
  - RN's and doctors short-staffed
  - Rural health care, Athabasca University can take LPN and RN
  - Water line extension
  - Negotiating water transfer distribution
  - Rail strike concerning
  - Cut the cost of snow plowing program
- Margaret Jacob – Town of McLennan
  - Developing and Economic Development Board in-house
  - Lodge/motel recently totally renovated, will supply small grocery store and restaurant
  - Golf course under new management
  - Summer Jobs Canada Program grant, not approved
- Larry Davidson – Birch Hills County
  - No runoff, reservoirs are low, enough water till next spring
  - Smaller fires, and one large one with faster response so contained quickly
  - Highway 737 new sewer lines
  - Wanham event, water leak
  - STARS appreciation event
  - Canadian fiber optics being installed
  - I want wireless, 13 towers in the community
  - School boards to put a teacher in Eaglesham
  - Drainage program waiting on feedback from other communities
- Vern Lymburner - Town of Valleyview
  - Highway traffic circle – in conversation with Minister Dreeshen and lobbying for \$6M funding for service roads
  - RCMP building – paving parking lot
  - New school ongoing
  - Drought still on, conserving water, look at building new reservoir
  - Golf course very busy and seeing increased participation
- Kate Potter – Town of Sexsmith
  - Looking at changing council size, split vote so not changing
  - Issues with group home and Alberta Justice, working with RCMP and directors of group home
  - Rebranding through grant received
  - Summer students – MP advised program is being downsized
  - Splash park – uses a collection tank and water is then used to water plants

- RHPAP - Attraction and retention – working with other municipalities approved for project starting in 2025. Getting high school students into polytechnic health care work experience
- Festival went well
- Tyler Airth – Big Lakes County
  - Discussions regarding nuclear power plant
  - Committee talking about medical waste facility, Swan Hills still has medical waste facility open and is the only place in Alberta
  - Two daycares trying to get up and running
  - Regional partnerships, lots of meetings
  - Wildfire preparedness advocating and completing fireguards
  - Meeting with Minister Sigurdson to talk about flooding at Buffalo Lakes and infrastructure
- Lunch (12:00 - 12:30 pm)
- Presentation Alberta Chamber of Commerce – Dana Severson, Manager, Advocacy and Research
  - Sign up for Alberta Perspectives partnered with a task force to aid post-secondary students to have them trained to where employers want them to be.
  - Developing a network for supply and demand data to help businesses come together, growth and efficiency.
  - Chamber Market – online marketplace, creating infrastructure for small businesses.
  - Moved by Donna Buchinski – Town of Falher – That NAEL receive information from the Chamber of Commerce and all information to be forwarded to members.
- Presentation Community Rail Advocacy Alliance - Reeve Ungarian and Mayor Pickard
  - Created a board
  - CN is not reliable and talking about abandoning tracks.
  - Trying to meet with the federal transportation minister
  - Want to push to avoid a strike or competing for trucks
  - Industry driven
- Adoption of Minutes  
Vern Lymburner – Town of Valleyview moved to adopt the March 8, 2024 meeting minutes.  
APPROVED
- Old Business
  - Getting quotation on flights, propose they fly on Thursday with MLA's and City of Edmonton Councillors (30 seats) from Edmonton to High Level, to Peace River, stay

overnight, then to Whitecourt, tour, meal at Alexis Casino and then fly back to Edmonton Friday. Looking at spring 2025. No expenses to municipalities.

- Community Rail Advocacy Alliance update – Meeting next week with the transportation parliamentary secretary to discuss moving goods and services, responsibilities, impending strike and monopoly. CN is recruiting.
  
- New Business
  - Want to meet and collaborate with the Northern Alberta Alliance for Growth and Opportunity (NAAGO). Arrange a meeting to gather information in Athabasca County and discuss the possibility of a collaboration. Motion by Myrna Lanctot.
  - Received request from Brazeau County to join NAEL. Request denied due to location, but invite them to attend a meeting so they can see what NAEL does. There is an Elected Leaders group in central Alberta which Brazeau County would fall under.
  - Acceptance of Financial Report  
Myrna Lanctot – Village of Donnelly moved to accept the Financial Report.  
APPROVED
  
- Update from Alberta Municipalities - Dylan Bressey, Alberta Municipalities Director - Cities up to 500,000 and City of Grande Prairie Councillor
  - Bills 18, 20 and 21 – received good feedback.
  - Bill 21 – Liability of province taking over control of fire fighting services. Discuss with insurance if you have appropriate insurance.
  - LGFF funding – not keeping up with inflation, working with a consultant to get better content of the financial state of municipalities. If you have a project delayed or cancelled please email [advocay@abmunis.ca](mailto:advocay@abmunis.ca)
  - ABmunis elections next fall.
  - Good rates for power, buying electricity directly to supply municipalities and non-profits.
  
- Minister Todd Lowen, MLA Central Peace Notley
  - LPN program Northern Lakes College
  - Good shape for wildfires
  - Bill 21 – province will only take over firefighting if absolutely necessary, only takes over firefighting not municipality and liability does not change.
  - Bill 20 – trying to line up campaign financing with provincial, minister could always take over mayor or councillor, now adds more people to make that decision.
  
- Date and Location of next meeting.  
Date: November 8, 2024  
Location: Grimshaw  
Moved by Margaret Jacob – Town of McLennan

- **Motion to adjourn.**  
Chair Kolebaba adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

DRAFT