

## **Deputy Mayor's Report - February 27, 2024**

It's been a busy three weeks filling in for Mayor Holmes while he is away. I wanted to start by thanking District staff for inviting council to participate in an all-day session called *Verbal Judo*. On February 13, myself, along with councillors Barkwill and Peake, and several staff learned all about effective communication skills for engaging with the public (and even each other!) - with the goal of de-escalating difficult situations and generating a positive outcome for everyone. The session was facilitated by our deputy fire chief Pat Hawkes.

On the same day, the District also received news that we did not receive the \$25 million "Green & Inclusive Community Buildings" grant that we had hoped to get for a new pool. As local media has been following this story, I spoke with both CBC Radio and Global Okanagan about our disappointment and about re-grouping to explore alternative options for our aging recreation centre.

On Family Day, February 18, my family and I participated in Summerland Recreation's "Photo Scavenger Hunt." We checked out several parks, landmarks, local businesses, and the museum which had kids' activities as well. I wanted to thank our recreation staff both at the pool and the arena, as well as museum staff and volunteers for hosting some great events. And of course - the provincial government for its contribution to funding this day.

Following the long weekend, Graham and I met with the South Okanagan Similkameen Medical Foundation to discuss grant opportunities for a "team-based and allied-care" health centre proposed to be located in the new Dickinson Ave Seniors Housing Project. Should this housing project get approval from BC Housing, and funding from the Ministry of Health is allocated, the proposed health centre will still require additional funding to help with equipment and interior construction.

Both Ian Lindsay, the foundation's CEO, and Peter Steele, the board chair, expressed a keen interest in the project but wanted more specific information regarding the operating model and a breakdown of how exactly the foundation's grant would be used. They requested representatives from the Division of Family Practice and the Summerland doctors' group, as well as Aaron McRann (Community Foundation) to do a formal presentation to their board.

Last week, I also attended the Okanagan Regional Library board meeting where our new chair was elected by acclamation - Kelowna City Councillor Loyal Wooldridge. And our new vice chair is West Kelowna Councillor Tasha de Silva.

The ORL's CEO Danielle Hubbard will be visiting each of the member communities in the coming weeks including Summerland. Finally, we approved the ORL's strategic plan.

Last Thursday, I attended the RDOS board meeting for Mayor Holmes. The board and staff are working their way through updating bylaws in response to Bill 44 (Housing Statutes for residential development). Staff are also looking at areas within the regional district that might qualify to be exempt because of ongoing health and safety issues such as Faulder with its water limitations.

CAO Jim Zaffino has also asked each of the departments to present to the board an overview of their operations and current projects (as a refresher.) At this meeting, we heard from Andrew Reeder, senior manager of Solid Waste, about work being done to move forward with an organics facility at 1313 Greyback Mountain Rd.

The RDOS board approved a staff recommendation to proceed with the preparation of a detailed “universal water metering” program which would apply to all residential users within the electoral areas on RDOS water systems. The board heard that with low rainfall and high temperatures, there is increasing strain on the reservoirs and infrastructure. The meters would be a proactive approach to protecting the water systems and conserving water. Currently the RDOS operates 10 systems and only one is metered.

The Okanagan Similkameen Regional Hospital Board gave third and final reading to its 5-year financial plan. The estimated average residential 2024 property tax levy is \$123.92 (2023 was \$118.02).

The board also approved several resolutions for SILGA. Of interest to Summerlanders, the board would like the province to explore officially upgrading and paving the 201 Forestry Road from Penticton to Kelowna to provide a permanent alternate route to Highway 97 – following several recent slide events.

Mayor Holmes will be back next week.

Submitted by Erin Trainer, Deputy Mayor