

Deputy Mayor's Report - March 4, 2025

Good afternoon everyone. Mayor Holmes is away and I have had the honour of filling in for him over the past two weeks.

On Tuesday, February 18, I attended the second of two presentations held during the Official Community Plan open house at the George Ryga Centre. This open house was part of "phase one" of the OCP update and review called "*Community Visioning*." Throughout the day, more than 80 residents came out to learn about the process and to provide feedback. In addition, 237 people completed an on-line survey which closed last Friday. The next phase of the review will consider the current "Urban Growth Boundary." You are encouraged to stay up-to-date on future public open houses and surveys on the District's website. The OCP review is scheduled to be completed by December 31 - as directed by the province. Thank you to everyone who have provided their ideas. The more community engagement, the stronger the final document.

On Wednesday, February 19, I attended an Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) board meeting, as the representative for Summerland. Staff provided us with a preview of the Summer Reading Club for kids. It's designed to keep young people engaged in reading through the summer. There's going to be lots of activities and prizes. More information is coming.

ORL CEO Danielle Hubbard will also be visiting all the communities in the library region this spring to provide municipal councils with updates and answer questions. The ORL serves a huge area from Salmon Arm to Golden - running south to Osoyoos. This year, Summerland will contribute just under \$603,000 to the library system, and we are getting our money's worth! Our library continues to grow in popularity. I want to thank our librarian Caroline and her team for doing an amazing job at making it an inviting and engaging place for everyone. As well, for the sometimes-challenging task of promoting and protecting public access to a wide diversity of books.

On Thursday, February 20, I filled in for Mayor Holmes at the RDOS board meeting. The board gave second reading to the 2025 budget. Summerland's tax requisition is just under \$1,161,000 (a net increase of 6.25%) - the lowest net increase of all member municipalities. Regional directors are still working on their electoral areas budgets before third reading next month. The budget must be adopted by March 31.

Also at the RDOS table, we had an "Okanagan-Similkameen Regional Hospital District" board meeting where we gave final reading to the 2025-2029 financial plan. This year's tax requisition will be increased to a level that supports capital funding requests from Interior Health at a 30% share, as well as sustains debt servicing of existing long-term borrowing (for the PRH new tower) and contributes to capital reserves. The hospital tax for the average residential property in the RDOS, including Summerland, will increase by \$14 to \$138 this year.

On Wednesday last week, I met with the owners of PH Cannabis on Main Street. The owners invited me to learn more about their business and to offer their thoughts on doing business in

Summerland. I learned a lot about the cannabis industry in BC that I didn't know, and I also gathered feedback on how council, the District, and the Summerland Chamber can support local businesses. I encourage all Summerlanders to shop local as much as they can, and to get curious about the unique stores and services we have in our town. Perhaps make it a goal to try a new restaurant, winery, boutique shop or service this spring? We can't control much of what's going on – especially with the United States – but we can choose to spend our money locally when possible.

Finally, on a personal note, my family and I attended the Penticton Vees game on Saturday night and had a great time. I was excited to see Bobby Williamson, one of our District staff members, refereeing the game. We also had the pleasure of sitting next to a couple of Americans from Brewster, Washington. They said they love coming up to the Okanagan to visit and in their words, *to escape the craziness*. I put in a “good plug” for Summerland. It was a reminder again that despite the current political climate, most Americans are great neighbours and so many of them support our local economy and value our nations’ friendship and connection.

I hope you all continue to enjoy the sunshine this week. Thank you!

- Erin Trainer, Deputy Mayor