

Mayor's Report – January 21, 2025

First, I would like to wish everyone a happy new year.

As we step into 2025 and the second half of our term, I think we can all look forward to the implementation of some exciting projects and the completion of many of our Council priorities.

Most of those projects and priorities were on display on January 15 at the Budget Open House at the Arena Banquet Room, which was attended by every member of Council and District of Summerland senior management.

I would like to thank all members of the public who came out to learn and ask questions about how our tax dollars are being invested in the community. Following public feedback, which we continue to receive, the budget will return to Council at our next meeting on February 11 for consideration of third reading.

Progress is also being made on the Regional District budget and first reading was passed at the January 9 RDOS board meeting that Councillor Barkwill and I attended. For Summerland, the draft regional district budget is projecting a 8.44% property tax increase with notable increases for regional transit, regional trails, and emergency planning.

The draft budget is now being taken out to the region for public feedback, a part of which will be a presentation to our Council also at our next meeting.

On January 8, CAO Statt and I met with Penticton Mayor Julius Bloomfield and Penticton CAO Anthony Haddad to discuss a number of issues of common concern. We also talked about areas where we could be collaborating and even potentially where we could deliver shared services. Those discussions will continue.

Finally, I continue to work with Peachland Mayor Patrick Van Minsel to make the case to the provincial government for the need of a year-round secondary road between our communities. The idea is to provide an alternate route for when there are closures on Highway 97, and it could also be a back road option to support tourism.

On January 2, we wrote a joint letter to Transportation Minister Mike Farnworth inviting him to visit the rockslide and other highway pinch points so he may gain a better appreciation of the issue. We will also be discussing the matter with Opposition Leader John Rustad who will be visiting the area later this month.

- Mayor Doug Holmes