

The RM of Piapot held its monthly meeting on January 13th at Piapot. Present were Councillors, Dryden Schulze, Lorne Kusler, Clay Moorhead, Anita Wasilow, Kelly Bertram, Derek Moorhead, Warren McNary, Keith Winzer, RM Manager, Dennis Germain, Administrator, Tammy Sloan and myself, Reeve John Wagner.

Nothing major in the division reports, as we have not had a lot of new snow. The 2013 Cat 140M2 grader with the V plow was acting like it had a fuel pump problem. In the end it was the ECM (Engine Control Module) that had failed and had to be replaced at a cost of approximately \$5,000. Anymore with electronics you simply pay the price and replace it. Everything else is running fine. Through out the winter they bring everything through the shop and check it out.

Dryden, Dennis, Marc and I toured the proposed construction on 2.25 miles of the #724 north of the 724 - Blackhills road intersection. This is the section past the former George Weber place, now owned by Graham and Trish Alexander. After looking at the project Dennis suggested that it would not be a problem for the RM to do this lift if we cut the ditches a little deeper and had access to a scraper for some minor fills. The RM had been approved for a 50% grant under the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth program. The cost estimates, which are always on the higher side came in at \$669,848, which even with a 50% grant comes to \$93,034 per kilometre on the 3.6 km project. The 3.1 kilometres south of this that we did by hiring Bucks Construction cost us \$53,354 per kilometre. One of the reasons the grant road is so expensive is that the fills have to be taken to a 4 to 1 slope vs. the current 3 to 1 slope. This requires moving a lot of dirt that is not at all necessary and the grant program will not move on the specs. Therefore council decided to do the project on our own and to look into purchasing a used Terex TS14 in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range.

The RM used to own its own scraper and built a lot of roads with it. In later years we used it for minor projects and snow problem areas. When Walter Richardson moved into the area with a scraper we sold the scraper and used Walter for all our smaller projects. Since Walter retired we haven't had anyone doing the little jobs. The list is adding up and with Dennis's experience both in operating scrapers and road building Council thought it would be a good investment at this time. We have learned from experience that doing the dirt work in snow problem areas is a better solution than snow fences that require ongoing maintenance.

Sgt. John Phipps, Maple Creek RCMP came to the meeting to review the quarterly policing report. There is never much for crime statistics in the RM (which is a good thing), the majority of the report deals with the #1

Highway. Our conversations are usually interesting and vary off topic. Anything from Covid to drugs, human trafficking, vehicle chases, you name it. Sgt. Phipps reported that they are fully staffed at Maple Creek with seven members and since it has been slow have had staff on a temporary basis filling in at other detachments that are shorthanded.

Devon Harlick, our APAS representative and a member of the APAS board of directors came to the meeting to give us an update as to what the organization was doing. They have been doing a lot of work on the carbon tax, trespass act, railway delays, improving cell service and broadband, feed regulations, drought assistance and orphan gas wells.

January is the month we review employee contacts. The full time employees are Dennis Germain (although Dennis will be flexible through the winter), Marc Beaupre, Billy Noble and Lyle Roode. Seasonal employees who have been hired are Mason Mackay and Allan Moorhead. Clay and Derek Moorhead declared a conflict of interest and did not vote on the seasonal hirings. We did a base salary increase of 50 cents per hour for seasonal employees. We also offer \$1200 per year health benefits and \$25 per month cell phone allowance.

Council indemnity stayed the same at \$250 per meeting, \$30 per month phone call allowance, \$25.00 per hour for special meetings and 50 cents per kilometre for travel.

January is also the month we do public appointments. Our Chinook Regional Library representative is Mary Anne McNeney, auditor is Stark and Marsh, engineer is WOOD (Saskatoon), solicitor is Mike Morris (SARM), weed inspector and pest control officer is Farron Hoffman, the pound is Heartland Livestock Services, pound keeper is Tammy Sloan, safety supervisor is Marc Beaupre, management safety representative is Tammy Sloan and employee safety representative is Billy Noble.

The RM Council decided to move to the All-Net Municipal meeting software. The cost is around \$4,500 for the first year, then \$4,000 per year after that. The software is supposed to be a lot easier to use. Information is available as the meeting progresses and there is a search engine for reviewing information. All the RM's that are using it seem to like it, so we are going to try it.

Western Infrastructure has been here and done the work on the bridge at Leigh and Cassie Portz and the bridge by Wayne and Margret Bowyers. From all reports they did a good job and everyone is satisfied with the work. The Portz bridge cost \$117,475 and the Bowyer bridge was \$13,775. There is a grant for approximately \$45,000, however these are supposed to be 40 year fixes so it is a long term investment.

We are experiencing a rather mild winter, which is good as we started feeding in early November. Has not been that much snow since the first blast, so snow plowing is minimal. Everyone is holding their breath hoping for some moisture in the spring. On the up side as one of our ratepayers always says "If you are going to have a drought, winter is the best time."

Here is a story you might enjoy. "Bless me Father, for I have sinned. I have been with a loose girl." The priest asks, "Is that you, little Joey Pagano?" "Yes, Father, it is." "And who was the girl you were with?" "I can't tell you, Father. I don't want to ruin her reputation." "Well, Joey, I'm sure to find out her name sooner or later so you may as well tell me now. Was it Tina Minetti?" "I cannot say." "Was it Teresa Mazzarelli?" "I'll never tell." "Was it Nina Capelli?" "I'm sorry, but I cannot name her." "Was it Cathy Piriano?" "My lips are sealed." "Was it Rosa DiAngelo, then?" "Please, Father! I cannot tell you." The priest sighs in frustration. "You're very tight lipped, and I admire that. But you've sinned and have to atone. You cannot be an altar boy now for 4 months. Now you go and behave yourself." Joey walks back to his pew, and his friend Franco slides over and whispers, "What'd you get?" "Four months vacation and five good leads..."

Our next meeting is February 10th at 1PM.