



Mayor's Report

April, 2017



Thank you to all of the great volunteers in our community. You do so much for all of us and deserve to be recognized during National Volunteer Month.

Council has made a concerted effort towards not only identifying where our biggest infrastructure shortfalls lie, but finding opportunities to remediate those deficiencies in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. Our 2017 budget reflects the direction we are taking to achieve those much-needed improvements. We know it takes time to make all of the required necessary infrastructure improvements but we are continually striving to make improvements to our overall municipal infrastructure needs within the financial means we have available so we may continue to live in a desirable and affordable community without incurring debt and additional costs.

The Town will be investing a total of \$7,660,354 to improve our water quality and distribution system this year. The water treatment plant upgrade is estimated to cost \$6.3 million with \$5 million coming via a grant from the Federal Gas Tax Strategic Priorities Fund. This project includes the building of a new facility for a filtration and disinfection system with the Town's share to be funded through general revenues. The Town's share comes from both the water parcel tax (currently \$140), and user rates for the water utility fund. Our water distribution system improvements will include water main upgrades at the following locations and at the costs identified:

- Greendale Road Water main \$769,863;
- Greendale Trestle Water main \$164,204;
- Footbridge Water main \$77,550;
- Park Road Water main \$235,052;
- and Wilson Ave. Water main \$113,685.

We have been fortunate to have approvals of 83% of the funding for these major upgrades through the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund. The funding for the water main upgrades is supported by grants of 50% from the Federal government, 33% from the Provincial government, and the remaining 17% from the Town. We are very thankful that the two senior levels of government recognize the need for the supply of clean and safe drinking water to our valued citizens and their support to us in making the necessary improvements to replace and upgrade aging infrastructure that include the water main distribution system is most appreciated.

Other major capital improvements for 2017 include the Centennial ball fields at a cost of \$1,048,500 with \$500,000 coming from Canada 150 Community infrastructure Program, \$50,000 for the Duck Pond washrooms upgrade partnered through Job Creation Program and the paving of Cowichan Avenue East (at a cost of 70,000). We are also in the meantime applying for a grant for the retrofit of the Town Hall. We are hoping to find out by this autumn if our application is approved.

Whereas 83.07 % of our tax revenues come from the Residential class, it is imperative that we leverage additional funding opportunities to keep our taxes as low as possible. Because we have had great success with the stream of grant funding to attain the much-needed infrastructure improvements, we now only face a general tax increase of 3% to parallel our 3% increases in both our water and sewer utilities rates for 2017.

A recent audit by Recycle BC, previously known by the acronym of MMBC, has identified that the Town of Lake Cowichan's recycle material has had between 9-12% contamination rates. Compared to 3-6 % contamination rates for other municipalities in the Cowichan Valley, it is apparent we can do a much better job by determining what we place in our curb side recycle containers.

The following recyclables are accepted: Mixed paper including junk mail, brochures, envelopes, white and coloured office paper, fax paper, paper bags, paper pet food bag notes, carbon less carbon paper, file folders, business cards, index cards, packing paper, calendars, gift wrapping paper (without foil), shredded paper (bagged) -Cardboard, fibre egg cartons, paper towel cores, boxboard packaging such as cereal, clean pizza boxes and detergent boxes -Newspapers and Magazines, newspaper inserts, including glossy material, phone books and catalogues (do not tie or bundle newspapers) -Corrugated Cardboard including flattened packing boxes, liquor boxes, etc. (maximum 2ft. x 3ft.) -metals, including cans & tins, foil, aluminum pie plates and empty aerosol containers from food, air freshness, shaving cream, deodorant and hairspray plastics, any clean flattened plastic, jugs & bottles, jars & lids, tubs, empty pill bottles, milk jugs and garden pots/ trays -Cartons; milk, milk-type beverages, cream ice cream, frozen yogurt, substitute eggs, molasses, soup, broth and sauces

The following are **NOT** accepted: refundable containers; unclean recyclables; film plastic (including plastic bags & overwrap); waxed cardboard or waxed paper or waxed; coated boxes; paper towels, napkins or tissues; books or soiled newspapers; chip bags, other foil-lined bags or contaminated foil; glass or ceramics; syringes, needles or sharp objects; coat hangers, pots, pans or baking trays -paint cans, aerosols, hazardous materials; and pails larger than 25L.

The following are treated as Free Recyclables at Meade and Bings Creek Facilities: Yard and garden materials including grass, leaves and branches not greater than 3" in diameter (no sod, rock or dirt); Glass containers, clean and lids removed -Scrap Metal(appliances, bicycles, BBQ's) - Styrofoam, clean of all contaminants; and film plastic including plastic bags.

We all must become better educated when it comes to knowing what can be recycled and we are working on having a representative from Recycle B.C. attend our next Town Hall Meeting to be held on May 29th 2017 at Centennial Hall at 7:00 PM. If you would like an explanation as to why particular items are accepted or not, this would be your opportunity to find the answers.

We encourage public input and engagement and remind you that our meetings are open to the public. Our committee meetings take place on the first and second Tuesday of the month all beginning at 5:00 pm. Our Regular Council Meeting is on the fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:00 pm. In addition we host two public meetings a year at the community hall to listen to your ideas and concerns. Your chance to attend a public meeting is on May 29th, 2017 at 6:30 pm. The next public meeting after that is in late November. We look forward to the opportunity to listen to you.



Ross Forrest, Mayor