

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REVIEW



J.R. McDonald & Associates Inc.

Management & Consulting Services

October 6, 2021



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MANAGEMENT & CONSULTING SERVICES

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Reeve and Council
Beaver County

October 6, 2021

Re: Submission - Corporate Governance Review – Beaver County

We are pleased to submit our review. The objective of our review was to conduct a high level governance and organizational health-check of the County corporate governance through an assessment of roles and responsibilities, and organizational effectiveness. (A review has not been done since 2009.) By submission of our report to Council we believe that we have addressed the requirements of our Terms of Reference for this assignment.

We completed a full scale corporate governance review; reviewed the operations of each individual department within the County; reviewed the County human resources functions; reviewed the organizational hierarchy including best practices; reviewed reporting structures to identify strengths and weaknesses; identified opportunities to enhance communication, both internally and externally; assessed strategic planning, operational planning, and budgeting systems; reviewed the working relationship between Council and senior administration; and reviewed Council as a leadership team.

Our review process included individual private interviews with Council, staff, external stakeholders and a few additional one-on-one interviews with members of the leadership team; an extensive process of document collection and review; and an analysis in key areas of importance within the organization. It is important to note that we observed that County is operating reasonably well and we believe that our recommendations will help the County achieve a higher level of service to Beaver County residents.

From observations and findings during the review we have made 44 recommendations for improvement. These recommendations are being provided to Council and the CAO for consideration, adoption, and implementation. Careful consideration is required on the timing and resource requirements associated with implementation of each recommendation.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service. It has been our pleasure to serve you which we believe reflects the commitment of both Council and administration to ongoing improvement in ensuring efficient and effective corporate governance. We summarize the report outline and highlights on the following pages.

We have presented our report in 13 specific sections:

1. An executive summary of the key findings and recommendations.
2. **Section A** provides an introduction, terms of reference and process.

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3. **Section B** describes components of a sound organizational system – what works.
4. **Section C** describes roles, duties and performance indicators
5. **Section D** describes elements of a good model of decision making in a governance setting.
6. **Section E** provides our general review observations from interviews and documentation.
7. **Section F** describes a brief description of our findings - key issues.
8. **Section G** describes performance expectations.
9. **Section H** provides an overview, observations and some analysis of each department and their functions.
10. **Section I** provide a description and observations regarding key functions in regional collaboration.
11. **Section J** proposes a better model of decision making and governing, and a new organizational design with key functional changes to improve efficiencies for Council and the Community.
12. **Section K** provides our recommendations.
13. **Section L** lists documents, contacts and comments heard.

Scope and methodology - for this project was designed to review the operation of the governance, administration, organizational design, and reporting responsibilities. During the review we received a significant amount of material directly related to the performance of Council as a leadership and governance body, and the performance of the administration. Key findings in the report include:

Council Working Relationships – since this Council was elected in 2017, the relationships on Council appear to be evolving, and it has taken some time for this Council to fully understand the role and mandate and then begin to work together effectively. Being consistent in Council roles and responsibilities has been an ongoing learning activity. Council has had its challenges relative to relationships and focus; we observed that debate about priorities continues to evolve.

Strategic Planning – Current strategic planning documents are interesting, but have some deficiencies. A common theme is that the current Council strategic vision does little to direct administration in a true sense of strategic priorities. Without a clear set of strategic goals, with key performance expectations, administration is struggling to focus on operational planning, impacting budgeting. A clearly defined process is required to ensure the County plan is current, and relevant.

Communication – It is clear that communications services have not been effective. Council and the Reeve need a sound Corporate Communications Service to effectively support the corporations work.

Working with Administration – Some Council members expressed concern with respect to the implementation of Council direction. Some believe that the advice from administration at times was questionable. However, not all Council members felt this way; some thought that the CAO was providing the best advice and direction he could under some challenging pressures. We also did hear and observe that there is general trust in most staff members who directly present to Council.

It was noted by both Council and members of administration that a trusting relationship is not always present. Over the past few years some Council members suggested that there have been a few issues that have affected the working relationship; some feel that information provided by the administration did not

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support Council direction and at times more information was needed. There have been several occasions where members of administration have made presentations to Council and unnecessarily negative responses were given. Some administrative staff does not believe the Council actively seeks out their advice or demonstrates acceptance of the advice provided. In the process of dealing with matters raised by residents or stakeholders, sometimes staff report that they think their actions have been publicly criticized by elected officials.

Councillor Involvement – Some staff report they find it a challenge to work with a Council that focuses on and questions administrative detail, which takes up considerable time and effort. Some report that they have experienced Councillor’s contacting staff directly bypassing the agreed protocol. At times some Council members have not been consistent in the manner in which they engage with administration (i.e. Councillor inquiries, of all types, including forwarded resident concerns and information requests, and reaching down to a variety of levels in the organization). This appears to create issues with managing and tracking matters, and also fails to respect role separation. It also can place staff in a precarious position.

Performance Management - During the review, we assessed the manner in which Council is engaging in performance management of its strategic mandate and implementation of such by the CAO. We observed that Council does not provide clear performance expectations. The CAO’s performance is normally based on key performance indicators frequently tied to Council’s Strategic Plan. We noted that previous CAO performance reviews appear overly subjective and do not provide annual goals, objectives or clear direction for improving performance areas of concern. Some Councillors expressed concern that they are unclear on the process to hold the administration accountable and needed a better system of ensuring accountability.

Department Level Findings – we completed an overview and assessment of each individual department within the County administration. Arising from the individual department-level findings were common themes that apply to multiple organizational units, or to the County administration as a whole. These included:

- ◆ **Morale** - Morale is an issue in some departments.
- ◆ **Trust** - Many staff reported feeling they were unsafe to honestly cooperate with this review as they have witnessed some negative activities between Council and management and were fearful of commenting.
- ◆ **Recognition** - Staff feel they are not acknowledged for any good work by the leadership. Some suggest that their ideas, concerns or opinions are not heard by management, even when they are bringing forward useful ideas which could benefit the municipality. Some felt it was no use to give advice to management as it was not welcomed. Where staff report high levels of recognition, it is generally specific to an individual and not the overall unit.
- ◆ **Communication** - Communication from the top down and between departments is often lacking, and in some cases there is no formal process for communication in place. Staffs appear to rely on personal relationships with other staff to understand expected tasks, as the appropriate route often results in red tape and delays. It is not good for employees to find out matters from the “moccasin telegraph” or outside media. This is embarrassing and counter-productive.

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- ◆ **Compensation** – Some concerns were expressed about the salary grid being maxed and there appears to be no movement to review the grid and recharge it. Many employees have reached the maximum on their pay grid and increasingly believe that there is limited upward room to adequately compensate for their efforts. There was general consensus that if the County compensation (including benefits) was reviewed it would help the County to become more attractive for future employees
- ◆ **Health, Safety & Security** – The lack of a proper safety program to ensure employees and contractors are operating safely is a concern. The current Health and Safety program is handled generally through administrative procedures and the expectations that the frontline staff follow protocols. There are tailgate meetings in the field, but many times the agreed protocols are not followed. Someone needs to be watching. Facility protection and security requires attention.
- ◆ **Human Resources** – employee relations and support is generally not available. Staffs have to rely on word of mouth and managers to deal with their personnel issues. This appears to be a general gap in the overall human resource “health” within the organization.

Central Services Model – There are times when rigorous application of policies, processes, and systems across departments appears to hamstring the administration from using common sense and imaginative approaches to resolve issues. This is mainly due to the central policy control. It also appears that at times some of the administrative policies and their implementation are not always clear and/or up to date.

Use of Technology – There is no IT policy. There are areas of technology gaps. Some staff report being underserved and find themselves lacking up to date technology. The Website is in need of technical modernization that would support efficiency and service response for ratepayers.

Performance Appraisals - Performance appraisals are a common point of some concern. While appraisals are supposed to be completed annually by every department, application of appraisals is inconsistent. Some staff report never having an appraisal, some have sporadic appraisals, and some perform their own. We observed a number of performance appraisals recently completed for the first time in many years.

Performance Measures - Performance measures are rarely in place and Staff is not always held accountable for service levels.

Organizational Design - A number of the findings contained within the report relate directly to the design of administration and to the current division of functions. Currently the CAO has eight direct reports and together with the role of advisor to Council he is torn in too many directions. There are too many direct reports. Obviously, this equates to poor conclusions on several fronts because of the lack of time available. The organizational design considerations were reviewed, with recommendations for changes to the current organizational model. The most significant change is the establishment of three distinct services with General Managers providing oversight and direction. This offers the opportunity to amalgamate Public Works, Transportation and Agriculture Drainage services under one General Manager.

While the comments above indicate a number of areas for improvement, the County does have a solid core of employees and practices. The areas to improve can be done with some external help plus internal efforts.

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Respectfully submitted,

J.R. McDonald & Associates Inc.

Acknowledgement: *We wish to gratefully acknowledge Mr. George B Cuff, FCMC who so graciously has provided the author with advice and support over the years and who provided the template for corporate governance reports. George B Cuff, FCMC is an expert in governance and has been involved in local government since 1970. Mr. Cuff is the author of many books on governance, and has written and lectured extensively on the art of governance. We are grateful for Mr. Cuff's willingness to allow us to learn from his material and guidance as we prepared this report.*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

J.R. McDonald & Associates Inc. (consultant) was requested by Council to review Beaver County Corporate Governance performance as follows:

- ❖ Governance (Council roles and responsibilities)
- ❖ Administration (roles and responsibilities)
- ❖ Organizational responsiveness
- ❖ Programs and services effectiveness.

Council Purpose for the Review

Beaver County Council initiated this review in July of 2021 in order to identify any issues that may be creating challenges or difficulty for the County as a municipal corporation specifically, and the County as a whole. Council requested an independent third party provide a review as a type of report card or a measurement of this Council's term in office and its success at implementing its vision and mission.

Council is aware of the challenge in attracting and maintaining a trained professional staff. They understand that they and the administration must work together to achieve success. This review is intended to help this and a future Council's focus the County and provide insight and recommendations on how to improve the Corporate Governance.

Council requested a complete review of the reporting relationships, roles and responsibilities, an assessment of what the issues are, and recommendations as to what should be done to resolve them.

The Process

Work began on this review in late early July 2021, and during the process interviews were held with all Council members, the interim CAO, senior management and most of the County staff members. Interviews were also held with stakeholders, ratepayers and contractors. A review of the financial administration, operations and field services was completed. The consultant attended several Council meetings and toured many of the roads, facilities and infrastructure, as well as the main office, shops and yards.

Documents reviewed during this review included:

- Agendas and minutes
- Bylaws and Policies
- Employee agreements
- Employee Position Profiles

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- Wage/salary grids and benefits program
- Budgets for this Council's term in office, budget preparation documents, and the last two year audit reports
- Quarterly reports and variance reports
- Capital plans
- Councillor committee's terms of reference
- Request for Decisions
- Previous Council strategic plans
- CAO performance reviews
- Shared services and mutual aid agreements
- County, Land-use Bylaw, ASPs, MDP, IDP and ICF's
- Relevant reports, studies and planning documents.
- *Municipal Government Act* and regulations

Objective

The consultant's independent review objective is to contribute to the development and wellbeing of the County within an overall healthy and capable governance structure. A corporate governance review is valuable to the extent that it captures the present situation in a reasonably accurate manner. Recommendations in the review are sensitive to the culture of the community and the organization. The corporate governance review provides a snapshot in time of what is happening, and includes a summary of suggested improvements that can lead to positive change.

About Beaver County

Located generally along Highway 14 in central east Alberta, Beaver County spans close to 360,000 hectares or about 1,400 square miles, serves some 6,000 residents and maintains close to 2,700 km of roads. It is a large County with many different issues. The County is led by a five member elected Council serving four year terms and administered by a Chief Administrative Officer who directs a professional staff. Beaver County provides municipal services to a strong agriculture community (central and east areas) and also a significant group of rural subdivisions (west areas) and two hamlets. The County possesses a viable assessment base and appears to be in a reasonable financial position relative to its current needs and in comparison to other similar sized municipalities.

The County office is located in the Village of Ryley. It was officially established as the M.D. of Ryley No. 480 in 1943, renumbered to MD of Beaver No. 73 in 1945, the M.D. of Beaver No. 73 was incorporated into the County of Beaver No. 9 in 1964 and finally it was incorporated as a municipal district on July 31, 1999, and the name was changed from "County of Beaver No. 9" to "Beaver County". (*Wikipedia*)

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Beaver County is a typical rural municipal corporation structure with key service responsibilities that generally include; Agriculture, Corporate and Legislative Services, Finance, Planning and Development, Community Development, Community Services, Public Safety and Public Works, that is led by a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

A significant different responsibility is waste management and the County is a recent signatory to a Municipal Controlled Corporation, Claystone Waste Ltd. The other municipal partners of this MCC are Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley, Town of Viking, and the Village of Holden.

The County has an abundance of diversified agriculture operations and supports a large geographical area that is quite different east of Tofield to the Town of Viking than it is in the western portion of the County. The western portion of the County contains several country residential subdivisions that are more populated and demanding more attention. Nestled within the County along Highway 14 are the Towns of Tofield and Viking, the Hamlets of Kinsella and Bruce, and the Villages of Holden and Ryley. Beaver County has an abundance of recreational opportunities, an abundance of surface water that attracts an overabundance of Beavers (thus the name Beaver County) that create numerous infrastructure and County challenges.

County Council have listed some 40 active committees; key committees include, Beaver Regional Partnership, Beaver Emergency Services Commission, Beaver Foundation, Agriculture Service Board, and Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission.

Administration of the County is overseen by a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) who reports directly to Council. The CAO oversees the organization and is responsible for the effective, efficient, safe and viable delivery of programs and services of the County pursuant to Legislation, Bylaw and Policy. Currently staffing consists of 56 positions of which 16 are seasonal. Of the 40 FTE's 18 are management and administrative. Some positions are likely to change through succession.

Critical Review

At the outset it is important to clarify and address the very nagging question that will arise during the reading of these findings and observations. "Is everything wrong and nothing right?" Obviously this review is based on the notion that things should be looked at through a critical eye with best practices as the comparison. However, we must emphasize that not everything is wrong with the County; in fact, Council, staff and citizens have done a lot and have much to be very proud of.

This review puts the County corporate governance under a microscope comparing the County to the best practices for rural local government. As an outcome it will and has identified a number of

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key issues and recommendations that the County should consider, together with a number of observations and suggestions throughout the report.

Summary of Findings, Observations and Recommendations

The report provides significant detail and observations regarding the roles and responsibilities of Council, Reeve, CAO and administration together with observations and analysis. It identifies the administrative functions within the County and makes a number of recommendations for consideration.

Recommendations:

COUNCIL

1. Council accept this report and direct the next CAO to provide a report to Council on how these priorities will be implemented, and when.
2. Development of a well-planned and implemented Council orientation process outlining duties, roles and responsibilities of Council, Reeve, CAO, and senior staff.
3. That Council and the CAO initiate a Council lead process for strategic planning that will aid Council in developing strategic measurable goals and objectives.
4. Development of a process for improving Council communication with ratepayers and staff; improving the relationship between Council and administration.
5. Implementation of a process for team building; building relationships with Council, the CAO and senior management that leads to mutual trust and confidence, and a respect for each other's role.
6. That the Council revisit the terms of the code of conduct and strengthen the confidentiality protocol and that each Council member should swear and sign upon becoming a councillor.
7. That Council hold administration accountable to provide professional/expert advice and recommendations.
8. That protocol at Council Meetings be strengthened and there be no debating with employees at Council Meetings
9. That Council and the administration begin to prioritize a review of all key bylaws and policies.
10. That all members of Council be briefed on complex issues before discussing in a public setting.
11. That the CAO establish internal administration processes to allow appropriate staff to input on policy recommendations.
12. Development of a public participation process on Council policy matters.
13. The following priorities for policy review:
 - Strategic/Corporate Planning
 - Council Orientation Process
 - Communications

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- Economic Development, water management and environment
 - Recreation Programming Policies
 - Terms of References for Committees of Council
 - CAO Performance Review
 - CAO-Council Covenant
 - Compensation Policy
 - Human Resource Policy — Staff Management, Development and Training
 - Whistle Blower Policy
 - Hiring of Personnel and Code of Conduct for All Staff
 - Follow-up to Staff Suggestions
 - Treatment of the Public; Responsiveness to Complaints.
14. The creation of an indexed Council policy manual specifically for Council policies and distinct from administration policies.
15. That the Committee of the Whole be revisited and implemented as the Governance and Priorities Committee and a Bylaw is created for its function.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

16. Council and the CAO meet at least twice annually to discuss issues and concerns, seek remedies for any new issues, review performance and plan for the following year and beyond.
17. The CAO have regular meetings with the Reeve and/or Deputy Reeve to discuss strategic policy matters, and relevant discussion from those meetings should be shared quickly with the other members of Council.
18. That the CAO develop a business plan with measurable objectives and provide an outcomes report to Council annually as a means of assessing the performance of the administration, which then becomes an important component of the measurements used to assess the CAO performance during the CAO's annual performance review.
19. A new Council-CAO Covenant be developed that formalizes relational protocols to support respect for each other's functions. A Council-CAO covenant commits both parties to seeking clarity in the relationship and to seriously undertaking to conduct their respective roles appropriately. The covenant should be accepted or endorsed "in principle" and be seen as an appendix to a CAO bylaw and/or contract.

ADMINISTRATION

20. That the CAO meet weekly with senior management team to address issues and to plan for the next Council meetings and to discuss action items.
21. That the senior management meet regularly with key staff to discuss important matters.

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22. That Leadership provide the CAO with recommendations and suggestions on the following fundamental governance matters:
 - How to address and/or respond to public issues.
 - To provide quality technical and professional advice for the CAO to bring to Council.
 - Impacts affecting long-term administrative and operational planning.
 - Development of business plans and performance measurements that can be implemented as a management tools for programs and services delivery.
 - Succession planning strategies.
 - Levels of delegation and empowerment of the management.
 - Maintain confidence in the financial information on capital projects.
23. The request for decision (RFD) process be strengthened, so that all matters that go before Council for decision are properly vetted and have sound reasoning, appropriate supporting documentation, recommendations and alternatives
24. Develop a sound Business Plan that supports the Council Strategic Plan. The Business Plan should empower staff to perform their duties appropriately, and review/modify performance measures to hold all staff accountable.
25. That the role of a Legislative Clerk reporting to the CAO be developed and implemented.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

26. That one position is delegated to the combined role of economic development and communication, and report to the CAO. These functions will have a profound effect on the role of Council and the County as it plans a strategy for its future economic well-being. It should also consider water management and environmental management within the organization.

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

27. That a process be developed to establish a comprehensive succession plan.
28. That a more focused emphasis on recruiting to important and/or vital positions.
29. That the administration strengthens its human resource function.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

30. That Council revisit its road master plan to develop an infrastructure development and maintenance strategy supported by a financial policy to ensure sufficient investment is made in infrastructure to help reduce the longer-term financial burden due to the cost of maintaining the infrastructure. Such a plan should contain an annual rebuild schedule.
31. That Council develop a Growth Management/Development Plan

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32. That Council establish an economic development plan and implementation strategy that improves regional development objectives. *(Typically a project of this type will take 3-4 months to develop and outline implementation needs. Municipal grants are often available to support these projects.)*

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

33. That a greater priority be placed on health and safety through the establishment of an operations safety officer. We suggest the safety officer role be put under protective services.
34. That more emphasis be placed on employee relations.
35. That all position descriptions be updated and reviewed annually; and that all staff performance reviews contain annual goals and objectives that can be measured.
36. That the current procurement policies, procedures and standards be reviewed by an independent party and report to Council. The General Manager of Corporate Services will provide recommendations with comments and any actions arising from the report to the CAO and Council.
37. That prior to any large purchase, the end user be consulted.

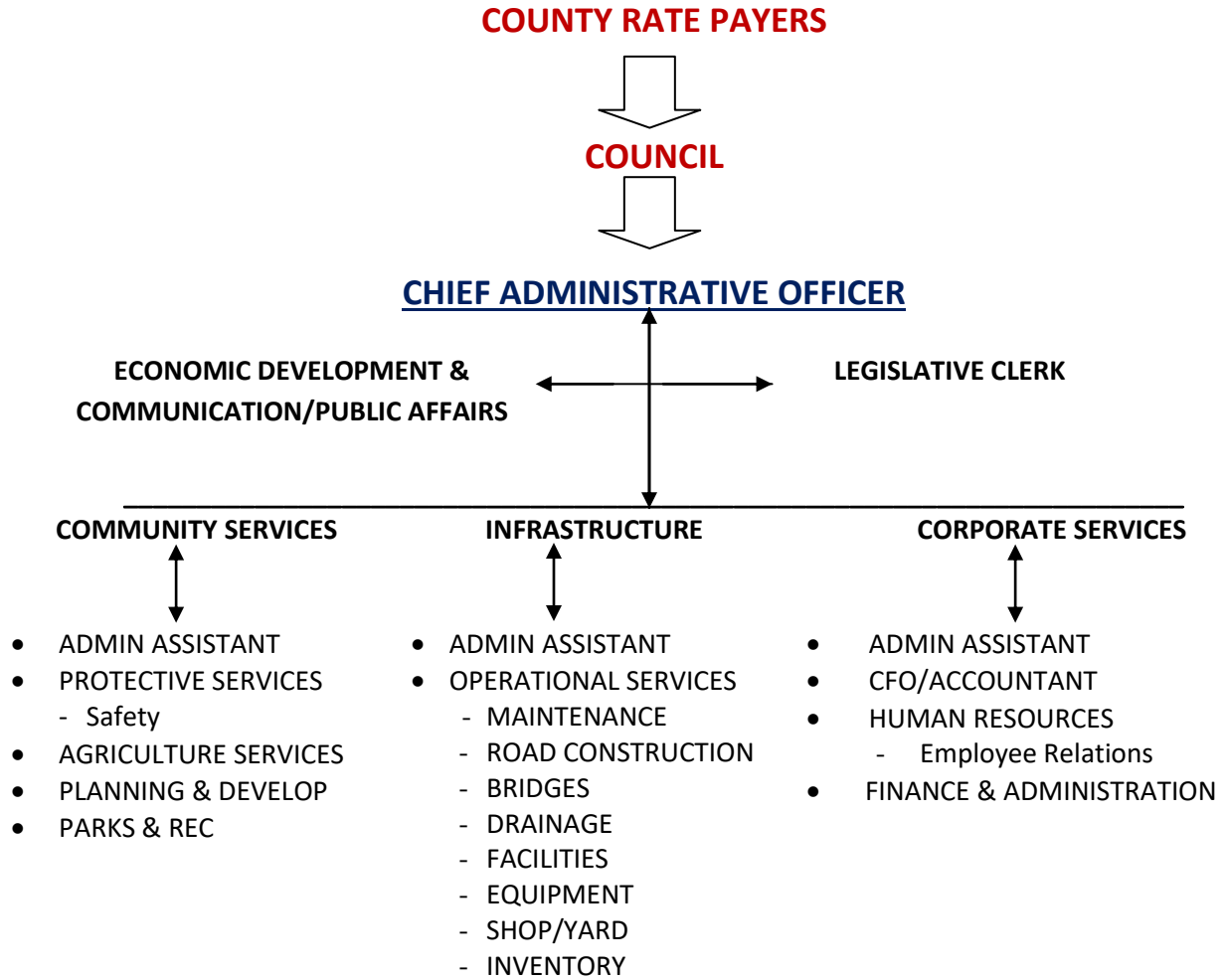
OPERATIONS

38. Prior to any major work or development planned in the Hamlets, the community be consulted and/or informed.
39. That the Maintenance Shop Foreman position be filled.
40. That the CAO fill the position of Economic Development Officer and Communication/Public Affairs Officer as soon as possible with a person who is educated, trained and experienced in the field of economic development, communication/public affairs.
41. Administration develops an automated inventory control system for equipment, tools, vehicles and parts.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION PROPOSED

42. That the CAO implement the proposed new organizational structure as outlined herein, including the development of a Senior Executive Team.
43. Added or adjusted functions include; 3 GM's, Economic Development/Communication, Legislative Clerk, Safety Officer, Employee Relations, Planner, 2 Field Supervisors. (We assume some adjustments from within and estimate this will increase the budget by between \$250,000 and \$325,000 annually).
44. That staff be given a presentation on roles and responsibilities within a municipality.

PROPOSED FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



THE FULL REPORT

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCESS

A.1 INTRODUCTION

The Council for Beaver County (County) initiated this corporate governance review as a way to assess Council and administration's performance. The Review objective is to have an independent analysis of the effectiveness of the current governance model. Council has a keen interest in effectively delivering programs, services and orderly government on behalf of the citizens and ratepayers of the County. This review will be seen as an important measurement of the organization's performance and the effectiveness of the role of the administration and Council in leading and guiding the performance of the organization.

This review, prepared by J.R. McDonald & Associates Inc., (consultant) is based on the terms of reference and is as comprehensive as possible, assessing the information provided by the County, as well as the interviews, observations and analysis of the governing body, both policy makers and implementers. Every effort has been made to be concise yet informative, and interviews of staff and others have been synthesized to focus on issues that are important to the performance of the County. Every effort has been made to protect the identity of those interviewed.

This Corporate Governance Review will provide Council and administration with an independent perspective that is:

- A snapshot in time,
- Meets the terms of reference, and
- Addresses matters identified during the term of the review.

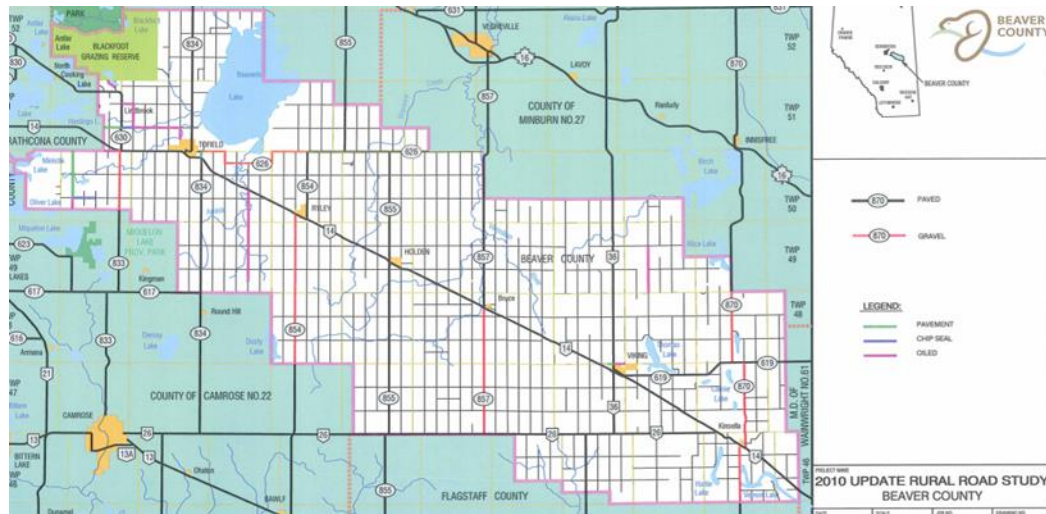
A.1.2 Beaver County Profile

❖ Some Facts

- Today the County is governed by a five-person Council. The Reeve is selected from the five Councillors
- The COUNTY covers 359,940 ha and has 2,600 km of road networks. It contains close to 3,000 dwellings with a population of approximately 6,000

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- The total population including the incorporated municipalities within its boundaries is approximately 10,000
- The County is situated close to the City of Edmonton with a greater Edmonton population of over one million.
- The County has easy access to key services including the Edmonton International Airport.



- The County is included in two provincial constituencies, Maskwacis-Wetaskewin the Honourable Rick Wilson MLA, and Camrose, Jackie Lovely MLA
- Annual Expenditure Budget funded by all sources in 2021 was \$27.5 million
- The Equalized Assessment for 2020 was reported at \$1.22 Billion

❖ Positive Aspects about the County

Before commencing this critical analysis of the County governance, there is a need to clarify and address the fundamental question that will arise during the reading of findings and observations. “Is everything wrong and nothing right?” Obviously, this review is based on the notion that things should be looked at through a critical eye with best practices as the comparison. However, not all is wrong with the County; in fact, Council, staff and citizens have a lot to be very proud of. Here are some positive indicators about the County:

- There is generally a progressive get-the-job-done attitude.
- There are many important projects completed or underway.
- The County provides a wide variety of services with a dedicated professional staff.
- Much good work is being accomplished, and many staff members are effectively engaged in their work.
- Service to the public has had its challenges but generally, administration sees it as most important.

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- While somewhat tight, there is currently sufficient revenue to support current infrastructure and programs.
- For the most part, the County roads are well maintained.
- There is a reasonable collegial working relationship with the two towns and two villages located within the County boundaries, as well as neighbouring municipal districts.
- Council is engaged in getting things done and wants them done efficiently and right.
- Each division has strong, dedicated and committed representation from each Councillor.
- There are significant interactions with agencies, boards and committees throughout that benefit the County and the region.
- The Reeve is engaged and wanting to be productive and is trying to be an effective leader, and for the most part Councillors and staff appear supportive.
- Some program service levels have been reviewed a number of times over this term in office.
- Most departments are proud of their accomplishments.
- While there is some, it does not appear that there are excessive public complaints about programs and services; this seems to indicate a general satisfaction by ratepayers and stakeholders.
- Many of the County accomplishments represent a positive, collective effort of past and current Councils and administrations.

A.2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The objective is to provide a critical assessment of the current operations, governance and functions of Council, management and administration and recommendations for change to assist the County in its goal of achieving greater effectiveness in its governance structure and abilities. One of the great benefits of a corporate governance review is that it captures the present situation in a reasonably accurate manner and provides recommendations that are sensitive to the culture of the community and the organization.

The terms of reference include the following:

1. Review the functioning of Council as a legislative and leadership body and to determine if improvements should or could be made.
2. Evaluate the current working relationship and management style of the CAO with Council and County.
3. Interview each Councillor, CAO, Director, Superintendents and most of the employees.
4. Assess and make recommendations on the appropriate role and responsibilities of the Chief Administrative Officer.
5. Assess current practices for preparing Council information and review the methods senior staff uses to prepare Council for handling issues including public inquiries.

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6. Review the present legislative decision-making processes including the staff reports, reporting minutes, time allocations, staff resources and future needs for standing committees. Identify how Council can best fulfil its governance obligations and expectations.
7. Review and identify recommendations for change that would improve the organization structure to address any perceived deficiencies or enhance service delivery.
8. Assess the current corporate direction/vision for the future.
9. Review the current strategic planning functions and assesses the process for identifying community needs or issues.
10. Review the current management practices, administrative procedures, performance measurement system and the guiding role of management.
11. Assess the adequacy of the current key job descriptions and recommended changes as necessary.
12. Assess the expectations of senior positions and the current capacity to perform at expected levels.
13. Assess the communication patterns between Council, management and staff.
14. Overview current operational planning, staff/resource allocation levels and workloads with a view to determining effectiveness of each departments operation.
15. Identify any concerns with service levels.
16. Suggest any more cost-effective methods in which to deliver services.
17. Review quality of financial advice being provided to Council and Senior Management.
18. Assess the processes for budget and financial management controls including information systems, planning and practices.
19. Provide opinion as to whether employee numbers are appropriate considering the size of the County.
20. Provide an opinion as to whether or not the current County policies are effective and beneficial and of course any missing policies.

A.3 STUDY PROCESS

A.3.1 Conducting the Review

Every effort has been made to complete a thorough review. This review has been conducted in a professional manner with input sought from all members of Council, senior management and staff from all departments. The Consultant has also received considerable input from stakeholders and ratepayers. The readers should recognize the limitations that a snapshot in time poses. Review methodology is one that is founded on the desire to gain a clear understanding of how the Beaver County functions at present, and to identify what changes are or may be necessary in order to increase the effectiveness of the governance of the organization.

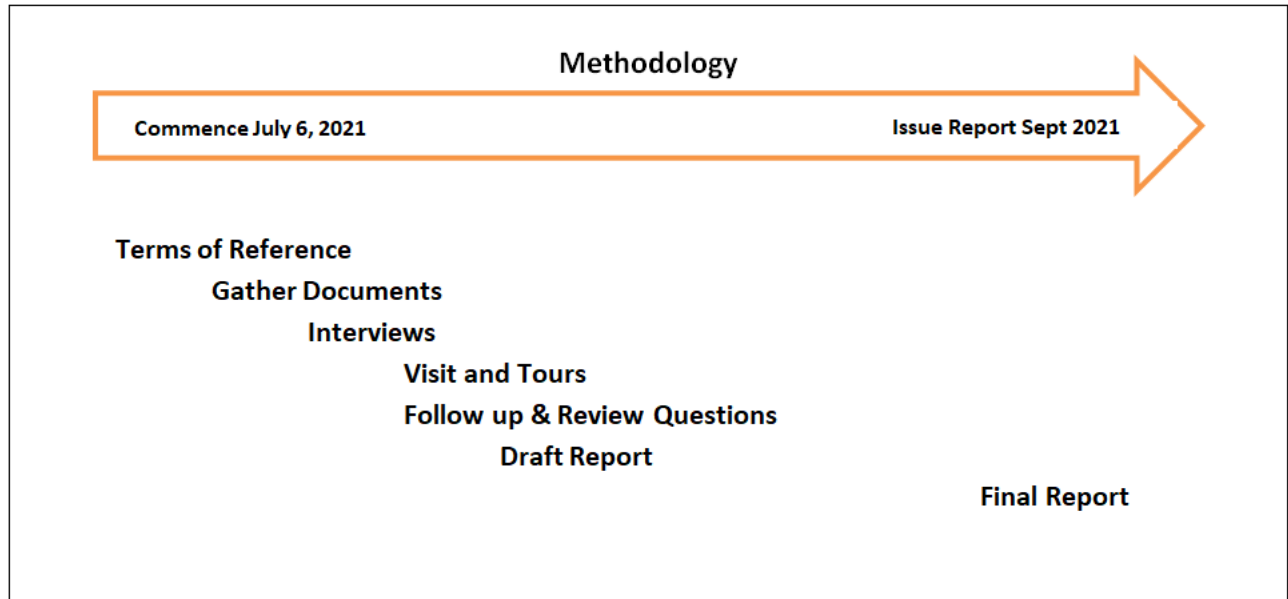
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Work began in early July of 2021 when the consultant met with a group of local staff to introduce the review objectives and answer questions. The Reeve also submitted a letter of introduction to all staff and external stakeholders.

The consultant interviewed all Council members, the interim CAO, senior management and almost all staff members (a few casual staff and some operators were not interviewed). In addition contact and interviews were held with all the four incorporated municipalities CAO's (within the County) and in some cases the Mayors. Importantly the consultant also attended several Council meetings and other in-house meetings with staff. Key and relevant County documents provided by the management and staff were reviewed, including:

- Agendas and minutes
- Bylaws and policies
- Position descriptions and wage/salary grids and benefits program
- Budgets for this Council's term in office, budget preparation documents, and audit reports from the last two years
- Quarterly reports and variance reports
- Capital plans
- Councillor committee's terms of reference
- Copies of Requests for Decision
- Council strategic plans
- Specific performance reviews
- Shared services and mutual aid agreements
- Land-use Bylaw, ASPs, IDP, MDP, ICF's
- Relevant reports, studies and planning documents.
- Inter-municipal agreements
- Union CBA
- Contracts and other agreements
- Other related correspondence from both internal and external sources

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A.3.2 Our Review Team

The Review team consisted of three professional consultants:

- Rick McDonald, CMC (lead consultant)
- Darrell Toma, MSc, PAg (Dist.), FCMC, CAC (conducted Interviews)
- Wayne Bullock, Public Works Expertise (conducted interviews with operation staff)

A.3.3 Purpose of this Review

Beaver County Council initiated this review in order to identify any issues that may be creating challenges or difficulty for Council specifically, and the County as a whole operationally. Council was especially interested to have an independent third party do a review as a measurement of Council's term in office and its success at implementing its vision and mission.

Council is aware of the challenge of operating in a diverse mix of agriculture, industrial and country residential semi-urban cultures. Council indicated that they wanted an independent assessment as to how the County has progressed during this term in the face of significant challenges. Council understands the importance of working together with County administration to achieve their goals and reach a measure of success. This review is intended to support this and future Council's to refocus and provide insight and recommendations for improvement.

SECTION B: WHAT WORKS?

B.1 COMPONENTS OF A SOUND ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM

There are a number of key interdependent components to a sound municipal organization. These should not be considered as “one offs”, but rather essential components or elements of good governance. It is expected to find key principles for the governing of the municipality. Some include:

- Governance is a function of ownership, not management
- Council represents the owners and is the link between ratepayers and management
- Council’s authority comes via the Municipal Government Act and can only be implemented through Council policy or resolution
- The end objective is to achieve results for those who Council represents
- Council policies describe what is important for the County – they create a sense of self-discipline
- Council sets prudent limitations on and for administration expectations
- Council takes considerable time and is sensitive to the stakeholders, ratepayers and staff when making policies – usually they are built through steps from the larger to smaller policies
- Council must regularly monitor policies and address any ambiguities
- Council via delegation to the CAO set in place through policy guidelines expectations for programs and service
- Council must show accountability to the ratepayers – addressing their values, needs and objectives

The following are aspects of what we look for and what works when good governance principles and practices are in place.

B.1.1 Council Leadership

- ❖ Council members understand their legislated mandate, both as individual Councillors and as a Council as a whole.
- ❖ A vision statement is developed by Council to guide future initiatives of both Council and administration.
- ❖ A set of goals is provided by Council to establish the stage for specific targets for each year, and are to be followed by the administration.
- ❖ An ongoing Council policy development regime is in place to establish guiding policies directing the administration to take specified actions in anticipated circumstances.

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- ❖ Council is focused on the big picture and broader issues which they and the community believe will impact the future of the County (the what), rather than focusing on issues that ought to be handled by an effective and trusted administration (the how).

B.1.2 Clarity of Roles

- ❖ A written role statement for the Reeve, as the CEO of the County, which underscores the Reeve's relationship to Council as a whole, any legislated and functional roles, and the Reeve's relationship to the CAO. (Section 154(1))
- ❖ A written role statement of Council as a whole and for individual Councillors which details their corporate and individual responsibilities. (Section 153 & Part 6))
- ❖ A written role statement for the role of the Chief Administrative Officer and the legislated authority under which this position is to function. (Section 207, 208(1 & 2))

B.1.3 Professional Administrative Leadership

- ❖ A Council-supported administrative vision statement flowing from the Council vision statement.
- ❖ A set of administrative goals and objectives consistent with those of Council, which set specific measurable targets for the following year and beyond.
- ❖ The CAO, with support from the administration (*"administration" used to designate management as a team*), drafts appropriate policies at the direction of Council for Council approval.

B.1.4 Trust, Confidence and Respect

- ❖ Evidence of respect between members of Council and its administration.
- ❖ Trust and confidence in the CAO as evidenced when the CAO states that something has or will be done, the Reeve or Council do not feel they have to watch over his/her shoulder to ensure it is done, rather the effort is complete and can be observed.
- ❖ Comments during Council meetings are courteous and positive, and any exchange at the Council table between members of Council and the CAO or the administration is appropriate.

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B.1.5 Council Effectiveness

- ❖ A comprehensive orientation process within 90 days following the Council election; this process is thorough and balanced, providing Council with a clear picture of the role of Council, each Councillor and the administration. (Section 202.1(1))
- ❖ A further comprehensive overview of the many of the main programs and services occurs in the weeks following the Council election.
- ❖ Council is focused on making the right decisions and is providing the appropriate stewardship.
- ❖ Council receives comprehensive advice and the best analysis possible prior to making a decision.
- ❖ Councillors are adequately prepared for all meetings by being briefed in advance on complex matters, and by perusing the briefing materials made available by the administration and other sources.
- ❖ Council has developed a Procedural Bylaw for the operation of all formal Council activities, including Council meetings, Committee of the Whole, and any other Council committee.

B.1.6 Decision-Making Structure

- ❖ There is a clear decision-making process in place for administration.
- ❖ All Council and Committee meetings are open to the public, including the Council's decision-making process.
- ❖ Debate by Councillors is encouraged and competing points of view are to be expected. (Respect for each other is a basis upon which good debate takes place.)

B.1.7 Administrative Practices

- ❖ The administration follows Council policy and is focused on making fair and impartial decisions in the best interest of the County, without forgetting the individual needs of community members.
- ❖ CAO carefully assesses the input provided by various departments before presenting advice to Council.
- ❖ Authority is delegated by the CAO to staff that are encouraged to make decisions within their area of responsibility.
- ❖ The organizational structure should not restrict or hinder, but rather facilitate decision making. (functional capacity is evident)
- ❖ The number of positions reporting directly to the CAO should be manageable.

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- ❖ The organization demonstrates a reasonable degree of synergy.
- ❖ The organizational design should be functional and flexible, providing competence and capacity in key service delivery areas.

B.1.8 Openness to Change

- ❖ There is an attitude of receptiveness and responsiveness to quality improvements.
- ❖ There is a willingness to try new ways of doing things.
- ❖ Continuous assessment of current methods and functions as to whether they are still needed or appropriate.

B.1.9 Communication

- ❖ There is clear and concise communication policy guiding how the Council, the Reeve acting on behalf of Council and the CAO will communicate regularly with residents and ratepayers as to its vision, policies, plans and issues/challenges.
- ❖ Formal communication tools are used to deliver the County messages to citizens and ratepayers, and to receive input from the public.
- ❖ Internal communication strategies are followed to keep all staff informed and involved in the direction of the County.

B.1.10 Culture of the County

- ❖ The citizens and ratepayers are informed and understand the current process for decision making by the Council.
- ❖ There is a behavioural policy in place that emphasizes the value that Council and staff place on each other and the residents. The focus of a behavioural policy is to treat each other and all residents with great respect, and action their requests promptly and with courtesy.
- ❖ All policy issues are referred to all Council members concurrently; administrative issues are dealt with in accordance with the powers and authorities granted to the CAO and as delegated from there.

B.1.11 Financial Program

- ❖ In accordance with the MGA and Council's vision, there are long-term plans and goals in place for the financing of both capital and operational initiatives.
- ❖ There is a formal budget development process. This process supports Council's Strategic Plan.
- ❖ There is a formal Council-approved annual budget for both administration and capital costs.
- ❖ All uses and investment of County reserve funds are guided by Council policies on the purpose and use of each reserve.
- ❖ Financial reports are provided regularly and are signed off by the CFO (senior finance person) and CAO. These reports generally focus on the exceptions or variances to approved financial plans and budgets; Council is not required to insert itself in the financial details, but should be prepared to ask appropriate questions when the need is present.
- ❖ Council retains an independent accredited Auditor. Audits are performed annually.
- ❖ Annual audit management letters from the auditing firm are responded to by Administration and dealt with promptly.

B.1.12 Municipal Facilities

- ❖ Municipal facilities are designed in such a way as to offer services effectively and efficiently.
- ❖ Municipal office contains appropriate signage to encourage ease of transactions for the public.
- ❖ The municipal facilities are appropriately sited to permit ease of access to the greatest number of current and future residents.
- ❖ Technology is used which keeps pace with the requirements of the organization and is maintained promptly and in accordance with properly scripted performance standards and manuals.

B.1.13 Performance Measurement

- ❖ Administration establishes business plans including specific and measurable targets that are set at the beginning of each budget year.
- ❖ Expected deliverables are identified.
- ❖ Performance results are measured annually.

B.1.15 Information Management and Technology

- ❖ An information management and technology system is in place and is governed by a comprehensive set of policies.
- ❖ An information technology (IT) plan is in place and actively applied.
- ❖ Information technology is continuously updated to meet the needs and demands of Council and management.
- ❖ A timely and responsive IT maintenance system is in place.

SECTION C: ROLES, DUTIES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

C.1 THE PURPOSE OF A RURAL MUNICIPALITY IN ALBERTA

According to the Municipal Government Act (MGA), Section 3:

“The purposes of a municipality are:

to provide good government,

to foster the well-being of the environment

to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality,

to develop and maintain safe and viable communities. and

to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to plan, deliver and fund intermunicipal services.”

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) does not describe how these purposes are to be delivered leaving it up to the Municipal Council acting in the best interests of the people and communities it serves. MGA Section 6 notes that *“A municipality has natural person powers, except to the extent that they are limited by this or any other enactment.”* Here are some important principles regarding roles, duties and performance indicators that apply to Beaver County.

C.2 THE ROLES OF A COUNCIL

C.2.1 Governance

There is a significant difference between the role of Council and the administration; albeit they are highly interdependent. When a Council meets to make decisions, it represents and delivers on

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behalf of the people (ratepayers, residents, administration, and stakeholders) as it determines what policies are needed to accomplish the results desired. Administrations role is to determine the best administrative or operational actions in-order to implement Council decisions. Council and administration are a team, and the role of each team member needs to be clear in order for the team to perform effectively and successfully.

When roles are clearly defined, understood and practiced there will generally be more effective and efficient governance. Many of the problems facing all types of Boards and Councils' today stem from a misunderstanding (or abuse of the application of) the basic roles within a governance structure. Often this leads to misunderstanding, unclear motives, animosity, and resentment. We often see that when there is evidence of micro-management by Council, or a group of Councillors, there can often be found a clouded understanding leading to inappropriate use of authority.

C.2.2 Council's Understanding of Process

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) provides direction and sufficient empowerment for the Community to elect a group of citizens to form a municipal council to lead them. Council leadership is through establishing guiding policies, strategic goals, and clear objectives. This is the key message of the MGA—the expectation of Council is to lead.

Leadership should be the main focus of a Council. A Council exhibits leadership when it represents and clearly articulates the priorities for the overall community; seeks public input on key issues; clearly understands the issues; and is prepared to stay committed to what it believes to be the right thing to do. A Council must clearly grasp the enormity of its responsibilities; set in place appropriate up-to-date policies; and establish clear decision making processes that allow Council to perform prudently and often judiciously.

Council must ensure that it is not unnecessarily moving into the administration role. In fact this is strictly forbidden under the MGA. It will also set in place appropriate processes and protocols to ensure that administration does not step unnecessarily into the role of Council.

In today's modern era of governing, the concept of SERVANT LEADERSHIP has become the desired approach and is expected by the citizens of the community. The very essence of running for Council should in our opinion be based on the desire to serve. The elements of servant leadership should produce effective governance by serving the interest of those governed. If the motive is not service, or the culture is something other than service, (i.e. command and control, or personal gain) it is very quickly obvious that there is a lack of understanding of the role and responsibility associated with being a Councillor.

C.3 COUNCILLOR DUTIES

Section 153 of the MGA outlines the duties of Councillors.

C.3.1 Interest of the Entire County

The MGA, Section 153 (a) states that a Council is expected:

to consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to Council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality.

Section 153 (a) of the MGA provides clear and essential guidance for the well-being of the County. It points out that the County Council has an obligation to consider issues and make decisions that benefit the County as a whole. Council must give equal weight to ideas, opinions and suggestions from all Councillors and the public from all divisions of the County, and avoid over-emphasizing any particular vested interest. This is not to say an issue is not important, but it is important to establish guidelines to ensure all decisions are considered in relation to the wellbeing of the entire County.

C.3.2 Developing Policies and Programs

Section 153 (b) of the MGA states that a Council is expected:

to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;

Council is elected to determine what is in the best interests of its residents and ratepayers, and to determine what, in Council's opinion, can be realistically incorporated into the municipal plans and annual budget.

C.3.3 Participation in Council and Committee Meetings

Section 153 (c) of the MGA states that a Councillor is expected:

to participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by council.

While all Councillors are entitled to participate equally in all regular meetings of Council, it does not mean they each need to speak on every matter, but rather that they clearly understand they are free to speak when they wish to.

Section 153 (c) provides that each member is *expected* to participate in meetings; therefore, each Councillor must attend and should be reasonably prepared to take part in a Council or Council Committee meetings by reading the background materials provided by the CAO or delegated officer. Councillors should research and prepare themselves for each topic to be discussed. Council

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must ensure that it has all the information and has an opportunity to challenge the issue before it through debate and information.

C.3.4 CAO Information and Advice

Section 153 (d) of the MGA states that a Council is expected:

to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer or a person designated by the chief administrative officer.

In order for Council to be effective, it is important that Council and the CAO have an open communication system so as to ensure they are provided with the proper information. Background reports from the CAO should be thorough, comprehensive and if possible concise (if not a summary should be available), enabling Council to ask informed questions during a Council, or a committee-of-the-whole meeting.

C.3.5 Confidentially

Section 153 (e) of the MGA states that a Council is expected:

to keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council or council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public

All decisions of Council must be made in public; however, there are specific matters that require confidential discussion such as land sales and purchases, legal advice, and labour relations or personnel matters. Council, for the most part, should not discuss these types of matters in public; all matters discussed in confidence (closed session) must remain confidential. The ramifications of leaking confidential information can be extremely costly.

C.3.6 General Requirements under the MGA

While there are many sections of the MGA that speak to the responsibilities of Council, those which appear to be particularly central to a corporate governance review are as follows:

Section 180(1) A council may act only by resolution or bylaw.

Section 181(1) A bylaw or resolution of council is not valid unless passed at a council meeting held in public at which there is a quorum present.

*Section 183(1) A councillor attending a council meeting **must** vote on a matter put to a vote at the meeting unless the councillor is required or permitted to abstain from voting under this or any other enactment.*

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Section 183(2) The council must ensure that each abstention and the reasons for the abstention are recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 201(1) A council is responsible for:

- *developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;*
- *making sure that the powers, duties and functions of the municipality are appropriately carried out;*
- *carrying out the powers, duties and functions expressly given to it under this or any other enactment.*

Section 201(2) A council must not exercise a power or function or perform a duty that is by this or another enactment or bylaw specifically assigned to the chief administrative officer or a designated officer.

Section 202(2) Only a council may pass bylaws.

Section 205(1) Every council must establish by bylaw a position of chief administrative officer.

Section 205.1 A council must provide the chief administrative officer with an annual written performance evaluation of the results the chief administrative officer has achieved with respect to fulfilling the chief administrative officer's responsibilities under Section 207.

The MGA imposes specific authorities and responsibilities, obligations and constraints on a municipal Council. For example, Council is responsible for ensuring the appropriate policies and programs for its municipality are put in place for the betterment of the municipality.

It is important to note that the MGA, S.201 (2) directs that Council in not to perform the responsibilities assigned to the CAO. In this respect, a Council is expected to function much like the board of trustees of any corporation. Council leads by setting the course, monitoring progress, making guiding adjustments, providing appropriate policy leadership, and ensuring the appropriate checks and balances are in place.

In addition to the legislated roles and responsibilities of Councillors, in order for Council to be successful a Council must be responsible to:

- ❖ work to provide effective elected leadership through cooperation and collaboration with each other;
- ❖ ensure that all reasonable background information is made available to Council to aid in its decision-making process;
- ❖ advise the public on how they might become involved in the political process;
- ❖ obtain a clear understanding of the priorities and requirements of the citizens and ratepayers;
- ❖ ensure that peace is maintained, public safety is provided and good government is delivered;
- ❖ respond to ratepayer complaints in an effective manner;
- ❖ obtain advice from the CAO;

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- ❖ participate in and act as liaison to various committees, commissions and boards that provide advice to Council;
- ❖ support, facilitate and encourage the CAO and administration to deliver effective and efficient programs and services;
- ❖ monitor the performance of the County delivery of programs and services and advise the CAO of any issues or concerns;
- ❖ obtain a clear understanding of fiscal indicators and to ensure proper monitoring of the fiscal health of the County;
- ❖ review and approve the annual budget;
- ❖ ensure that the CAO has appropriate financial monitoring procedures in place;
- ❖ establish mechanisms that support the CAO and administration in forwarding ideas and opportunities which, in the opinion of the CAO, may improve or enhance services or service levels for the residents and ratepayers;
- ❖ provide the CAO with appropriate opportunities to take training and develop as their senior manager;
- ❖ support training and development programs developed for the administration staff by the CAO; and
- ❖ implement Council's vision by developing and approving policies, bylaws and resolutions that steer the County and provide clear direction to the public as well as to the administration regarding Council's direction.

C.4 SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP CRITERIA

Starting with the 2013 elections, Council mandates changed from three year to four year terms. Some might call elections the report card time. Measuring whether or not a Council or Councillor is perceived by the community as providing effective leadership is generally based on a number of inter-related criteria:

- ❖ Has there been strong decisive leadership by Council on important or difficult issues?
- ❖ Does Council stand by its decisions even when there may be pressure in opposition?
- ❖ Are Council meetings effective with formal attention to procedures and decorum, and which lead to quality decisions?
- ❖ Is there respect between Council and its administration?
- ❖ Is there clear Council direction given through following a strategic plan, and then implemented by an approved business plan?

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- ❖ Are there sound policies and appropriate, responsive procedures, or is Council prone to change its mind by the “squeaky wheel” effect or momentary whims?
- ❖ Does the Reeve understand the role and responsibility, and is the Reeve respected by the rest of Council?
- ❖ Is there evidence of trust and respect in the relationship between Council and its CAO?
- ❖ Does Council make reasonable and prompt decisions?
- ❖ Is there a clearly defined budget process that includes some opportunity for planned public input?
- ❖ Do citizens and ratepayers feel their needs are being met and that the County shows a sensible approach by understanding needs, issues and challenges and their implications and priority?

C.5 A COMPREHENSIVE ORIENTATION PROCESS

Section 201.1(1) *“A municipality must, in accordance with the regulations, offer orientation training to each councillor, to be held within 90 days after the councillor takes oath of office.”*

- ❖ It has been the consultant’s observation over many years of performing reviews that a municipal Council’s abilities are often hindered due to a lack of understanding of the issues and clear role clarity. For Council to make appropriate decisions to address key issues and provide effective leadership, it is important that all members begin with the same (or equal) base of knowledge, especially as to what a Councillor’s function entails. The importance cannot be overstated that an effective orientation is vital to the success of a Council; not only for those who have been elected for the first time but also for those who have served on Council for more than one term.
- ❖ An effective orientation involves a detailed review of the respective roles of Reeve, Councillor, CAO and department heads; a review of current issues facing the community; an introduction to each department head; a tour of key community facilities and potential problem areas; a review of legal requirements (by the County solicitor); and a review of key policies; etc. An orientation might best be facilitated and performed by an independent professional advisor.
- ❖ A further compliment to the organizations orientation immediately after the election would be a further orientation in 6 to 8 months after the first orientation and then training on a regular basis.

C.6 REEVE – CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL

Section 150 (2) of the MGA establishes the appointment of the Reeve as the chief elected official (CEO) of the County. The CEO is a key figure in the County because of the significant influence this position can exercise.

C.6.1 Chief Elected Official – Reeve

The MGA describes the Reeve as the chief elected official.

The Legislated Role

Section 154 (1) A chief elected official, in addition to performing the duties of a councillor, must:

- (a) Preside when in attendance at a council meeting unless a bylaw provides that another councillor or other person is to preside, and*
- (b) Perform any other duty imposed on a chief elected official by this or any other enactment or bylaw.*

Section 154 (2) The Chief elected official is a member of all council committees and all bodies to which council has the right to appoint members under this Act, unless the council provides otherwise.

Section 154 (3) Despite subsection (2), the chief elected official may be a member of a board, commission, subdivision authority or development authority established under Part 17 on if the chief elected official is appointed in the chief elected official's personal name.

- ❖ The Chief Elected Official is expected to preside at all meetings of Council whenever present; cause the laws governing the municipality to be executed; and communicate measures to Council which will, in the CEO's opinion, improve the quality of governance. One cannot understate the importance of the role of the Reeve and his/her inherent value to the betterment of the community.
- ❖ The Reeve is the focal point for contact and can establish a significant presence in the County, the region, and with the provincial government (and sometimes Federal Government). The Reeve plays a very important role in working with the administration to identify and lead improvements and gain support from key funding agencies.
- ❖ Effective Reeve leadership requires that Council has provided a clear vision of the future of the County.
- ❖ The CAO is delegated by Council the day-to-day "administration" of the organization. The MGA requires Council to hire a qualified administrator (CAO) capable of managing the County pursuant to the MGA and within Council's bylaws, policies and guidelines.
- ❖ The Reeve is elected as a political leader and as a representative of Council, and is not expected to be trained as a municipal administrator. As the elected official, the Reeve's focus is on understanding County issues and challenges and leading Council to successful resolutions.
- ❖ Obviously the Reeve's success depends on the style of the individual, their leadership skills and the support of Council and their fit with the culture of the organization. The basis of the role is political not administrative.

C.6.2 Some Expectations of the Reeve

(a) Chairperson of Council

The Reeve is the chairperson for Council meetings. The most important function during Council meetings is to ensure Council business is completed in a timely and effective manner.

The Reeve needs to be aware of meeting protocol, the procedures bylaw, meeting policies, the personalities of Councillors, and the issues to be discussed at that meeting. The Reeve should be comfortable with meeting authority and with dispensing that authority clearly and fairly.

It is important for the CAO to brief the Reeve (sometimes an agenda committee) prior to any meeting with regard to each business matter on the agenda.

(b) Building Consensus

Keeping meeting decorum positive and focused is often one of the most difficult tasks of any meeting chairperson. The Reeve facilitates and acts as the mediator during meetings building consensus and finding common ground between conflicting or opposite points of view. Bringing together the views of Council colleagues and identifying a reasonable compromise, if possible, becomes an integral component of the Reeve/Chairperson's responsibilities. The challenge is guiding the conversation so that when possible compromise can be reached and a reasonable solution identified.

The Reeve, as chair and leader of the County should normally be impartial on an issue before Council until the issue has been presented and debated, at which time it becomes appropriate for the Reeve to share his/her view on the issue. Once the decision is made by Council the Reeve represents that position. The challenge for Reeves within a divisional system is to balance the Reeve's allegiances to his/her own division issues with those of the entire County. The Reeve's divisional issues may well be at odds with those of other divisions.

(c) Relation to Staff

Great care is needed by all Council members to stay out of the administrations prevue and thus not perceived to be managing the County. The role of a Reeve is to be the political leader of the Council; however, Council and administration often look to the Reeve to provide a connection between the policy makers and the administration.

As the leader of Council and the County, the Reeve is expected to be Council's main spokesperson on the political spectrum and to ensure the views of Council as a whole are understood. All other matters are to be handled by the CAO so as to avoid any confusion and potential undermining of the CAO's office.

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(d) Confidant to Council

Due to the Reeve's leadership position, the Reeve has considerable contact with the public, organizations and other levels of government; e.g., in the County with the provincial government, towns of Tofield and Viking and Villages of Ryley and Holden etc. It is an implied expectation on behalf of Council that any information the Reeve becomes privy to will be shared with all Councillors as soon as realistically possible

(e) Ex-Officio to Boards and Committees

The Reeve as a Councillor may be appointed to various boards and committees. The Reeve's role is to reflect the views of Council (as they exist in terms of policy, resolutions, bylaws and informal debates/discussions) to the external agency.

The Reeve is ex-officio to all boards and committees appointed by Council, unless Council provides direction otherwise.

(f) Ceremonial Responsibilities

The Reeve is the spokesman for the County unless delegated, and as such the Reeves duties will likely include special occasions such as Civic Day, Remembrance Day, annual parades, high school graduation, business openings, special meetings, etc. Faithful application of this role as a public face of the County helps to develop community pride.

While these public events are important, due to the size of the County not all need to be attended by the Reeve, nor should they be. Due to travel and timing, the Reeve may want or need to delegate some public appearances to other Councillors, on a case-by-case basis.

(g) Contact for Jurisdictions

Unless Council directs otherwise, political contacts with other levels of government or jurisdictions are normally conducted through the Reeve. At times, the Reeve may delegate the contact to the Deputy Reeve or another Councillor.

Opinions, commentary or decisions of Council should be conveyed through the Reeve.

C.7 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

C.7.1 Introduction

The Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) represents Council's main link with the rest of the organization and is expected to act as the channel through which the administration reports. As

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policy advisor to Council, the CAO needs to exhibit prudent wisdom guided by training, experience and background in municipal government, especially in Alberta's legislative environment.

For the CAO to be successful there must be a high level of trust and confidence between the Council and the CAO. When there is trust and confidence in the CAO Council will not need to become involved in exercising authority over the administration.

If Council does not exhibit trust and confidence in the CAO Councillors will begin to look to other sources for advice, either from others such as department heads or internally to other members of Council. If the relationship falters, CAO decisions begin to be made by Council and bypass the CAO level of decision-making. This puts the Council in violation of the MGA.

When the CAO is functioning as intended, the administration is found to be researching issues; providing well thought out options; assessing and weighing those of most merit; and recommending to Council the option or series of options that appear to have the greatest merit. The CAO has a significant impact on Council's decision-making and success and the CAO's impact on senior management and staff performance and perceived sense of integration is integral to the success of the County.

When the CAO is providing appropriate levels of service and advice to Council, there will be clear indicators such as:

- ❖ Administrative services and procedures are clear and well defined.
- ❖ There is an effective organizational structure.
- ❖ Roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated in employee position descriptions reflecting current duties
- ❖ Supervisory staff is empowered to make decisions related to their sphere of responsibility.
- ❖ The CAO clearly supports staff on all fronts and will publicly protect staff in the face of any criticism from the public or from the Council.
- ❖ Performance indicators are in place to identify inappropriate performance and any inappropriate performance is addressed.
- ❖ There are regular productive administrative meetings with the department heads.
- ❖ The CAO consistently provides to Council organizational performance feedback
- ❖ Training and employee development is a priority.
- ❖ Safety and security of residents, personnel and assets is a priority.
- ❖ There are appropriate and competitive compensation plans and personnel policies.
- ❖ There is mutual confidence between the Council and the CAO, and the system is working very well.

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- ❖ Confidence and trust that is based on a belief by both the CAO and Council that they should not interfere unduly in the role of the other, and confidence that the CAO is fully capable of fulfilling the role.
- ❖ There is a degree of comfort that the CAO is competent, fair-minded, wise, ethical and of strong character, able to focus on administrative matters and not become involved in the policy role of Council, retains confidences, is a capable and strong leader for staff, is a team player, and has high moral standards.
- ❖ There is evidence the CAO is proactive regarding any new initiatives or policies which will place the municipality at the forefront of public sector bodies.
- ❖ The CAO functions effectively as the chief policy advisor.

C.7.2 Authority and Responsibility

The Chief Administrative Officer is established and receives authority through:

- ❖ MGA, specifically Sections 207 and 208,
- ❖ Council bylaw established to appoint the CAO position,
- ❖ CAO position description,
- ❖ CAO and Council contract.

The MGA provides:

Section 207 The chief administrative officer

(a) is the administrative head of the municipality;

(b) ensures that the policies and programs of the municipality are implemented;

(c) advises and informs the council on the operation and affairs of the municipality;

(d) performs the duties and exercises the powers and functions assigned to a chief administrative officer by this and other enactment's or assigned by council.

C.7.3 Reporting Relationship

The role of a CAO is set out in legislation as being subservient to the Council as a whole. Although the CAO may receive guidance from the Reeve, this is through policy direction from Council.

C.7.4 Reeve and CAO Relationship

There must be a formal working relationship between the CAO and Reeve, which is very important to the effective functioning of the County.

- ❖ The Reeve represents Council leadership and therefore is seen as Council's appointed spokesperson to provide counsel to the CAO. Accepting this counsel helps the CAO to provide policy advice to Council that the CAO believes is appropriate for Council as a whole.
- ❖ The Reeve's advice and counsel is helpful to the CAO in understanding Council's concerns with regard to their issues. The Reeve – CAO relationship should be such that the Reeve is able to share concerns from other Councillors with respect to the CAO's performance; offering the CAO an opportunity to address those concerns professionally.
- ❖ The MGA does not provide the Reeve with authority to supervise the CAO. The CAO and Reeve meet frequently to discuss coordination of the administrative and political agenda however it is Council that directs the CAO through bylaw, policies and approved procedures. Without clear policies, the relationship between the Reeve and CAO can sometimes be strained.

C.7.5 CAO – Administration Relationship

- ❖ The CAO is the administrative head, which implies the CAO has full accountability for the actions of subordinates.
- ❖ The CAO implements a functional organization structure that will effectively and efficiently deliver sound administration and implementation of Council-approved programs and services.
- ❖ The CAO is the mentor for managers and subordinates in the organization. It is clear that the organization mimics their style of management and decision-making by observing and following the CAO.
- ❖ The CAO is responsible for any employee appearing before Council in terms of making reports, giving presentations or policy advice. All reports, presentations and requests for decisions that go to Council by administration should be pre-approved by the CAO. The CAO should introduce the item to Council, and only then should the CAO refer matters to employees to provide information and details so as to give Council sufficient understanding.
- ❖ As CAO, he/she directs and coordinates the role and responsibilities of all staff approving functions and activities that are to be carried out by subordinate staff with particular emphasis on department heads.

C.7.6 Public Relationship

- ❖ The CAO is not expected to be the primary contact for the public on political matters. That is the role of the Reeve and Councillors. Understandably however, the public expects transparency in its civic services and its decision-makers are to be visible and accessible.
- ❖ Due to the nature of the CAO's role, obviously the CAO will have some degree of profile with the public. A municipality is required to operate publicly; therefore, the decisions and actions of Council and the CAO are open to public scrutiny and feedback.

C.8 DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES

One of the key questions this report attempts to answer is whether the present style of decision making either facilitates or inhibits good decision making. The business of running a multi-faceted corporation such as Beaver County requires processes that support sound decision making. The processes impact how the organization conducts its business. Questions asked about the business of the County will often be: is it open for business? Are Council and administration user friendly or difficult to do business with? Are the processes convoluted or simple?

- ❖ Generally there should be simplicity in how a municipality conducts its business, such as:
 - Is it open for business and easy to access?
 - Is the process for decision making transparent and straight-forward?
 - Are there clear procedures for achieving the intended results?
 - Do those involved have the proper authority?
 - Are results of decisions communicated effectively?
- ❖ Information provided by the administration at Council meetings is critical to the decision-making process. When council does not receive sound advice, the resulting decisions are not always the best ones possible. Professional, informed and very careful thought should be given to the how Council meetings are prepared for and what planning, intent, procedures and follow-up action is needed.
- ❖ Council meetings are how Council does the business of the County, and are open to the public to view the process and participate if possible. It is important that proper planning is put into the agenda. A properly prepared agenda is central to the process of local government, and enables Council to consider, discuss and make relatively good decisions through a formal process.
- ❖ Any staff report intended for Council should be directed to and through the CAO. If reports are prepared by an employee of the CAO, their name should also be shown on the request for decision (RFD) covering page along with the name and signature of the appropriate department head. These should always be signed off by the CAO, indicating CAO support for the RFD.

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- ❖ When recording the RFD report in the Council minutes, the minutes should reflect only the topic, motion, mover and disposition of the motion. Accompanying comment is unnecessary, as that would largely be contained in the report.

C.8.1 Confidentiality

- ❖ Given that Council business is to be dealt with publicly, there should be a genuine desire to handle most issues in a public Council forum. The only time that an audience must leave is when Council, by a majority vote, decides the nature of an item is "confidential". This is commonly termed a "closed session" meeting (or incamera- with no minutes).
- ❖ A separate agenda and report on those issues should be prepared by the CAO and given to Council as a recommended list of confidential matters. This agenda should be made public as well. Obviously we would not find names and confidential elements of the matter on the closed session agenda.
- ❖ When Council members attend meetings with other jurisdictions, all Council should be fully briefed as to the nature of the matter(s) under discussion. The same holds true for non-confidential matters – all Council members should be fully briefed at the earliest possible time.
- ❖ An important rule is that all Councillors should have the same information, with no Councillor possessing more information than another.

C.9 EFFECTIVE MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

The most important component of a successful administration is the implementation of good management practices. What are the current practices – is the system focused on development and training in "best practices"? Are there existing limitations imposed by current and historical practices of decision making? Here are some important yet simple basic management practices for Beaver County.

C.9.1 Planning – Goals and Objectives

- ❖ Often heard is the statement "we need to do strategic planning". Yet because many do not really understand what it is and why it is important, they give it cursory attention or avoid it all together. Essentially strategic planning is no more complicated than planning. Planning identifies what needs to be done, why and in what order of priority. In order to plan there needs to be a clear sense of purpose, a mission. A plan includes goals and objectives, and a list of priorities to achieve those goals. It sets in place the mandate for the future initiatives.

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- ❖ If there are no goals and priorities set by Council, then the CAO needs to work with Council to establish them. The CAO needs Council to set goals and objectives and establish priorities because it is the CAO's responsibility to work with staff to develop annual departmental goals and objectives that achieves the Council's outline of yearly goals and objectives.
- ❖ When there are no goals, there is no strategic plan to achieve the goals, we often find that the administration does what it believes are the goals for the County. This works sometimes, but our experience is that the community soon tires of CAO goals and implementation plans. Not good!

C.9.2 Organizational Development

- ❖ Often organizations are designed around the concept of appointing key players in a hierarchal system in order to achieve control. Perhaps some of this premise is acceptable, experience suggests however that most successful organizations first develop functions and once the functional requirements are identified, an organizational design can be created that establishes expected reporting and accountability relationships.
- ❖ Today more than ever before, municipalities like Beaver County need to be streamlined. They work toward becoming a single integrated and effective body, and this objective needs to be clearly communicated to all employees; it must be clear that they work for the betterment of the entire County. It must be clear that the needs of the County take priority over those of any individual department or function.
- ❖ An organization is in place to serve the public, sometimes it is in place to support those who are doing the serving, but it must never lose sight of the purpose for the organization in the first place.

C.9.3 Recruiting

- ❖ Managers are responsible for recruiting, providing orientation, training, supporting and rewarding employees. Clear position descriptions must be developed and updated regularly, identifying the fundamental tasks expected of the employee. It is a manager's role to ensure that a proper orientation process is in place. Employees need to be briefed as to the nuances of how the organization functions, who does what, and any functions that may overlap with the employee's work functions.
- ❖ Each employee brings some or most of the basic necessary skill-sets to the position. There will, no doubt, be certain functional requirements that are new to the employee or in which the employee may need upgrading – therefore, training is vital.

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- ❖ We look to see how the organization does its recruiting, how it handles human resources and what its ideology is respecting employee relations. If Human Resource Management is weak the impact on the overall administrations capability can be weak.

C.9.4 Mentoring and Guiding

- ❖ Managers in an organization mentor and guide daily. They supervise and measure performance, provide guidance, establish the level and quality of work expectations, establish deadlines, and guide work with other departments involved.
- ❖ Integral to the role and responsibility of a CAO is stewardship and wise use of the County human resources.
- ❖ A municipality cannot deliver any programs or services without a well-trained and effective organization filled with competent people.

C.9.5 Performance Measures

- ❖ Most managers recognize their success depends on getting the job done, and their ability to accomplish this depends heavily on the quality and calibre of the employees.
- ❖ Effective managers will have a system for measuring and providing feedback to employees on the performance of their duties. Therefore, any decisions regarding termination, training needs or promotion should rely heavily on the results of independent and individual performance review sessions.
- ❖ Effective performance measure policies and procedures are in place.

C.9.6 Communicating

- ❖ The most important aspect of management is the ability to communicate. Managers communicate with subordinates to provide direction, counsel and feedback. They also communicate within the organization. The most common method is to meet as a group to share information. Often managers will meet with a group of subordinate staff to discuss assignments, deadlines, linkages to other departments, performance problems, etc. The objective is to keep everyone informed and on the same page.
- ❖ Internal communication protocols are essential to the wellbeing of the administration.

C.9.7 Developing Policies and Procedures

- ❖ We often advise Councils that while a properly understood and followed policy process will not completely separate Council and administration duties, it will serve to clarify the distinction between macro and micro issues. Council's role is to address the big picture, macro matters (the what); the administration manages the micro issues (the how).
- ❖ Policies and the process for developing policies are very valuable in that they serve to maintain the separation of an elected official, charged with setting policy, from staff that is expected to carry-out policy. Good policy promotes continuity, stability and consistency of decision-making.
- ❖ Administration develops procedural policies that guide and control the delivery of roles, responsibilities, program delivery and management controls.

SECTION D: ELEMENTS OF A GOOD MODEL OF DECISION-MAKING

D.1 MODEL FOR DECISION-MAKING

Ten core principles of a model for governance and administration to use in making decisions are based on a philosophy of effective municipal government as presented by Mr. George B. Cuff, FCMC, in his book *"Making a Difference – Cuff's Guide for Municipal Leaders – A Survival Guide for Elected Officials"*.

D.1.1 Basic Principles

Principle #1 – Clear Mandate

Effective governance and administration requires the presence of a clearly established mandate which is set in legislation and local bylaws. There must also be a clear definition of what authority is to be delegated to the committees of Council and to any agencies created by Council. Further, the powers of the Reeve and the mandate of that key position must also be clear if that authority is to be exercised with real effectiveness.

The supporting role of the administration must also be stated with clarity and be based on principles which guard their professionalism and independence.

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Principle #2 – Clear Authority

In addition to understanding the legislated mandate of the Council, Reeve, associated committees and the administration, the degree of authority of each of those roles must also be made clear. This authority may be conveyed by legislation, but also will likely need to be clarified by bylaws, policies and procedures.

Principle #3 – Accountability and Responsiveness

Council (and committee) decisions must be based on a clear sense of what is in the best interests of the public or at least Council's view of what would constitute the majority opinion. Thus, Council and its committees should be open to the public in terms of their decision-making processes.

Further, Council's obligation of accountability to the public requires that it provide a regular means of advising the public as to its goals, objectives and strategies. As well, Council should advise the public as to how it can access Council information and provide input into the decision-making process.

Principle #4 – Clarity of Purpose

A clear sense of direction is required by any organization that wishes to understand its purpose and objectives and to be accountable for achieving its targets. The process is often referred to as corporate or strategic planning, and needs to involve not only Council and the administration, but also input from the public.

Principle #5 – Full Disclosure

In order for Council to make informed decisions, Council should be provided with:

- ❖ Ongoing advice on the stated goals and targets of Council with the best options available.
- ❖ Updated reports on the handling of key issues.
- ❖ Current, comprehensive and understandable advice on the fiscal health of the organization.
- ❖ Status reports on any significant matter referred to the solicitors for action.
- ❖ A report on any significant matter wherein the employment standards or security of the County has reportedly been breached.

Principle #6 – Integration

As complex as a County is, it is important there is a comprehensive organization in place which is involved with many issues and "businesses". An important principle of sound government is that the entire corporation must all be viewed as operating from the same page.

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The CAO sets the tone and sense of integration such that employees and departments are aware of and avoid duplication of resources and turf protectionism.

Principle #7 – Sound Relationships between Council and the CAO

This is a critical relationship that must reflect:

- ❖ respect for the mandate and authority of each other;
- ❖ trust in commitments made;
- ❖ confidence in the ability to handle confidential information appropriately;
- ❖ a common desire to achieve Council's mandate;
- ❖ willingness to implement decisions of Council;
- ❖ recognition of the professionalism of the administration;
- ❖ full disclosure of necessary information;
- ❖ no interference in administration, and supporting the CAO to get the job done.

Principle #8 – Independence of Council

The role of Council is to govern. Although there may be many other influences and information given to it, Council's primary responsibility is to govern independently and responsibly.

Principle #9 – Orientation and Planned Continuance

There are two related and necessary components of governance:

- ❖ First, at the outset of any Council term, its members (returning or first time elected officials) should receive a thorough orientation/briefing as to expected roles, relationships, powers, key issues, appointments, departmental overview, etc.
- ❖ Second, Council needs to ensure planned continuance through the development of a succession plan in the event the CAO or any designated officers depart.

Principle #10 – Assessing Performance

- ❖ Governance (Council and administration) must include a mechanism or process to measure if it is performing as needed and, if not, what corrective steps are being taken.
- ❖ Council should perform, or have performed, an annual evaluation of its successes and/or failures.
- ❖ Public surveys of the citizens and ratepayers may be undertaken and/or an independent consultant retained to review the entire organization or portions of it to see where improvements may be needed.

D.2 COUNCIL / CAO COVENANT

- ❖ The foundation of good governance stands on a successful working relationship between the Council and CAO. To ensure this relationship is healthy, a Council – CAO covenant should be established. Such a covenant commits both parties to seeking and maintaining clarity in the relationship. The covenant should be accepted “in principle” and be attached as an appendix to a CAO bylaw and/or contract. It should also be renewed with each new Council. *(A draft of a proposed covenant may be provided to Council upon request.)*

SECTION E: REVIEW OBSERVATIONS

E.1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Council members are elected officials that volunteer much of their time and while they are paid a stipend for their time, they should be commended for their commitment to public service on behalf of their community. They are elected to guide and serve the entire County including their divisions.

- ❖ When Council meets they collectively collaborate and represent the interests of the County as a whole. It appears that Council members generally understand this role, however at times there is a natural struggle to weigh the pros and cons of needs in one portion of the County with another area; often their own division.
- ❖ Council’s term commenced October 2017. During the first few years Council worked to set in place their vision for the future years in office and for the long term. Some have indicated concern about their ability to get things done. Some feel that at times the administration has not acted in a timely fashion, and it appears there has been some reluctance to address the direction Council wish to pursue. It is during these times that a degree of faith, trust and or confidence in the information and advice being provided by the administration has been questioned.
- ❖ Over this term there have been many successes.
- ❖ We have received numerous comments about Council and all levels of the organization and about how the current governance system functions, and a number of suggestions were offered on how it could be improved. At the same time, it is evident that:
 - 1) Council desires to do the best job they can,
 - 2) there are many hard-working employees,
 - 3) a lot of good work is being done, and

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4) there are many good examples of positive initiatives by both Council and administration.

E.1.1 Council

All Council members were interviewed, and staff and stakeholders also provided further insights. Here are general observations about governance by Council:

- ❖ Council had been working reasonably well as a group since the election however it appears more recently that a few personality conflicts have arisen contributing to some uncertainty and unclear direction, especially in this past year.
- ❖ The procedure bylaw is in need of updating. Council must have more involvement in the development of the Agenda.
- ❖ Every Agenda mentioned that the Strategic Plan is to be discussed, yet this does not happen. It appears that the item is on the Agenda as a bit of a reminder, but it is not addressed during most Council meetings. It is unclear why.
- ❖ CAO performance review process is questionable. We did not observe any relationship to Key Performance Indicators that have been previously agreed to. We did not find a link to CAO performance tied to the strategic plan.
- ❖ The Strategic Plan appears to be less than visible and now Council is moving to Priority Based Budgeting. The direction seems unclear and lacks focus.
- ❖ Concern that Council is directing the administration and the apparent resistance by the administration's to respond effectively.
- ❖ Public Consultation Policy lacks planned interaction with the citizens and rate payers.
- ❖ There is a general commitment and brief informal strategy to engage or improve communications with the community through key messaging.
- ❖ There does not appear to be a strategic focus on the long-term economic well-being of the County.
- ❖ Bylaws and policies are being amended on a go forward informal basis.
- ❖ Concern that the County location is getting a poor reputation with respect to working environment.
- ❖ Committee of the Whole system discontinued.
- ❖ The workload for Councillors is increasing, with the number of committees, agencies and Boards to serve on.
- ❖ The process for placing matters on Council agenda requires clarification.

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- ❖ 2020 was an unusual year for local governments and Beaver County is no exception; Zoom meetings, and other virtual connections have changed the way some of the business is conducted.
- ❖ Professional capacity in administration appears small and many will soon reach retirement age, succession plan unclear.
- ❖ Lack of orientation for boards and committees for new members. Terms of reference lacking.
- ❖ Protocols for Council members and staff working relationship at times ignored.
- ❖ Communications when decisions are made, especially when Council implements something and the Community or even staffs are unaware.
- ❖ Council – Administration relationships need some work at re-building.

E.1.2 Management

Management staff were interviewed providing a number of key concerns:

- ❖ Management suggested that at times it appears that Council lacks trust and confidence in administrations advice or guidance, giving the appearance that Council is micro-managing issues, and therefore at times directing the administration.
- ❖ Process of dealing with County legal matters in Council setting and with Councillors privately is unclear to some managers.
- ❖ There has been the odd time when a Councillor did not work through the CAO, but rather go directly to staff. This concerns staff as it should not be the normal practice and should be discontinued.
- ❖ An evolving relationship between management and Council appears to be creating some internal challenges, even some morale issues.
- ❖ High volume of project expectations with limited resources and manpower.
- ❖ There has been a lack of consistent direction.
- ❖ Management believes it requires more flexibility, especially on recruitment matters.
- ❖ Seems to be a lack of vision, imagination and forethought; deal with immediate issues and lose sight of the bigger picture.

E.1.3 Administration

Interviews with employees provided a number of issues and observations:

- ❖ Increased work expectations with limited resources. (*“Champagne appetite on a beer budget”*)

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- ❖ Micro-management – the system not conducive to quick decisions, or when an off-the-hip quick decision is made some are unclear what the objective or motive is. Can create collateral implications.
- ❖ Recruiting untrained or unskilled persons to fill vacancies is not creating a healthy or safe working environment.
- ❖ The County is getting the reputation as a less than optimal place to work, and morale is deteriorating somewhat.
- ❖ Employees who have remained over the past few years and continue to be very loyal to the County.
- ❖ Poor succession planning process and/or support.
- ❖ Security of facilities and infrastructure needs attention.
- ❖ Communication and team building not evident, not a priority.
- ❖ Health and safety delivery program is weak and irregular.
- ❖ The Health and Safety person is only part-time and does not have time for safety implementation.
- ❖ Staff meetings were discontinued for some time especially during lockdowns. Were usually after Council meetings with key staff.

E.1.4 Other Observations

- ❖ Occasionally policies and bylaws that guide administrative decisions are deferred. Admin appears to have to wait for Council to decide.
- ❖ Roles and responsibilities require clarification; evidence of understanding of roles, responsibilities and duties at all levels is unclear. Role Clarity is important. Policy CCL-001 is in place to provide clarity, but is sometimes ignored.
- ❖ More recently there has been minimal internal discussion within management on key issues going before Council. The interim-CAO has opened up the discussion more since taking office.
- ❖ Many complex issues brought to Council are not given time to absorb, yet admin expects a decision.
- ❖ Lack of go forward improvement initiatives.
- ❖ Protocols and measurable objectives not evident.
- ❖ Levels of authority are unclear or hands are tied at times.
- ❖ Role of Human Resource Management is lacking focus and as a priority is unclear. Being handled by a Clerk who has other roles.

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- ❖ Limited teamwork evident in some areas and subjective annual performance reviews or no performance reviews in some cases.
- ❖ While there has been some movement to update position profiles that include measurable duties and responsibilities there is still a lot of updating required. Many position descriptions appear out-of-date.
- ❖ Lack of internal focus on developing people skills, process improvement, or technological expertise.
- ❖ Notable duplication of titles within administration, sending wrong message to public.
- ❖ Expectations appear unbalanced; some are working above their expected level and some appear to be working below it.
- ❖ Favouritism apparent within administration.
- ❖ The website and e-commerce opportunities appear to be lacking, and the website, social networks and related communications are not managed consistently. This is a current and future asset which can be used to a much greater benefit.
- ❖ Key performance indicators and results-based budgeting are not used to connect Council's decisions to a strategic direction, and the latter is not clear to staff or residents. Currently there is no feedback loop, such as an internal or citizen satisfaction survey, and no way to measure Council's performance.
- ❖ Council moving to priority based budgeting requires much rigor and training.

SECTION F: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

F.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE KEY ISSUES

There are a wide range of issues for Council and administration to address in becoming a more effective governing body. These are issues that cannot be addressed as “one-offs” by either Council or administration, but can be addressed if done cooperatively by all members of Council and administration, in order for there to be progress and to achieve desired outcomes.

There are key required components or elements of good governance and the following are constructive components of these elements. Comments herein are limited to the consultant's observations as compared to Section B.1, components of a sound organizational system.

F.1.1 Effective Council Leadership

Findings:

- ❖ Some Councillors are frustrated by the current style of leadership, which is not conducive for a united Council.
- ❖ Over this past year it appears that the relationship between the CAO and Council has become challenged.
- ❖ Some Councillors are concerned regarding the type and completeness of information provided to it.
- ❖ There appears to be a weak strategy for implementing Council's goals, objectives and priorities and when they will be delivered. There is no corporate business plan for administration to follow to implement Council's goals and objectives.
- ❖ A strategic priority set of goals exists, but their impact on the direction of this Council is unclear.
- ❖ There is a Council Code of Conduct (Ethics) Policy CCL-005, which has not been reviewed recently.
- ❖ Long term Capital replacement plan is being implemented.

F.1.2 Role Clarity

Findings:

- ❖ At time the lines of authority appear unclear and the normal distinction between Council and administration vague.
- ❖ The relationship between Council and some organizational functions, (i.e. bylaw & transportation) does not appear to be following proper channels and appropriate protocols that would normally be found between a Council and administration.

F.1.3 Administrative Leadership

Findings:

- ❖ Including the CAO there are a few experienced professional leaders in local government at the senior management level. The rest of the organization has a number of less experienced staff.
- ❖ The ACAO is very experienced.
- ❖ There is no apparent succession plan for replacing senior leadership in functional areas.
- ❖ No apparent administrative business plan that would guide the administrative vision and understanding of corporate goals.

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- ❖ Staff recruitment and additional resources not seen as a priority.
- ❖ Challenges' attracting the necessary skill sets, therefore returning employees through contracting in order to manage and deliver programs and services.
- ❖ There appear to be some morale issues.

F.1.4 Trust between Council and Administration

Findings:

- ❖ A suspicion by some members of Council that what is reported to them as factual by their administration may not have all the information.
- ❖ Some evidence of respect and positive feedback for some staff who present materials and information to Council.
- ❖ Staffs are generally respectful but there is a sense that some in the administration do not respect some of the Council decisions.
- ❖ There is some criticism of Council by some members of the administration to their colleagues and externally.
- ❖ Some Criticism of staff by some Council members.

F.1.5 Effective Council Principles and Practices

Findings:

- ❖ A weak orientation process that gives information with minimal opportunity to digest their roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ Process for determining priorities unclear.
- ❖ We observed reasonable administrative advice on most issues that go before Council.
- ❖ Council as a whole is viewed as generally prepared to make decisions because many members have a reasonably good grasp on the issues and their background.

F.1.6 Effective Decision-Making Structure

Findings:

- ❖ Council meetings are twice per month on a regular basis set for a whole day.
- ❖ Committee of the Whole meetings were conducted once a month but have been discontinued.
- ❖ General or non-urgent issues and topics being discussed without a resolution to place on the table are over-crowding agenda at times.

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- ❖ Agenda requiring too many add-in's during the meeting.
- ❖ Supporting information reasonably well prepared and generally with appropriate recommendations.
- ❖ Limited involvement by the public other than through the normal public hearing process related to planning issues.
- ❖ Limited formal deadlines, accountabilities or time frames for completion of action items.
- ❖ Minutes are clear.

F.1.7 Effective Administrative Principles and Practices

Findings:

- ❖ Some policies are unclear and may cause confusion for planners and implementers.
- ❖ The administration is sometimes hesitant to provide an impartial view of the issues.
- ❖ Limited degree of organizational delegation and empowerment.
- ❖ Encouragement for staff development, albeit selective and without a comprehensive plan for each department or function.
- ❖ Lack of a sound administrative leadership approach to communication, organizational improvement, team building, empowerment, learning and mentoring.

F.1.8 Updating the Organization

Findings:

- ❖ Funnels process through the former CAO's office that appears to inhibit effective decision-making rather than facilitate it.
- ❖ Need to improve internal communication.
- ❖ A number of gaps in functional support requirements.
- ❖ Questionable supervisory roles and functions.
- ❖ An unbalanced delivery model that does not adjust as the workloads require.
- ❖ The responsibilities within Agriculture, Public Works and Transportation appear somewhat disconnected, and at times unclear.
- ❖ An unclear role for Communications.
- ❖ Unclear if the number of employees in the administration is the appropriate staff complement; minimal attention is being paid to assessing if functions are adequately resourced or are even required.
- ❖ Many employees were interested in developing their skills on a gradual basis.

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- ❖ Need to refocus on cross training, which would be useful to help provide transition when staff terminate or are on leave.
- ❖ Need to clear up confusion regarding cover-off schedules.

F.1.9 Improvement Needs Assessment

Findings:

- ❖ Over the past couple years the County has, in some opinions, evolved a poor reputation externally with respect to CAO leadership.
- ❖ Need to be more proactive in dealing with some critical functions.
- ❖ Need more focus on administrative process when submitting projects to advise leadership on the impact on staff and resources.
- ❖ Lack of succession planning; a number of senior functions soon to retire.
- ❖ Some employees feel that they are not supported; some suggest there appears to be a lack of focused leadership. *"Why do we do things this way?"*
- ❖ Lack of a change or quality improvement management approach.
- ❖ Recruitment to replace positions is slow and some positions are not being filled in a timely manner. Some concern that they could be filled by persons who have limited experience or training in the function.
- ❖ Improve risk assessment and asset management protocols.

F.1.10 Communication Practices

Findings:

- ❖ Apparently some public enquiries have been either ignored or not responded to on purpose.
- ❖ Inconsistent communication within the administration, resulting in a lot of word-of-mouth, rumour and innuendo.
- ❖ Some public issues appear to be treated at times as unimportant.
- ❖ A website and newsletter available to all ratepayers are the only means of communicating with the public.
- ❖ Internal communication is inconsistent. Messaging and key relationships not consistent.

F.1.11 Organizational Culture

Findings:

- ❖ The organizational management has a history of independence and secrecy (stove pipe management) lending itself to ends that are confused and at times dysfunctional.
- ❖ Style of administrative leadership behaviour that appears unclear of role and expectations.
- ❖ Uncertain authority levels and unclear roles and expectations of the administration.
- ❖ Culture of urgency (squeaky wheel and day-to-day approach to management)
- ❖ General lack of priorities in some of the administrative functions.
- ❖ Some improvement needed in communication and support.
- ❖ Friendliness and relationships between most staff appear to be quite good. However, at times there appears to be a propensity by some staff to gossip and share unsubstantiated information; this creates unhealthy behaviour.
- ❖ Significant influence on the County culture by office located in the Village of Ryley.
- ❖ Resistance to changes may be counter to the existing culture of the longer serving staff. There has been a degree of resistance to change management and functional improvement over the past few years, which was not the experience previously.

F.1.12 Financial Planning and Management

Findings:

- ❖ The budget process is focused on reducing taxes and keeping the status quo.
- ❖ A long-term (10 year) capital plan with limited criteria for setting priorities; the rationale for both the operating and capital budgets for the long-term is not clear. Using 5 years at a time with limited method to assess priorities.
- ❖ Moving forward with “Priority Based Budgeting” sounds reasonable on the surface, but there is no future vision for where the municipality needs or wants to go and how to get there. There appear to be limited strategies to achieve goals. Using Priority Based Budgeting is a challenging detailed process, requiring a clear understanding of Council’s goals and objectives. Council needs to be focused on the higher level priorities and not get bogged down on administrative minutia, which Priority Based Budgeting can sometimes lead to. Administration’s role is to address the minutia based on Council priorities.
- ❖ The County has invested a significant amount in automation technology with unclear goals and objectives; there is no IT policy.
- ❖ Current technology does not appear to be used to its fullest capability.

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- ❖ Some on Council have difficulty understanding the financials and mentioned they find the audit a challenge to follow. Need for simplicity in financial reporting. Councillors are not accountants.
- ❖ Functional needs are not clearly articulated in the process to guide budget requirements and future projections.
- ❖ Regular and special budget meetings are set up to provide opportunities for discussion between Council and administration; however, they appear somewhat disjointed due in part to unclear objectives and personal biases.
- ❖ The budget development process appears to be time consuming and results in huge volumes of paper; the overall process could be simplified.
- ❖ Investments are handled internally, linked to a cash management system, and are dependent on good communication between CAO and ACAO responsible for Corporate Services. This function could make better use of existing software.
- ❖ By policy, the CAO is charged with investing surplus funds and reserves in safe investment tools:
 - Policy ADM -005 requires that the funds be invested in a manner that will provide the highest return with minimal risk while meeting the daily cash flow demands. Must conform to provincial statutes.
 - All long term investments must be approved by council.
 - An investment manager may be secured reporting to the CAO and ACO and must report quarterly.
 - Short term investments are managed by the CAO or ACAO.
 - Some of the suggested types of investments include:
 - Bonds - Canada/Provincial with a rating of AA1 or higher;
 - Debentures;
 - Trust Certificates;
 - Guaranteed Investment Certificates or Receipts;
 - Certificates of Deposit;
 - Deposit Receipts;
 - Treasury Bills; and
 - Banker's Acceptance.
- ❖ The CAO must report to Council on all surplus fund investments on a quarterly basis.
- ❖ The County uses “Bellamy” software to manage all finances; Bellamy is not being used to its fullest potential due to a lack of training, and inconsistent data entry.

F.1.13 Equipment, Office Space and Facilities

Findings:

- ❖ Upgraded office space has created a very favourable working environment.
- ❖ Location of office in Village of Ryley is central and easy for residents to access.
- ❖ Shop for the agriculture services, provides a space for proper equipment and supply storage, repairs and security.
- ❖ Maintenance Shop is an appropriate facility for maintenance services.
- ❖ Need for priority setting for maintenance of County buildings and facilities requiring proper security and maintenance.
- ❖ Facility security is weak and requires attention.

F.1.14 Performance Measures

Findings:

- ❖ Council mandate is unfocused and is currently not very clear to the community; the community is questioning the priorities and it is not clear how citizens will know if the mandate is being achieved.
- ❖ The few current goals and priorities established over the past couple of years and do not provide strategies for accomplishing them, nor whether they are even attainable and in what time frame.
- ❖ There are no relevant performance measures to guide Council decisions on a timely basis. To focus management:
 - They should be reliable, unbiased and verifiable.
 - They should be comparable from year to year and, where possible, with best practices elsewhere.
 - They should be cost beneficial (their benefit should exceed their cost).

F.1.15 Information Technology

Findings:

- ❖ There is no IT policy. IT is a core function/ tool and must be support by policy.
- ❖ Some plans are being considered to continue to be developed automation and software enhancement and their associated functions.

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- ❖ There are no performance protocols for the planning, delivery and maintenance of information systems and service.

SECTION G: PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION

G.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following should be read in conjunction with Section C relating to a general description of roles and responsibilities.

G.2 THE NEED FOR ROLE CLARITY

Clearly, a central issue facing the County is role clarity.

G.3 ROLES OF REEVE AND COUNCIL

G.3.1 Observations – Role of the Reeve

Degree of Role Clarity During Meetings

- ❖ The Reeve leads and chairs Council meetings and is both the spokesperson and Council leader.
- ❖ The Reeve has served on Council previously, was previously the Reeve. After a period of time determined to run for office again and was elected in 2017. Since 2017 he has served as the Reeve. We found that even though the current Reeve spent some time away from elected office he has demonstrated a general ability to understand current complex information and issues.
- ❖ At times the number and complexity of issues facing the County that are being handled by the County are significant.
- ❖ In general the Reeve enjoys the support of the majority of Council members.
- ❖ The Reeve seeks regular updates and briefings on issues of significance from the CAO. These topics are shared with all Council members and when they are issues for Council to deliberate they are scheduled on the Agenda.
- ❖ The Reeve plays an important role in gathering the input and ideas of the Council during discussion and debate; we observed that the Reeve summarizes the issue(s) at the end of the discussion (debate) and then shares his views.

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- ❖ The Reeve ensures that during Council meetings matters are tabled that have support; therefore only discussion of an issue on the agenda that has a resolution on the table for a vote should be allowed. (*Roberts Rules suggests that presentation of the information prior to a motion is acceptable, but no discussion or debate should be allowed prior to a motion.*)

Relationship of Reeve to Administration

- ❖ The nature of the relationship must be one predicated on mutual respect and duty. The CAO and the Reeve should be able to bounce ideas off each other. The CAO should contact the Reeve first to inform of any key issues; which we observed for the most part was not taking place.
- ❖ The relationship between the Reeve and the current (past) CAO is somewhat challenging due to a number of factors; the history and experience of the Reeve; the longevity of the current CAO and his views of programs and services delivery; lack of clarity of Council direction; policies that do not always fit the objectives; and general personality differences.
- ❖ It appears that the Reeve has attempted to clarify with the CAO just what Council objectives are, in terms of initiatives, policies and expectations while trying (with varying degrees of success) not to interfere in the CAO's duties and responsibilities.
- ❖ The CAO must ensure the relationship is one of genuine support for the initiatives and expectations of Council. Council policies offer significant direction taken by the CAO; the CAO must be open to such direction.
- ❖ The Reeve and Council should expect sound advice and guidance from the CAO on a multitude of issues related to policies, programs and services that come before Council.

Roles of the Reeve

- ❖ The Reeve role is trying to balance his role as Reeve with representation of the interests of the Reeve's divisional constituents to the rest of Council as any other member of Council is expected to do.
- ❖ The Reeve is the elected head of Council by the majority of Council and obviously must have their trust and confidence.
- ❖ The Reeve should be involved in the development of an appropriate agenda for each Council meeting.
- ❖ The Reeve chairs Council meetings, provides leadership, and is expected to see issues clearly, and must discern and recommend what, in final analysis, the appropriate response of Council should be.
- ❖ We found that the Reeve takes his responsibility seriously.
- ❖ The Reeve at times wants to see issues resolved and may contact employees directly. This has caused some issues for the CAO.

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- ❖ Other duties include corresponding with the leaders from other municipalities, other elected official, Ministers of the Crown, and participating in ceremonial functions.

G.3.2 Observations on Council

Changing Dynamics of Council

- ❖ The County Council comprises five members, each representing a division of the County.
- ❖ The Reeve has been in place for the past four years. A current councillor was the former Reeve.
- ❖ The dynamics of the Council have changed somewhat since the last election, wherein the majority on the current Council appears to have a different perspective on programs, services and policy matters than the previous Reeve and Council.
- ❖ There are obvious differences of opinion, views and positions of this Council, on many occasions the vote on matters appears to be split in a 3 to 2 manner. However, overall Council for the most part has been able to work together to get things done. Members for the most part are reasonably courteous and afford each other the opportunity to have their message heard in a debate.
- ❖ The current Council appears to be more prone to address one-off issues and less focused on the big picture, longer term strategic planning. Some of this appears to be a result of the current differences of opinion on the direction of Council.
- ❖ Council appears committed to reducing spending and thus reducing taxes (not an uncommon goal). As such their priority is to reduce the annual budget. In order to accomplish this it appears that Council has been digging into departmental budgets and attempting to control certain administrative responsibilities. For example Council appears to interfere in the replacement of key staff calling it a cost saving measure. Management of the approved budget is normally the responsibility of the CAO not usually ascribed to policy leaders. (Essentially this comes across to administration that they are not trusted). It also is a hindrance for the CAO to manage his organization properly.
- ❖ The budgeting process has allowed some on Council to dig in line by line in department budgets. The potential fallout is that administration appears to no longer own the budget decision, nor are they fully responsible for the outcomes because Council has decided what is to happen in administration and how much is to be spent. It appears that the reason Council has reverted to digging into the administration budget is that during previous budget presentations, some Councillors viewed the department submissions as Council being asked to blindly approve the suggestions of the administration without any indication that stewardship of public funds is a priority. This should never be the case.
- ❖ Council this term has not been able to establish sound firm policies on a number of files including dust control, ditch mowing/spraying, and beaver management.

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- ❖ Council has a five year road management plan, and follows two years at a time. The long term is seen as too far off to address.
- ❖ There has been limited consideration of assessing how well Council is doing and as an extension, how well the County is doing.

Council Orientation

- ❖ Soon after each election, the CAO is responsible for preparing the new Council with a proper orientation process. This is not a time to deal with current planning and finance issues, but rather a day to learn or refresh about the MGA, County bylaws, policies and procedures; roles, responsibilities, expected duties and legal responsibilities; as well, presentation should be given on any pressing issues of significance policy or legal matters the members should be aware of.
- ❖ A day is normally set aside shortly after the elections and is supplemented with a separate session on Planning and Finance. Municipal Affairs and the Rural Municipalities Association (RMA) also provide orientation for candidates to attend after they have been nominated.
- ❖ Prior to election, administration should advise candidates of the dates for an orientation meeting and the organizational meeting of Council when they pick up their nomination papers.
- ❖ Council must confirm its mandate, vision, values, goals and objectives from start of its term. We noted the April 2017 Strategic Plan titled “Home Grown, Beaver County Plan for People, Place and Possibility”, which was part of the orientation package. This was a very extensive and well thought out strategic plan. We observed a further Council strategic planning exercise that resulted in what is titled the “2020-2030 Strategic Plan”. We noted that there are broad statements and a list of goals in this document, but we were not able to determine if there is a mechanism to measure performance. Usually there are key performance indicators that provide a sense of accomplishment. So far we have not determined how Council will know if or when it has accomplished its goals.
- ❖ Some of the difficulty that Council appears to have experienced in guiding and setting targets for the administration is attributable to a lack of focused direction with goals, objectives and time frames.

Council – CAO Relationship

- ❖ A positive working relationship with the CAO is based on mutual respect and understanding as to respective role obligations and prerogatives. For the most part, Council appears to have respect for the person in the CAO role however there have been some bumps along the way.
- ❖ Some Councillors indicated they would like to do a better job of assessing the CAO’s performance and are hoping to find a better system for conducting annual appraisals. *(Note: we can provide a performance evaluation tool at the request of Council.)*

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- ❖ Some Council members indicated that they have historically struggled to find a satisfactory relationship with the CAO.
- ❖ For the most part of this term the CAO has been briefing Council as a whole fully and expeditiously on matters of significance. We found generally that these briefings are clear, factual, supported with considerations and whenever possible, contain the CAO (administration's) opinion/recommendation.
- ❖ The CAO's role is to ensure that matters brought before Council are vetted and have his support and recommendations. This has been generally happening, however, there have been some occasions, however few, where an employee feels they have been challenged during a Council meeting and they suggest that the CAO did not step up to defend the employee or the issue. Obviously this reflects on the morale of the organization.

Council – Administration Relationship

- ❖ Council feels that the County has many very dedicated and hard-working employees.
- ❖ Policy CLL-001 Council & Administration Roles and Responsibilities clearly describe the protocol on how Council and Administration work together and what their duties are. When Council members are talking to staff about the County business it can send a mixed message about who directs administration. At the very least it can cause some confusion.
- ❖ There is no policy outlining a formal mechanism for staff to invite Council members as a whole to any function that they feel they would like to have them attend. Off-the-cuff invitations to individual Council members are generally inappropriate.
- ❖ Some Councillors may be concerned about not receiving information in a timely fashion. This does not give license to use personal relationships with staff, whether in the community or through various committees and Boards they serve on with staff, to find out information. And the same holds true for staff that have a personal relationship or connection with a Councillor.
- ❖ Councillors should never voice displeasure with staff, either at a meeting of Council, during committee meetings, or make comments about staff in public.
- ❖ Staff should be advised that they are not to make negative statements about Council, Councillors or the senior administration at any time in a public forum.
- ❖ This administration is somewhat concerned about the apparent lack of trust and confidence in the administration by Council.
- ❖ Some in Council are concerned about the apparent lack of trust by some staff in the Council.
- ❖ Some on Council are disappointed by the apparent lack of attention sometimes paid to Council direction.

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Council Agenda

- ❖ The Agenda for Council meetings should be guided by Council with key input and final preparation by the CAO. It should be clear that the meeting is a Council meeting and therefore needs to address formally matters of significance to Council and the Community.
- ❖ Councillors, for the most part, listen to residents and ratepayers and desire to have their issues raised throughout their terms; they require time on the agenda for these issues. Care is needed to avoid too much “administrivia” on the agenda leaving little time to formally debate significant matters of importance to Council and the community.
- ❖ The Council needs to have time to advance their issues to the agenda, and the CAO needs to be aware of the Council matters that require thorough analysis and review before being placed on the agenda.
- ❖ It appears that Council is not aware of what will be on the agenda until such time as the agenda is received by Councillors, generally the Thursday or Friday prior to a meeting of Council the following week.
- ❖ Committee of the Whole - Council previously held a monthly meeting called the “Committee of the Whole” meeting. More recently they stopped the Committee of the Whole meetings in favour on another formal Council meeting. The Committee of the Whole is a Council meeting for the purpose of discussing matters publicly pursuant to the MGA. These meetings are established so that topics can be thoroughly informed, vetted, and discussed. We strongly support the reintroduction of the Committee of the Whole as a way to inform, vet, and analyse issues and objectives. An agenda should be published and a set of general Committee minutes should be kept. Any decisions of a Committee of the Whole are simply recommendations, but they should be captured in Committee minutes and available to the public.
- ❖ Committee of the Whole should be established by its own bylaw, with terms of reference embedded. We suggest the Committee of the Whole have as it mandates matters of Governance, Policies and Priorities.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of the administration to plan, organize and optimize the annual organizational meeting.

Council Procedures

- ❖ The Procedure Bylaw 20-1088 outlines the duties and responsibilities of participants in Council meetings and meetings of the Committee of the Whole. We observed that the role of the CAO in preparation of the Agenda is unclear.
- ❖ Council decision to start Council meetings at 8:30 creates additional resource issues and adds to staff banked time.

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Briefing Council Members

- ❖ Procedures should be in place to ensure that all Councillors are equally informed and well briefed on the key elements of issues. Conference calls could be used for this purpose.
- ❖ Briefing of Councillors should be done by the CAO on complex or difficult matters before they come to Council. This can be done in many ways; one way is to provide briefings of such issues at Committee of the Whole meetings. A briefing is intended to be a fact finding procedure for Council and not a place for one Councillor to gain more information than another. When a briefing is held, it is a type of CAO workshop is not a place for decisions. Decisions are only to be made in a formal public Council meeting.
- ❖ The process should be a submission/presentation by the CAO on key issues that will impact the County in the future, such as issues that were not addressed within budgets or plans, and any increases or decreases to service levels specified by existing Council policy.

Policy Development – Responsibility

- ❖ It appears, for the most part, that the County developed numerous policies to guide Council and administration. However, we observed that at times these policies are adjusted to suit a specific one-off issue thus leaving some confusion or gaps for others. Policies are intended to deal with reoccurring or repetitive matters and not generally for one-off issues.
- ❖ The value of clear policies and a policy-based process has been fully adopted by management, and thus much of what does come to Council is viewed as a challenge to deal with because Council is dealing with both the matter and how the policy may not address the matter.
- ❖ Council Policy differs from administrative policies. Council policy should focus on what is to be done and what is to be approved by Council, and administrative policy (procedure) should focus on how it is to be done.
- ❖ At times some Councillors have perceived that the administration has either not responded to their policy direction or has been slow to respond if the Council's decisions are not supported by the administration.
- ❖ The CAO leads policy development and should endeavour to draft policies to take to Council for approval. These new policies should provide Council with assurance that the administration will follow them to guide programs and services delivery.

Council Decision-Making

- ❖ We observed that the current agenda process may not be giving Councillors sufficient time for a full debate or to hear the concerns of their colleagues or the public (affected parties) relative to the issues. We note that some matters may be urgent, however usually they are not urgent and

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more time can be taken to gather additional information so that an informed decision can be made. For example when considering bylaws holding three readings in a single session should only be done when the matter before Council is time sensitive. Otherwise bringing it back to a future meeting offers time to address any additional information or nagging questions. It also provides the public time to contemplate and inform Council of their thoughts.

- ❖ It should be clear to the public that the CAO is not an elected official and the CAO should not be seen to overly influence the political decisions of Council.
- ❖ Often, Council members are not well briefed on the issues. This has much to do with the lack of a useful committee structure and the role that it could play in setting the stage for formal Council debate.
- ❖ We observed times during debate where Councillors addressed each other or staff members without respecting the Chairman. Council meetings are quasi-judicial type meetings and the Chairperson is to be respected. All conversation to others should be through the Chair. The Chair should control the information sharing and be acknowledged to have given permission to question, and receive answers.

Time Commitments

- ❖ Councillor time commitments vary but appear to be increasing to where Councillors are busy for a good portion of each month.
- ❖ This review suggests that the Reeve's and Deputy Reeve's time commitment is significantly greater than Councillors.
- ❖ Revisiting the Councillor time commitments under the current governance model and assessing remuneration should be considered and should be done by an independent citizens committee or consulting firm charged with assessing time commitments and remuneration, and providing recommendations to Council.

Communications Strategy

- ❖ There is no formal communication strategy or plan. There is a communication function within the administration. For Council to fulfil its role as the public representative and ensure a reasonable flow of information in both directions, then an overall communications strategy is essential.
- ❖ The minutes of regular Council meetings are available on the County website, and there is a council meeting brief summary of decisions publicized soon after each meeting.
- ❖ Council meetings are being streamed live and accessible on the website for review later.
- ❖ Terms of reference and guidelines for boards and committees of Council should be posted on the County website.

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- ❖ When setting direction for the community Council should utilize various methods of obtaining input from the community.
- ❖ The website is in need of revamping to become more informative and offer e-commerce opportunities, and be updated regularly.
- ❖ In today's social media society, there is a need to participate which requires a dedicated commitment.

Confidentiality

- ❖ Bylaw 18-1060 is in place to govern the conduct of all Councillors of Beaver County in order that they maintain the highest standards of conduct in public office and faithfully discharge their duties as an elected official. It requires that Councillors adhere to all aspects of the MGA including sharing information from a closed session
- ❖ We had one unconfirmed suggestion that there have been leaks of closed session discussions and agreements. Councillors must adhere to the confidentiality requirements, or trust and confidence in those members could lead to a serious dysfunction of Council.

Value for Money

- ❖ Council is aware of the need to provide assurances to the citizens that they are receiving good value for the monies being paid for their taxes.
- ❖ The fact that some positions in the administration are not filled appropriately and the requisite need to fill the void with contract employees is a concern with respect to organizational needs and the costs involved. An evaluation needs to be carried out on the economic impact to the County of not filling positions with qualified persons, filling them with untrained persons, and/or filling them with contract persons.
- ❖ Building and maintaining roads and infrastructure is the most significant part of the County budget. Council must be certain that the County has been sufficiently proactive in assessing whether or not private contracting is a viable option regarding certain work functions.
- ❖ Some in the general public argue that the County has been wasteful in its use of resources and the types of infrastructure promoted. We were advised that some roads are redone too often while other roads do not see proper and timely renewal. Financial resource use is the greatest challenge in a large rural municipality with significant different needs throughout. A focus on hearing what the needs are from the community and setting priorities is one way to achieve the best value out of limited County resources.
- ❖ It appears there have been times where a lack of attention to an issue at the outset has ended up costing the County significantly more than if they had addressed the matter at the outset.

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The administration suggests that it has not been able to keep up with some of the issues due to manpower and resource shortages.

- ❖ Some major repairs are not being done due to budget constraints, and emergency repairs often wait for Council approval to address them. This allows for further deterioration. There is no emergency repair or replacement policy allowing the CAO to address these anomalies.
- ❖ Work in some Hamlets has proceeded without discussing with local community. The lack of communication and input from the community has created a significant sense of poor management by the locals.

G.4 DECISION-MAKING PRACTICES

G.4.1 Observations: Decision-Making Practices

- ❖ Normally agenda items are to be completed by noon on the previous Thursday.
- ❖ There does not appear to be an informal agenda review with senior staff.
- ❖ There does not appear to be an informal agenda review with the Reeve or an agenda committee of Council.
- ❖ During Council meetings a member of Council may ask administration to take certain actions. Without a motion the request is informal and may create certain expectations that have no basis of performance measurement. At times administration has not responded to individual requests leaving the question unanswered and the Councillor somewhat frustrated.
- ❖ Some policy issues appear to be moved directly to the Council agenda without an opportunity for the CAO and staff to review them. This gives the impression that Council is attempting to implement decisions without all the information. It is our view that good Policy development will occur in an effective Committee of Whole system so that Council has the opportunity to review difficult issues in a more casual environment, thereby resulting in more agreement at the actual Council meeting.
- ❖ Minute-taking is the responsibility of the Executive Assistant, with the admin support from Public Works as backup. We observed that the Executive Assistant may not have communicated a planned absence and there has to be some scrambling to get the Admin Support person to drop what they are doing and attend to Council minutes. Some suggestion was made that the minutes could be taken by a dedicated assistant and the EA would then have more time to support Council and the CAO.
- ❖ Under the MGA, the responsibility for accuracy of the minutes lies with the CAO.

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- ❖ Most presentations of materials by the Public Works, Transportation and Agriculture departments at Council meetings appear well-organized and clearly visible, for the most part, to Council and the public gallery.
- ❖ We attended three Council meetings and observed the following from attendance during all or parts of three meetings of Council:
 - The seating of the Reeve allows for proper control of the discussion between the Councillors and those presenting materials.
 - Councillors may want to change seating locations annually. Perhaps seating could be allocated by a drawing of seat numbers at each annual organizational meeting.
 - A copy of the agenda and accompanying agenda package, or at least a summary of it, are available for staff public to access a meeting.
 - The Request for Decision (RFD) contains a cover page summary of the item presented, including background, discussion and options, and also recommendations in the form of a draft motion, approval of the department head and approval of the CAO.
 - Council should only give direction to the CAO via a Council Resolution; all instruction should be in a form of direction to the CAO by Council and not directly to staff.
 - The Council meetings often appear to become a chat session. This is not the proper use of the formal Council meeting.

G.5 EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

How well the County functions can be directly attributable to the style of managerial practices. The first question to ask, are the energies of the administration being directed toward continual improvement? Secondly, to identify if the senior management group is modelling effective practices and open to hear input on how the status quo can be improved.

G.5.1 Effective Managerial Practices - Observations

- ❖ Leadership appears to be average or acceptable; we looked for management that takes charge, inspires, and influences others individually or as a team, Beaver County administration is about the same as many of its municipal peers.
- ❖ A motivated management system is necessary in order to carry out the multiple challenges. At times issues can be complex and people can be difficult, therefore leadership must be motivated to accept the challenges and garner the energy to address these issues and concerns. The current management motivation has been described to us as wanting to avoid complexity and conflicting or difficult matters.

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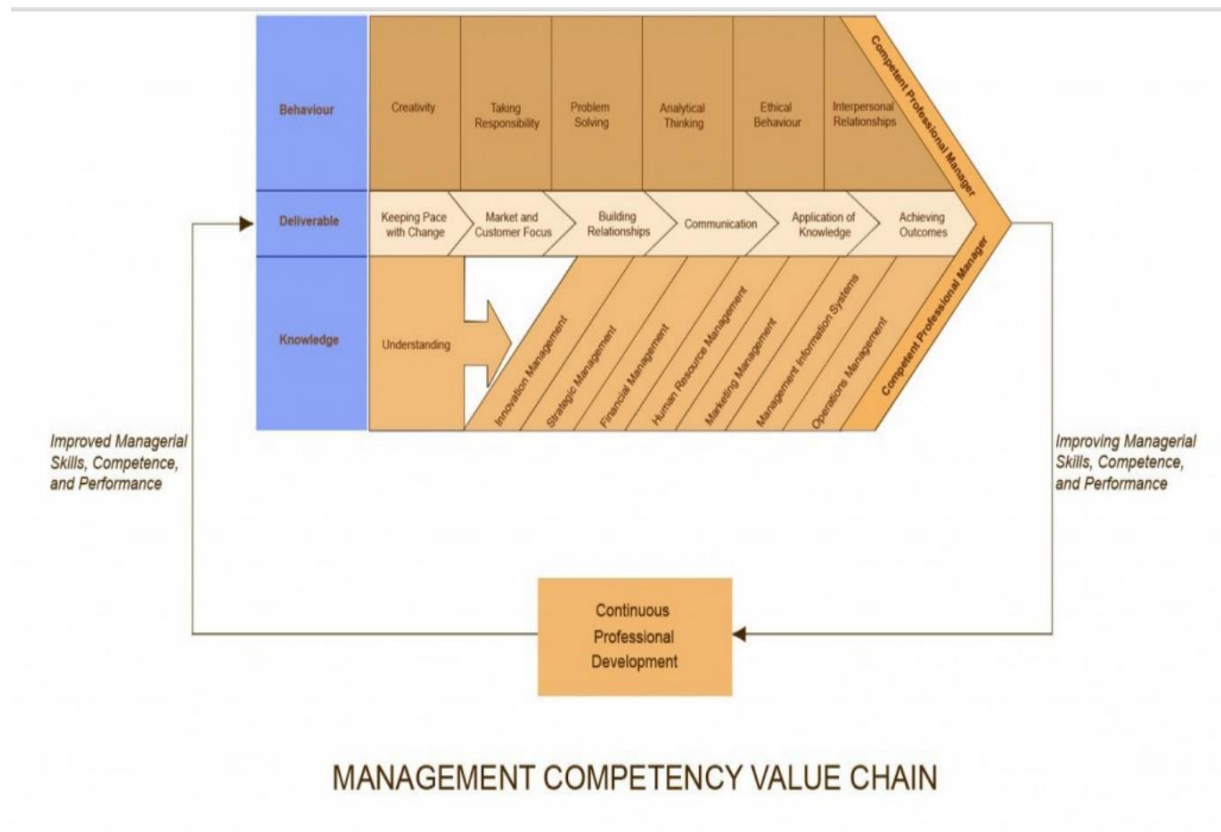
- ❖ Problem Solving is a necessary objective for management. We look for a system that gains understanding of the many challenges and develop strategies to meet those challenges. The current system seems to ignore some of the problems and eventually the problems either get lost or get bigger.
- ❖ Creativity and innovation was something that Beaver County administration in the past prided itself in however it seems over the past few years not so much; we often heard from internal and external sources “same old same old”.
- ❖ Being aware of the feelings and attitudes of Council, staff and ratepayers/stakeholders is an important attribute of a management system. We observed an organizational awareness to the political sensitivities, a recognition and understanding of the motives and objectives of the others, and one that acts or reacts appropriately. We did not however find a lot of forward thinking that would get out ahead of issues before they happen and then become larger.
- ❖ Change and improvements of any organization is ongoing and will normally be consistent, we look for the ability of the organization to institute and manage change and to be aware that the introduction of change often generates insecurity. We sensed and observed insecurity in a number of fronts within the County leadership. Change can be scary.
- ❖ We look to determine if the leadership is prepared to be accountable and responsible or do they seem to want to pass the buck so-to-speak. We did not find a culture of formal accountability, which appears to be a cultural trait developed over time. It appears that there is a propensity to never admit failure or errors, or blame someone else. That type of culture needs to be addressed because over time it has negatively impacted the organization. And thus a morale failure.
- ❖ We observed an organization that is quite good at collecting, administering and managing information, albeit information storage and recovery could use more focus.
- ❖ We found position profiles are for the most part out of date and inconsistent with what the employee in each position is doing. With limited resources and Council objective to do more with less, employee roles on many fronts have added or changed.
- ❖ We observed the sporadic use of annual performance reviews. Some get them some don't some never have. Human resource management criteria, does not appear to be a priority, and there is a clear lack of discipline in this regard.
- ❖ Some staff mentioned that they do not feel comfortable in communicating with senior staff any concerns or suggestions for improvement. There have been repercussions for doing so.
- ❖ Some staff are fearful of talking to elected officials because of potential discipline from “on high”.
- ❖ There appear to be people in positions with questionable ability, skills, training and experience.

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- ❖ Management has not created an environment in which the County would be viewed as “an employer of choice” so as to attract skilled and experienced personnel.
- ❖ Currently, management has not given sufficient attention to the development of a broad scale administrative vision and plan that would support the vision and plan of Council.
- ❖ The County ability to recruit quickly and effectively has been limited. Sometimes because of a fear of bringing issues forward for approval.
- ❖ We noted that some employees who end their formal employment come back to work on a contract basis. Clearly succession planning does not appear to be high on the list of priorities, albeit we were informed that the previous CAO had put together a plan; however the plan was not available to us.
- ❖ There are some challenges with collaboration between departments. The styles of communicating with staff appear to vary between departments, with some very committed to keeping all their employees informed and others not so committed.
- ❖ The County requires strong management and leadership with sound employee relations skills to work with the organization to bring about effective improvement; leadership appears to have been dragging and more focus and energy is needed. Training maybe required.
- ❖ Because there is a separation between operations and administration there has not be sufficient effort to improve communications.
- ❖ Council has traditionally become too intertwined with the administration. Trust is lacking.
- ❖ The CAO has too many direct reports, and it appears that he is really the director of every department. The current management style has been hands on, often micro-managing and controlling outcomes. This has not allowed staff to grow and learn and has stymied improvements.

MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY VALUE CHAIN¹

We provide hereon a diagram from the International Professional Management Association that depicts the values we look for in a competent professional management of a municipality:



It is these traits and competencies that ensure the management of the organization are enriched by a competent, professional and experienced manager. One who is energetic, and willing to improve and/or adjust to changes.

¹ <http://www.ipma.co.uk/management-competences.php>

SECTION H: OVERVIEW OF EACH DEPARTMENT AND FUNCTIONS

H.1 OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STRUCTURE

The following are observations and a brief assessment of each department as they function today.

H.1.1 Observations – Issues Impacting the Administration

- ❖ The administration is challenged to keep pace with the development, implementation and service improvements or requirements of the County. For example, there is a lack of succession planning. In the next couple years there will be a substantial turnover in key staff which will create significant loss of capacity and institutional memory. During our interviews we counted a potential of 5 employees who will either retire or have considered moving on for family or personal reason. These functional losses will create a huge challenge for the County.
- ❖ In the past 10 years there has been no increase in administrative staffing numbers. With currently 3 vacancies there are currently fewer employees than a decade ago.
- ❖ With the potential turnover there must be a plan to ensure the information, knowledge and records pass from one individual to another, and are captured in the corporate information and records systems.
- ❖ Administration appears to be working in a vacuum. On one hand there are unclear targets, and on the other hand administration has many regulated responsibilities to address. Every policy shift or change of direction creates an administrative burden that adds to the current responsibilities, usually with limited consideration of the administrative or resource burden.
- ❖ To varying degrees communication among services is irregular and lacking rigor of up to date sharing.
- ❖ A number of employees noted concerns about not being informed about Council meeting decisions which may affect their duties or positions. At the very least they should not find out what direction or decision is given by reading the paper or hearing it from external sources.
- ❖ The cost of contracted services including legal services should be reviewed.

H.2 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

H.2.1 Description of Services

The CAO as Councils only employee is the leader of the administration, acts as coordinator and filter of all information and services, including provision of advisory and support services for Council including specific services for the Reeve and each Councillor. The CAO must ensure the administration is functioning effectively and efficiently. He must ensure the organization is structured to manage and achieve optimum outcomes and is providing clear and appropriate direction to ensure the administration is effective and successful in their functions. The CAO must be a forward thinker, have good communication skills, possess excellent leadership skills, and very importantly is a trusted loyal servant to the community.

The CAO's 8 direct reports include; Executive Assistant, Supt. of Public Works, Supt. of Transportation, 2-Agriculture Fieldman, Communications Coordinator, Assistant CAO and CPO.

H.2.2 Observations on the CAO Function

Based on our experience and from our observations during this review process we identified a few areas where the current function could be improved:

- ❖ Improve openness and communication with all members of Council.
- ❖ Provide guidance to Council for development of a "strategic" approach to governance. This requires clear advice to ensure Councils vision and directions are effectively implemented and communicated across all levels of the administration.
- ❖ Improve the quality of advice to Council on matters the CAO may disagree with or have a differing view of what is important for the community.
- ❖ Support employees who make administrative reports to Council for which some on Council might question during Council meetings.
- ❖ Advise on new policy statements to Council on major or repetitive issues.
- ❖ Prepare a briefing dossier for any major or complex issues. Host information sessions for Council members as the need arises.
- ❖ Ensure a proactive administration that can address adhoc issues promptly, without disrupting the ability of staff to complete current functions.
- ❖ Assess behaviour and culture of the administration and address any anomalies.
- ❖ Resolve trust issues with Council and some ratepayers.

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- ❖ The CAO must develop a succession plan. It appears that three senior people will leave in the next 24 months and succession will be needed.
- ❖ The CAO's office needs to improve and/or increase emphasis on putting the needs of the Council and residents first, together with advancing actions that improve Council and public confidence.
- ❖ The CAO should develop an evaluation process that would assist council in reviewing the CAO performance.
- ❖ Senior management has not been given the reigns to manage their own organizations. The CAO should hold leadership accountable, but does not interfere to a large extent and is supportive providing mentorship and advice as needed.
- ❖ The CAO should be given more latitude to fix issues in emergencies that are fixable before they become bigger and more difficult or costly issues. In most municipalities, the CAO has the responsibility to fix problems and safety issues before they fester. This authority appears to be somewhat curtailed at the current time, it is unclear if this is a policy matter or just the system chosen by the CAO; perhaps it is a historical style for the County and not necessarily the CAO?
- ❖ The CAO should revitalize and lead the administration with a focus on implementing this report and developing a strengthened administrative organizational design.

H.3 ASSISTANT CAO – ADMINISTRATION

The function of the Assistant CAO Services provides leadership to a variety of functions including Director of Finance, Assessor, Development Officer and Reception. The administration also include; Payroll and Benefits (Human Resource).

The Assistant CAO (ACAO) provides strategic leadership and management of legislative and corporate services for the County. As a member of the management team, provides input, advice and support to the leadership, while delivering effective and efficient administration. The incumbent also acts as Chief Administrative Officer in the absence of the Chief Administrative Officer. The ACAO is currently acting as the interim-CAO.

H.3.1 Description of Services

Is responsible for the following major functions under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO):

- ❖ Recruits and selects staff and provides leadership and oversight to all staff under Directors supervision.
- ❖ Responsible for duties, responsibilities, productivity and goal achievements of Corporate Services.

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- ❖ Provides performance feedback and accountability, and engages with staff with delegated responsibility.
- ❖ Coaches and mentors staff; ensures ongoing staff development, cross-training, multi-skilling, and succession planning.
- ❖ Visits work area on an on-going basis to maintain open communication, personal accessibility to all staff and team-oriented environment.
- ❖ Cooperates and participates as a senior leader and part of the management team.
- ❖ Responsible for leadership and productivity of operations within the Departments of Finance, Assessment, and Planning and Development with a focus on customer service, productivity, and cost-effectiveness. Ensures a focus on, and a measurement of, successful outcomes rather than outputs.
- ❖ Ensures adherence to all legislative requirements such as those of the *Municipal Government Act* and the County's bylaws and policies
- ❖ Participates in the County's Health and Safety Program and models, by active leadership, healthy and safe work practices.
- ❖ Assists, advises, and informs Council, through the CAO, on all administrative and legislative municipal matters in support of appropriate and well-informed overall policy direction.
- ❖ Participates in senior management oversight to ensure adherence to the policy direction established by Council for the County.
- ❖ Assists and advises CAO regarding short and long-term planning.
- ❖ Supports all staff to maintain productive public relations at all times.
- ❖ Represents the County at various functions, when required.

Summary

- Finance, Budgeting & Accounting,
- Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable
- Tax Clerk
- Assessment
- Reception, front counter services
- Admin support
- Administration Services, IT
- Legislative Services
- Planning – Development Office
- Human Resources – Payroll/benefits
- Contract Administration
- Records Management and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Administration
- Insurance and Risk Management – Coordination of access to legal services by Council and administration

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H.3.2 Observations – ACAO (Administration)

- ❖ The ACAO is a long service employee, who a decade ago served as the County CAO. This position is a very important component of the executive management leadership team. The function of ensuring and confirming that County finances and formal administrative services are managed and maintained effectively cannot be understated.
- ❖ Enjoys working for the County and has stayed loyal.
- ❖ Primary responsibilities as described in the position description:
 - Plans, directs, coordinates and provides leadership to the Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Contracted Services, IT, Assessment, and Planning.
 - Contributes to County strategic direction, values and vision.
 - Advises the CAO on corporate priorities and policies, bylaws, etc., to achieve objectives and/or improve department operations.
 - Fills the acting role in the absence of the CAO.
- ❖ Responsible for providing financial implications and making recommendations for all background requests presented to Council.
- ❖ Ensures implementation and maintenance of accounting compliance pursuant to Policy.
- ❖ Authorizes payments for invoices, on agreements and contracts and as per Policy ADM - 006.
- ❖ Assists the CAO in the development of departmental related policies and bylaws; provides input on legislative requirements.
- ❖ Ensures compliance with legislation, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines.
- ❖ Ensures that appropriate operational systems, practices and procedures are in place.
- ❖ Analyses proposed provincial and federal legislation as it affects the County.
- ❖ Coordinates grant applications, budgets and financial statements for recreation boards, community clubs and other local organizations.
- ❖ Prepares and administers the Corporate Services Budget.
- ❖ Advises the CAO on risk management issues.
- ❖ Coordinates preparation of financial forecasts.
- ❖ Prepares and implements administrative policies and procedures for the general office operations.
- ❖ Researches.
- ❖ Oversees IT services
- ❖ Assists public and ratepayers with inquiries and concerns.

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- ❖ Prepares newsletter articles as necessary.
- ❖ Ensures policies of Council are carried out in a timely fashion.
- ❖ Ensures adequate and well trained staffs are employed to carry out the duties.
- ❖ Procures ongoing training for staff to keep up to date with the latest technology.
- ❖ Updates Council on an ongoing basis regarding the financial progress of the County.
- ❖ Working at improving the method of evaluating the effectiveness of Corporate Services.
- ❖ The Director conducts ongoing meetings with individual supervisors, and infrequent meetings with the full staff.
- ❖ The issues facing the department include:
 - Workloads and few resources offer limited time to focus on issues
 - Retirements over next couple of years – succession planning
 - Asset management challenges
 - Communications efforts are limited – public engagement has not been a priority
 - Continued improvement of the financial reporting systems.
 - Improve Human Resources effectiveness in recruitment timeliness and employee wellbeing.
 - Staffing – the administration feeling the squeeze of recruiting sufficient qualified staff.
 - Providing quality corporate services to the organization as a whole in the face of reducing revenues and resources.
 - Lack of a planner position. Has been overseen by the CAO who was a trained planner. This did put the CAO in a potential adversarial role and is not a wise use of his time.
 - Now there is no planner on board and this will leave a significant gap for subdivision and planning requirements.

H.3.3 Financial Services

The Finance Department is overseen by the Director of Finance who is responsible for all aspects of the financial operations of Beaver County in accordance with policy, legislation, and sound accounting principles. There are two financial administrative assistants (accounting services) Reporting to the Director of Finance. The following are the general duties:

- ❖ Recruits, selects, directs and oversees all staff under his/her direction.
- ❖ Maintains an up to date set of financial information to be used to keep the County informed of current financial status – financial record management.
- ❖ Reports all financial matters to the ACAO.

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- ❖ Provides performance feedback and accountability.
- ❖ Coaches and mentors staff; ensures ongoing staff development, cross-training, multi-skilling, and succession planning.
- ❖ Cooperates and participates as part of the management team.
- ❖ Ensures that the Department of Finance focuses on customer service, productivity, and cost-effectiveness.
- ❖ Ensures all Generally Accepted Accounting Systems for municipalities are supported within Beaver County administration.
- ❖ Ensures adherence to all legislative requirements such as those of the *Municipal Government Act* and all the County's bylaws and policies.
- ❖ Participates in the County's Health and Safety Program.
- ❖ Assists, advises, and informs Council, through the ACAO, on all financial matter.
- ❖ Inputs to short and long-term operational and capital strategic planning.
- ❖ Under the supervision of the ACAO the Director of Finance, the following services are provided:
 - Accounting A/P – A/R
 - Payroll and Benefits
 - Property taxation
 - Fee administration
 - Cash management
 - Investment management
 - Insurance coverage
 - Accounts payable/receivable
 - Grants: applications for/to non-profit groups; and from Provincial Government

H.3.4 County Finances

The following is a summary of a brief review of the County financial situation, including reviewing the audited financial statements for performed by "MNP."

Beaver County Financial Review

The County has 3,316 sq. km of area, a population of 5,905 (2016) with 2,893 km of County roads. Of the 2,893 kilometers of local roads there are approximately 11 km of paved roads, 39 km of oiled roads, 2,263 km of graveled roads and 174 km of graded roads. There are 406 kilometers of undeveloped road allowances. The great majority of the local roads serve as local access to farming and smaller industrial activities. However, some of the roads provide a higher level of service to several Country Residential subdivisions, mostly located in the western part of the County.

The County is growing modestly in population over time. Acreages are increasing in numbers. A map of the County and roads are noted below.

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Figure 1- Beaver County

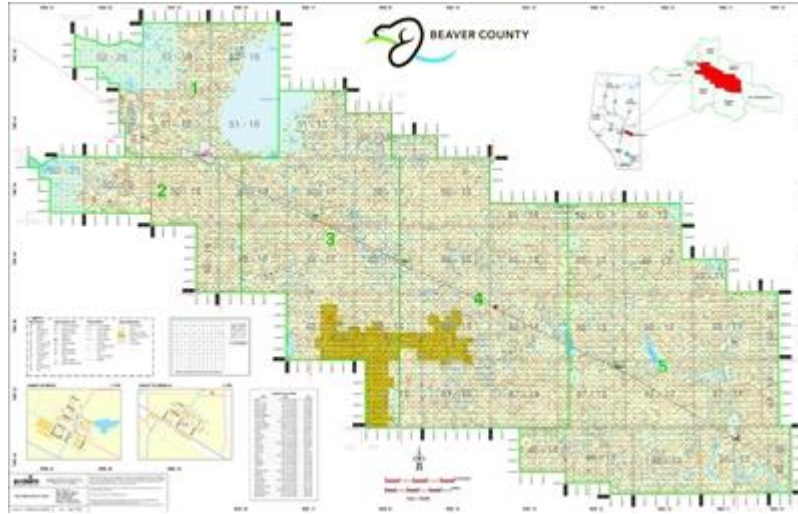


Figure 2- Beaver County Roads

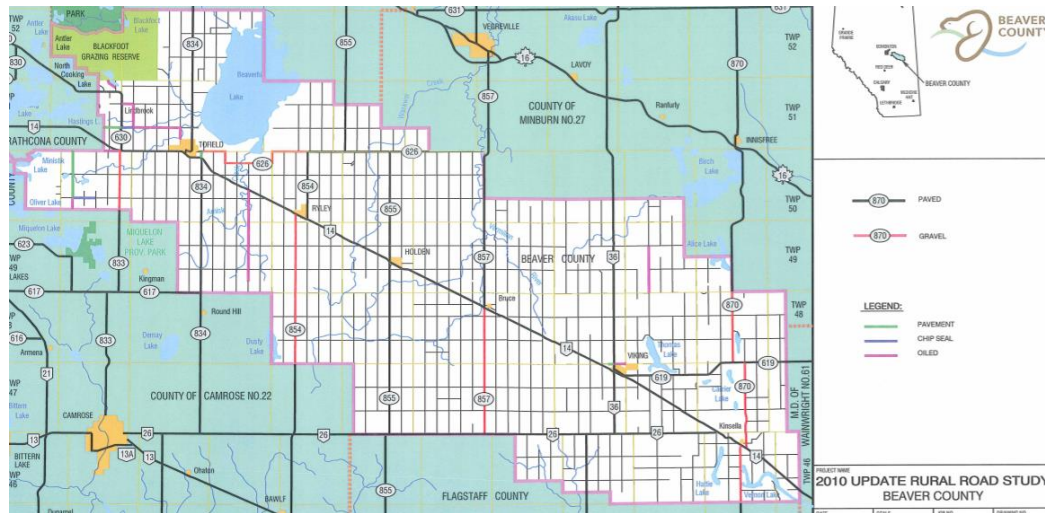


Table 1- Beaver County Population

Beaver County	2006	2011	2016	2020	Change 2020 from 2011
Farms	795	677	631	631	-7%
Population	5676	5689	6030	6044	6%
Dwellings		2109	2381	2772	24%

Source: Census, Statistics Canada; AB Municipal Affairs

Operating and Capital

The table below shows the operating and capital expenses for the County from 2020 to 2025 (projected). Operating expenses total about \$16.7 million in 2020, and are budgeted at \$14.9 million in the current year. By 2025 the estimate is about \$13.4 million (Table 2).

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Table 2- Beaver County Financial Overview

Beaver County FS Summary - Adjusted	Actual	Budget	Projected →→→→			
	2020 Audit FS	2,021	2,022	2,023	2,024	2,025
Operating						
Admin	\$ 2,773,615	\$ 2,284,467	\$ 2,127,764	\$ 2,140,847	\$ 2,160,453	\$ 2,180,350
Major Fin Transactions						
Council	\$ 250,563	\$ 290,528	\$ 310,786	\$ 312,655	\$ 315,171	\$ 317,720
Cmty Peace Officer	\$ 362,077	\$ 493,161	\$ 563,384	\$ 687,298	\$ 724,858	\$ 727,570
Fire Protection	\$ 615,151	\$ 849,358	\$ 874,839	\$ 883,587	\$ 901,259	\$ 919,284
Animal Control	\$ 9,353	\$ 10,750	\$ 11,073	\$ 11,183	\$ 11,407	\$ 11,635
PW - Dir Office & Capital	\$ 515,059	\$ 708,658	\$ 541,109	\$ 544,879	\$ 550,830	\$ 556,875
PW - Grader Operations	\$ 1,758,322	\$ 2,104,146	\$ 2,021,819	\$ 1,959,920	\$ 1,979,919	\$ 2,000,222
PW - Road Construction						
PW - Maintenance	\$ 5,130,657	\$ 5,609,132	\$ 4,747,268	\$ 4,184,265	\$ 4,254,457	\$ 4,325,985
Water Supply			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Sewage Treatment	\$ 57,960	\$ 49,985	\$ 50,526	\$ 50,911	\$ 51,564	\$ 52,228
Waste Collection	\$ 20,520	\$ 39,560	\$ 39,560	\$ 39,560	\$ 39,560	\$ 39,560
FCSS	\$ 136,846	\$ 137,626	\$ 141,699	\$ 143,107	\$ 145,941	\$ 148,832
CALP	\$ 135,305	\$ 147,338	\$ 151,633	\$ 151,679	\$ 151,725	\$ 151,772
Planning & Dev't	\$ 189,654	\$ 263,740	\$ 216,561	\$ 218,205	\$ 220,998	\$ 223,839
Agriculture	\$ 701,262	\$ 931,185	\$ 828,157	\$ 833,587	\$ 842,169	\$ 850,887
Recreation	\$ 311,513	\$ 429,063	\$ 352,809	\$ 356,337	\$ 363,464	\$ 370,733
Campgrounds	\$ 206,847	\$ 318,511	\$ 286,677	\$ 289,544	\$ 295,334	\$ 301,241
Culture	\$ 245,115	\$ 253,711	\$ 265,736	\$ 268,391	\$ 273,754	\$ 279,224
Amortization	\$ 3,296,511					
	\$ 16,716,330	\$ 14,920,919	\$ 13,531,400	\$ 13,075,955	\$ 13,282,863	\$ 13,457,957
Annual change		-11%	-9%	-3%	2%	1%

Importantly the five year change is significant at about -20% if the current projections hold true, with a reduction of \$3.2 million by 2025. The County in 2020 spent \$25 million in total and is projected to spend \$22 million annually by 2025. A major item affecting the change is road construction costs which rely heavily on the MSI grants from the provincial government. These grants are expected to decline in the near term but no formula is available yet. The road construction and capital plan is noted below for the County and the construction amounts are less certain over time. That annual cost is a risk to the County plans.

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Table 3 shows the balance of operating items for other program areas.

Table 3- Beaver County Capital and other Allocations

Beaver County FS Summary - Adjusted	Audit 2020	Budget 2021	Projected →→→→			
Road Construction	\$ 2,429,093	\$ 2,858,203	\$ 1,040,000	\$ 1,040,000	\$ 1,040,000	\$ 1,040,000
Capital	\$ 1,420,315	\$ 2,464,923	\$ 1,900,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,305,000	\$ 2,180,000
Sub total	\$ 20,565,738	\$ 20,244,045	\$ 16,471,400	\$ 15,315,955	\$ 15,627,863	\$ 16,677,957
Transfer to reserves						
Admin (also includes major fin trans)	\$ 101,949					
Major Fin Transactions		\$ 2,780,436	\$ 2,726,742	\$ 2,548,449	\$ 2,490,832	\$ 2,567,519
Cmty Peace Officer	\$ 16,250	\$ 16,250	\$ 16,250	\$ 16,250	\$ 16,250	\$ 16,250
Fire Protection	\$ 234,205					
PW - Dir Office & Capital	\$ 1,296,596	\$ 1,075,895	\$ 970,895	\$ 970,895	\$ 970,895	\$ 970,895
PW - Maintenance	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 3,329,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
Water Supply	\$ 71,190	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000
Sewage Treatment	\$ 19,985					
Agriculture	\$ 66,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Campgrounds	\$ 112,098					
Grand Total	\$ 24,984,011	\$ 27,540,626	\$ 22,280,287	\$ 20,946,549	\$ 21,200,840	\$ 22,327,621
Sources: Audit Statement; Finance Director						
Reconcil to Budget						
Per Budget		\$ 27,540,626				
Variance		\$ -				
Reconciliation to Object Exp & Capital						
Expendit By dept (OBE)			\$ 20,380,286	\$ 19,746,548	\$ 19,895,840	\$ 20,147,621
Road construction						
Capital			\$ 1,900,000	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,305,000	\$ 2,180,000
Total			\$ 22,280,286	\$ 20,946,548	\$ 21,200,840	\$ 22,327,621

Table 4- Reserve Statement

Beaver County Reserve Statement				
Item	Balance 2021	Transfer In	Transfer Out	Balance Dec 21
Administration	\$ 2,513,335	\$ 45,250	\$ (405,569)	\$ 2,171,016
Public Works	\$ 6,077,433	\$ 4,398,900	\$ (5,222,256)	\$ 5,254,077
Water & Sewer	\$ 464,111	\$ 65,000	\$ (5,000)	\$ 524,111
Industrial Parks	\$ 1,077,902	\$ -	\$ (157,122)	\$ 920,780
Agriculture	\$ 250,642	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 280,642
Recreat/ Parks	\$ 210,976	\$ -	\$ (152,319)	\$ 58,657
Contingency	\$ 42,145	\$ 205,995	\$ -	\$ 248,140
Leg. Reseroces	\$ 180,891	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 180,891
Total	\$ 10,817,435	\$ 4,745,145	\$ (5,942,266)	\$ 9,638,314
Source: Finance Dept.		Reduction		-11%

The reserves for the County appear in table 4 and will be down by 11% at the end of 2021.

Revenue Sources for the County include three main areas:

- Tax revenues from property owners;
- Grants from the provincial government and others; and
- Claystone dividends.

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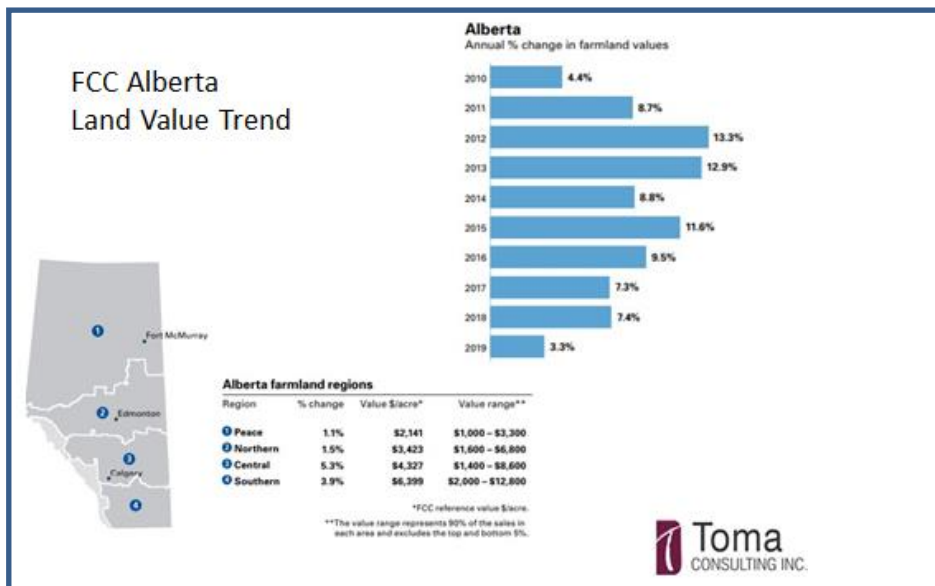
A review of the County assessment base is noted in table 5 with a low amount of non-residential assessments. Farmland assessments are held static and linear and machinery and equipment are declining over time. That will have an implication for farmers and for businesses.

Table 5- Assessment Mix for Beaver County

Beaver County Assessment						
Assess yr-->	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Tax Year-->	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Class						
Farmland	\$ 114,162,670	\$ 114,529,520	\$ 114,529,520	\$ 114,529,520	\$ 114,529,520	\$ 114,529,520
Residential	\$ 628,777,650	\$ 631,096,750	\$ 633,627,000	\$ 636,171,630	\$ 638,731,450	\$ 641,306,620
Non-Resident	\$ 116,265,470	\$ 116,265,000	\$ 116,300,000	\$ 116,300,000	\$ 116,300,000	\$ 116,300,000
Linear	\$ 296,197,480	\$ 281,261,180	\$ 280,000,000	\$ 280,000,000	\$ 280,000,000	\$ 234,921,890
Mach & Equip	\$ 77,816,490	\$ 75,000,000	\$ 70,000,000	\$ 65,000,000	\$ 70,000,000	\$ 70,000,000
Grants in Lieu	\$ 1,382,610	\$ 1,382,610	\$ 1,387,330	\$ 1,387,370	\$ 1,387,400	\$ 1,387,400
Total	\$ 1,234,602,370	\$ 1,219,535,060	\$ 1,215,843,850	\$ 1,213,388,520	\$ 1,220,948,370	\$ 1,178,445,430
Annual Change		-1%	0%	0%	1%	-3%
Source: Finance Dept.		From 2019				-5%

The level of assessment is stable to slightly declining in the longer term. This will mean an impact on mill rates. It is interesting to point out that Farmland has been increasing in value in central Alberta by about 5% annually (FCC).

Figure 3– FCC Farmland Data



The risk from possible MSI grant reductions can mean the rate payer will need to fund shortfalls for road construction and other County programs and services. This is expected in the next few years. Claystone has indicated in a prior email (Sept, 2019) from their finance department the potential fund flows. That information indicates:

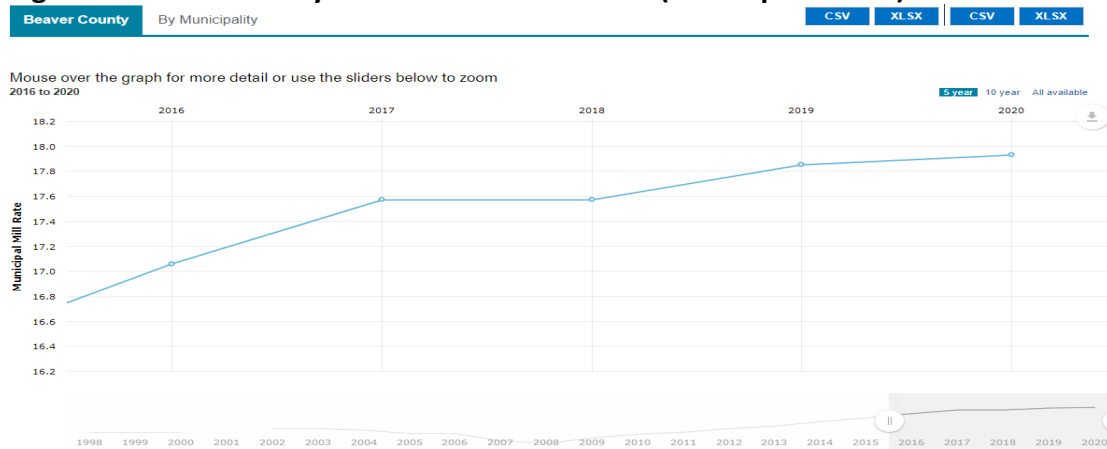
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- ❖ **“Grant in lieu of taxes:** Prior to the MCC (Municipal Controlled Corporation) Claystone operating as Beaver Municipal Solutions was a Commission. As such it did not pay municipal taxes however it gave a grant to the County: Grant in Lieu of Taxes. This grant was about \$132,034 per year. As an MCC it will be paying taxes to Beaver County. These taxes are likely about \$300,000.
- ❖ **Good Neighbour Grant:** The County received about \$36,524 per year for this grant. This was used by Council to pay for garbage bins for residents within 1.0 kilometers from the site for effects such as noise, dust and odours. At the time of this report the 2021 payment has not yet been received.
- ❖ **Dividend:** In 2021, the expected dividend was \$1,392,688 and in 2022 the County is expected to receive about \$1,624,803. This will depend on net income of the organization and the marketplace as it is a new organization. The email was based on the 5 year plan at the time. The County received \$1,392,507 in February 2021.”
- ❖ The County receives a small amount of revenue from the Highway 14 Commission of about \$65,000 annually for water sales. The County built a small building for water storage and piping system with a truck fill at RR 630 and the Commission uses it and pays a small royalty for the use. No other fund flows occur with the County.

Mill Rate Review

The County has a comparable mill rate to others in the region based on Alberta Municipal Affairs data. The trend has been a slight upward trend in the mill rate.

Figure 4- Beaver County Mill Rate- Non-Resident (Municipal Affairs)



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Figure 5- Current Mill Rate (Beaver County)

BEAVER COUNTY 2020 TAX RATE TABLE									
	RESIDENTIAL (Class FMR)	RESIDENTIAL (Class RES)	RESIDENTIAL (Class VAC)	FARMLAND	NON-RESIDENTIAL (comm/indus)	LINEAR (DIP)	MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT	DIP	DIP M&E
ASFF	2.6534	2.6534	2.6534	2.6534	3.6212	3.6212	0.0000	3.6212	0.0000
BEAVER FOUNDATION	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260	0.2260
MUNICIPAL	3.6699	3.6699	7.7726	16.4641	17.1558	17.1558	17.1558	17.1558	17.1558
BESC	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887	0.6887
POLICING	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847	0.0847
DIP						0.0760		0.0760	0.0760
2020 TOTAL	7.3227	7.3227	11.4254	20.1169	21.7764	21.8524	18.1552	21.8524	18.2312
2019 TOTAL	7.0742	7.0742	11.1769	19.8684	21.9243	22.0029	18.0689	22.0029	18.1475
%AGE CHANGE	3.5128	3.5128	2.2233	1.2507	-0.6746	-0.6840	0.4776	-0.6840	0.4612

Figure 6- Comparable Municipal Data (Municipal Affairs)

INDICATORS	Lamont County ✕	Beaver County ✕	Minburn County No. 27 ✕	Strathcona County ✕
Demographics & Population				
Population [2020]	3,619	6,044	3,236	103,187
New Permanent Residents [2018]	0	-	0	175
New Temporary Residents [2014]	0	-	0	515
Total Temporary Residents [2014]	0	-	0	533
Births [2019]	16	14	19	826
Deaths [2019]	4	3	9	514
% Official Language Speakers [2016]	98.5%	97.2%	88.2%	97.2%
% Visible Minority [2016]	1.41%	1.78%	0.94%	7.29%
% Aboriginal Population [2016]	5.51%	3.13%	4.24%	3.96%
Aboriginal Population [2016]	215	185	135	3,880
% Non-official Language Speakers [2016]	1.54%	2.80%	11.77%	2.76%
Municipal Finances				
Municipal Mill Rate [2020]	17.92	17.93	21.12	9.36
Property Assessments [2020]	1,198.5M	1,222.0M	862.2M	33,928.1M
Residential Share of Property Assessments [2020]	39.1%	52.1%	34.2%	51.7%
Transportation				
Driver's Licenses [2020]	547	2,901	614	78,438
Vehicle Registrations [2020]	605	4,147	928	92,286
Net Commuter Flow [2016]	-1,015	-1,390	-695	-6,130
Business Activity				
% Small Businesses [2020]	100.0%	98.9%	100.0%	96.2%
Incorporations [2020]	1	12	-	653
Number of Businesses [2020]	60	276	71	3,467
Quality of Life				
Life Expectancy (Years) [2018]	78.1	80.0	79.6	82.8
Dollar Loss from Fire Incidents [2014]	377,540	86,163	718,502	5,416,710
Number of Fire Incidents [2014]	16	4	13	105

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Based on our quick review of Municipal Affairs data Beaver County compares reasonably with and is not significantly different from similar rural municipalities. Overall Beaver County appears to have a reasonable mill rate.

Major risks to future budgets:

- ❖ Possible MSI grants which are expected to decline in the next few years. This will affect both capital for equipment (33% of MSI) and construction (66%) of MSI annual plans. Reduction or illumination of MSI may require increased property tax funding for infrastructure – estimated \$1 million per year
- ❖ Council will be challenged to find revenue over time given the MSI expected reductions, provincial government downloading i.e. policing costs, and the major rural road improvements and annual repair/maintenance.
- ❖ Claystone dividend- this can change over time as the corporation pays an annual property tax of about \$300,000 (recent) to the County plus over a million in the dividend. However the dividend can vary with the market place and earnings of the corporation. The prior amount paid as a grant to the County was about \$153,000.
- ❖ Unplanned disruptive events such as flood, fire, climate or other risks which may not be covered by insurance or other programs.
- ❖ Declining revenue and budget over next few years will create a financial challenge.
- ❖ In order to address resource support by filling key positions and replacing several positions that are vacant could require up to \$300,000 annually in new spending (TBC). In addition, some work re-balancing needs to be done among current programs/ positions.
- ❖ Council currently appears to be running a very tight budget, perhaps so inwardly focused that there has not been sufficient focus on developing a strategy for long term growth or adaptation (NOTE: *inflation is currently growing exponentially due to government high debt and the printing of more dollars; expect inflation to grow at least by between 3% and 5% this year*).
- ❖ Currently road maintenance and construction takes a larger portion of the annual budget. The challenge for Council going forward over the next few years is to develop a plan for rebuild of key heavily used roads. The question not answered at this time is how many will be fixed over the next 10 years? It could be that Council develops a 10 year plan and proposes an increase in the farmland levy dedicated to a long term commitment to road rehabilitation in the County.

H.3.5 Financial Services Functions

Reporting to the Director are two Admin Support staff. They are responsible for:

- ❖ Accounts Payable – Contract administration
- ❖ Accounts Receivable

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- ❖ Payroll – Salary and Wages and Benefits
- ❖ Preparing Monthly and Quarterly Reports
- ❖ Human Resources Support – advertising, recruitment, interviews, reference checks, etc.
- ❖ Tangible Capital Asset administration
- ❖ Assist with budget preparation
- ❖ WCB and insurance provisions
- ❖ Administers employee performance review system

H.3.6 Observations - Financial Services

- ❖ We observed an internally focused financial service that provides reports and recommendations for Council and to other directors and managers, and the CAO on fiscal issues.
- ❖ The department provides leadership and support the annual budget processes, and has regular communications with the ACAO and the CAO and senior management. The department will face succession issues in the next two years or so.
- ❖ The Finance department has a significant say in the control and delivery of the administration's support systems. The department can be integrated into more financial decisions/ monitoring earlier and has strengths to offer other areas and to Council.
- ❖ The purchasing functions should be reviewed more thoroughly to clarify authority levels, purchasing processes, control of inventory, and confirmation of receipt of goods and services.
- ❖ Council has provided good policy to allow for approved capital projects to be implemented without further Council authorizations. Council does request project updates.
- ❖ Sufficient care needs to be taken to ensure that capital assets are purchased with end user input or agreement.
- ❖ Inventory control should be more efficient; there are opportunities for improved efficiencies through systems.
- ❖ Council is moving to priority based budgeting which has its good points and also its challenges, especially in the political and emergent realms. The budget review process has been developed over time. Much effort has gone into ensuring that both the Council and key staff are involved. This process is obviously very time consuming and results in a number of discussions and revisions.
- ❖ Finance is a small area with some limited opportunities for succession planning. More cross training would be useful to help provide transition when staff leave or are sick.
- ❖ Internal audits are not performed.

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- ❖ Control of financial data and data recovery – ensuring testing, off-site backup, checks and balances, and server cross training for financial matters.
- ❖ Security and control of sensitive financial information.
- ❖ Continued development and improvement to financial and other e-commerce computer applications.
- ❖ Short-term financial planning is adequate for budgeting purposes.
- ❖ Addressing staffing stresses due to complexity and responsibilities of financial management in the areas of accountabilities, training, competencies and the need to maintain ongoing quality assurance and performance measures.
- ❖ On-going need for training and cross training on all data management systems.
- ❖ Continuing to build confidence in the financial information provided to Council.

H.3.7 Human Resource Matters

- ❖ Beaver County Human Resource functions are administered by the finance department through clerical support as well as under the oversight of the ACAO. We provide hereon the roles and duties we would normally find in an HR department:
 - Prepare recruitment strategies and succession planning.
 - Support recruitment, interviewing, and selection of skilled employees.
 - Maintain confidential personnel files.
 - Liaison/resource support for personnel issues.
 - Administer employee annual leave entitlement, bank time, absence reports, holiday requests and other documents related to the personnel policies.
 - Administration of age and payroll systems and policies, respond to payroll inquiries, process payroll year-end and issue T-4s.
 - Enter timesheets into financial accounting system, process payroll and present payroll registers for approval.
 - Transmit payroll information to bank for direct deposit.
 - Administer benefit programs.
 - Identify staff training and professional development needs, and assist staff with the development of education plans.
 - Assist with new employee orientation to foster positive attitudes toward County goals.
 - Ensure performance evaluations and reviews are conducted in a timely manner for permanent and seasonal employees.

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- Conduct salary surveys within labour market to determine competitive rates.
- Promote team building with staff, Council and ratepayers.
- Prepare quarterly employee training and education report for the CAO.
- Prepare staffing reports for Council.
- Review and administer all employee salary change requests.
- Coordinate Years of Service awards and incentive programs for staff, Council, and boards and committee members.
- Support the coordination of the seasonal employee orientation.
- Ensure employee health and safety training implemented.
- Security and distribution of all keys, fuel cards and building security codes.
- Supervise Payroll & Benefits.

H.3.8 Observations – Human Resources

- ❖ It appears the oversight of the County HR is the responsibility of the ACAO.
- ❖ Some areas may need a review of personnel and resources, as there are areas that appear have an uneven workload and not all using the resources and personnel to their fullest measure.
- ❖ It seems that when some positions are vacant for an extended period of time, future attempts at recruitment are discontinued and the vacancy remains, leaving the department with a void and no options.
- ❖ A number of position descriptions are out of date.
- ❖ Managers interviewed were found to have a good relationship with their staff and other staff in the organization, however we note that most lack basic management, supervisory and team building skills. It appears unclear as to the role of HR in addressing skills development within the management group.
- ❖ The County performed a compensation review in 2015/2016. There appears to be a reasonably current compensation philosophy that aligns pay with other rewards in relation to the financial challenges of the current years.
- ❖ We did not find a sound HR policy or philosophy that would:
 - Attract and retain a qualified and diverse workforce through a competitive compensation program.
 - Recognize and reward individual and work achievement, contribution and excellence.
 - Provide a non-discriminatory and equitable merit-based compensation program.

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- Provide opportunities for advancement.
- ❖ Some staff shared that they are less than supportive of the current human resource management philosophy and some of the procedures being delivered. Some felt there was a degree of favouritism evident with respect to priority setting.
- ❖ Non-union salary and wage increases have been somewhat curtailed due to budget constraints. Although the outside workers have a collective bargaining agreement under the International Union of Operating Engineers.
- ❖ Union employees current CBA annual adjustment was negotiated at; 0.5%, 1.0%, 0%, & 0%. The next bargaining negotiations are scheduled for August of 2022.
- ❖ During discussions with the Union representative we were advised that for the most part employees are satisfied with their work for the County.
- ❖ Challenges facing the County human Resource management:
 - One of the most significant challenges facing the County is the need to rebuild or renew the corporate culture. From an HR perspective, the morale has lowered substantially over the past few years and there are a wide variety of challenges which the CAO will need to address over the coming months.
 - Revisit and update the essential HR policies and procedures. Ensure all position profiles are up-to-date and kept that way.
 - Seek CAO approval for employee development initiatives and seek buy-in from the employees.
 - Guide appropriate recruitment, selection and orientation processes and techniques for all aspects of the organization.
 - Develop a proposed approach to succession planning.
 - Recommend a consistent approach to staff training and development.
 - Develop and implement an HR information system needs analysis.
 - Develop a process to help improve employee morale and motivation to do quality work, establishing the County as an employer of choice.
 - Improve the process for training the senior managers on key management skills.
 - The ability of management to respond to key employee relation issues will determine whether or not it will be successful in both attracting and retaining personnel.
 - Consider the employ of an employee relations position.

H.3.9 Assessment Services

Assessment Services would normally have three employees; currently there is one vacancy. Reporting to the ACAO, the Assessment Department provides:

Senior Assessor

- ❖ Manage the preparation and administration of the County's assessment roll in strict accordance

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with the *Municipal Government Act*, related regulations, and other legislative addendums as prescribed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

- ❖ Holds the position of Designated Officer for the purpose of fulfilling the *Qualifications of Assessor Regulation*
- ❖ Advises the Assistant CAO, Director of Finance, and through the CAO, advises Council
- ❖ Responds to all taxpayer or public inquiries and defends the assessment roll
- ❖ Prepares or initiates public education and awareness
- ❖ Makes presentations at Council or Committee meetings, Assessment Review Board hearings
- ❖ Supervises accredited and unaccredited assessment staff, as well as assessment and tax administrative support staff

Assessment Technician

Senior Assessor the Assessment Technician preforms the following:

- ❖ Prepares the property assessment roll and preforms the following duties:
 - Maintains database of new development for inspection purposes
 - Prepares and distributes requests for assessment information from non-residential property owners and records construction cost information
 - Prepares, distributes, and reviews farm declaration forms
 - Conducts residential inspections and records physical characteristics as required to prepare property assessments
 - Examines development/building permits, blueprints, construction plans, or supplemental information related to on-site inspections
 - Creates APEX building sketches from on-site inspection drawings
 - Applies valuation standards as legislated by the Municipal Government Act and associated regulations
 - Assigns appropriate assessment classifications
 - Updates web-mapping program with assessment information (e.g. assessment summary sheets)
 - Investigates and inputs market sales information
 - Migration of assessment information from CAMA lot to Bellamy software
 - Applies Rural Assessment Policy to assessment roll
- ❖ Maintains the assessment roll's integrity at all times (e.g. new/corrected information, Land Title changes, ensures assessment roll is balanced).
- ❖ Prepares property assessment and tax notices accurately and ensures they are mailed on a timely basis. Processes assessment changes and amended assessment notices.
- ❖ Prepares and distributes related property assessment documentation in response to customer inquiries (e.g. assessment summary sheets, Rural Assessment Policy).
- ❖ Prepares Assessment Review Board agendas and hearing information packages.
- ❖ Attends Assessment Review Board hearings as required and records hearing proceedings.

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- ❖ Prepares correspondence and other documentation in follow-up to Assessment Review Board hearings.
- ❖ Carries out assessment roll maintenance as assigned by the Senior Assessor.
- ❖ Creates new assessment files and assigns roll numbers (e.g. new subdivisions).
- ❖ Assists assessment department staff with administrative functions as requested. Prepares correspondence related to position responsibilities for signature.

Taxation

- ❖ Processes tax financial transactions. Ensures the safe, accurate, and timely deposit of all cash.
- ❖ Assists with preparation of property tax bylaw.
- ❖ Prepares the property tax roll and maintains its integrity at all times.
- ❖ Prepares and distributes related property taxation documentation in response to customer inquiries, including tax certificates and tax searches.
- ❖ Prepares property tax arrears notices and related documentation with the utmost accuracy, in a timely manner, and according to the *Municipal Government Act*.
- ❖ Assists with the sale of tax recovery properties. Attends tax recovery sale and records auction proceedings.
- ❖ Prepares yearend working papers.

Other

- ❖ Processes all cash/debit/credit financial transactions. Ensures the safe, accurate, and timely deposit of all cash.
- ❖ Maintains County website with respect to property assessment and tax information.
- ❖ Maintains name and contact information in the computer system for use by all departments.
- ❖ Responds to telephone and front-counter inquiries related to property assessment and taxes.

H.3.10 Observations – Assessment Services

- ❖ Senior Assessor is well known and a seasoned veteran assessor having been a member of the assessment department since 1988.
- ❖ Senior Assessor is on Contract after having retired. He has indicated a desire to end the contract in a few years. This will cause a succession issue.
- ❖ Assessments of subdivisions have had to adjust as pavement returns to gravel because of linear assessment losses causing reduced revenue
- ❖ Assistant assessor vacancy should be filled as it would be a good succession plan
- ❖ Reduced tax rate incentive plan impacts revenues from assessed commercial-light industrial developments
- ❖ There is no intermediate or junior backup for the Assessor.
- ❖ In the event the Assessor leaves the County will be required to contract out the service as there has been no other succession plan developed.

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- ❖ Assessment reform promoted by the Government of Alberta has left some unknowns. It appears that the Government is trying to address an industry cost via the assessment process. The Government has the process under review currently.
- ❖ Loss of linear assessment will fall on the overall assessment to achieve revenue necessary to operate the County.
- ❖ Without the assistant assessor property inspections are behind.

H.3.11 Planning and Development Services

Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act provides authority for municipalities to develop and implement Planning and Development bylaws.

Section 622(1-5) Every statutory plan, land use bylaw and action taken under Part 17 ... must be consistent with the land use policies ... established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council,"

Section 624(1) "Subject to section 641, a council must by bylaw provide for a development authority to exercise development powers and perform duties on behalf the municipality."

These bylaws are statutory in nature as long as they are not in conflict with the MGA. There are several types of statutory plans in Beaver County:

- ❖ *"intermunicipal development plans"*
- ❖ *"municipal development plans"*
- ❖ *"area structure plans"*
- ❖ *"area redevelopment plans"*
- ❖ *"land use bylaw"*

Under the ACAO's leadership Planning and Development is responsible for land use planning, subdivision approvals, and development control within Beaver County.

The Beaver County Municipal Development Plan (98-800 as amended) describes the objective of planning and development, which is to direct growth of the residential and commercial development described below:

"The goal of Beaver County is to conserve and enhance the County's agricultural and rural character while encouraging environmentally sound, sustainable economic development. The County foresees agriculture and agricultural services as major economic force in the community. The conservation of agricultural land and measures designed to assist the continuation of agricultural activities will remain a priority in most of the County. Although the Council of Beaver County regards agricultural land as an important asset, they recognize the need to promote economic diversification so that all residents may enjoy optimum working and living standards. This economic diversification must be environmentally sound and compatible with the rural character of

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the County. In the west end of the County, where the agricultural capability of land is limited and where country residential development predominates, the County will allow residential development that can be harmonized with the unique environmental sensitivities of the area. The County will provide leadership and direction in the following areas: (1) Conservation of agricultural land and encouragement of diversity in the agricultural and the agricultural service sectors; (2) Preservation of wildlife habitats and environmentally sensitive areas; and (3) Provision of the infrastructure necessary to encourage sustainable, environmentally sound economic development.”

The MDP points out that the County is large and home to wide and diverse resource development from oil and gas, country residential subdivision, tourism and agriculture.

Planning and Development provides oversight, assistance and information to facilitate the development, subdivision or approved uses of land and developments to ensure compliance with current planning legislation and bylaws. The department reviews and makes recommendations on Development Permits, Subdivision and Land Use Amendment Applications, including providing information, analysing referrals, consulting stakeholders, negotiating alternatives and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Currently Beaver County has no senior or professional planner on staff. The ACAO is the Subdivision Authority. The Senior Planner for purposes of the Planning department was the previous CAO. The Subdivision Authority is the ACAO.

The Planning Department - Development Officer reports to the ACAO. In addition to the general position responsibilities, Planning and Subdivision Authority is responsible for the following functions under the direction of the ACAO:

- ❖ Holds the position of Subdivision Authority for the purposes of processing and deciding upon applications for subdivision, including final endorsement.
- ❖ Prepares subdivision and development agreements, including caveats, easements, etc. Maintains effective liaison with developers and other government departments.
- ❖ Holds the position of Development Authority for the purposes of processing and deciding upon applications for development permits and compliance requests.
- ❖ Ensures compliance with subdivision and development decisions and assists the County’s Bylaw Enforcement Officer with enforcement of the Land Use Bylaw and other relevant planning legislation or regulations.
- ❖ Attends and participates in the Beaver Hills Initiative Planners Working Group.
- ❖ Administers general land use matters, including but not limited to land dispositions and sales of land in the County’s industrial parks
- ❖ Periodically reviews the Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw and other planning documents with a view to consistency and long-term planning of land use. Prepares amendments to relevant planning documents, as required, or upon application by landowners.

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- ❖ Responds to public enquiries. Initiates public education and awareness campaigns regarding the municipal planning function and related regulations, and holds community consultations on current issues. Assists with relevant updates to the County's website.
- ❖ Makes presentations at Council and Committee meetings, public hearings, Appeal Board hearings, and community meetings.
- ❖ Advises the CAO and Council on matters of planning policy and other Department initiatives. Undertakes special project research and policy document preparation as required.
- ❖ Liaises with Safety Codes inspectors regarding safety codes applications, permits, and inspections, including monitoring and audit of Safety Codes files.

The Development Officer role is to:

- ❖ Assist the Senior Planner and Subdivision Authority on subdivision and development matters
- ❖ Receive development applications
- ❖ Process development applications
- ❖ Make recommendations based on the ASP, MDP and Land Use bylaw
- ❖ Make presentations to Council when the issue requires

H.3.12 Observation – Planning & Development Services

- ❖ Lacks annual priorities, as there is minimal focus by leadership on the vision for the County. The department lacks a director as the CAO used to be a planner and completed this function. The role is a core one for a County.
- ❖ Council's vision, values, mission, goals, issues and priorities would normally be translated into specific goals and priorities for planning and development; clearly there is a need for these to guide planning.
- ❖ The planning process should include public, developers, adjacent residents, community groups and ratepayers with certainty. The more specific a plan is, the more certainty there should be associated with it. It is important that Council recognize this distinction and that planning authority decisions reflect the requirements of the plan. Where more discretion is desired than that presently contained in a plan, Council should direct that the bylaw be amended.
- ❖ Clearly the planning department requires guidance. Now that there is no senior planner will create challenges, some of which can become costly if not handled properly.
- ❖ The CAO was the planner; however a CAO has so much on their plate it is unwise to count on attentiveness to key planning complexities. This is not a wise use of the CAO's time and it stands to reason that the CAO could be in a conflict from time to time based on the CAO's role on behalf of the County.

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- ❖ Often the subdivision approval authority is delegated to either Council or a municipal planning commission. In Beaver County it is delegated to a designated officer, the ACAO.
- ❖ The Land Use Bylaw has a number of areas that appear out of date and it is in need of review/updating (i.e. Drainage, Site Grade).
- ❖ Using a legal firm for subdivision advice can be quite costly.
- ❖ Environmental issues include delays – AEP challenges, timeliness of responses!
- ❖ Most complaints or objections come via Country Residential Subdivision property owners.
- ❖ The County needs a planner to handle applications that involve often complex developments that often have environmental concerns.
- ❖ Focus by some on Council has been developments within their divisions.
- ❖ The development officer requires more training in the area of engineering and environment interpretations of plans.
- ❖ A full review of Beaver County planning and development should be considered.
- ❖ Agriculture developments are not being assessed and taxed, this policy should be reviewed.
- ❖ Businesses are not being licensed in the County, this policy should be reviewed.
- ❖ The challenges facing this department include:
 - Need for a Council-approved comprehensive growth management strategy.
 - Review and update LUB.
 - Address issues related to staff workloads and capacity.
 - Attract and retain a senior planner.
 - Create positive relations with the public and other stakeholders.

H.4 INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT (PW-Transportation-Ag Services)

We have conducted a thorough review of the over-arching infrastructure management that includes the departments of Transportation, Public Works and Agriculture Services. During the course of this portion of our review our associate infrastructure expert interviewed all leadership and support as well as a cross section of the operational staff.

Our focus was to determine the overall efficiency and operation of these important services in the County operations. Nineteen employees from across these three functional areas were interviewed. A series of thirty eight questions were asked of the supervisors, managers and clerical staff with a lesser number asked of the field workers.

We were pleased to hear that the majority of these employees stated that Beaver County is a good place to work. They appear reasonably happy with the current working environment, although there were a few of minor issues identified through some of the answers to our questions:

- ❖ Lack of consistency in the application of certain policies. It was noted that in one year a number of policies were amended in reaction to resident complaints even though the amendments reverted the policy back to the policy that was previously amended to react to another resident complaint. The employees would rather be acting in a proactive manner other than reactive and establish the policy after vigorous debate and then stick to it for the following year.

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- ❖ One concern heard a number of times were rumors that some elected officials believe that their position entitles them to preferred status and that they should be able to direct services when requested. This puts employees in a very uncomfortable situation and must be addressed at the highest level.
- ❖ The back sloping of roadways causes a problem in that the Ag. Services department administers the program but the transportation department has the equipment and manpower to complete the work. The shortage of staff to man all the equipment makes this a program that gets done only when time and equipment are available.
- ❖ The five year road management and capital construction plan is basically followed on a two year schedule. The plan directs the installation of culverts in the year prior to their planned construction because of the usual changes made by council to the longer plan.
- ❖ The unfulfilled shop foreman position does create an efficiency gap in terms of taking care of the shop and equipment, and scheduling and completing repairs. We suggest that this position is important and should be filled as soon as possible with someone who possesses mechanical understanding together with administrative and scheduling skills.
- ❖ There appears to be some conflicting instructions on the daily activities of certain functions because it appears there may be two different functional managers utilizing the same services. This may be creating problems and inefficiencies.
- ❖ We noted that there are three bosses handling infrastructure services, which creates some confusion – Who does what has become an issue?
- ❖ We also noted that there appears to be an uneven work load distribution.

H.4.1 Transportation Services

The Superintendent of Transportation is responsible for the following major functions under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer:

- ❖ In consultation with the CAO, recruits, selects, and manages regular employees, temporary employees, contractors related to the Transportation and infrastructure functions of the County.
- ❖ Currently the Superintendent manages the administrative assistant who also covers administration for the PW Superintendent and the Community Peace Officers, shop foreman, construction crew, maintenance crew, and 12 grader operators (equipment operators).
- ❖ The shop foreman oversees 2 mechanics, and shop administrative support.
- ❖ Management and response to Service Requests within the areas of responsibility
- ❖ Road maintenance and repair
- ❖ Gravel application program
- ❖ Shop Operations and Staff
- ❖ Liaison with Highways, CN
- ❖ Terracem, oiling

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- ❖ Winter maintenance
- ❖ Approaches
- ❖ Road Use Agreements
- ❖ Road Bans
- ❖ Dust Control program
- ❖ Protection of Infrastructure

Operations

Supervises and oversees the overall operation of all construction, maintenance, gravelling and operations of the County's local roads by:

- ❖ Budgeting, Strategic Planning and Council Presentation
- ❖ In accordance with purchasing policies, recommends purchases of new equipment to the CAO and Council.
- ❖ Involved in coordinating responses to emergencies related to infrastructure in consultation with the Manager of Protective Services, and advises the Director of Emergency Services of actions taken.
- ❖ Supervises and recommends training and staff development opportunities
- ❖ Develops department policies and procedures in consultation with the CAO
- ❖ Supervises and supports staffing performance reviews, report assessments, coaching, advising and discipline.
- ❖ Ensuring that all projects have Council approval, are completed on a timely basis, comply with County standards, and are within budget.
- ❖ Assisting Council in identifying road maintenance and road construction priorities and standards.
- ❖ Ensuring that all resources (human and equipment) available to the Transportation Department are used economically and in accordance with County policy, including contracted services.
- ❖ Providing technical advice regarding construction techniques, engineering requirements, cost estimates, and schedules for construction projects being considered by County Council.
- ❖ Developing specifications and tender documents for construction and maintenance projects as directed by Council.
- ❖ Administering contracts with respect to contractor payments, holdbacks, etc.
- ❖ Acting as a liaison with consultants and engineers hired by the County for various projects.
- ❖ Coordinating and directing tasks to be performed by Transportation staff as required by the CAO and County Council, or by other Departments that they pertain to (gravel cross-sections, engineering and drainage profiles, legal surveys, plan surveys, gravel searches, gravel testing, soils identification, and obtaining preliminary agreements, general releases, and easements).
- ❖ Acting as liaison with the legal survey company contracted for the preparation of legal survey plans.
- ❖ Acting as the County Landman for departmental projects by arranging for all land purchases,

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general releases, and easements in accordance with County Policy, ensuring correct payment is issued on a timely basis, and that all documentation regarding agreements is in place.

- ❖ Providing technical and analytical expertise to the CAO, and acting as a liaison with various government departments as required, with respect to the Transportation Department.
- ❖ Overseeing all management, supervision, life cycle and health and safety program requirements as they relate to the Transportation Shop and inventory.
- ❖ Ensuring that all utility line moves are coordinated with construction projects undertaken by the County.
- ❖ Supervises and supports staffing performance reviews, report assessments, coaching, advising and discipline.
- ❖ Coordinates and assigns work related to road construction.
- ❖ Coordinates and assigns work and oversees the progress of assigned projects and activities.
- ❖ Monitors the work and performance of contractors and consultants performing capital works projects. Provides recommendations and information to the CAO and Council on results obtained.
- ❖ Prepares and monitors annual budgets, long-term financial plans, and cost estimates for all areas of responsibility.
- ❖ Support and advice for long-term planning for future development within the Municipality.
- ❖ Monitors budget expenditures and reports any variances to the CAO.

H.4.2 Observations - Transportation Services

- ❖ In terms of public services, transportation is the most prominent, if not important, function of the County. The County roads and infrastructure must be maintained and controlled in a safe, reliable and economical manner.
- ❖ As can be seen from the list of duties and responsibilities the Superintendent position is overly busy. As a result, we were advised that, projects and initiatives are sometimes not initiated or take considerable time to complete.
- ❖ Leadership in the transportation department has minimal experience in the management role, demonstrating limited support expertise. We would have assumed a much stronger team to exercise the most significant and costly component of the County infrastructure services.
- ❖ The current superintendent has been able to grapple with the key components of the department and gained some Council confidence. He is still learning the management aspect of the role on the job. He appears quite capable to evolve into the job.
- ❖ It appears that some members of Council have contractors coming directly to them on issues, and will sometimes intervene on the contractor's behalf. Contracts should not be interfered with by Councillors.

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- ❖ It appears that there is some Council involvement in operations; this indicates that there may be a lack of clarity regarding expectations, resulting in increased frustration.
- ❖ Policy PW-018 2013, provide road engineering and maintenance specifications. Roads are maintained to Alberta Transportation standards.
- ❖ Due to this being a dry year for the most part, roads are in better condition, except where the Ag industry uses heavy equipment and/or drainage continues to be a challenge.
- ❖ Older roads are constantly requiring maintenance; some would suggest the County is just putting Band-Aids on them to get by.
- ❖ Maintenance supervision is weak; we would have expected to find two road maintenance supervisors to oversee summer grading, gravel programs, ditch mowing, repairs etc.
- ❖ Clearly we find project management is weak. In the construction season there needs to be a hands on dedicated project management team in place.
- ❖ It appears that there is sufficient amount of equipment to complete minor repairs like installing and changing culverts, digging out soft spots, minor shoulder pulling etc.
- ❖ We suggest that the helper on the culvert crew be encouraged to get a license to allow him to haul gravel, unsuitable material etc. in the culvert installation process. This would leave the backhoe operator free to continue his work.
- ❖ We observed that Councillors have not gone on a Council road tour, which we suggest would be helpful as a means of pointing out current issues and complaint areas.
- ❖ Transportation is responsible for implementation of capital projects, all of which are important. The projects range from small capital repair, to major construction or rebuild of roads, bridges and facilities. This degree of complexity and the sheer number makes it nearly impossible for one person to manage, as each area has its own degree of problems and thus the need for strong support and supervision.
- ❖ The department is impacted in terms of workload by the number of new projects and requirements for maintenance and repairs. It is also impacted by a lack of critical expertise and support to carry out projects in a safe, economical and timely manner.
- ❖ A significant factor in the successful application of financial resources in any organization is to ensure those resources are focused on the most productive and efficient areas. In the case of Transportation, they must stick to overall plan because any deviation will reduce capacity and place serious impacts on its capability.
- ❖ We note that there has not been a formal performance assessment on Transportation services. We would expect a regular evaluation program would be in place to ensure the effectiveness of services including the on the ground work and also by comparing budgeted expenditures to actual results - value for money, and by the number of complaints and requests.
- ❖ We found limited cross-over of roles and responsibilities within the County. Public Works is not always available to assist. Especially in the absence of the superintendent. We also found that work can stall when the Transportation Superintendent is not available.

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- ❖ There is some frustration regarding what would appear to be poor communication between management and Council relative to necessary decision-making on capital and infrastructure development and maintenance.
- ❖ The mechanical/maintenance shop provides maintenance and repairs on Beaver County equipment which does not appear to be an onerous task as all of graders are on full warranty so their main focus is on the other and perhaps older equipment.
- ❖ The supply of gravel makes up a significant portion of the costs for gravel road construction and maintenance each year. In order to maintain lower costs, the County needs to ensure a long-term supply of gravel (40 years minimum) through long-term contracts or outright ownership of gravel resources.
- ❖ Challenges facing Transportation:
 - The current allocation of resources and functions appears to be creating an undue amount of stress; construction, planning and development require focus and attention along with the appropriate resources.
 - Operational requirements due to poor quality roads, increases both in-house and contract cost. The maintenance of existing aging infrastructure will create considerable stress on future resources.
 - Recruitment in vital positions, cross training and succession planning.
 - Size and vastness of the County.
 - Public expectations continue to grow.
 - Size of Agriculture and industrial equipment using older roads.
 - Building mutual respect between field operations and administrative staff.
 - Ability to administer and account for capital projects on a daily basis.
 - Spread out the workload and prioritize work.
 - Consistent standards for maintenance.
 - Improve internal communications – regular meetings.
 - Improve screening of complaints.
 - Improve recruitment service.
 - Succession planning.
 - Workplace incentives for staff retention.
 - Project management appears weak:
 - Should be a competency level at least 5 to 8 years of a project management experience or have appropriate professional designation in road construction.
 - Must be a good communicator with interpersonal skills; tactful, diplomatic and able to influence.
 - Ability to enforce contracts and guide contractors
 - Ability to professionally address all inquiries from all levels of County
 - Familiarity with County systems.

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- Ability to understand surveying information and to read plans.
- Understand contract law.
- ❖ There should be consideration given to have a safety inspector or officer attend every operational and construction site regularly.
- ❖ The need to hold regular staff meetings to pass on/share information, teleconferencing or video conferencing could be considered.
- ❖ A number of the operations staff mentioned they had not met the CAO.

H.4.3 Public Works

Public Works was separated from the Transportation department a few years back and given certain functions. Under the direction of the CAO the Superintendent of Public Works is responsible for the following functions:

- ❖ Supervise the Utility Officer
- ❖ Contracted services management
- ❖ Management and response to service requests for PW's.
- ❖ Facilities including buildings
- ❖ Utilities (sewer)
- ❖ Utility and oilfield crossing requests
- ❖ Capital projects requiring contracted services
- ❖ Bridge files
- ❖ Campground facilities
- ❖ Land Development (industrial)
- ❖ Crack sealing and line painting of paved surfaces (contracts)
- ❖ Gravel contract preparation (working with Supt of Transportation)
- ❖ Budgeting, input to strategic planning
- ❖ Staff recruitment
- ❖ Provision of technical and analytical expertise, including construction techniques, engineering requirements, cost estimates and construction scheduling
- ❖ RFD development
- ❖ Intergovernmental liaison
- ❖ The superintendent is responsible for maintenance of all County buildings, property and security systems.

H.4.4 Observations - Public Works

- ❖ The Superintendent position has one utility officer reporting to him as his only direct report.

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- ❖ While the functional aspects of the Public Works department are important much of what is being done appears to have some overlap with both the transportation department and the Agriculture services. They all fit under the infrastructure and agriculture services banner.
- ❖ The security of county facilities and infrastructure appears to be weak. We obtained a copy of a recent security study. The role and responsibility of security of facilities is unclear and needs to be reviewed.
- ❖ Several interviewees suggested that the department of Public Works could be part of a reorganization that would see the consolidation of the related functional departments.
- ❖ The Superintendent is required to prepare some Requests for Proposals for infrastructure initiatives such as the gravel crush etc.
- ❖ When the Superintendent is away, the Superintendent of Transportation is expected to cover off and visa-versa. This is not always possible due to schedules and work commitments.
- ❖ While the Superintendent is responsible for facilities, including the two County Camp Grounds, the administration of the operations of the Camp Grounds is assigned to the Communication Coordinator. This appears to create some linkage and communication challenges.
- ❖ Interestingly Public Works has a role in mowing as well, i.e. in the hamlet of Bruce, but mowing has been the responsibility of agriculture services and to some extent the transportation department. There appears to be some overlap and ambiguity in relation to operations and administration.
- ❖ Some of the Superintendents role and the role of the Communication Coordinator appear to reflect an overarching recreational facility responsibility. Recreation was reviewed in 2013 with a needs assessment however the report recommendations have not been acted upon. The challenge for the County is to continue to implement a facility program including recreational facilities, while adjusting to the cost prohibitions.
- ❖ Current facilities:
 - Transfer station – west
 - Water fill – west
 - Transfer station – Tofield
 - Grader shed – Tofield
 - Grader shed – Ryley
 - County Service Centre – Ryley
 - Transportation yard – Ryley
 - Grader shed - Bruce
 - Grader shed – Holden
 - Grader shed – Viking
 - Transfer station – Viking

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- Grader Shed – Kinsella
- Transfer station – Kinsella
- Gravel pit - Kinsella
- Camp Lake Campsite
- Black Nugget Lake Campsite

H.4.5 Maintenance Yard and Shop

- ❖ Currently the maintenance shop is manned by a Shop Foreman (vacant), Administrative Support, and 2 mechanics.
- ❖ Oversight of the Maintenance is under the supervision of the Superintendent of Transportation.
- ❖ The Superintendent of PW also is connected to the shop.
- ❖ The yard has the main maintenance shop including offices. There is also a shop that houses the Agriculture Services. Equipment and inventory are stored in the yard.
- ❖ The Graders for the Ryley area operate out of the shop and yard.
- ❖ The maintenance crew and Agriculture Services also operate out a shop in the yard.
- ❖ The mechanics repair and maintain County vehicles and equipment in the shop and/or on job sites.
- ❖ Perform regularly scheduled preventative maintenance, and coordinate and maintain the parts required to do repairs.
- ❖ Maintain all vehicles and equipment maintenance records through the work order system.
- ❖ Responsible Advise on equipment to be surplusd.
- ❖ Responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of shop tools and equipment.
- ❖ Ensure inventory is controlled and accounted for.

H.4.6 Observations - Yard and Shop

- ❖ Yard appears to be coordinated
- ❖ Shop offices appear to be reasonable for the worker requirements
- ❖ Mechanical areas could be kept cleaner and clear of potential hazardous items. We suggest equipment operators could help to clean, and organize the mechanical shop when they are not busy.

H.4.7 Agriculture Services

Agriculture Services Board

The County agriculture services, as guided by the Agriculture Service Board under the *Agriculture Service Board Act*, work in conjunction with the *Agricultural Pests Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, *Weed Control Act* and *Animal Health Act* to allow ASBs to fulfill their assigned duties under the ASB Act. Agricultural fieldmen are designated officers appointed under the *Agricultural Pests Act*, *Soil Conservation Act* and *Weed Control Act* as inspectors to allow them to fulfill their duty of protecting and managing the agricultural resources for their municipality.

As per County Council Policy AG-004, the mission is; “the ASB will preserve our area as “a place to call home” through open, transparent citizen engagement. With the addition of Producer-at-Large Members, County

Duties of the Ag Service Board (Section 2 Agricultural Service Board Act):

- a) To act as an advisory body and to assist Council and the Minister of Agriculture in matters of mutual concern, and
- b) To advise on and to help organize and direct weed and pest control and soil and water conservation programs, and
- c) To assist in the control of livestock disease under the Livestock Diseases Act, and
- d) To promote, enhance, and protect viable and sustainable agriculture with a view to improving the economic viability of the agricultural producer, and
- e) To promote, enhance, and protect viable and sustainable agriculture with a view to improving the economic viability of the agricultural producer, and
- f) To promote and develop agricultural policies to meet the needs of the municipality.

Nine (9) members sit on the Agricultural Service Board. Four (4) farmer members (Producers-at-Large) have been selected from throughout Beaver County in addition to all members of Council. Producers-at-Large appointed by County Council are engaged in an active farming enterprise.

Agriculture Services

Overseen by the CAO administration of the County Agriculture Services currently has two key personal designated as agriculture fieldmen. It is not unusual for a County to have a number of Ag Fieldmen. The two Fieldman have the following responsibilities:

Responsible for the effective and efficient operation of Agriculture Services by managing Agricultural Service Board functions which include annual weed and pest inspection programs,

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seasonal spraying operations, roadside maintenance operations such as mowing and brushing, delivery of extension and technology transfer seminars, environmental programs and other duties as directed by the Council under the supervision of the CAO. The Agriculture Services include:

Operations

- ❖ Management of the Agricultural Department with a focus on customer service, productivity, and cost effectiveness.
- ❖ Cooperates and participates with other staff as part of the operations team.
- ❖ Ensures a focus on, and a measurement of, successful outcomes rather than outputs.
- ❖ Ensures adherence to all legislative requirements such as those of the *Municipal Government Act* and all the County's bylaws and policies.
- ❖ Participates in the County's Health and Safety Program.
- ❖ Maintains productive public relations at all times and represents the County at various functions, when required.
- ❖ Exhibits behavior to the highest standard, both personally and professionally.
- ❖ Cooperates and participates with the Leadership Team.

Council/Administration Liaison

- ❖ Assists, advises, and informs Council, through the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Agricultural Service Board, on municipal matters within the mandate of the Board to establish appropriate and well-informed overall policy direction.
- ❖ Assists on municipal matters within the area of responsibility to establish appropriate and well-informed overall policy direction.
- ❖ Assists and advises Council, through the Chief Administrative Officer, and the Agricultural Service Board regarding implementation of short and long-term operational and strategic planning as it relates to the Agriculture Department.
- ❖ Follows the policy direction established by Council.
- ❖ The Agricultural Services is responsible for the delivery of agricultural programs and services as recommended by the Agriculture Service Board and approved by County Council.
- ❖ Council will be provided with diverse opinions and ideas on relevant agricultural topics".
- ❖ In summary Agricultural Services provides the following services:
 - Control of restricted and/or noxious weeds on public and private lands.
 - Roadside weed spraying program.
 - Oversees back sloping of ditches (transportation does the work)
 - Storage and disposal of pesticide containers.
 - Assist ratepayers with chemical recommendations.
 - Investigate complaints of damage from predatory animals.
 - ASB rental equipment for use by ratepayers.

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- Veterinarian Services Incorporated (V.S.I) Program.
- Pest control; i.e., rat sighting investigations.
- Workshops of interest to ratepayers.
- Assist ratepayers, agencies, and the agricultural community.
- Seed cleaning plant inspections and licensing.
- Implementing projects respecting agriculture agreed on between COUNTY Council and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.
- Acting as inspectors under the *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pests Act*, and soil conservation officer under the *Soil Conservation Act*.

H.4.10 Observations - Agriculture Services

- ❖ Clarification is required with respect to roles of Council, Agriculture Service Board, CAO, two agriculture fieldmen. It appears there are some overlaps, interference and confusion with respect to policy development, leadership and responsibilities.
- ❖ The two Ag Fieldman appear to work well with each other, and based on each-other's strengths and skill sets are able to support one another well. One is focused on agriculture and environmental/ community issues and the other is focused on planning the water management related to infrastructure and the annual mowing program.
- ❖ Both Ag Fieldmen, serve as part of the overall county management leadership team. Both report to the CAO and each operate in a different department.
- ❖ Water management continues to be a significant issue for the County.
- ❖ The Ag Fieldmen oversees the drainage, beaver and pest population control, road mowing, weed spray, and drainage.
- ❖ There are nine water licenses to manage in the County
- ❖ It appears that the County does not have an over-arching water management strategy or policy. Water issues can involve up to seven people from various departments.
- ❖ Ongoing policy adjustments continue when one-off matters are raised with or by Council relative to Agriculture Policies, Services and Programs.
- ❖ The province continues to download costs over time and water is a key issue – numerous outstanding projects.
- ❖ Funding and financial revenue losses impact Ag Services capacity.
- ❖ Recent policy adjustment removed beaver control on private land unless it affects infrastructure, however private landowners are also being affected. Policies are not clear.
- ❖ Holden drainage district is one of the first in the province. Is a strong community group and because of the solonetzic soil (Horizon B); the land does not drain well and causes water issue.
- ❖ Web-based work order system is good and new (fall 2020). A call comes in or is entered on the web for some County service. Creates a work order that can be used to allocate resources. It can

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be used to follow the incident and track it. Should be linked to policy; also to Council for their decisions.

- ❖ Ag Services busy on extension work (30-50% of time) in field days, workshops, hazardous roundup, water groups, etc. Have Bee producers and many crop producers as well as a few cow-calf operators too. Also involved with Battle River Research Group, Biosphere, Vermilion River and the North Saskatchewan River Water Alliance.
- ❖ Need for a Public Engagement Coordinator to help with the public consultation – and communication. Communication protocols appear weak.
- ❖ Ag Services needs ASB and Council direction and/or input on program design, appears to have been lacking last few years.
- ❖ Current operations are complaint based and not generally proactive.
- ❖ Ag Services appears to have a shortage of help - prior to this Council they had 9 staff and now they have 5.
- ❖ The mowing program was reduced and now is \$100k for the whole County. Not meeting community expectations.
- ❖ There appears to be a lack of coordination among the three key service areas; Transportation, Public Works and Agriculture.
- ❖ Appears to be a considerable backlog on workloads due to lack of staff this summer and extending well into fall season.
- ❖ The level of experience and knowledge of the CAO regarding Agriculture Services was mentioned several times as a concern.
- ❖ Equipment rental services require more security and oversight.
- ❖ Lack of staff availability when needed.
- ❖ Challenges facing the Agriculture Services:
 - Clarity - Roles and responsibilities should be reviewed pursuant to the Weed Control Act;
 - Address, who gives instructions on a daily basis, has been some confusion.
 - Recruitment services for spring/summer mowers, sprayers, and weed inspectors.
 - Administrative support and records management for Ag Services.
 - Provide an adequate level of service and equipment, i.e. need for safer modern equipment such as brushing and skid-steer upgrade, and small excavator to help with beaver control.
 - Control the inventory and security of equipment in the County rental program.
 - Improve weed spray capacity.
 - Drainage County wide is an issue; western area of County has subdivision challenges and the rest of the County eastward is Agriculture issue driven.

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- Clear policy needed for water management and beaver control. Could be overseen by field staff, with someone on staff charged with year round pest control. Problem with the tail bounty is that there is no proof where the beavers were caught or if they are from problem areas.

H.5 COMMUNICATIONS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

H.5.1 Communication Coordination

Reporting to and under the direction of the CAO the **Community Development Coordinator** is responsible for internal and external stakeholder communications as well as the marketing and promotion of the community to retain business, support tourism, expand the economic base and improve the quality of life in Beaver County.

In addition to the general position responsibilities, the Community Development Coordinator is responsible for the following functions:

- ❖ Is the primary communications contact for internal and external communications, including media/public relations activity.
- ❖ Provides reports and information request responses, elections, and assorted activities in support of the CAO or Council.
- ❖ Facilitate community economic development planning and initiatives, consistent with Council's vision and policy direction.
- ❖ Assists and advise key stakeholders on community development activities and strategies.
- ❖ Develop and implement recreation and tourism strategies, including managing Beaver County's campgrounds at Black Nugget Lake and Camp Lake.
- ❖ Support community events that contribute to the quality of life in Beaver County and organize and coordinate the annual Experience the Bounty in Beaver County event in partnership with the Towns and Villages within Beaver County.
- ❖ Provide support to community groups on community development initiatives, including the processing of funding applications.
- ❖ Process sponsorship requests and other community support items according to policy, including annual funding of cemeteries, community halls and scholarships/awards.
- ❖ Ensure proper use of County logo, name and other proprietary materials by internal and external stakeholders.
- ❖ Develops and implements communication strategies.
- ❖ Prepares/edits content for advertising (i.e. Chronicle, employment ads, news releases, articles,

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ad copy, employee newsletter etc.).

- ❖ Monitors social media sites.
- ❖ Chooses vendors based on quotes
- ❖ Coordinates County recognition for sponsorships and grants (i.e. signage, photo opportunities, etc.).
- ❖ Create advertising content.
- ❖ Manage Beaver County's website.
- ❖ Manage budget.
- ❖ Presents to Council.
- ❖ Attends tradeshow, conferences, and community events as required.
- ❖ Prepares media releases, briefing packages, and speaking notes.
- ❖ Special projects and other duties as requested by the Chief Administrative Officer.

H.5.2 Observations - Communications

- ❖ The coordinators function is unclear to many in the organization, which suggests that the position was created with unclear functions and responsibilities.
- ❖ It appears the role of the communications and economic development services and the coordinator, has not been clearly articulated to both Council and the organization as a whole.
- ❖ The website is in need of updating.
- ❖ There is some overlap of communications within the organization. Who does what is unclear. The review of public documents, inputs, reports, newsletter input appears is somewhat scattered throughout the organization.
- ❖ Communication coordinator role should be reassessed. The County requires more attention on the opportunities for economic development, and consideration should be given to creating an economic development/communication function. Other Counties are addressing economic development given the pull back of provincial public supports.

H.5.3 Economic Development



The County has a timely opportunity to examine how to diversify its local economic base. Economic development is usually defined by a plan that has input from businesses, businesses in the region, and elected officials. The illustration above shows some of the main areas for economic development activity.

In 2017, Council adopted a County Sustainability Plan² entitled “Home Grown, Beaver County Plan for People, Places and Possibilities”. The plan’s intention was to address key goals; from agricultural diversification to innovative housing that attracts new residents. All while ensuring life is in balance in our stewardship of environment, wise fiscal management, and good governance.

The 2017 Vision:

“Beaver County Home of Agriculture and Environmental Revival, we will lead as a food and innovative, as a food, renewable energy, and imaginative rural housing hub for the province”

The 2017 plan was the result of a process to create ONE plan – a clear direction forward for the County that integrates existing plans and documents:

- Community Economic Development Strategy
- Municipal Development Plan
- Recreation and Culture Services Master Plan
- Council Strategic Priorities

A 37-person Steering Committee comprised of a cross-section of County residents and led by County Council met in three workshop settings to brainstorm strategic direction. A regional

² Beaver County Website Information

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Community Survey, generating 198 responses from County residents, served as a foundation for the direction of this Plan. The survey included responses from residents of the Towns of Tofield and Viking, and the Villages of Ryley and Holden – who will be very important to the County as communities increasingly, collaborate to achieve success. County staff feedback was acquired in late stages of plan creation.

The result was a holistic Plan that aims to balance and integrate five key community building pillars:

- Economic Prosperity
- Environment Stewardship
- Social Conscience,
- Governance Leadership,
- Fiscal Responsibility.

In November of 2019 Beaver County Council further adopted their new updated Beaver County Strategic Plan (2020 – 2030)³. The Strategic Plan is stated to serve as an aspirational guiding document created to maximize the collective efforts of our community and achieve the most beneficial results possible.

The 2019 Strategic Plan is quite different than the 2017 plan. This new Strategic Plan has goal statements and complementary results as the drivers for future decision-making. *“Council states that these elements provide more clarity than has ever been seen in our Strategic Plans and raises the bar for common understanding and subsequent expectations for success.”*

2020-2030 Four Strategic Goals:

1. Our lifestyle options are known as a strength
2. Citizens benefit from our diverse assessment base
3. We are seen as leaders in the Capital region
4. We are confident in the stability of our infrastructure investments

H.5.4 Economic Issues Facing the County

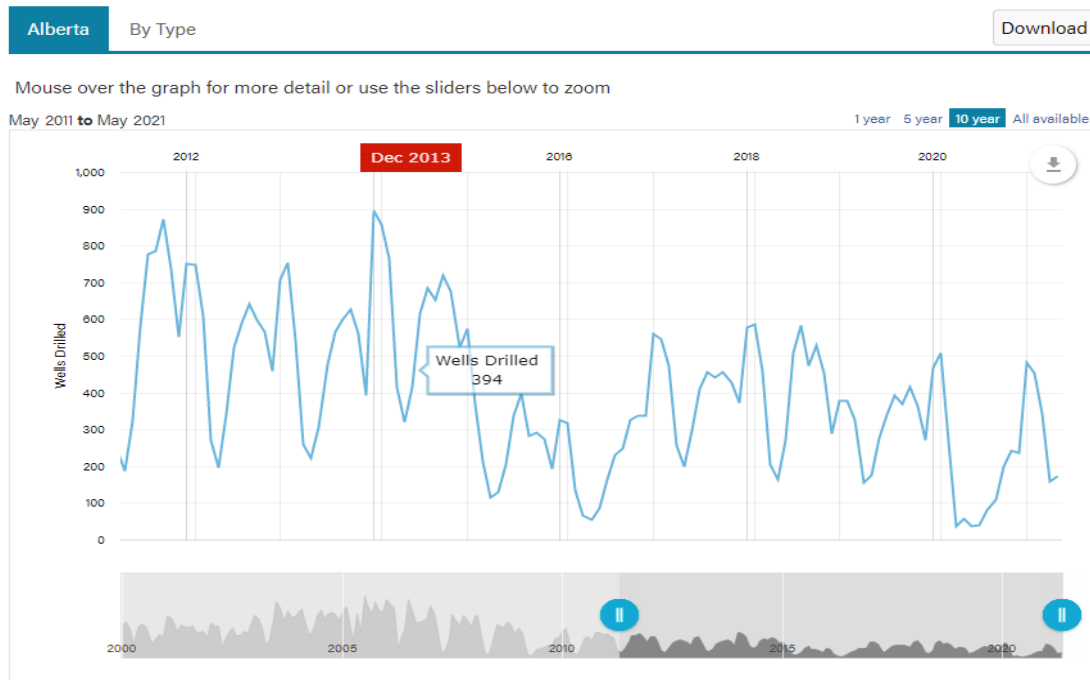
- ❖ The County revenues depend heavily on property tax, grants, agriculture, and energy resources. The days are at hand that the revenues have reduced; we note that many resource industries are not paying their taxes. The County must take steps early to address the future revenue stream loss.

³ Beaver County Website Information

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- ❖ Over the last decade energy production and subsequent revenues to Alberta continued to diminish. Those Municipal Districts, Counties and Specialized Municipalities that are relying on revenues from conventional oil and natural gas assessment and all have faced a significant decline in tax revenues.

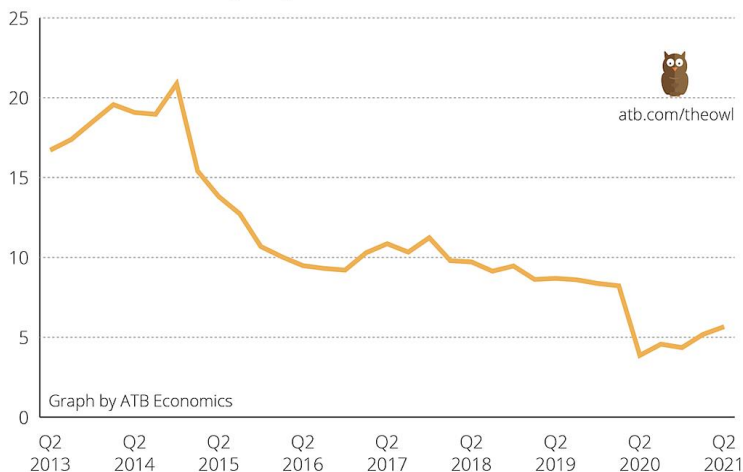
In summary, the picture of wells drilled:



http://www.ercb.ca/docs/products/STs/st98_current.pdf

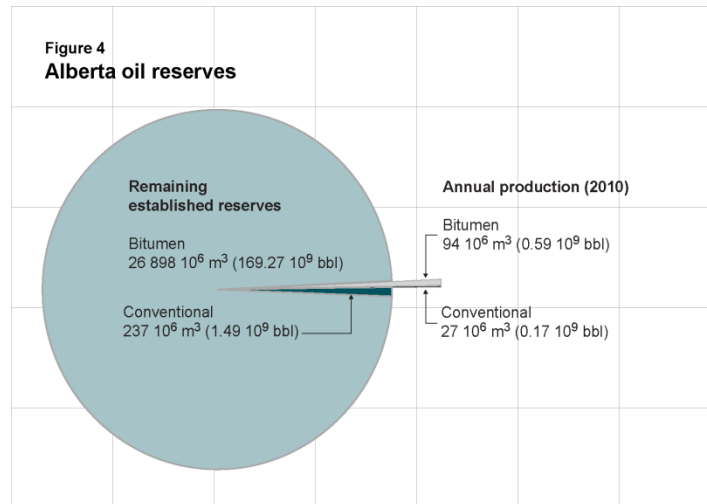
Oil and gas capital expenditures in Canada

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



Source: Statistics Canada Table 25-10-0054-01

- ❖ The depletion of Alberta's conventional oil reserves presents a future serious decline to municipal revenues, which some municipalities are already experiencing the initial impacts of declining assessment.



- ❖ The ERCB estimates) that there are approximately 300million m³ of reserves yet to be discovered, which at current rates of reserves growth will require over 15 years to find and develop. These projections put together anticipate a continuing decline in light/medium crude oil production after a 2013 peak from production upsurge due to the use of Multistage Fractured Horizontal Well technology, which typically does not increase reserves, but does increase production, bringing forward the depletion of oil fields across the province.
- ❖ The revenue decline from the depletion of Alberta's conventional oil reserves will happen at different rates for municipalities based on the maturity of oil exploration and exploitation within their boundaries. As the natural gas market fluctuates rapidly due to world supply surpluses, an added decline in revenues has been experienced in some municipalities due to the temporary shutdown of natural gas fields not having additional value from natural gas liquids sales.
- ❖ Strategic planning by Beaver County needs to reflect the realities of the future decline of oil and gas revenues to the municipality.
- ❖ Having an economic development plan will greatly enhance the County ability to cope in the future with the potential for decline in resource revenue.
- ❖ Having this information can also assist the Council with capital infrastructure development and maintenance plans over the long term.

H.5.5 Observations - Economic Development

- ❖ The issue that stood out during our review is an apparent lack of attention being paid to economic development and the implementation of a strategic economic plan. It is unclear to the observer as to how the 2020-2030 plans will guide the County over the next decade of growth or change.
- ❖ Some of the key issues that are not included are; demographics (population aging, children moving away), financial and Government of Alberta trends of downloading costs. The potential impact in directing budgets that improve the interest of certain types of investors such as new technology and social media opportunities. A focus on the economic strategic plan can greatly aid in guiding decision making and in gaining new ideas and engagement from citizens.
- ❖ There does not appear to be a process that shows how economic develop would connect to a County business plan or any way to measure progress.
- ❖ Currently there is no economic development facilitation or coordination; the county has resisted the creation of a position of an economic development function. Such a function would have the objective of supporting and guiding the County toward becoming a place to build, grow and develop. There appears to be a void in this regard and we suggest there is a need to establish an Economic Development function and suggest the following scope:
 - To provide leadership and assistance to Council on behalf of the County in developing and achieving its economic development goals and objectives through the development of a municipal as well as a broader regional strategy.
 - To monitor, facilitate and hear from ratepayers, investors, developers and leaders regarding future economic development.
 - To assist Council to establish a process to continually input and enhance its economic development strategy, and to effectively convey that strategy to the ratepayers.
 - To identify opportunities and strategic partnerships, and proactively implement the strategy in a consultative fashion.
 - To liaise and coordinate municipal and intergovernmental departments and private sector partners to broaden the municipality's economic base.
- ❖ Some key deliverables could be:
 - Promoting and advancing the County as a logical place to do business, whether in one of the towns or hamlets or within the boundaries of the County.
 - Supporting current and prospective businesses to ensure that everything possible is being done to enable them to carry out their businesses in the County.
 - Maintaining an up-to-date data base of current and prospective businesses.
 - Assisting businesses to access the appropriate approvals for their development.

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- Providing a linkage to other key players in the marketplace who may be able to assist the business to locate or to find funding for their business.
- ❖ An economic plan should be centred around various strategies, including:
 - Non-residential growth strategies.
 - Business retention and support strategies.
 - Business attraction and investment strategies.
 - Communication and marketing strategies.
 - Regional growth and development strategies.
- ❖ An Economic Development function primary responsibilities could be:
 - Provide guidance and direction for County staff, Council and stakeholders.
 - Establish and evaluate measurable goals and objectives.
 - Provide or contribute to a long-term vision for Council (strategic planning).
 - Ensure inter-departmental cooperation and efficiencies.
 - Provide superior customer service and assistance for Council, residents, developers and investors.
 - Provide external communication support and services for the County.
- ❖ Develop an Economic Development Advisory Committee that would provide support and guidance to the Economic Development function, and advice to the economic initiatives of the council.
- ❖ Need to develop regional partnerships.
- ❖ Establish a method to liaise with organizations, non-profits, government officials and industry to help initiate economic opportunities in the region.
- ❖ Communicating with ratepayers and stakeholders on the future of the County.
- ❖ Addressing the diverse needs of the County; prioritizing opportunities.
- ❖ Supporting and enhancing the corporate image, promoting industry, tourism, commercial and residential opportunities.
- ❖ Developing strategic marketing materials and networking.
- ❖ Assessing potential developer service needs.
- ❖ Work with departments to focus on vision of County.
- ❖ Develop funding proposals.
- ❖ Track trends on a regional, provincial, national and international basis.

H.6 COMMUNITY PEACE OFFICERS - BYLAW

H.6.1 COMMUNITY PEACE OFFICERS

According to the most recent position profile the community peace officers duties include:

- ❖ Level One CPO for purposes of enforcement of Provincial legislation.
- ❖ Adheres to the Public Security Peace Officer Program Manual.
- ❖ Enforces all authorized Provincial legislation and municipal bylaws and policies.
- ❖ Development and implementation of public awareness and educational programs with respect to community safety and bylaw enforcement matters.
- ❖ Enforcement of the Land Use Bylaw, Unsightly Premises Bylaw, and other relevant planning legislation or regulations.
- ❖ Enforces the Off-Highway and Vehicle Animal Control Bylaws.
- ❖ Responds to public inquiries, complaints, and confrontational situations and conducts necessary investigations.
- ❖ Provides contracted by law enforcement services to local Towns and Villages as authorized by Council.
- ❖ Maintains effective liaison with other enforcement agencies.
- ❖ Assists with the periodic review and amendment of the Regional Emergency Response Plan.
- ❖ Assists with emergency responses as requested by the Director of Disaster Services.
- ❖ Assists in the County Health & Safety services.

H.6.2 OBSERVATIONS CPO'S

- ❖ Two CPO's are covering off key times for enforcement
- ❖ Senior CPO has been in place for 20 plus years
- ❖ Senior CPO serves on the H&S Committee and is a COR auditor
- ❖ Providing 40 hour per month coverage for Town of Viking
- ❖ CPO's are sometimes not informed when a breach of County Facilities has occurred
- ❖ CPO Kenyon performed a security analysis of County facilities in 2020/2021 – document is informative and should be considered further.
- ❖ There is no global or targeted notification system in place to alert residents of pending emergencies
- ❖ CPO Ellis suggests that the CPO's would be the best suited to handle facility security.

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- ❖ Road bans and weights should be a priority as the road destruction from heavy vehicles is significant. Could be a fulltime role that would pay for itself.
- ❖ CPO service can be improved with additional responsibilities, training and support.

H.7 SALARY AND WAGES

H.7.1 Organization - Salary and Wages – Comments and Observations

We did not perform a wage and salary review as this was not required under the terms of reference for this corporate governance review. A full salary and wage review is a major undertaking and requires surveys of similar functions in Alberta that should be done as a separate initiative. We did however review the current wage and salary grids to obtain a general assessment of the current remuneration for employees in relation to what we are generally seeing in the current economic environment.

- ❖ We note that there was a general review in January 2009 by the consulting firm “Beacon for Change”. We also note that there was a further salary review in December 2015 by the firm RSH Group Inc. Further the current Union Collective Bargaining Agreement provided for a wage adjustment for unionized employees.
- ❖ The Beacon for Change report made a number of organizational realignment suggestions and proposed new pay range grid for key employees when their role was realigning. They offered a suggested boost to 5 senior employees that suggested the overall realignment cost would be in the \$80,000 annually range that included a 3.5% COLA.
- ❖ The RSH Group Inc. 2015 survey was a comprehensive analysis of key positions in comparison to 9 similar municipalities. This compared 21 County non-unionized positions. They proposed a number of market adjustments to keep the County competitive and suggested an implementation strategy. The formula used was “The difference between the maximum salary offered by Beaver County and the median/average of the market responses with a 70% fit or better”. The formula comparison median/average did not include the County maximum. They found that 6 positions were 4.6% on average higher than market. 14 were lower by about 7.2%. They noted that the market medians found 7 positions higher by 2.9% on average and 13 positions were lower by 5.1% on average. In general the senior executive salaries were comparable. All-in-all they recommended a slight increase on a proposed new grid.
- ❖ In 2009 there were 22.5 full-time equivalent positions and 3 part-time. Currently in the office excluding the shop there are 18 fulltime and 3 part-time positions, a reduction 4.5 positions in 12 years.

- ❖ Salary Grid that was put in place it appears in 2015 with 5 annual steps is now out of date. As of December 2020 we note that of the 18 employees listed, 14 have reached or exceed the maximum range and 4 are under their maximum range on the salary grid. With nowhere to go on the grid, we expect some of the employees may be seeking opportunities for improved incomes. Certainly it is not helpful with morale and enthusiasm.
- ❖ Based on these observations and our understanding of the current economic environment we can assume that the status quo is relevant. Inflation is growing rapidly however it appears until the grid is reviewed employees may have to wait for further opportunities for adjustments. It is noted that the Cost of Living Allowance for 2021 continues at zero. Current Canadian COLA is at 4%. A review of salaries should be performed in the next year to ensure that the salary grid is up-to-date, the County is competitive and also meeting the economic standards of the day.

SECTION I: REGIONAL COLLABORATION

I.1 REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Beaver County has Collaboration Agreements and Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDP's are statutory plans) with its neighbouring municipalities. These important collaborations are implemented to ensure shared support for important programs and services that impact the residents in the region. We interviewed these key regional services:

I.1.1 Emergency Services

Part one section three of the MGA:

3 The purposes of a municipality are

(a) to provide good government

(a.1) to foster the well-being of the environment

(b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or a part of the municipality,

(c) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities, and

(d) to work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to plan, deliver and fund intermunicipal services

Pursuant to this legislation, Beaver County has embarked on a number of inter-municipal collaborative agreements that provide protective services in order to achieve safe and viable communities.

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Beaver Emergency Services Commission

Beaver Emergency Services Commission (BESC) was established in 2010 by Order-in-Council 137-2010 to provide the residents of Beaver County, (*including the Hamlets of Bruce and Kinsella*), the Towns of Viking and Tofield, and the Villages of Ryley and Holden with emergency services. A regional approach to the delivery of emergency services was established with the objective of creating more consistency regionally as well as the belief that it would achieve efficient and cost effective utilization of resources.

- ❖ The County passed the “Beaver Emergency Services Commission Delegation” bylaw which was implemented in 2011.
- ❖ BESC objectives as stated is to provide fire protection, major emergency management, emergency medical services and community bylaw enforcement to the residents of Beaver County, the Towns of Tofield and Viking and the Villages of Ryley and Holden in a timely and competent manner in order to save lives and protect property.
- ❖ Members of the Commission foresaw several benefits to the establishment of the Commission:
 - Municipal liability for the operation of emergency services will be reduced.
 - Residents may be eligible for reduced insurance premiums.
 - Support and assistance for the volunteer Fire Chiefs.
 - Efficient utilization of fire apparatus
 - Higher lever and consistency in the delivery of fire services in member municipalities.
 - A functional regional Emergency Management program.
- ❖ The parties entered into a cost share agreement on January 1, 2014 that outlines the cost recovery share of each municipality. Beaver County pays a share based on ½ population, ½ usages, or population or per capita, as determined by the parties. The 2021 Budget indicated Beaver County share of the budgeted deficit of BESC at \$849,358 of which \$234,205 was paid out of Reserves and \$615,153 was collected from property tax. In general BESC provides the following services:
- ❖ Oversight and management is provided by the Regional Emergency Manager who is considered the Regional Fire Chief/Director of Emergency Management. The duties of the REM are the coordination and administration of a well-trained and adequately equipped volunteer fire services. When functioning as the DEM is responsible for the coordination of the Regional Emergency Management Agency including training and exercises.
- ❖ BESC provide a Regional Emergency Operations Centre.
- ❖ CAO’s from each Municipality (or their designate) are designated Deputy DEM’s.
- ❖ Responsible for the administration and delivery of fire protection, and emergency services, services to Commission members.
- ❖ Responsible to be available 24/7 to address any emergency.
- ❖ Monitors and coordinates the regional volunteer fire departments, including fire response, fire prevention, training of fire crews, inspection programs, and providing assistance with emergency and disaster preparedness for the region. This includes participation in the

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development of fire and emergency policies, procedures, regulations and program objectives along with providing administrative and technical support and advice to each Fire Departments.

- ❖ Locates fire and, emergency equipment and apparatus, in the Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley, Village of Holden, Hamlet of Bruce, Town of Viking and Hamlet of Kinsella.
- ❖ Communicates, facilitates and collaborates with all volunteer fire departments and other related stakeholders, for the effective delivery of services to the Commission members.
- ❖ Provides training of the volunteer fire fighters, and training on non-complex fire inspections and pre-fire emergency planning.

I.1.2 Observations - Emergency Services

- ❖ Areas that may need attention:
 - Collection of important demographic information
 - Ability to engage resources 24/7 – address the relationship of County resources
 - Ongoing Update of equipment and fire halls replacement plans
 - Continued assessment of capital budget for fire and emergency apparatus
 - Focus on continued improvement of personnel training service levels
 - Improve reporting and compilation, operating guideline variances, and policy
 - Address key positions
 - Creation of a regional emergency management plan
- ❖ Cost sharing with regional partners continues to be a focus for all municipalities within the Commission.
- ❖ Some partners have differing perspectives on the success of the delivery model. Some feel that the operations are not well managed because there is no emergency plan and financial matters are questionable, and that some board members are directing the operations.
- ❖ Concerns were expressed by some of the partners that Beaver County with 3 of 7 board members together with the Town of Tofield are in control of the Commission. This was questioned both by elected and non-elected stakeholders.
- ❖ Management has changed over past number of years. The current manager is relatively new to this position however the incumbent comes to the position with related experience.
- ❖ The manager is required to oversee the provisions of the *Fire Prevention Act*, the *Alberta Fire Code*, Municipal bylaws and regulations.
- ❖ The Manager is appointed as the “Director” under the *Alberta Emergency Management Act*.
 - The Director must prepare and coordinate emergency plans and programs for the member municipalities and coordinate all emergency services. We see this as a significant, as we were not provided with a copy of an emergency plan. We understand that this is being worked on but has not seen fruition to date.

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- ❖ The ongoing maintenance of fire services equipment appears to be of sufficient priority to support a service where the reliability of equipment is essential in protecting the lives of the public and fire-fighters.
- ❖ We note that there are many administrative policies and standards however we did not find a regional emergency plan, or a fire prevention program, (education, ongoing inspections and a program to support fire investigations).
- ❖ Cost of providing services in the event of a fire or emergency is a concern to rural residents.
- ❖ Lack of insurance for rural residents is creating some financial concern about the commission.

I.1.3 Highway 14 Water Services Commission⁴

The Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission was established under Order-In-Council 340/90 and confirmed under Ministerial Order 500/90.

The Commission has five members including; the Town of Tofield, the Town of Viking, the Village of Ryley, the Village of Holden, and Beaver County. Board representatives appointed to the Commission must be sitting members of the elected councils of the member jurisdiction.

The Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission Pipeline system obtains its water supply from Epcor through Strathcona County and extends along Highway 14 delivering high quality treated water to the municipalities of Beaver County (rural customers, the Hamlet of Bruce and Kinsella) the Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley, Village of Holden and the Town of Viking. The Commission also supplies water to the non-member municipalities of Strathcona County and Camrose County. The Commission provides meter reading and billing to almost 800 residential and business customers.

Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission also owns and operates the municipal water distribution systems in the Villages of Ryley, Holden, the Hamlet of Bruce, Roundhill and Kingman. The Commission operates bulk water truck fills at the West End, Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley, Village of Holden, Hamlets of Bruce and Kinsella.

I.1.4 Observations - Highway 14 Water Services Commission

- ❖ The main water line follows Highway 14 with branches to a number of non-member services.
- ❖ The main water line has a pinch point that is being addressed by adding reservoirs. Is believed to be less costly than upgrading the line.

⁴ <http://www.hwyl4water.ca/aboutus.html>

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- ❖ The Commission would like to transfer ownership of municipal infrastructure back to Municipalities of Beaver County, Village of Ryley and Village of Holden so that the Municipalities can acquire municipal financing and grants on behalf of the commission – utility commissions are not eligible for Alberta financing and grants.
- ❖ Fire services are limited. The Commission has met with BESC and County recently to discuss fire protection in subdivisions. There is a significant challenge because in order provide hydrant fire protection there must be a certain amount of capacity and pumping capability which is not available currently and would be extremely costly to provide.
- ❖ The County is looking at additional tanker storage at the truck fill stations and ensure there is quick fill capacity for fire.
- ❖ Commission is concerned that often the fire department opens a cleanout hydrant which is not for fires and then forgets or just does not inform the Commission when there is a fire. Commission feels it should be notified of fires so they can send a crew to assist with their water needs and also to re-winterize the hydrants.

I.1.5 Beaver Foundation

Beaver Foundation Board consists of five elected officials: one member from each municipality of Beaver County, Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley, Village of Holden and the Town of Tofield as per Beaver Foundation Charter.

- ❖ Beaver Foundation operates 9 seniors living facilities, 4 SL2 living and 5 seniors self-contained. Out of all nine facilities, Beaver Foundation owns Sunshine Villa in Tofield and Vialta Lodge in Viking. The other seven facilities are owned by the Alberta Social Housing Corporation and managed by Beaver Foundation. The five seniors self-contained facilities are not included in SL2 lodge budget or requisition as they follow a separate budget approved by Alberta Seniors and Housing and managed by Beaver Foundation.
- ❖ 2020-21 COVID (and still is) was tough on a lot of seniors as visitation limits from families and friends or seniors leaving to visit families due to CMOH Orders. This resulted in seniors vacating Foundation facilities to live with family and also decreased the attraction to move in. Current vacancies out of 203:
 - Sunshine Villa 10
 - Tofield Lodge 16
 - Holden Lodge 23
 - Vialta Lodge 20Total Vacancies 69
- ❖ Beaver Foundation 2021 lodge budget \$4,316,200
 - Requisition \$471,100
 - Tofield \$99,006.17

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- Ryley \$22,979.33
- Holden \$16,651.69
- Viking \$51,525.08
- Beaver County \$280,937.74 (Commission Records)
- LAP \$536,013
- Small Lodge grant Holden \$86,001
- Rental income \$2,500,000
- Beaver Foundation currently has a loan agreement with Beaver County thru Alberta Capital Finance for the construction and renovation of Sunshine Villa and Vialta Lodge. The current principle of \$2,804,809.47 has a term ending December 15, 2035. The annual payment \$261,419.

I.1.6 Observations - Beaver Foundation

- ❖ Current CEO has worked for or with the County for nearly 30 years; 20 plus years in waste management and last 8.5 years as the CEO of Beaver Foundation
- ❖ Cost of operation is impacted by the vacancies, especially the Holden Lodge with about 2/3 vacant.
- ❖ Foundation operations run reasonably well.
- ❖ A focused strategic analysis could be beneficial in addressing some of the costs associated with vacancies.
- ❖ County ratepayer requisition is close to the amortization payment for the construction and renovations to the Sunshine Villa and the Vialta Lodge.
- ❖ The requisition noted by the Foundation appears to be about \$309 different than the amount provided to this review by Beaver County.

I.1.7 Claystone Waste Ltd.⁵

Beaver County Council and its regional partners were successful this term in establishing the Municipal Controlled Corporation Claystone Waste Ltd. Claystone Waste was previously operated as Beaver Municipal Solutions and the Beaver Regional Waste Management Services Commission. The Commission operated the landfill since 1992 to service the waste management needs of communities within Beaver County, Alberta. The size and complexity of operations have grown since that time and Claystone Waste Ltd. now is a western Canadian leader in waste management servicing a diverse range of municipal and industrial customers.

⁵ <https://claystonewaste.com/>

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As a municipally controlled corporation, Claystone Waste Ltd. is committed to being a responsive community partner and to operate with the highest standards of environmental and operational excellence in the delivery of waste management services.

Claystone Waste is governed by an experienced Board of Directors responsible for guiding the strategic direction to achieve its mandate to be a western Canadian leader in waste management.

The five members Board of Directors is comprised of non-elected independent business people hired through a recruiting process that brought together a strategic leadership team. The Team includes:

- Meryl Whittaker, Chair – former Alberta Deputy Minister
- Guy Bridgeman, Vice-Chair – 30 years with Epcor
- Kathy Kiss, Director – Public Affairs Professional
- Bernard Manz, Director – Former CEO Acquatera
- Ron Helmhold, Director – CFO Workers Compensation Board

Claystone Waste Ltd. provides residential collection and residential and commercial land fill services.

I.1.7 Observations - Claystone Waste Ltd.

- ❖ Shareholders are the five municipalities including the Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley, Village of Holden and the town of Viking, as well as Beaver County.
- ❖ There is a public advisory board led by Kathy Kiss. The advisory committee has met a couple of times, but so far there has been minimal communication through the PAC.
- ❖ Every year that Claystone Waste operates and succeeds, these municipalities benefit with more revenue to support their residents. In 2021, Claystone Waste is providing \$3 million in dividends to its shareholding municipalities, a figure that works out to more than \$300 per person.
- ❖ The added municipal revenue from these dividends is used across the region to support infrastructure, community programming, and other priorities of our member municipalities that would otherwise have to be funded by tax dollars.
- ❖ Some folks living around the landfill have expressed some concerns that certain promises have not been kept; we are unable to confirm or comment further.
- ❖ Claystone Waste Ltd. has significant capacity and capability to develop further economic opportunities such as methane compost driven power.
- ❖ Claystone Waste Ltd. appears to have the knowledge and experience to provide similar services elsewhere.

SECTION J: IMPROVING THE GOVERNANCE MODEL

J.1 MODEL FOR GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Legally as Councillors you must act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the County. Councillors must exercise care, diligence and skill of a reasonably prudent person.

Council is responsible for planning, policy setting, hiring the CAO, and monitoring the organizational effectiveness.

Here are some suggestions that are essential if the County is to provide the type of leadership and public service necessary to gain the confidence of the residents and support of the administration. These suggestions are inter-dependent and not to be considered as a potpourri of ideas from which the best are to be picked and the rest discarded. The objective in making these suggestions is to provide a basis for what works and what doesn't. Based on a review of the present state of affairs in the County, and the expressed desires of the Council and the administration certain actions should be taken to strengthen the current system.

Suggestions start at the beginning, describing principles upon which improvements can be built identifying components of a larger picture of change that can be implemented both by Council and administration. Council and administration should be serious about making the changes necessary to improve its corporate oversight and delivery, and these are provided for thoughtful recognition.

J.1.2 Factors Impacting the Style of Governance

- ❖ There are many factors that appear to have determined the current “Governance Model” and, therefore, the governing style of a Council. Some of these are:
 - History – the model in place at the time this Council was elected to office.
 - The degree of comfort, trust and confidence demonstrated between the Council and the Reeve, and the CAO.
 - Level of acceptance of current model developed over time.
 - Number of new members of Council elected.
 - Change of leadership on Council.
 - Public perception of the communication style between Council and the public.
 - The public style of the Reeve.
 - The objectives of the current Council and whether these are best achieved using the present governance model or another model.
 - The degree of support from the administration – real or perceived.
 - The culture of the various communities.

J.1.3 Impacts of a Governance Model

- ❖ The type of governance model implemented will have an impact on the style of governance of the Council and its administration, such as:
 - Ownership of decisions by the Council.
 - Council relationship with ratepayers and stakeholders as perceived by Council.
 - Public relationship with Council as perceived by the public.
 - Council relationship with administration as perceived by the Council.
 - Administration relationship with Council as perceived by Administration.
 - The application of the authority exhibited by the Reeve.
 - The clarity of the guidance to the organization as exercised by Council.
 - The real flow of the decision-making process across the organization.
 - The sense of progress by all parties.

J.1.4 Council Objectives

- ❖ Council the objectives:
 - Provide representation on behalf of the ratepayers and citizens.
 - Advocate on issues of concern.
 - Clearly and sufficiently understand the issues in order to make informed decisions.
 - Involve the public in the decision-making process in a reasonable and responsible manner.
 - Provide effective leadership upon receiving and reviewing applicable information and advice from the administration.
 - Provide oversight, trusteeship, and good government through sound policy-oriented decisions.
 - Be effective and participate adequately in the decision-making process.
 - Manage its quasi-judicial authority wisely.

J.1.5 Council Powers Exercised Through Policy

- ❖ The difference between Council and the administration is Council has a mandate under the MGA to establish the policies for the municipality. For Council to lead effectively, it must be capable of understanding the impacts of the use of its power and authority, externally and organizationally. Administration on the other hand has the responsibility to keep Council informed and educated, and provide recommendations that would effectively and efficiently implement programs and services that support the Council mandate.
- ❖ The keys to the Council authority are:

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- Legislative Authority
 - Bylaw Approval
 - Governance Policies - Resolutions
 - Public Representation – Mandate
 - Budget Approval and Business Plan
 - Deciding on Planning and Development matters
 - Hire and Supervise Chief Administrative Officer.
- ❖ When these keys to authority are appropriately understood and applied, Council will find the majority of actions and initiatives within the County do not happen without legitimization by the Council. Unfortunately it is not uncommon for Councils to be mesmerized by administrative activity thinking administration is their job. They do not understand that administrative activity cannot exist without the authority and oversight provided by Council. The most effective Councils will seek to understand how to employ its authority without becoming hands on, and at the same time ensure the will of the public is fully represented in activities and priorities.

J.1.6 Governance Improvements Suggested

We are proposing improvements requiring several substantive changes, both in terms of the functioning of Council and the administrative operations. These changes can occur over several months; they will require a champion to act as a facilitator of change.

Changes for improvements include:

- ❖ Council to change its operational focus and improve its governance by developing key performance indicators that support their strategic goals, objectives and priorities.
- ❖ Good governance will require a concerted effort by both Council and the CAO to create a team approach between Council and CAO/administration in order to identify, discuss and plan of how important issues will be successfully managed.
- ❖ Administratively in order to implement Council direction there needs to be created a strategic Senior Management Team with regular planning and issue resolution meetings. These meetings need minutes and action lists to make sure implementation is timely and accountable.
- ❖ Development of trust between Council and administration that allows Council to be confident that the information it receives from the Administration is accurate.
- ❖ Administration ensures that all members of Council are included in any briefings, correspondence and awareness of new issues.
- ❖ A renewed commitment to development of a Governance and Priorities Committee that deals with Governance matters such as Policies and Priorities. The Council “Committee of the Whole” which was abandoned recently should be resurrected. It could be reworked as a Governance

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and Priorities Committee. These meetings would be less formal, provide for opportunity to be informed and ask questions, with an agenda and minutes.

- ❖ A Committee meeting would allow the CAO and experts to provide a preliminary briefing to all Councillors on complex or key issues before they come to formal Council meetings for direction and/or resolution.
- ❖ A commitment to obtain public input on key issues, ideas and matters of concern to local communities within the County, through public meetings, surveys and improved social media.
- ❖ A commitment to strengthen the relationship between Council and CAO by establishing a Council-CAO covenant which commits both parties to seeking clarity in the relationship and seriously undertaking to conduct their respective roles appropriately. (A draft copy of a Council-CAO covenant can be provided upon request.)
- ❖ A review of the current working protocols between Council and CAO/administration.
- ❖ Training and education about protocols that establish the relationship between Council, Councillors and the administration.
- ❖ Council and Councillors must demonstrate respect and support for the role and authorities of the CAO in managing the County administration and in making decisions relative to finding and placing the right people into the organization.
- ❖ We suggest that Council endorse the proposed changes to the organizational structure as we recommended herein.

J.1.7 Role of the Reeve in Governing

- ❖ Being selected by Council and functioning as the Chief Elected Official, the Reeve's role is central to improving the governance capabilities of Council. The Reeve's role is to:
 - Discern and support the "will" of the community.
 - Discern and support the "will" of Council.
 - Communicate effectively with all members of Council and the CAO.
 - Understand and articulate the central issues of complex matters.
 - Represent the County effectively.
 - Liaise with administration without stepping into their areas of responsibility.
 - Chair Council and other meetings effectively in a judicious and equitable/fair manner.
 - Reach out to a broader cross-section of the community.
 - Represent the County in ceremonial capacity opportunities.
 - Understand and carefully apply the office of the Reeve as the centre of County government.
- ❖ The Reeve cannot meet these objectives alone; therefore, the Reeve will need:
 - advice and support from fellow Councillors,

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- advice and support from the CAO,
- great care to ensure that when the Reeve receives information, it is shared with all Councillors expediently,
- to be fully briefed on all of the central issues by the CAO on a regular schedule of weekly meetings. These meetings should be immediately followed by a memorandum from the Reeve and CAO to all members of Council which outlines their discussion.

J.1.8 Strategic Planning

- ❖ Delivery of local government services should be based on a sound and comprehensive plan. Strategic planning is a process by which Council establishes the direction forward, the vision. Council, through the CAO, must lead through articulating Council-established goals, objectives and strategic actions. On an annual basis, Council needs to:
 - confirm the County strategic direction,
 - review and update the County priorities (short and long-term),
 - link the annual budget processes to measurable objectives,
 - ensure that each department in the administration has goals and objectives linked to Council goals and objectives,
 - obtain input from both public and staff,
 - monitor costs of delivering services and programs, comparing County delivery to private sector delivery,
 - develop a business planning model based on the needs of the County and the trends that can be observed.

J.1.9 Council Governance

We noted that a lot of time is being spent on determining who does what and what the role of Council is and what the role of the CAO is. This is a complete waste of time for both parties. We strongly support the message that *Peter Drucker* wrote “*leadership is doing the right thing; management is doing things right*”. The answer is you are colleagues you each have a different part and your task are complimentary; you have to work together to be successful.

We believe that Council understands that it is responsible for both the governance policies and oversight of the management of the County; and that the CAO is accountable to the Council for the management of the County.

Central to these proposed improvements and changes being effective is the role of Council in governing. A Corporate Governance Review of this nature will have much to say about changes

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needed in the administration; however, it also addresses what improvements and changes Council must consider.

- ❖ It is our observation that the principal improvements for Council pertain to:
 - the ability to see the big picture as a fundamental concept; not getting lost in the minutiae of the day-to-day issues,
 - clearly understanding the need for proper focus on policy, without which there is the tendency to micro-manage,
 - effectively controlling the system by asking governance questions while emphasizing Council's commitment to delegate administrative matters to the CAO, whom is trusted to implement.
- ❖ These can be accomplished through inter-related processes:
 - Council-led corporate strategic planning annually.
 - A formal process of establishing goals and objectives that prioritizes issues, building on Council's mandate and strategic plan.
 - Follow-up on some of the excellent work to date.
 - Focused policy development.
 - Holding the CAO accountable to ensure the delivery of sound and clear policy advice.
 - Clarification on what is expected when a request for decision comes to Council from the administration.
 - Council obtaining sound legislative advice on how to handle key issues.
 - Implementing good governance questions and seeking advice on what constitutes a governance kind of question, vis-à-vis those which are focused on procedures; establishing the distinction between governing and administering (i.e., steering the boat versus rowing it).

J.1.10 Decision-Making

It appears there is a need to clarify the decision-making processes of Council in order for Council to provide the organization with leadership and guidance. The administration needs to be seen as a mechanism for implementing Council decisions. Council cannot insert itself into the administration or operations. It must follow governance protocols to attain objectives. As is clear in the Municipal Government legislation, the CAO is in charge of administration and delivery of programs and services and Council or Councillors cannot interfere in that role. Neither can the CAO interfere in the decision that Council is required to make.

J.1.11 The Priority of Council Meetings

The MGA clearly establishes the regular Council meeting as the principal decision-making forum of a Municipality. Council meetings are the venue where the major issues of the day need to be aired, debated and decided publicly. The structure of Council meetings should support a process to ensure the focus by Council is on the priority issues on the agenda. As final decisions are rendered at Council meetings, careful thought should be given to their planning, intent, procedures and follow-up action. It is noted that Council has established bylaw 20-1088 (procedure bylaw) that regulates meetings proceedings for Council and Committee meetings.

The MGA S. 145 states:

Bylaws – council and council committees

Section 145 A council may pass bylaws in relation to the following:

- (a) the establishment and functions of council committees and other bodies;*
- (b) the procedure and conduct of council, council committees and other bodies established by council, the conduct of Councillors and the conduct of members of council committees and other bodies established by council.*

J.1.12 Observations – Procedure Bylaw

- ❖ We have reviewed bylaw 20-1088 the Procedure Bylaw and found for the most part that it is quite generic or similar to many other Procedure Bylaws developed by municipalities throughout Alberta. We did note one section that we believe should be reviewed. Section 12 (2) “The C.A.O. shall have the sole discretion in determining if any Agenda item should be included under the Closed Session heading of the Agenda in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the C.A.O. shall be responsible for the security of any confidential documents.
- ❖ We agree that the CAO should be responsible for any documents that are tabled during a closed session, but the wording should be clarified to confirm that the CAO should advise Council when a matter should go into closed session. Having the sole discretion limits Council’s purview of a matter.

J.1.13 Executive Committee

We reviewed the non- numbered Policy titled “Executive Committee”. This Committee is comprised of the Reeve, Deputy Reeve and CAO. We would strongly suggest that the role of this committee in relation to an employee matter should be revisited. We understand that this committee is

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established to handle Councillor alleged inappropriate behaviour or conduct, however elected officials should not be handling employee private matters. The CAO is responsible for all staff and the CAO should establish a mechanism to address any employee matter. If a councillor has an issue with any employee they should bring the matter to the CAO in confidence. The Councillor will expect it to be addressed and may ask for a private update. Or bring the matter into a closed session should it be necessary.

J.1.14 Public Input

It appears there are few opportunities for the public to be connected or involved in the decision-making process. In any municipality there are issues which are of sufficient concern to the public that the Council needs to hear from the public. There needs to be a mechanism for seeking public input prior to the issues being so far along the decision path that if they make any intervention, it is viewed as negative and disruptive.

Council should find ways to support any area or community association that is trying to meet the needs of the residents and establish a more formalized mechanism of seeking public input.

It would benefit the County if Council were to create a process to allow for public input on a number of public interest matters including environmental services, economic development, emergency services, transportation services, parks and recreation, etc.

J.1.15 Role of the CAO and Senior Management

Municipal governance places responsibility on the CAO (and senior management) in determining the matters of importance that should be placed before Council for guidance. Where policies are in place, management simply applies the policies and does not need to seek input or approval of Council. However there needs to be clarity as to what should be placed before Council for review. There are several key areas that should be placed before Council for discussion and approval:

- ❖ Proposed new policies.
- ❖ Revisions to existing policies.
- ❖ Significant matters deemed of significance to Council.
- ❖ Responses to matters referred from Council.
- ❖ Monthly financial variance reports.
- ❖ Monthly and quarterly financial statements/updates.
- ❖ Independent reports from the external auditor.

❖ Capital projects status reports.

❖ Statutory referrals.

Only important matters should be put forward at a council meeting. They should all be reviewed by the CAO and Reeve, and then placed on the agenda of Council. Complex or non-urgent matters would better be tabled on a committee agenda.

The management team are expected to provide advice to the CAO on key aspects of the organization, but particularly on issues that cross departmental lines. Senior managers in the administration play a central role in the decision-making process by assisting the CAO in vetting key reports to Council and ensuring these reports cover all aspects of the issue under review. Thus, the number and type of items on Council agendas would be focused on policy matters or essential items (i.e., those that require Council decision).

J.2 NEW ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

During the course of the review process, the CAO was off on personal leave and at time of this writing the future status is unknown. Should the CAO depart an interim CAO will be appointed until such time as a permanent CAO has been recruited. The appointment of an interim CAO provides the opportunity for the County to make adjustments on key organizational delivery functions as noted throughout this report. Once the key adjustments are in place the new CAO will have the opportunity to develop a new organizational culture that should have a positive impact on the County governance and administration.

The organizational design is important as a foundation for good government. The consultant reviewed the current organizational structure and hereon provides functional recommendations for changes to the structure that will in our opinion address gaps and inefficiencies. The proposed functional organizational design represents the consultants view as to what is reasonable given the understanding of objectives of this Council and the responsibilities of this administration. We base these changes to the organizational structure on observations and information gathered from extensive rounds of interviews and document review.

J.2.1 Functional Changes

The new organization structure, proposes a new business model implemented through four interrelated functional components:

1. CAO – leadership and oversight
2. Infrastructure
3. Corporate Services

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4. Community Services

J.2.2 Principles

Principles for providing an effective County organization are:

- ❖ Professional and responsive to Council as its political leadership.
- ❖ Serving the public and meeting the needs of the public is primary.
- ❖ Open and understandable decision-making processes.
- ❖ Measurable stewardship of resources through communication, co-ordination and collaboration.
- ❖ Streamlined and efficient administration.
- ❖ The organization is structured by integrating similar and complementary services.
- ❖ Organization is transparent, open, flexible and adaptable in an ever-changing environment.
- ❖ Managed by cooperative team models at the management and non-management levels.
- ❖ Responsible application of delegated powers and duties.
- ❖ Open to provide services through either public or private sectors.

J.2.3 Proposed New Functional Organizational

We have noted that the CAO currently has eight reports and is effectively the General Manager of every service. This is too many direct reports. The Organization relies on the leadership of the CAO as he/she implements Council objectives while meeting the obligations under the MGA. He/she must have time to lead, and currently the CAO is run in too many directions. The operations have become scattered – to say it best.

This report proposes functional adjustments to the current organization which, in the consultant's opinion, will support the improvements necessary for the organization to develop and improve. The proposed functional structure is based on a creation of a Senior Executive Team consisting of the CAO and three General Managers.

As a part of the proposed changes we propose a new function of a Communication/Public Affairs/Economic Development function reporting to the CAO: a legislative clerk role in Corporate Services among others. We suggest moving all community service roles under one function, which includes Ag Services, Planning and Development, Protective Services, Recreation & Parks. We believe that Public Works, Transportation and the Drainage Management of Ag Services be placed under a GM of Infrastructure. We also noted a distinct weakness due to a lack of focus on Human Resources and Health and Safety and we believe this gap must be addressed.

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As an observation, we detected some dysfunction in relation to the reception services and the small staff that provides cover-off. We believe that once the overall leadership functions are in place a focus on customer service and who does what in the head office will be needed. We also note that often much work is placed on the shoulders of a few and this will need to be addressed going forward.

Here is a listing of the new functional organization we believe will address most of the challenges this organization is facing – we propose:

❖ **Chief Administrative Officer** – County Manager Reporting to Council.

- **Legislative Clerk** reporting to CAO supporting both the CAO and Council.

The CAO function is leadership, guidance and oversight of the County corporate infrastructure and resources. To effectively support Council, lead the organization, build an effective policy delivery team, and improve service delivery, the office of the CAO requires clear professional support. The office requires a strong legislative professional proficient in legislation as well as other duties required to support Council, Councillors, the Reeve and the CAO. Is a member of the Senior Executive Team meeting's.

- **Administrative Assistant** - reporting to the Legislative Clerk.

The office of the CAO and Legislative Clerk requires capable administrative support for the administrative requirements of the office including coordinating calendars, responding to enquiries, correspondence, research for Council, Council Committee and management team minute taking are handled promptly and appropriately.

- **Communication & Economic Development** – Communication-EDO combined position

This is an important role and is responsible for public affairs, also providing external communication support to Council and CAO. An important component of the Council – CAO role is that of communication, public affairs, and Economic Development, promoting the many facets of the County. To do this, it would be advantageous to have working within the CAO office the functions of communication/public affairs and economic development.

❖ **Corporate Services** – **General Manager** (Assistant CAO)

An important function within the administration is oversight and grouping all corporate services under a single component of the organization. This includes, finance, administration, facilities administration, materials and supply coordination, budgeting, audits, financial filter for organizational RFD's, RFP's, insurance, asset management, inventory control, records management,

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FOIPP, Reception, IT, assessment and taxation, grants administration, and Human Resource administration. The GM is a member of the Executive Management Team.

- **Administrative Support** – Administrative Assistant

Reporting to the GM/ACAO the administration supports the entire service including the General Manager and Directors.

- o **Chief Financial Officer** - Director

Reports to the GM of Corporate Services/ACAO, and is a member of the Executive Management Team provides financial administration - includes investment management/administration and business planning. Under the direction of the CFO/Director (qualified person) are the following functions:

- Accountant/Internal Audit – (CPA/ other trained staff)
- Information Technician - ?
- Taxation and Assessment
- Accounts AR/AP Salary and Wages – 2 Senior AS V's

All accounting and budget management is administered by the CFO and accountant. Provides ongoing audit and financial review of all expenditures including contracts is imperative. The CFO's office provides budget development, control and reporting.

- o **Assessment Services** – Chief Assessor
 - Assistant Assessor
 - Assessment Technician

Assessment Services provides County assessment. Due to the workload and as a succession plan there should be an assistant assessor together with an assessment technician. In the event of the unavailability of a certified assessor the County may have to contract services. However there will continue to be the need for a taxation and assessment clerk within the administration.

- o **Employee Relations** - Human Resource Coordinator

This is a new proposed function, long overdue, that will provide employee relations services. The function includes all aspects of human resource management, from development of position profiles, recruiting, advising on discipline, ensuring annual performance appraisals are up to date, ensuring position descriptions continue to evolve with position developments, and terminations. The Employee relations office will provide a place for employees to share privately their issues and concerns and look for employer supported initiatives. Employee Relations works with financial services on salary, wages and benefits.

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❖ **Infrastructure Services – General Manager**

We are proposing the application of a General Manager of infrastructure Services function that will oversee all aspects of Public Works, Transportation and Agriculture Field Services. This includes drainage and ditch control. The GM Is a member of the Senior Executive Team.

- **Infrastructure Administrative Support – Senior Administrative Assistant**

Reports to the General Manager and is responsible to facilitate administration of all infrastructure administration. This includes supervision of the shop administration assistant.

- o **Maintenance Shop and Yard - Foreman**

The function does not necessarily need to have a heavy duty mechanics ticket. The function requires a good mechanical background in order to coordinate all the activities required in the shop and yard. These would include, parts ordering, warranty work and scheduling, service scheduling for all equipment, and prioritizing repair work, etc. Must have skills in computer uses/ functions. Supervises

- Two Mechanics – 2 employees
- Contracted Services
- **Shop Administration – Administrative Assistant**
 - Equipment & Stock Inventory Control
 - Ordering
 - Available for public calls of concern regarding infrastructure

Supervised by the Senior Administrative Support and provides support for the shop and yard operations.

- o **Operations Director – Director of Operations**

This is a critical function that will provide daily control and supervise all capital construction and maintenance; roads, bridges, crossings and contracted services, etc. - Supervises:

- Road Construction and Maintenance – includes 2 road foremen (could be seasonal)
- Facility Maintenance and Utilities – 1 employee
- Maintenance Assistant – 1 employee
- Summer Labourers
- Construction Crews
- Equipment operations

This role includes oversight of grading, road ditch and drainage oversight, on site control of gravel program, shoulder pulls and road construction, as well as all related responsibilities.

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❖ **Community Services – General Manager**

The GM oversees key community services and is a member of the Senior Executive Team. The Service is responsible for Ag Fieldman Services, Protective Services, Planning and Development, and Parks and Recreation. Community Services will provide the contact and community liaison for external committee's and organizations that the County works with. These may include; FCSS, Beaver Ambulance, BESC, Beaver Foundation, RMA, Claystone Advisory, Beaver Regional Partnership, Health & Safety, Hwy 14 Water Commission, Inter-Municipal committees, Libraries, Rural Crime Watch, Tofield Health, Tofield Welcome, and Victim Services

- **Administrative Assistant**

In order to keep community services administratively organized an administrative assistant will be needed to support the Service. The Administrative Assistant will support the administrative requirements of Community Services.

○ **Agriculture Services** –Ag Fieldman

- All Ag Services
 - Summer staff
- Ag Shop
- Pest Control (Beaver and Wildlife)
- Environmental Services
 - Liaison to protected areas, reserves, sanctuaries, and community organizations

○ **Protective Services** – Manager (Senior CPO)

- Community Peace Officers (bylaws and provincial offences)
- Emergency Services Facilitation with BESC
 - Facilitate County Resources in Emergencies
- Regional protective services coordination
 - Fire, Emergency Management, RCMP, Sheriffs, Other Municipal Bylaw and CPO's
- Safety – new position for a Safety Officer
 - Cor – inspections and audits
- County Facility Security
- By-law enforcement

○ **Planning & Development** – Development Officer

The DO provides delivery of County planning and development administration.

- **Parks and Recreation** (function and position duties to be developed)

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Currently the role is combined with Communication. At some point there will need to be a function that oversees planning, development and operation of parks, including campgrounds and other related community recreational services. The role will support the GM of Community Services with Recreational supports for the urban communities that the County has ICF's with.

SECTION K. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations:

COUNCIL

1. Council accept this report and direct the next CAO to provide a report to Council on how these priorities will be implemented, and when.
2. Development of a well-planned and implemented Council orientation process outlining duties, roles and responsibilities of Council, Reeve, CAO, and senior staff.
3. That Council and the CAO initiate a Council lead process for strategic planning that will aid Council in developing strategic measurable goals and objectives.
4. Development of a process for improving Council communication with ratepayers and staff; improving the relationship between Council and administration.
5. Implementation of a process for team building; building relationships with Council, the CAO and senior management that leads to mutual trust and confidence, and a respect for each other's role.
6. That the Council revisit the terms of the code of conduct and strengthen the confidentiality protocol and that each Council member should swear and sign upon becoming a councillor.
7. That Council hold administration accountable to provide professional/expert advice and recommendations.
8. That protocol at Council Meetings be strengthened and there be no debating with employees at Council Meetings
9. That Council and the administration begin to prioritize a review of all key bylaws and policies.
10. That all members of Council be briefed on complex issues before discussing in a public setting.
11. That the CAO establish internal administration processes to allow appropriate staff to input on policy recommendations.
12. Development of a public participation process on Council policy matters.
13. The following priorities for policy review:
 - Strategic/Corporate Planning
 - Council Orientation Process
 - Communications
 - Economic Development, water management and environment
 - Recreation Programming Policies

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- Terms of References for Committees of Council
 - CAO Performance Review
 - CAO-Council Covenant
 - Compensation Policy
 - Human Resource Policy — Staff Management, Development and Training
 - Whistle Blower Policy
 - Hiring of Personnel and Code of Conduct for All Staff
 - Follow-up to Staff Suggestions
 - Treatment of the Public; Responsiveness to Complaints.
14. The creation of an indexed Council policy manual specifically for Council policies and distinct from administration policies.
15. That the Committee of the Whole be revisited and implemented as the Governance and Priorities Committee and a Bylaw is created for its function.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

16. Council and the CAO meet at least twice annually to discuss issues and concerns, seek remedies for any new issues, review performance and plan for the following year and beyond.
17. The CAO have regular meetings with the Reeve and/or Deputy Reeve to discuss strategic policy matters, and relevant discussion from those meetings should be shared quickly with the other members of Council.
18. That the CAO develop a business plan with measurable objectives and provide an outcomes report to Council annually as a means of assessing the performance of the administration, which then becomes an important component of the measurements used to assess the CAO performance during the CAO's annual performance review.
19. A new Council-CAO Covenant be developed that formalizes relational protocols to support respect for each other's functions. A Council-CAO covenant commits both parties to seeking clarity in the relationship and to seriously undertaking to conduct their respective roles appropriately. The covenant should be accepted or endorsed "in principle" and be seen as an appendix to a CAO bylaw and/or contract.

ADMINISTRATION

20. That the CAO meet weekly with senior management team to address issues and to plan for the next Council meetings and to discuss action items.
21. That the senior management meet regularly with key staff to discuss important matters.
22. That Leadership provide the CAO with recommendations and suggestions on the following fundamental governance matters:

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- How to address and/or respond to public issues.
 - To provide quality technical and professional advice for the CAO to bring to Council.
 - Impacts affecting long-term administrative and operational planning.
 - Development of business plans and performance measurements that can be implemented as a management tools for programs and services delivery.
 - Succession planning strategies.
 - Levels of delegation and empowerment of the management.
 - Maintain confidence in the financial information on capital projects.
23. The request for decision (RFD) process be strengthened, so that all matters that go before Council for decision are properly vetted and have sound reasoning, appropriate supporting documentation, recommendations and alternatives
24. Develop a sound Business Plan that supports the Council Strategic Plan. The Business Plan should empower staff to perform their duties appropriately, and review/modify performance measures to hold all staff accountable.
25. That the role of a Legislative Clerk reporting to the CAO be developed and implemented.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

26. That one position is delegated to the combined role of economic development and communication, and report to the CAO. These functions will have a profound effect on the role of Council and the COUNTY as it plans a strategy for its future economic well-being. It should also consider water management and environmental management within the organization.

SUCCESSION PLANNING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

27. That a process be developed to establish a comprehensive succession plan.
28. That a more focused emphasis on recruiting to important and/or vital positions.
29. That the administration strengthens its human resource function.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

30. That Council revisit its road master plan to develop an infrastructure development and maintenance strategy supported by a financial policy to ensure sufficient investment is made in infrastructure to help reduce the longer-term financial burden due to the cost of maintaining the infrastructure. Such a plan should contain an annual rebuild schedule.
31. That Council develop a Growth Management/Development Plan
32. That Council establish an economic development plan and implementation strategy that improves regional development objectives. *(Typically a project of this type will take 3-4 months*

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to develop and outline implementation needs. Municipal grants are often available to support these projects.)

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

33. That a greater priority be placed on health and safety through the establishment of an operations safety officer. We suggest the safety officer role be put under protective services.
34. That more emphasis be placed on employee relations.
35. That all position descriptions be updated and reviewed annually; and that all staff performance reviews contain annual goals and objectives that can be measured.
36. That the current procurement policies, procedures and standards be reviewed by an independent party and report to Council. The General Manager of Corporate Services will provide recommendations with comments and any actions arising from the report to the CAO and Council.
37. That prior to any large purchase, the end user be consulted.

OPERATIONS

38. Prior to any major work or development planned in the Hamlets, the community be consulted and/or informed.
39. That the Maintenance Shop Foreman position be filled.
40. That the CAO fill the position of Economic Development Officer and Communication/Public Affairs Officer as soon as possible with a person who is educated, trained and experienced in the field of economic development, communication/public affairs.
41. Administration develops an automated inventory control system for equipment, tools, vehicles and parts.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION PROPOSED

42. That the CAO implement the proposed new organizational structure as outlined herein, including the development of a Senior Executive Team.
43. Added or adjusted functions include; 3 GM's, Economic Development/Communication, Legislative Clerk, Safety Officer, Employee Relations, Planner, 2 Field Supervisors. (We assume some adjustments from within and estimate this will increase the budget by between \$250,000 and \$325,000 annually).
44. That staff be given a presentation on roles and responsibilities within a municipality.

L. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED & COMMENTS SUMMARY

L.1 Documents Reviewed

L.1.1 Documents

- ❖ Minutes past 2 years
- ❖ Policies - Policy Manual
- ❖ Bylaws key to the review
- ❖ Collective Bargaining Agreement
- ❖ Beaver County Regional Water Study 2018
- ❖ Regional Water Strategy 2016
- ❖ Salary Grid
- ❖ Salary and Benefits Review 2015
- ❖ Organizational Alignment Review 2009
- ❖ MDP LUB ICF's and IDP's
- ❖ Claystone MCC
- ❖ Council Approved Committee's
- ❖ Strategic Plans 2018 and 2020
- ❖ All position profiles
- ❖ Current Organization Chart
- ❖ Key personnel performance appraisals
- ❖ Financial Data – Budget Operational and Capital
- ❖ 5 year Capital Plan 2021-2025
- ❖ 3 year Operation Budget projections
- ❖ Municipal Sustainability Plan
- ❖ 2021 Council motions regarding Capital Projects
- ❖ Rural Road Study 2016
- ❖ 2019-2023 Road Plan
- ❖ Facility Security Review 2020-21
- ❖ BRP Recreational and Cultural Services Master Plan 2013 (never implemented)
- ❖ BESC 2009 Business Plan
- ❖ Beaver Foundation Highlights

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- ❖ Chronicle and Social Media Posting
- ❖ Municipal Government Act

L.1.2 External Contacts

- ❖ Officials from the Town of Viking, Town of Tofield, Village of Ryley and Village of Holden.
- ❖ Representatives of Claystone Waste Management
- ❖ Representative of Hwy 14 Water Commission
- ❖ Representatives of Beaver Foundation
- ❖ Representatives of BESC
- ❖ Union Business Representative
- ❖ MNP Auditors
- ❖ We toured each Division with the Division Councillor
- ❖ Toured the maintenance and agriculture shops and yard
- ❖ Had contact with many private citizens' emails, meetings and phone calls.
- ❖ Attended a public hearing
- ❖ Talked to a number of business representatives in the County
- ❖ Observed Council meeting online

L.1.3 Summary of Comments and Concerns (internal and external)

- **During the course of our review we heard from administrative staff, here are a few comments:**
- ❖ Assessment base losses is a concern
- ❖ County assessment base losses because the Alberta oil and gas industry has been struggling. Things are starting to improve, but recovery is slow (see attached long-range assessment base projection).
- ❖ 2020 Assessment model review of oil and gas properties.
- ❖ Provincial Government reluctance to assist with oil and gas delinquent taxes via AER or tax recovery proceedings.
- ❖ The demand for services (especially for surfaced roads) is beyond our capability to fund without substantial mill rate increases.
- ❖ Staffing resources to meet Council's expectations are always a challenge.
- ❖ We lack the resources to implement all that Council and the ratepayers expect.

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- ❖ Staffs need a clear strategic direction or goals sanctioned by Council.
- ❖ With decreased provincial funding to community groups, the County expects to field more requests for operating and capital funding. The budgeted pool of money each year, so far have met the requests, but we expect the requests to be higher dollar value in the future.
- ❖ The recreation infrastructure in the region is aging. The region commissioned a Recreation and Culture Services Master Plan in 2013 which recommended some rationalization of facilities. No action has been taken, but operating costs continue to increase. Capital upgrades are/will be very expensive.
- ❖ The County depends on MSI Capital funding for road construction to avoid mill rate increases. That funding is being reduced and may disappear in the future.
- ❖ Other Provincial grants (e.g. ASB) are being reduced.
- ❖ We receive dividends from Claystone Waste and we try not to use it for operating, the County has in the past to avoid a mill rate increase.
- ❖ County reserves are not fully funded.
- ❖ Key staff retiring in the next 2 - 5 years.
- ❖ Some of our Intermunicipal relationships are strained (not all).
- ❖ An asset management plan is in progress, but not yet complete.
- ❖ The sewer systems in both the hamlets of Bruce and Kinsella are aging.
- ❖ County communication efforts are weak and need to be enhanced.
- ❖ Public engagement is limited at present.
- ❖ Water management (drainage ditches, beavers) on both private land and County land. Staffs wonder what role they play, and what services are to be provided. Council has changed policy more than once during their term. The Province is also downloading responsibility in this area.
- ❖ Guidance is weak and lacking in some cases for acreage owners in relation to water issues, land use, weed control, pest/predators, etc.
- ❖ ASB direction – many agricultural-related issues were identified in Council’s priority goal statements. Not much has been done - context and direction are needed.
- ❖ Road and infrastructure maintenance will always be a key issue whether administration perceives it as such.
- ❖ New RCMP cost-sharing. When fully implemented in 2024, the County will be contributing over \$400,000.
- ❖ Council has taken steps towards a priority-based budgeting model, but it’s been difficult to implement politically.
- ❖ Leadership takes too long to make decisions – not firm enough.

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- ❖ Council is managing the organization.
- ❖ Feel like being set some up for failure.
- ❖ Leadership showing favouritism.
- ❖ People are getting away things as there is no apparent discipline - Accountability seems limited to a few.
- ❖ CAO Council relationship appears strained.
- ❖ Leadership lacks transparency, openness and honesty, too much held close to the vest.
- ❖ Leadership is lacking and sometimes we feel it is unstable.
- ❖ We used to be a team with a lot of comradery, now not so much
- ❖ Leadership morale under current circumstances – “not good”
- ❖ Cover-off for absences has become confusing and a concern.

➤ **Here is a brief summary comments from the 36 questions we asked employees from Transportation, Public Works and Agriculture:**

1. Do you consider Beaver County a good place to work?

- ❖ The majority of employees consider Beaver County a very good place to work with only a few minor concerns with communication, hours of work in the union agreement and retired employees being rehired ahead of seasonal workers.

2. What is the best part about working here?

- ❖ Being able to be at home every night
- ❖ Good people to work with
- ❖ Flexibility in completing daily activities
- ❖ Variety of work requirements
- ❖ Left alone to complete work

3. What is the worst part about working here?

- ❖ Poor communication
- ❖ Uncertainty of current situation
- ❖ No accountability, responsibility downloaded
- ❖ Policy changes to satisfy resident complaints
- ❖ Certain office dynamics interfere with work
- ❖ Some positions overextended with work requirements
- ❖ Morale low
- ❖ Staffing levels too low to complete work requirements
- ❖ Poor choice in which roads get the Terra Cem treatment and improper preparation of the sub base resulting in failures in subsequent years
- ❖ Low pay with no overtime because of the 191 hour per month condition

4. Do you get all the support you need to complete your responsibilities?

- ❖ For the most part yes
- ❖ Some requests for gravel to repair bad spots are sometimes hard to get
- ❖ A summer student for help in the office would be very helpful

5. What extra support would make you more efficient?

- ❖ A spare operator and or truck driver to help with spot gravelling
- ❖ A summer student to help in the office
- ❖ Realignment of front line reception to better allocate responsibilities
- ❖ Bring staffing levels back up to past levels

6. Do you have a customer complaint system here for residents?

- ❖ Yes

7. If so, how does it work and what is the follow up?

- ❖ The system could use some clarification as all complaints are not processed through the same system
- ❖ At present the process is that complaints are filed with the main office, delegated and feedback received in regards to status
- ❖ Response back to complainant not clear

8. Do councillors get involved in your daily or operational activities?

- ❖ For the most part no
- ❖ Some are of the view that some councillors make requests for service based on their position as an elected official and expect special treatment including no payment of fees.

9. If so, how do they impact your work?

- ❖ Very uncomfortable in those few circumstances where special treatment is expected

10. Do you have road maintenance policies for summer and winter maintenance?

- ❖ Yes

11. Do any policies impact your ability to provide service?

- ❖ The habit of amending policies on a regular basis to satisfy councillor or resident concerns makes it very difficult to administer programs

12. Are there any policy creations that would make your service more efficient?

- ❖ Clarification on dust control deadlines, beaver control, culvert replacement

13. Please describe your gravellingg program.

- ❖ Each grader operator is allowed a certain length of road to be gravelled
- ❖ Typically these are on a three year cycle with some more often and some less depending on traffic
- ❖ Some concerns with the hired truckers inability to spread gravel – low bidder not always the best approach to program delivery
- ❖ At times the gravel checker could use more help with the amount of trucks and changing locations

14. Are grader operators involved in deciding which roads get gravel?

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- ❖ Yes, the grader operators prepare the areas that they recommend for gravelling by marking on a map of their area
- ❖ The use of a tablet to mark this and other activities would be a benefit to the whole organization
- 15. Are the grader beats sized appropriately for adequate maintenance?**
- ❖ Yes by all concerned with some indicating they could handle more
- 16. Do you have any concerns with the drainage or beaver control program?**
- ❖ Council should listen more to professionals
- ❖ Keep bounty on beavers to encourage more control
- ❖ Have centralized area of responsibility
- ❖ Have clear policy and stick to it
- ❖ Be proactive and not reactive
- ❖ Beaver mitigation should be directed at specific problem areas, there is no way to track where the bounty beaver tails came from
- 17. Do you have any concerns with interdepartmental cooperation?**
- ❖ Some conflict with public works and transportation in allocating tasks
- ❖ Lack of operators to handle all required activities
- ❖ Shop situation with no supervisor needs resolution
- ❖ Back-sloping program, Ag. department administers but trans. department has the resources to complete the work
- 18. Do you have your own construction crew?**
- ❖ Yes but just for some minor shoulder pulling and the Terra Cem program
- 19. How are priorities set for which roads get reconstructed?**
- ❖ Try to follow the five year plan by installing culverts in the year prior to actual construction indicated on the schedule
- ❖ Council often changes the priorities
- ❖ Grader operators are requested to submit a list of roads to be considered for reconstruction based on their opinion of roads that are requiring substantial more maintenance
- 20. Does the county have a shoulder pulling program?**
- ❖ Yes and have contracted out a section of road to be shoulder pulled this year
- 21. Do you have an equipment replacement plan?**
- ❖ The county has a ten year equipment replacement plan
- ❖ The equipment operators are involved in the selection of replacement machines
- ❖ For warranty purposes the graders are replaced on a regular basis with two or three replaced every year
- 22. Are the grader operators involved with the grader replacement process?**
- ❖ Yes
- 23. Have you noticed any areas of concern between the mechanical and operations departments?**
- ❖ The lack of replacement for the recently retired shop foreman has left some holes in the system

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- ❖ There is some minor concern with the mechanical staff not responding as quick as hoped with requested repairs

24. Does the county have a current operator training program?

- ❖ No official policy or program
- ❖ Some operators are willing and do offer assistance to those employees who are in need of more knowledge
- ❖ Supervisor provides hands on training as required for operators

25. Does the county conduct a performance appraisal process?

- ❖ Yes, on an annual basis but it seems to be inconsistent

26. Does the county implement road bans?

- ❖ Yes

27. Does the county have a GPS system that tracks grader activity?

- ❖ Yes
- ❖ The addition of tablets for the grader operators could be a benefit in recording problem areas, gravel program, dust control and culvert concerns etc.

28. Does the county have a detailed road inspection policy?

- ❖ No

29. Does the county have a long term transportation plan?

- ❖ Not an adopted one

30. Does the county have an accepted set of engineering standards?

- ❖ No

31. Does the county have an asset and or process management plan?

- ❖ Working towards the completion of the tangible capital asset plan

32. How would you describe the level of trust between council and administration?

- ❖ Appears that there is some trust lost with council towards administration

33. How is the level of trust between the operational and administrative sections?

- ❖ Lack of communication

- ❖ Not the greatest

- ❖ Very poor, no trust

34. What are your long term goals and where do you see yourself in five years?

- ❖ Most content with current position but some who are working towards advancing with their careers
- ❖ Some are planning for retirement in a few years

35. If you were made king for a day what changes would you implement?

- ❖ Reallocate staff to better represent responsibilities
- ❖ Fill vacant positions to alleviate over worked staff and be more efficient
- ❖ Make people more accountable for their actions
- ❖ Establish control over the gravel hauling and spreading program with strict qualifications
- ❖ Decertify the union agreement

36. Anything else you would like to bring up or discuss?

- ❖ The union agreement with the 191 hour per month clause is a concern
- ❖ The grass cutting policy is not consistent

➤ During the course of interviews with Council members these are the themes we heard:

- ❖ Getting back to basics
- ❖ Loss of connection with ratepayers and stakeholders – lack of public engagement
- ❖ Appears to be a need for succession planning – concerned about institutional memory leaving
- ❖ Loss of trust
- ❖ Administration seems to have a resistance to help ratepayers – usually more of a defend the narrative at all costs mentality
- ❖ Contractors are frustrated – administration exhibiting a lack of flexibility
- ❖ No method to measure County performance
- ❖ Split Council on many issues – somewhat dysfunctional – 3 members driving agenda
- ❖ Roads are the main priority – grading, repairs, mowing, and ditch growth
- ❖ Grader operators are doing a good job – most are very conscientious about their work – pride is evident
- ❖ Most roads were not built with solid base, difficult to maintain
- ❖ Road study helpful but does not have a strategic approach
- ❖ Significant pressure from western subdivisions – expectations different than rest of County which is essentially agriculture
- ❖ Drainage and Beaver Control are huge challenges – 2020 flooding, water has nowhere to go
- ❖ New Councillor orientation was too short – too much too quick
- ❖ Council seems to ignore advice from administration
- ❖ Takes too long to make easy decisions yet complex matters are decided quickly
- ❖ Appears the transportation department has too many functional responsibilities and is at times over stretched
- ❖ Communication is a concern
- ❖ Administration seems to drag its feet when an issues needs resolving
- ❖ We keep changing our policies on the fly putting administration off balance, they are trying to keep up –
- ❖ We are sloppy at times, adding too many non-emergent items to the agenda thus not giving the administration time to research matters
- ❖ Administration leadership is not visionary, more reactionary, and often looks the other way when things go array
- ❖ Our 5 year plans are constantly out of sync with our needs

➤ **During the course of the review we heard from a number of ratepayers and stakeholders, these are the themes we heard:**

- ❖ Roads are a disaster especially when it rains or in the spring thaw.
- ❖ Roads are built on black dirt and have no foundation. Just keep putting more rock on it which disappears.
- ❖ Not keeping pace with the needs of our communities, charge more if it means better roads.
- ❖ Why does the County not have its own equipment and a crew to rebuild its own roads? Contractors are expensive and we are beholden to their schedules.
- ❖ Administration never calls me back.
- ❖ Administration is not customer service oriented; too much bureaucratic inaction.
- ❖ Too many chiefs and not enough people on the ground who do the work.
- ❖ Reactive instead of proactive. Administration argues and resists instead of getting it done.
- ❖ CAO is said to have threatened legal action to address issues with a ratepayer or concerned citizen.
- ❖ CAO often will not listen and try to correct the situation amicably. This can be unnecessary and often costly.
- ❖ CAO has an attitude, he does not listen. If he doesn't like you he will not talk to you.
- ❖ Councillors are so busy micro managing they can't see the future.
- ❖ Too much emphasis on subdivisions versus agriculture areas.
- ❖ People are not aware of what is happening until it does.
- ❖ Residents of Hamlets are frustrated with the lack of communication by the administration.
- ❖ Concerned about operators receiving proper training.
- ❖ Reworking same road over and over every second year.
- ❖ County budget always returns money to reserves and planned work is not getting done.
- ❖ Weed control and mowing is getting out of hand.
- ❖ New cement roads are not holding up due to poor base.
- ❖ Drainage and beaver control not keeping up.
- ❖ We pay taxes and now we have to pay for fire protection to a commission, this is not reasonable and needs to be addressed. Commission too costly.
- ❖ Some contractors and ratepayers have experienced difficulty working with administration.