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Bruce, Holden,  
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 Ryley, Tofield, Viking

# The Beaver County Chronicle

A Free Weekly Publication Serving All of Beaver County

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## Council to vote on interim operating budget Dec. 18

Patricia Harcourt

After talks at Beaver County Council's November 20 regular meeting when the Chief Administrative Officer Kayleena Spiess gave the CAO report on the budget overview, budget sessions were scheduled for November 27-29, and December 4-6.

Reeve Kevin Smook announced that the December 5 and 6 meetings concerning the budget were cancelled.

"Council was able to address all agenda items by the end of the Special Meeting on December 4, 2024, so no additional meetings are required," he said.

With decisions made and consensus reached, the matter will now go to the December 18 regular meeting for ratification. This doesn't mean that changes aren't possible into the spring when mill rates will be finalized prior to sending out tax notices.

The budget overview under consideration shows a proposed tax levy increase of \$392,828 based on the budget rising from \$16,129,641 in 2024 to \$16,522,369 in 2025.

The county had four options to consider to deal with the rise in budget.

Administration stated that the preferred option

was to increase the mill rate by 2%.

Option 2 was to put a 1.5% mill rate increase plus take \$90,000 from reserves.

Option 3 was to raise the mill rate 1% and take \$160,000 from reserves.

Option 4 was to not increase the mill rate but reduce services as directed by council.

These options do not include increases to Beaver Emergency Services Commission (BESC) and Provincial Policing which are calculated on top of the municipal portion, and to which the county does not have control.

Ryan Arndt, General Manager of Corporate Services, told council Nov. 20 that costs are up and will not stop due to inflationary trends.

"We budget for the worst case scenario so we are not at risk," he said, noting that a budget shortfall indicates the need to increase taxes. He indicated there were major purchase increases in capital equipment like graders, utility and fuel costs, wages and salaries, plus an increase in the BESC requisition and a drop in interest rate revenue.

"Half the tax bill is from Beaver County..The other half are requisitions that are not under our control," he said. He said a 2% tax increase had been prepared

for 2025, noting that farmland "would remain status quo."

He said the 2% increase was "on top of the assessment increase."

Several motions were passed at the budget meetings regarding councilor initiatives. They include:

A motion by Cr. Pederson (Division 5) that Council budget \$265,000 for the Kinsella Community Center roof repairs, to be funded from the Clean Harbors Grant.

A motion by Cr. Smook that council budget \$50,000 for the Tofield Golden Club expansion project, to be funded from the Clean Harbors Grant.

And then a motion on increasing scholarships and awards was carried, including the following:

- ASB Farm Family Award - \$1,000;
- ASB Scholarship - \$2,000;
- Ag for Life Grant - \$2,000;
- Stelmach Scholarship - \$4,000;
- Youth Education - \$4,000;
- Youth Outstanding Achievement grants - \$5,000.

The motion to approve an interim operating budget and the capital budget will be considered by Council on December 18. The mill rate bylaw will be presented and considered by Council in the Spring.

## Funding request

Patricia Harcourt

Tofield 4-H Beef and Multi Club was granted \$2,500 as operational funding to come out of Beaver County council's Community Support Request program.

"Tofield 4-H is requesting funds for help to cover the costs of providing rubber mats for the Club Show and the 4-H District Show," stated the report to council November 20. The mats are used to cover the concrete in the Tofield Arena where the show is usually held.

Ryan Arndt, general manager of corporate services, blamed "insufficient postage" for the request letter not making the application deadline.

"This application was mailed before the deadline in September; however, it was returned to the applicant by the post office after the deadline had passed due to insufficient postage," stated Arndt. "The applicant did not have time to resubmit before the grant applications were considered by council."

"How is it possible to have insufficient funds between Tofield and Ryley," asked Councillor Lionel Williams (Division 2), before making the motion that was passed to provide the requested funding.

## Beaver County increases grants to watershed organizations

Patricia Harcourt

After discussions noting the importance of keeping watersheds protected for the future, Beaver County Council agreed to increase its grants to two organizations that perform that function.

The previous amount of \$.050 per capita was increased at council's November 20 regular meeting to \$0.60 per capita starting in 2025.

The funds will be shared based on per capita population between the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (80 per cent) and the Battle River Watershed Alliance (20 per cent).

This means a total of \$2,816.64 for the NSWA based on the 2021 census population of 5,868; and \$704.16 to the BRWA based on 2021 census figures.

The request for an increase was given for several reasons including the fact there had been no increase in the amount since 2006, while inflation has increased "dramatically."

And in-kind support increased from \$34,500 in 2006 to over \$500,000 for the past eight years, an indication "It costs significantly more to operate the alliances."

Members of county council sit on both boards of these organizations.

In his presentation to council, Ryan Arndt, general

manager of corporate services, noted that: "It costs significantly more to run these organizations," than when they were originally formed.

Councillor Barry Bruce (Division 4) spoke of how conditions upstream to the county can cause flooding in Beaver County, even though the area is not located within its boundaries. Bruce sits on a watershed board and gave the example to emphasize the importance of the organizations and how the watersheds can affect the local area.

"It should be treated as a whole and not just (what lies) within the county," he said, concerning the waterways that run through Beaver County.

Councillor Lionel Williams (Division 2) asked how the watershed groups facilitate Beaver County, saying "I don't see it." Agriculture field man Jonathan Culbert gave the example of how the county can access a large amount of information regarding the watersheds based on being a member of each organizations.

And councillor Dale Pederson (Division 5) pointed out that the Town of Viking's new non potable water service project was given help from BRWA as the project's water source of Iron Creek is a tributary of the Battle River. With that, a motion by Bruce to raise the grant funding as per administration's recommendation was passed.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Beaver County Council is considering the lease of the following municipal reserve lots:

- Plan 762 0125, Block 1, Lot R5 in SE 26-50-20-W4 (Willow Lake Estates) (28.34 acres)
- Plan 762 1641, Block 1, Lot R1 in SE 9-50-20-W4(15.37 acres)
- Plan 1670 TR, Lot R1 in SE 16-50-20-W4 (13.35 acres)
- Plan 752 0263, Lot R3 in SE 31-51-19-W4(13.08 acres)
- Plan 1972 TR, Lot R2 in NW 26-51-20-W4

Further information can be obtained at the Beaver County Office (5120 - 50 Street, Ryley) or on the County's website at [www.beaver.ab.ca](http://www.beaver.ab.ca).

Beaver County will be holding a public hearing to give residents an opportunity to provide input on the proposed leases. Details of the public hearing are as follows:

- **Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2024
- **Time:** 1:00 P.M.
- **Location:** Beaver County Council Chambers, 5120 - 50 Street, Ryley
- **Contact:** Margaret Jones at 780-663-3730 ext. 1016 or [mjones@beaver.ab.ca](mailto:mjones@beaver.ab.ca)

If you wish to provide feedback at, or prior to, the public hearing, you may register to speak in person or submit written comments no later than 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 11, 2024.

To register, contact Meagan Walsh, Executive Assistant, at [mwalsh@beaver.ab.ca](mailto:mwalsh@beaver.ab.ca) or 780-663-3730 ext 1023.

Written comments may be delivered in person to the Beaver County Office at 5120 - 50th Street, Ryley, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, or by e-mail to [mwalsh@beaver.ab.ca](mailto:mwalsh@beaver.ab.ca).

Note that written submissions will not be accepted during the public hearing and that any information you provide may be made public subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



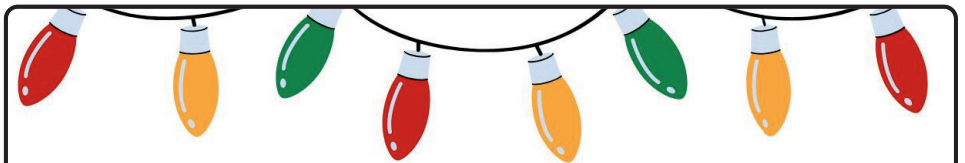
All information is available at [www.beaver.ab.ca/government/meeting-schedule](http://www.beaver.ab.ca/government/meeting-schedule)



## IMPORTANT TAX NOTICE

Due to the Canada Post strike, we are unable to send out tax statements. If you're unsure whether you owe taxes, please call our office at 780-663-3730 for assistance.

**Reminder:** The next penalty on outstanding taxes will be applied on January 16, 2025. Thank you for your understanding!



# STUFF THE CRUISER!



Viking Christmas Cheer will be accepting donations of canned goods, new gift items, or financial contributions in support of our local Christmas hamper campaign- Please help us and our partners stuff the RCMP cruiser!

**DECEMBER 13TH, 2024**

**11:00AM - 12:00PM**

**VIKING CARENA COMPLEX**

Brought to you in partnership by:



## Claystone Waste Holiday Hours

**December 25 & 26, and January 1**  
Administration office, all transfer stations, and landfill will be **CLOSED**.

There will be **no waste collection** pickups on these dates.

### Residential Waste Collections

Collections scheduled for December 25 & 26 (Tofield, Holden, Ryley) will be picked up December 27 & 30.

Collections scheduled for January 1 (Tofield) will be picked up along with Holden and Ryley on January 2 & 3.

All of us at Claystone wish you the best this holiday season!



## 4TH ANNUAL Holiday Decorating Contest!

It's back! Lets light up our County! Full details can be found on our website under the Community menu.





## Driveway Plowing Tips

**Heads up, winter warriors! Here's a frosty plowing pro-tip: Keep the left side of your driveway clear. Why? So when the snow plows come rumbling by, they won't redecorate your driveway with a fresh coat of snow.**



When plowing your driveway, please avoid pushing snow across the road and creating a large pile.

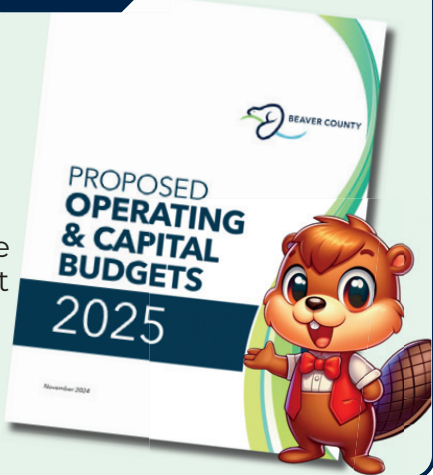


These piles can compact into solid ice, and if a snowplow hits one, it can cause the plow to jolt off course, posing a **serious safety risk** to the operator and other vehicles.

## BUDGET SEASON IS HERE...

2025 Proposed Budget is now available for review! This budget outlines plans to support community priorities, enhance services, and maintain infrastructure while balancing fiscal responsibility. Council will be voting on the proposed budget at the next Council meeting.

Find the document on the website under the **Government** menu > **Financials**



### Mailing list

Get news, meeting highlights, the road construction schedule, the Chronicle, and more - direct to your inbox!

### Website

Information on County programs and services can be found on our website, along with the latest news.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### December 18

- 9:30 AM - 12 PM - Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting
- 1 - 4:30 PM - Regular Council Meeting

### December 25 - 27, and January 1

- Office Closed for Christmas, and New Years Day

## WHATS HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

### Book Club

Location: Ross Creek Community Hall, 531041 Rge Rd 191  
Rural book club that meets the first Tuesday of each month. Meetings run from 7PM - 8PM, all ages welcome!

### Tofield AA - Thursdays, 8 - 9 PM

Basement of Bardo Lutheran Church, 4737 57 Ave, Tofield.

### Viking AA - Wednesdays, 8 PM, Zoom option also available.

Golden Valley Lutheran Church, 5327 56 Ave, Viking.

<https://area78aa.org/meetings/147-3>

Submit your event/s, meetings and/or gatherings to the events calendar on the website! Just head to the website, under the Explore menu click on County Region Events Calendar. We have partnered with Go East to share local events on our website!

## DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

None this week

## COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS - OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

Highlights were a little late over the last couple of months, and for that we apologize! However, please find them now on our website under County News!



For County News and other updates:



## Music Jam / Open Mic

**SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 15, 1 PM**

HOLDEN COMMUNITY HALL  
4919 - 49 Ave. HOLDEN, AB

Admission - \$ 5 per person  
Musicians/Participants - No Charge  
Come Dance to the Music!



For more info:  
Dave 780-720-5839  
or beaverhillplayers17@gmail.com

*Musicians and spectators welcome!*



## Social media

Find us on Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.



# Little movement as Canada Post strike enters week 4

Leslie Cholowsky

With the Postal strike now entering a fourth week, and millions of potential revenue over the busiest time of the year lost to the company, Canada Post reports that it has received the latest offers from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and is reviewing them.

Canada Post says their initial review of the latest CUPW offering finds the company,

## Avoid driving high

Patricia Harcourt

The stigma surrounding drinking and driving is a reality even though there are still too many people, especially during the holiday season, who end up behind the wheel of a car after having “a few drinks.”

However, the concern is now growing about driving while high ever since cannabis was legalized for recreational use in Canada.

This is what the National Safe Driving Week is focusing on this year with the theme: “Head in the Clouds? Don’t drive high.”

“The misconception that cannabis impairs driving less than alcohol can lead to dangerous and even fatal consequences on the road,” is the warning going out from the Canada Safety Council campaign, and backed by the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada.

They are highlighting the risks that come with driving under the influence of cannabis.

“Driving under the influence of cannabis is a serious risk to road safety,” says Gareth Jones, president and CEO of the Canada Safety Council. “It impairs your ability to react and make sound decisions, and the consequences can be devastating.”

“Impairment, whether from alcohol or drugs, has no place behind the wheel.”

Statistics reveal that “cannabis impaired driving remains a leading contributor to road accidents,” according to a report from Public Safety Canada.

In fact, last year it was determined that 23.3 per cent of cannabis users nationwide admitted to driving within two hours of consuming cannabis.

Between 2018 and 2020, half of the almost 5,000 injured drivers in 15 trauma centres had at least one impairing substance in their system (Trauma Injury Research Foundation). Cannabis (THC) was detected in almost 20 per cent of drivers involved in those traumatic injuries.

Cannabis affects motor skills, reaction time and decision making, all of which are crucial to safe driving. It can also impair cognitive functioning necessary for driving coordination and perception.

The psychoactive compound THC in cannabis alters how the brain processes information, affecting the ability to focus, make quick decisions and react to changes on the road.

But the most dangerous issue is that it reduces reaction times, so the driver doesn’t respond to sudden hazards such as a car braking suddenly or a pedestrian stepping out on the road.

And in situations requiring split second decisions, this can make avoiding a collision or adjusting to rapidly changing traffic conditions much less likely.

Cannabis impairs motor coordination which can cause a driver to swerve or lose control of the vehicle.

“One of the dangers of driving under the influence of cannabis is that users often do not realize how impaired they are,” states the report, which is different from someone intoxicated by alcohol.

“Studies have shown that even small amounts of cannabis can significantly impact driving performance,” affecting memory, attention and the ability to multitask.

“extremely disappointed that their intent appears to be to widen the gap in negotiations, rather than close it.

“We are conducting a full review of the offers for the Urban and RSMC (Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers) bargaining units and will share more information as soon as possible.

“However, we don’t want to provide false hope to impacted employees, small businesses, charities, and northern communities that were hoping for a speedy resolution.

“In the last few weeks, Canada Post has made several important moves to close the gap and reach negotiated agreements, but the union has reverted to their previous positions or increased their demands.”

Canada Post says that while the specifics of its offer must remain confidential, that the focus has been:

“Changes to our mail-based delivery model that would allow for affordable and reliable weekend delivery and other improvements.

“Maintaining our largely full-time delivery workforce while creating weekend part-time positions – providing benefits, guaranteed hours and opportunities for temporary employees.

“Focused on providing good jobs for our people, building on what they already have: Wage increases above our previous offers.

Approximately 70 per cent of current employees are at the maximum current salary range, making more than \$30 per hour, plus overtime and cost-of-living allowance payments.

“Providing good pensions for retirement.

“Maintaining up to seven weeks of vacation and 13 personal days.

“Maintaining stringent job security provisions.”

CUPW says the Urban and Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers Negotiations Committees met Monday, Dec. 9 with Canada Post to present revised proposals in response to the Corporation’s latest proposals.

The Union finalized a counter proposal and response to Canada Posts “comprehensive framework,” last week, delivering new proposals to the special mediator on Wednesday, Dec. 4. On Dec. 6, CUPW received Canada Post’s response to its counter proposals, and reviewed those prior to presenting the revised proposals Monday.

The Union said last Thursday, Dec. 5 that it is committed to delivering pension and social assistance cheques, saying, “We do not want pensioners and people who rely on government assistance to suffer during the current work disruption. The most vulnerable members of our society should not be caught in the crosshairs of our contract dispute with Canada Post.”

## MLA Lovely receives medal from Premier Smith



Camrose MLA Jackie Lovely stated in a recent press release: “I am humbled and honoured to be presented the King Charles III Coronation Medal from Premier Danielle Smith. This metal is given in recognition of serving the people of Canada. It is a privilege for me to serve and represent the residents of the Camrose Constituency.” In the presentation photo, Premier Smith (right) presents the MLA with her medal.