



TOWN OF PEACE RIVER Annual Report

TOWN OF
PEACE RIVER
ALBERTA

To:	Mayor and Council	Date:	Feb. 6, 2023
Presenter:	Barbara Miller, CPA, CGA, CLGM Chief Administrative Officer	Prepared By:	K. Parsons
Topic:	2022 Annual Report – CAO	File No.:	12/201
Attachments:	None.		

A year in Review - 2022

The past year was a year of change and fluctuation for Administration as Council was introduced to policies, bylaws, current issues, budgets, legislative requirements and roles and responsibilities as “onboarding” continued throughout the first year of the term; all while the organization was finding its new normal following a nearly two-year period in a global pandemic. During this time Administration and Council have made strides in a positive direction, having a shared goal of providing a high level of service to our ratepayers.

As we review 2022, we also look forward to 2023, and continuing to build our working relationship with Council and community, learning of new and creative means for attraction and retention of staff, and collaborating with our regional partners and stakeholders, all with the goal of discovering more efficient and cost-effective means of providing great services and community amenities to our residents, business owners and visitors.

Staffing

Several transitions in staffing occurred within the Executive Office over the course of the year. This included hiring in the positions of:

- Director of Corporate Services - January 2022 and again in October 2022;
- Legislative Services Coordinator - July 2022; and
- Chief Administrative Officer in November 2022.

We also saw the departure of our Communications Coordinator in December 2022 and the position remains vacant at this time to allow time for evaluation of current and future organizational needs. External expertise has been engaged to provide interim support

The Town of Peace River was without a full time CAO for approximately 4 months, in which time Tanya Bell, Director of Community Services, stepped into the role of interim CAO. This was a huge undertaking for an individual who already has a large portfolio. Once a new CAO is hired, the responsibility of interim CAO does not end, as there is a lengthy transition period for such a large role. Ms. Bell executed the duties of interim CAO wholeheartedly, and her efforts are greatly appreciated and commended by the Town.

Policies

The process of reviewing Town Policies continued throughout 2022 with Administration bringing forward approximately 22 policies (or Council directives) for Council review with recommendations for each to repeal, make amendment or to remain the same. .

Intermunicipal

The Town and Northern Sunrise County worked diligently to develop a new capital funding agreement. This new 5-year agreement outlines the annual contribution from NSC to the Town for the purposes of capital costs for regional assets, programs, and services providing greater certainty in our future capital financing strategy.

IC Committee Meetings with Northern Sunrise County, MD of Peace and County of Northern Lights, were held in 2022 as outlined in our ICF Agreements. In addition, regional Christmas dinners were held with our rural counterparts, including this year, the Town of Grimshaw. Administration looks forward to 2023 and continuing to build on these relationships and finding further opportunities to collaborate.

Significant Projects

Council Strategic Plan

In 2022, Council successfully drafted and passed their 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. Based on 4 pillars, this document sets a vision and mission for the Town, and acts as a guideline, directing the work of Administration and for the development of benchmarks. In 2023, Administration will work to build an Administrative working plan which will outline the projects we feel will meet Council's objectives and will have quantifiable mechanisms to demonstrate progress.

Economic Development Committee

One of the pillars within Council's Strategic Priorities is 'A Robust and Sustainable Economy' with a goal of growing investment in Peace River. One strategy that Council implemented in 2022 in an aim to meet this goal, was the establishment of the Economic Development Committee. The Terms of Reference for this Committee describes their purpose as

...assist[ing] Town of Peace River staff and Council in supporting, enhancing, and promoting business and economic activity within Peace River. The Committee's role is to plan and undertake economic development initiatives, to advise and support Peace River Council ("Council") on matters relating to the local economy and business community, and to act as a liaison between Council and the business community.

The Committee held their first meeting May 17, 2022. It is clear this group is full of ambitious and community-oriented individuals, who are enthusiastically working to meet their objectives.

Organizational Review

In early 2022, Administration engaged WMC (Western Management Consultants) to conduct an Organizational and Compensation Review on behalf of the Town. The resulting report provided recommendations for change within the organizational and compensation structures. With the changeover in senior administration, we have not fully engaged the recommendations. However, some have been implemented, such as moving HR, IT and Health & Safety portfolios under the Corporate Services Department and transitioning current staff to provide additional support to the HR department. We will continue examining and considering the other recommendations within the report and hope to implement more changes in the coming months. This will include diving into the compensation portion of the report.

Approved by: Barbara Miller, CPA, CGA, CLGM
Chief Administrative Officer

Date Submitted: January 26, 2023