

## OPEN LETTER

TO THE RATEPAYERS OF THE TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE & LAC STE. ANNE COUNTY

**Mayerthorpe, Alberta, May 26, 2021** – The Town of Mayerthorpe has consistently adopted a cooperative and respectful approach to intermunicipal relationships. We do not intend to depart from the approach but must respond to aspects of the County's May 24, 2021 Open Letter.

- The County pulled out of the recreation services agreement with the Town in 2011. The Town has been open and transparent in the intervening decade about the fact that the County has not been providing a fair contribution to Town recreation services used by County residents.
- The County has chosen to defer dealing with its financial obligations in relation to this important service to its ratepayers. Until the ICF process required the County to come to the table, the Town could only keep the County aware of the inequities of the situation.
- The financial implications of the County's past approach to recreation services may come as a surprise to County ratepayers. County Council has been fully aware of the consequences of the "use now/ pay later" approach for an extended period of time.
- Despite the imbalance in the financial relationship for the past decade, the Town worked extremely hard, and entirely in good faith, to find a compromise during the two years of discussion and mediation on the ICF agreement, as required by the Municipal Government Act.
- The Town has not sought contributions for past inequities and has, instead, focused on the future and on trying to build a fair approach to cost sharing between the two communities.
- Right up to February 25, 2021, the Town was under the impression the ICF would be finalized through the mediation process and in compliance with the April 1, 2021 statutory deadline.
- The County chose to pull out of the ICF mediation process without any advance discussion. The Town had no control over that County decision.
- The County was fully aware that the Municipal Government Act would force the municipalities to enter into binding arbitration as a result of that County decision. The County was fully aware that the provisions of the MGA would place the majority of the burden for the costs of the arbitration on County ratepayers. ...2/



Mayerthorpe

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- The Town regrets that the costs of a binding arbitration have become necessary, but has no control over the County's actions and must comply with the requirements of the MGA.
- The ICF arbitration will proceed within the context of the MGA, which specifically requires municipal operating budgets to include "the amount of expenditures and transfers needed to meet the municipality's obligations for services funded under an intermunicipal collaboration framework" and that one of three primary purposes of the ICF is "to ensure municipalities contribute funding to services that benefit their residents".
- The Town regrets that County Council's decision not to budget for the real, and known, costs of recreation services may now impact County ratepayers during an economic downturn. As noted, that is the result of County Council's chosen approach, not due to any actions taken by the Town.

Despite the issues that must be resolved around Recreation Services, the Town values its relationships with neighbours and will continue to make good faith efforts to build a strong and functional intermunicipal relationship.

We remain committed to providing positive, sustainable recreation opportunities to the County's ratepayers, who are our valued customers. We remain focused on supporting ratepayer health and wellness by ensuring we are in a position to continue to provide recreation services for the Town and the ratepayers of the County who value and use those services. However, a fair funding model to support the provision of those services is long overdue.

Mayerthorpe's Town Council will continue its principles-based approach on this critical matter as we work toward an equitable outcome for our community. The Town of Mayerthorpe has followed the process laid out in the MGA to the letter and in good faith. We will continue to do so as we advocate for our town.

Be well & stay safe.



Janet Jabush  
Mayor, Town of Mayerthorpe

For questions or additional information please contact the Town Office.

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