



THE CORPORATION OF THE VILLAGE OF ASHCROFT
 REGULAR MINUTES
 FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE
 VILLAGE OFFICE AT 6:00 PM ON MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2025

PRESENT: Mayor, Barbara Roden
 Councillor, Jonah Anstett
 Councillor, Jessica Clement
 Councillor, Nadine Davenport
 Councillor, Doreen Lambert

CAO, Daniela Dyck
 CFO, Yogi Bhalla
 DPW, Brian Bennewith

EXCUSED:

Media – 1
 Public – 11

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Roden called the Regular Meeting of Council for Monday, January 27, 2025, to order at 6:01 pm.

“Mayor and Council wish to acknowledge that the meeting today is held within the traditional territory of the Nlaka’pamux people.”

1. ADDITIONS TO OR DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

M/S Clement / Lambert

THAT, the Agenda for the Regular Meeting of Council for Monday January 27, 2025, be amended to include an Invitation to the 158th Clinton Annual Ball to be discussed under New Business.

CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-27

2. MINUTES

2.1	Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council held Monday, January 13, 2025 M/S Lambert / Clement <i>THAT, the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council held Monday, January 13, 2025, be adopted as presented.</i>	CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-28
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3. DELEGATIONS

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4. PUBLIC INPUT

All questions and comments will be addressed through the Chair and answered likewise. Please state your name and address prior to asking a question or commenting, no more than 2 minutes per question.

Mayor Roden welcomed everyone in the gallery, acknowledging that their attendance was likely related to the Water Meter Grant application. Before addressing the water meter project, she took a moment to inform the public that bullying and harassment of Council members or staff would be met with the full force of the law. She emphasized that a Council member had been both verbally and physically assaulted earlier that day, making it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated.

Mayor Roden then provided background information on the Village’s ongoing water conservation efforts, which have had limited success. She highlighted the opportunity for 100% funding for the proposed water metering project and noted the likelihood of future legislation requiring all communities to implement water meters. Additionally, she pointed out that many grant applications for water and sewer infrastructure upgrades now require municipalities to demonstrate active progress toward metering to be eligible for funding.

Focusing on the Village’s proactive and fiscally responsible approach, Mayor Roden emphasized the importance of preparing for future service delivery and infrastructure needs. She assured the public that if the funding application were approved, there would be extensive public consultation as the project progressed.

Mayor Roden asked all speakers to please note their name and address prior to addressing Council.

Public:

Steve Smith 1266 Heustis Dr.

- Comment – Noticed the EV Charger is being used and commented that in his opinion that type of visitor is not an economic contributor.

Rick Lang 617 Cedar Crescent

- Appreciated the clarification provided about the water metering project and is happy to hear there will be consultation.

Steve Smith

- Comment that he cant see a reason for water metering in Ashcroft, believes conservation is a better approach.
- Comment that some people may not be able to afford to water their trees under a water metering program and turn Ashcroft’s landscape into a baren land.
- Suggested mandating underground sprinklers s an alternative solution.

CFO Bhalla

- Addressed the increasing costs of managing projects in the current post-pandemic, inflationary period. Noted that ongoing monthly expenses, such as gas and hydro, have escalated significantly, requiring the Village to explore alternative solutions for water conservation. Emphasized that higher water usage leads to increased service delivery costs, drawing a comparison to the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) operating costs.
- CFO Bhalla acknowledged the Village's past reluctance to implement a water metering system but emphasized that 100% grant funding is rare, making this an opportunity that should not be overlooked.
- Discussed the WTP's size and capacity, clarifying that the current two trains are fully equipped with membrane filtration and meet the needs of the community, including proposed developments. Noted that if further growth occurs, a third train would need to be installed and populated with membrane filters to accommodate increased water demand.
- Further discussions covered the need for upgrades to the Sewer Treatment Plant and the pursuit of grant funding for the project. Additionally, highlighted the proposed twin reservoir for North Ashcroft.
- CFO Bhalla emphasized that Council and Staff are taking a proactive approach to ensure Ashcroft's future growth is supported by essential infrastructure and services.

Keith Archibald – 505 Pine Street

- Asked about fire mitigation efforts undertaken by the Village
 - Response – Participating in the FireSmart program, currently looking to hire a contracted FireSmart coordinator – first year is mostly public education and engagement and development of the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan, second year enables implementation and private property assessments. Year two also permits mitigation efforts such as chipping programs.
- Concern that water meter rates will be unaffordable
 - Response – the current water rate for all households is \$550/year. The elderly single person pays the same rate as a family of four, metering will have a base rate, and any usage of the estimated annual consumption rate will have additional charges for those households that exceed the base rate.
- Comment regarding green lawns and trees providing fire protection.

Ken Brown 1311 Western Ave

- Comment about the WTP and pump station at Legacy Park, and ongoing water restrictions, causing his wife to hand water her plants. Wondered what the capacity and base rate for water will be per household?
 - Response – base rate and capacity is unknown at this time, we are at the application stage and if approved will be working through the details and keep the public informed. The Village will draw on the knowledge of other communities that have implemented a similar program and learn from their experience.
- Implementation cost question
 - Unknown at this time but we are applying for the maximum funding. Water Meter and technology price will depend on if the province bulk buys or each municipality will be purchasing individually.

- Concern that the additional work load will require one or two new employees
 - Our intent is not to hire additional employees but reconfigure within. If this isn't possible, usage of water generally offsets all operational costs.

CFO Bhalla discussed parallel billing

- Noting water metering usually runs a dummy pay system the first year after installation so consumers can see what the estimated payments are for the year compared to the current model. This enables consumers to gauge their consumption and adjust usage to manage their bills.
- We are at an impasse, we need to begin looking at water meter implementation at the most affordable level.
- Ashcroft has not had any utility costs increases in the last four years, but our costs have escalated providing an example of Hydro and Fortis costs.

Alexandra Potter 1217 Brunswick Place

- Comment in regards to removal of cedar trees which provided a privacy barrier but required too much water.
- Who determines the water fees with the meters, the province or the Village?
 - Response – the Village will determine costs based on actuals. The fees collected for water and sewer much sustain the systems.
- Concern about a household not using as much water as is estimated in the base rate.
 - CFO Bhalla provided a breakdown of how he determines water fees
 - Variable and fixed costs breakdown explanation of overall expenses provided. Water systems are not a tax – but the system does have to sustain itself ie: cost equals actuals plus statutory reserve (pumps replacement etc).
- When do we anticipate to see the actual costs – will it be based on regular consumption or restricted consumption?

Gallery Comment:

- What will billing cycle look like?
 - The Village will keep things as simple as possible – ideally bill once a year but show consumption on a more regular basis. We will commit to research what other communities are doing? What do their residents prefer: monthly, quarterly annual billing?
- Will there be a meter cap, for example if residents want to water their lawns to keep their grass green during a wildfire, will the water be shut off when a certain water usage is maxed?
 - Response – during an emergency situation, there will be emergency actions. We have to maintain water for fire flows,
- Will there be penalty charges or water shut off for those using excessive water?
 - Response – No, we wont shut water off, but those residents will be billed for the water they used. There may be a penalty, but these things will be discussed during community meetings keeping in mind there has to be a balance.



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Mayor Roden commented that Stage 1 water restrictions although not discussed to date in regards to a water metering program, will likely not go away it's the norm in most communities. Commenting on the ongoing watering throughout the community in the summer months during the peak heat in the afternoons which is a waste of water as most of it evaporates almost immediately. Moving to levels two, three or four is influenced by drought conditions, wildfire, and many other extenuating factors and cant be addressed today.

Cam Tedford

- Asked how many Closed meetings were held in 2024 and wondered what percentage of motions were released to the public. In his estimation it appears to be 20%.
 - There were eight Closed Meetings in 2024, not all motions are released to the public such as any related to a legal matter or motions approving the previous meetings minutes.
- Clarification requested what can be asked during Public Input, todays questions didn't appear to be on the Agneda.
 - Grey area – the Water Meter project was on the Minutes from the previous meeting which were an agenda item.

Leith – apologised for inability to properly stream the last Council meeting.

5. BYLAWS/POLICIES

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6. STAFF REPORTS

REQUEST FOR DECISION		
6.1	CAO Report – Retroactive Request to Waive Ice Time and Liability Insurance Purpose: The purpose of this Council Report is to seek retroactive approval from the Council for the donation of ice time and waiver of liability insurance for the Guns and Hoses Charity Hockey Game, which took place on January 25, 2025, at the Drylands Arena. M/S Lambert / Anstett <i>THAT, Council retroactively approves the donation of ice time for the Guns and Hoses Charity Hockey Game and a two-hour practice session at Drylands Arena; and waive the liability insurance for the event providing liability under the Village policy.</i>	CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-29
FOR INFORMATION		



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7. CORRESPONDENCE

FOR ACTION		
7.1	Ashcroft & District Health Care Auxiliary – Request Donation of Community Hall for Thrift Shop Christmas Sale November 12-16, 2025 M/S Clement / Davenport <i>THAT, Council approve the Ashcroft & District Health Care Auxiliary’s request for donation of the Community Hall for the Thrift Shop Christmas Sale, November 12-16, 2025.</i>	CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-30
7.2	Ashcroft & Area Community Resources Society – Request Donation of Community Hall for the Christmas Hamper Drive December 16-20-, 2025 M/S Roden / Lambert <i>THAT, Council approve the Ashcroft & Area Community Resources Society’s request for donation of the Community Hall for the Christmas Hamper Drive, December 16-20, 2025.</i>	CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-31
7.3	British Columbia Rural Health Network (BCRHN) – 2025 Membership Renewal M/S Clement / Anstett <i>THAT, Council approves the membership renewal to the BC Rural Health Network for a fee of \$50.00.</i>	CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-32
7.4	Gold Country BC – Input Needed for New Geocaching Tour Locations in Gold Country <i>Refer to Economic Development and Tourism Working Group</i>	
7.5	BCEDA – Connecting the Dots – Collaboration, Innovation, Resilience – 2025 BC Economic Summit – May 12-15, 2025 Penticton Interested Council members to advise the CAO	
FOR INFORMATION		
7.6	SD 74 Board Bulletin – January 2025	
7.7	SILGA – Joint Area Association Virtual Engagement Session (JAAVES) – Save the Date	
7.8	Recognize Remarkable – Nominations & Programming Updates from BC Achievement Foundation – Nomination Deadline is February 15, 2025 Reminder Rotary is still seeking nominations to January 31st	

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1	Task Manager	
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	Installation of parking signs will proceed in the next few weeks	
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9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1	Invitation from the Clinton Annual Ball Society inviting Mayor Roden to the 158 th Annual Ball M/S Lambert / Clement <i>THAT, Council approves the Mayor and guest to attend the 158th Clinton Annual Ball and direct staff to coordinate the tickets.</i>	CARRIED Unanimous R-2025-33
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10. REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES, COTW, and COMMISSIONS

10.		
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11. COUNCIL REPORTS

11.1	Mayor Roden SILGA – coming up this spring in Merrit, organizers are looking at including a trip to the Honour Ranch	
11.2	Councillor Anstett	
11.3	Councillor Clement Attended the HAWK meeting last week – confirmed that there are three full time doctors at the UPCC and noted that anyone without a family doctor can be connected to the UPCC as patient and their file will be transferred.	
11.4	Councillor Davenport	
11.5	Councillor Lambert Attended the Seniors Meeting – sadly only 4 members were present. Encouraged Council to promote seniors attendance as the Society needs members	

12. RESOLUTION TO ADJOURN TO CLOSED MEETING

Motion to move to a closed meeting to discuss an item under the Community Charter Section 90.1

12.1	N/A	
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13. RESOLUTIONS RELEASED FROM CLOSED MEETING

13.1	CAO Report – Closed Meeting January 13, 2025 – Release of Closed Meeting Resolutions For Information	
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14. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Roden adjourned the Regular Meeting of Council for Monday, January 27, 2025, at 7:28 pm

Certified to be a true and correct copy of
the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
Council held Monday, January 27, 2025.

Daniela Dyck,
Chief Administrative Officer

Barbara Roden,
Mayor