

MULTI-USE BUILDINGS PROJECT



INFORMATION HANDOUT

On September 30, 2019 (advance poll on Sep 26th) the polls will open in Town at the Community Centre to vote on Bylaw #1674, a bylaw to approve borrowing \$2.8M for the construction of new buildings in Town to replace the current Daycare, Playschool, Administration building and provide additional community space. This vote will have significant implications for decades to come.

What is wrong with the current facilities?

The current building (221 45th Ave W) was built in the 40's and is over 70 years old, still with original plumbing and electrical. The building has been pushed long past its useful life and without major renovations it can't continue to support operations. Every year significant dollars go into repairs and maintenance to keep the building operating.

Additional Concerns:

- Annual licensing is precarious for Daycare and Playschool due to existing layout and code concerns.
- Daycare is at capacity with a waiting list for parents trying to find care for their kids.
- Daycare and Playschool aren't wheel chair accessible.
- Council Chambers doesn't accommodate large groups.
- Temperature control and reliability is a concern (Daycare often over 25°C during the summer and Playschool sending kids home due to boiler issues in the winter).

Is the old school building being used?

The old elementary school (5318 2nd St W) has been looked at as a possible site for a multi-use facility since 2013. This was a surplus school from Livingstone Range School Division that was already on Town owned land. Due to costs of renovation and unsuccessful grant applications the project continued to be postponed, and with postponement came inflation and code changes that continued to make the project budget increase. As per the news release dated May 14, 2019, the existing building was deemed not viable for a renovation within the budgetary constraints. The final cost analysis, with all the recent code change requirements, was estimated at \$5.5 million to renovate the building. To remain fiscally responsible and within the approved budget this overage was deemed outside of the desired scope.

What is the Town's current debt load?

The Town currently has \$4,019,971 of debt outstanding. Current debentures include:

Purpose	Debenture Remaining	Year of Final Payment
Sewer Trunk	\$100,000	2020
Golf Course	\$263,731	2021
Sewer Upgrades	\$364,775	2023
Sewer Trunk	\$382,708	2028
Water Treatment Plant	\$2,908,757	2033

As can be noted from the existing debt, it is primarily utility related (93% of the outstanding debt). Council has recognized this concerning trend, which is a result of not properly planning for the future, and is addressing it with the updated utility rate structure and rates.

Has the old school been condemned?

No. An expenditure of \$149,000 has been approved for the demolition. Some of the concrete materials from the demolition may be re-used at the Town's lagoons as rip-rap, which will save landfill costs and assist with erosion at the lagoons. All asbestos remediation has been completed on the building which was required for either renovation or demolition.

What's being done instead?

To stay within the originally proposed budget and to meet the needs of the users the Multi-use Building concept is being split into two separate locations.

Through discussions with the Livingstone Range School Division, the proposed plan is to subdivide the north-east corner of the West Meadow Elementary School property construct new Daycare/Playschool facilities located directly adjacent to the West Meadow Elementary School. This assists with operations and is the desired course of action by the Daycare/Playschool boards. As this is conceptual at this time, and no formal provincial approvals have been granted, we ask the communities patience and respect as the user groups work through this process. It is through these partnerships that projects such as these can exist in the community and be an attraction to families considering moving to the area.

The remaining users will be located in new facilities at the site of the old elementary school (5318 2nd St W), such as FCSS and hopefully Lethbridge College.

How is building new cheaper?

The old elementary school was a 26,000 square foot building (on two floors), with the original portion of the building built in 1954. Due to the age, a renovation would require complete retrofit of nearly all the electrical and mechanical systems (plumbing, wiring, HVAC) and significant upgrades for fire and energy code as well as adding in an elevator for accessibility. A new build total area, both locations combined, is planned at around 11,000 square feet, less than half the area of the renovation. A new build will also be all on ground level, eliminating the need for costly elevators or lifts. While there will be no gymnasium there will be additional community office/gathering space for groups/functions.

What does this mean for me as a resident?

- Single pick-up/drop-off location for school, daycare, and playschool.
- Additional capacity for Daycare.
- Safer and more comfortable facilities for children in Daycare and Playschool (accessible, reliable heating/cooling, no long stairs, etc.)
- More accessible participation with Council with improved technology to better hear and participate in Council meetings remotely, and more room to accommodate larger audiences.
- Additional community meeting space for community groups or training.
- Town Administration and FCSS will be under one roof, with other services as well. For example, in an effort to have Lethbridge College remain in Claresholm we are hoping to have them housed at this location. The Town will continue to work with all interested groups to ensure continued programming within the Town.

What does this mean to me as a taxpayer?

The project budget is \$3.8 million with \$2.8 million being financed. Debenture details:

- Amount: \$2,800,000
- Term: 30 Years
- Rate (based on today – could change based on actual date of issue) – 2.661%
- Annual payments: 136,080
- Based on 2,000 taxable properties in Claresholm this is \$68 per property per year.

Annual cost noted above is ignoring the savings that will be realized, such as the \$25K per year in rent, additional phone lines, internet connection, photocopier lease, etc. that will be saved by moving FCSS into the same building. Or the estimated extra 30K per year in insurance, utilities, and maintenance costs of keeping the current building and the old elementary school building both insured and operational during this time of planning.

Where did \$3.8M come from – wasn't that the same cost for renovation before?

Council has been very firm at not wanting to exceed this original budget. When redeveloping this project this was always kept as a line not to be crossed which is why the original project didn't move forward.

In developing this current plan extensive needs evaluations were done with all user groups to determine what space was required. Some of these needs are based on licensing requirements, others on program or service logistics. This square footage size and building requirements was sent to a third party for a preliminary quote. This was utilized for budget purposes. As these projects do require tendering the costs may be lower than anticipated, however if delays continue to occur inflation can change project costs.

Conclusion

Council would like to thank the user groups and the public for their feedback. Town Council will continue to work with all partners to ensure needs are met moving forward. Council is committed to listening to the public and user groups who continue to be invested in this project to ensure their programming enriches the community. If anyone has any questions regarding this project please feel free to come into the office or contact one of the groups for more information.

Over the weeks to come before the vote of the electors the Town will continue to provide additional information through the Town News and Social Media about this project and the users.

Where & When Can I Vote?

At the Claresholm Community Centre located at 5920 – 8 St West.

1. Voting day – Monday, Sept. 30, 2019 from 10 am to 8 pm.
2. Advanced Poll – Thursday, Sept. 26, 2019 from 2pm to 8 pm

Every person who resides in the Town of Claresholm is eligible to vote if they are at least 18 years old and a Canadian Citizen (proof of street address & photo identification may be required).

