

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL  
of the Village of Barons  
December 12, 2023**

***Present:*** Daniel Doell, Mayor  
Ron Gorzitza, Deputy Mayor  
Clinton Bishop, Councillor  
Jen Durell, Administrator

***Absent:*** Brian Passmore, Village Foreman

***Recording Secretary:*** Jen Durell, Recording Secretary

***Call to Order:*** Call to order at 6:59 p.m.

***Guests:*** **Honorable Joseph Schow, MLA Cardston – Siksika**  
Honored to be here tonight. Wanted to provide an update at what has occurred in the legislature over the past six (6) months. The fall session of the legislature just finished and nine (9) bills were passed. In addition, the Taxpayer Protection Act passed which would keep taxpayer money in their pockets. Also spoke of the Opioid Cost Recovery Act, which will recover costs from pharmaceutical companies. Honorable Schow has been appointed the new Minister of Tourism and Sport in addition to the Government House Leader. He has had the opportunity, through the Ministry, to travel to Paris, Hamburg, Newfoundland, etc. He spoke of visiting Vimy Ridge this year and speaking there on Remembrance Day. While in Hamburg, he was promoting Alberta beef and tourism. Spoke to the cost of living and how the government is helping people who need it.

Floor was opened to those in the gallery who have any questions.

Mr. Baird spoke of the cost of living and tax dollars. Spoke of government getting involved and carbon capture/green initiatives. He also spoke of contaminated properties – indicates that Main Street is contaminated. Spoke of tax payer money going to multinational companies but not to Municipalities. Says small business is not subsidized.

Administrator Durell asks if the government will be supportive of increasing the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF) that replaces the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) grant. Councillor Bishop echoed his own concerns re: LGFF and increase in funding.

Honorable Schow indicated that Rural AB will be okay with LGFF and be taken care of.

Councillor Bishop speaks of Rural Healthcare access. Access to physicians, wait times, long term strategies need to be seen. Mr Vrooman asked about a travelling clinic.

Honorable Schow responds by stating that the government is recruiting doctors and it will be an ongoing process. Living in rural Alberta should not be a disadvantage. The government recognizes that there is deficiencies in Healthcare and the system is having a hard time managing. Massive changes to the healthcare system will be coming as the current system isn't working. Asks for patience while these changes take place. Honorable Schow will be speaking with the Health Minister and will present these ideas.

**Susan Sarazin - Bylaws**

Would like to speak of bylaws. Concerns raised re Land Use Bylaw - percentage of land used, parking, accessory buildings and quonsets; Unsightly Bylaw re: derelict RV's

Accessory building cannot be placed ahead of the home. Says that there is a property with buildings up to the sidewalk and the buildings are forward from the house.

**Rebecca McDonnell – Vrooman – Policy and Procedure, Transparency and Accountability, FOIP**

Speaks of public participation policy and requirement to have this as per MGA. Speaks of suggestions to be added to the policy. Says that allowing public participation will instill confidence in the public. Suggest that different documents be made available online such as MAP review, Agendas, Budgets, working Financial papers, remunerations of council and Administration and in input on the budget.

FOIP re: items not available to the public

Concerns expressed re communication and the need to do better.

**Karalee Hickman – Reason for demotion of Councillor Bishop, 5 Man Council, Process for requests to be actioned, Volunteer Groups, Emergency Preparedness**

Wants to understand the decisions made by the demotion of Councillor Bishop. Says that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have no investment in the Village. Deputy Mayor Gorzitz says that they listen to Councillor Bishop during the Council meeting but

that doesn't mean they have to agree. Mayor Doell spoke of rules that have to be followed. Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor want to see Councillor Bishop get more experience as a Council Member as he has had no prior experience in municipal governance.

Ms Hickman spoke of Councillors working for the best interests of the people. Both Mayor Doell and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza say that they do make decisions on behalf of all of Barons residents and that they do not deny that Councillor Bishop brings forth some ideas that they agree with.

Ms. Hickman would like to see a five man Council again. Deputy Mayor Gorzitza gave her the rationale as to why Barons went back to the recommended three man council. He spoke that having a five man won't necessarily make it better and it will just make it more expensive.

Spoke of the Village's website being outdated and contact information is not up to date. Also spoke of the Emergency Plan and Volunteer groups.

### **Bob Baird – Public Engagement**

Says that this meeting is awesome. Says that the conversations need to stop. Says that everyone has a role to play in the Village. Says that everyone in the room is a human being. Speaks of inclusion. Says that talking about the other things needs to stop. Honestly, integrity, transparency. Says Roberts Rules is overblown. Says that Roberts Rules is a lot of hot air and process. Says the Village needs to turn around. Speaks of aging water system and sewer systems. Had questions re: engagement with Council. Says we need town halls. Says we need to stop looking at neighbors. Says there is a lot of frustration that needs to go away. Asked about strategic reserves re: water system. Says we need honest, transparent talks. Talks about the fire and needing volunteers in town. Speaks of needing volunteers to drag people out of burning buildings. Speaks of fire dept and the loss of. Says we need to go after the county and the province because of it. Says we need to drop egos and fights that have taken place over decades. Says that Mayor Doell and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza are just as important as Councillor Bishop.

Mayor Doell asks for respect for Schow. Honorable Schow asks for respect and that Mr. Baird is being belligerent and offensive – that he is making Schow's job sound frivolous.

**Approval of Agenda:** **Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gorzitza to approve the agenda as presented. Carried**

**Minutes:** To accept the minutes of the November 14, 2023 Regular Council Meeting minutes as presented.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to accept the minutes of the November 14, 2023 Regular Council meeting as presented. Carried**

To accept the minutes of the December 9, 2023 Special Council Meeting minutes as presented.

**Motion made by Deputy Mayor to accept the minutes of the December 9, 2023 Special Council Meeting as presented. Carried**

**Business Arising:** a) **Garbage Services Contract**  
Council was presented with the Coalhurst Garbage Services agreement for consideration.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to accept and sign the garbage services agreement as presented but encourages Administration to explore alternative arrangements. Carried**

b) **Utility Request from Seniors**  
A letter was received by Council requesting consideration for relief of Utility Charges from the Barons Senior Citizens Society. Council was also presented with the Utility Relief Program for Non-Profit Organizations as requested.

**Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gorzitza to amend the Utility Relief program to reflect a change from asking for Tax filings, to asking for 2 years of Financial Statements and to implement the program as of January 1, 2024. Carried**

**Village Foreman Report:** Speaks of things running smoothly as of late. Christmas decorations are now up. Décor for flag poles has been damaged in storage, so Foreman Passmore is hesitant to put them up. Speaks of putting up Christmas lights at the front entrance. Speaks of being behind on making ice compared to last year.

**Administrator Report:**

The Village Auditors have now completed their pre-audit activities, and Civic Solutions has also attended the Village to work on the Tangible Capital Asset reporting. Administrator Durell has been in contact with Bylaw Enforcement to address some unsightly properties and letters have gone out for same. Administrator Durell attended a meeting for the Regional Emergency Management partnership, and work continues to revise our Emergency Plans. Administrator Durell was in contact with Fortis Alberta regarding the front entry lights, and it appears that EPCOR was misinformed as to the locations of some of our sites. Based on the account records submitted by Fortis Alberta, the account the Village was told was the front entry sign light by EPCOR is actually our streetlight account, which would then account for the discrepancy in the delivery charges. Further discoveries were made, such as EPCOR listing the “Village Gazebo” as the “Carwash”, and the Sewer Lagoon listed as “Pump to Town”. EPCOR has been contacted to rectify the billing account names. Administrator Durell attended a meeting with MPE Engineering regarding the sewage lift station project. The drafting for the project is being re-worked again as it is now the recommendation of MPE Engineering to build a structure at the lagoon site to house the control panel for the deep well. This building is to replace the current structure that is on site. The project is still planned to go to tender in January, with tender to close in February. Administrator Durell has received word from the EOEP that the Muni’s 101 Zoom course has now opened up for registration. The session runs from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm on January 25, February 1, February 8, and February 15. Registrants must attend all four sessions, and the cost of which is \$295.00 plus GST.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to instruct Administration to register Councillor Bishop and Mayor Doell for the Muni’s 101 course offered through the EOEP at a cost of \$295.00 each plus GST. Carried**

**Correspondence:**

- November Bank Reconciliation
- ORRSC – Notice of Change of Municipal Planner
- AB Environment – EPR Framework
- ATB – Holiday Hours
- EOEP – Muni’s 101 Registration

**Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gorzitza to accept the correspondence as presented. Carried**

**Financial Reports:**

Council was presented with the accounts payable and monthly statement for the month of November, 2023.

**Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gorzitza to approve the accounts payable for the month of November, 2023. Carried**

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to approve the monthly statement for November, 2023. Carried**

***Committee Reports:***

- a) **ORRSC**  
Spoke of new developments and fee increases of five (5)%.
- b) **Green Acres**  
Was not able to attend.
- c) **CFLR (Community Futures Lethbridge Region)**  
Was not able to attend
- d) **FCSS (Family Community and Social Services)**  
Conference in Edmonton. Spoke of downsizing and the importance of perspective.
- e) **Mayors and Reeves**  
Was not able to attend
- f) **Chinook Arch Library System**  
Attended the last meeting. Spoke of financial reports. Library is in good position. Looking to grow the Library system.
- g) **AG Society**  
Washroom repairs are completed. Ag Society is looking to do some renovations they are looking to undertake.
- h) **Emergency Advisory Committee**  
Have been working on refreshing the HIRA's (Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment) for the Village.
- i) **Carmangay Library**  
Will be coming to Barons once a month in the new year. Dates are not set but they will hopefully be at the Seniors Centre and open to the public on those days.

***New Business:***

- a) **Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendments – Sea-Cans**  
Council was presented with proposed amendments for their consideration and discussion.

Presentation was made by Kattie Schlamp, Municipal Planner from ORRSC.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to obtain further information about successes and failures regarding allowing shipping containers in residential areas, and a report to be brought to Council showing same in February.**

**Carried**

**b) Request from AG Society – ASIRP Application**

Council was presented with the application form for the AG Society for the ASIRP Grant. The AG Society requests a letter of support from Council for their application for the grant.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to support the AG Society in their ASIRP Grant application, and to write a letter expressing same.**

**Carried**

**c) Proposed Procedural Bylaw Amendments**

Council was presented with proposed Procedural Bylaw amendments for their consideration.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to recess for five (5) minutes at 8:55 pm.**

**Carried**

**Motion made by Mayor Doell to return to the meeting at 9:03 pm.**

**Carried**

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to instruct Administration to draft Bylaw amendments to allow for agendas to be posted in advance of Council Meetings and to include all attachments respecting FOIP Guidelines, to add all attachments to the ratified minutes respecting FOIP Guidelines, to explore recording of the Council Meetings, as well to remove Part “X”, Section 33 of the Meeting Procedures Bylaw.**

**Carried**

**d) Request for Tax Agreement Reinstatement and Penalty Forgiveness**

A letter was received by Council requesting consideration for reinstatement of a cancelled Tax Agreement, as well as forgiveness of the Tax Penalties applied to the account.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to not cancel the monthly agreement and to give a 2 month period to get caught up and current.**

**Carried**

e) **Request from Barons Legion #160**

A letter was received by Council requesting their consideration to allow for a “Muster Point” sign to be installed on the wall of the building known as the “Old Fire Hall”.

**Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gorzitza to allow for the Barons Legion to place a “Muster Point” sign on the building known as the “Old Fire Hall” in the interest of safety.**

**Carried**

f) **Interim Budget**

Council was presented with the 2024 Interim Budget for their consideration.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to approve the 2024 Interim Budget as presented.**

**Carried**

g) **Village Holiday Schedule**

As in previous years, the Village Office and Public Works have been closed between Christmas and New Year’s. It is proposed that the Office and Public Works be closed between noon on December 21st to January 2nd, 2024 inclusive.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to close the Village Office and Public Works on December 22nd and remain closed until January 2nd, 2024 inclusive.**

**Carried**

h) **Wages/Christmas Bonuses**

It is recommended to provide a cost-of-living increase of 3.3% for Public Works. It is also recommended that the Administrator be provided with a \$5,000.00 wage increase.

As in keeping with previous years, it is recommended that a Christmas bonus of \$500.00 for Administrator and Public Works Foreman, as well as \$150.00 for the casual employees.

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to approve a \$1/hour wage increase for Casual Employees, effective January 1, 2024.**

**Carried**

**Motion made by Councillor Bishop to provide a Christmas bonus of \$500.00 for Administrator Durell and Public Works Foreman Passmore, and \$150.00 for the Casual Employees.**

**Carried**



*Closed Session:* Administrator’s Yearly Evaluation FOIP ACT – 17(4)(f)  
Motion made by Councillor Bishop to go incamera at 9:35 pm  
Carried  
Motion made by Deputy Mayor Gorzitza to come out of  
camera at 11:47 pm.  
Carried

*Adjournment:* Adjournment of the meeting was at 11:47 p.m.

---

Mayor – Daniel Doell

---

Administrator – Jen Durell