

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL
at the Village of Barons Office
With Residents**

November 10, 2020

Present: Mayor Weistra, Deputy Mayor Gorzitza, Councillor Tarditi,

Residents: W. Vrooman (WV), R. Vrooman (VR), M. Sigurdson (MS), R. & W. Anderson (R,WA), E. Kish (EK), S. Tarditi (ST), R. Tarditi (RT), G. Foster (GF), B. Baird (BB), B. & S. Sarazin (B,S S), C. Beierbach,(CB), L. Sheehan (LS), I. Duncan (ID) (21 people in total)

Call to order: This meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

Mayor Weistra asked for civility and to respect everyone, otherwise this meeting will be called off.
Mayor Weistra asks how many groups will be presenting?

W. Vrooman made his presentation to Council.

Comments/Questions:

- Councillor Tarditi appreciates the presentation to council
- Councillor Tarditi questions why equipment has not been upkept.
- Councillor Tarditi asks - does the Village have CVIP's for trucks
- WV states Public Works is afraid of the zoom boom. Mayor Weistra says Public Works states that zoom boom is fine. Minor leaks but nothing unrepairable. WV states hydraulic lines easy and cheap to fix.
- RV asking cost of upkeep vs rental. Actual costs unknown.
- GF asks if Brian is a licensed mechanic. Mayor Weistra replied unsure but believes not.
- WV asking why Brian hasn't been reported for working on equipment uncertified.
- Councillor Tarditi asking for walk-arounds prior to using each piece of equipment.
- RV asking why Public Works cannot refuse work w. zoom boom as per OHS. Mayor Weistra is unaware of Public Works refusing work. RV arguing why Mayor Weistra cannot be prepared for the meeting. BB asking what cost of mechanic would be to fix zoom boom deficiencies.
Unknown
- BB asking when WCB audit was done last. Is Public Works ticketed to run equipment? Mayor Weistra and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza have no knowledge of a WCB audit being completed during their tenure. BB offended at lack of pro-active management. BS asks if anyone has ever been hurt on the job, or if there has been a WCB claim. GF states he was electrocuted when on fire dept. Arguing that it was Administrator's fault that he was never paid from WCB as she told them not to pay him.
- Foster asks what type of training that the council has received since being appointed. Mayor Weistra replied that all Council with the exception of Councillor Tarditi has received Councillor training when first appointed. In addition, Mayor Weistra and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza have also completed the required Council Emergency Management training, but Councillor Tarditi has not. GF asks why she hasn't. Councillor Tarditi states that she hasn't done the Councillor Emergency Management training because of COVID. Councillor Tarditi states that further councillor training wasn't allowed for her because of budget constraints. Someone asked who is to issue evacuations in case of emergency, like a train derailment. Councillor Tarditi responds that L. Biddlecombe – Director of Emergency Management, Mayor Weistra, Deputy Mayor Gorzitza, and M. Sigurdson – Deputy Director of Emergency Management are the ones who would respond.

- Councillor Tarditi asks about grant for beautification. Mayor Weistra replies \$2,000 annually is in the budget. WV suggests using that grant funding to upkeep current trees rather than buying new trees or using said money to repair equipment used to upkeep trees.
- Councillor Tarditi speaking of equipment – council can assure the people that these issues with equipment will be dealt with and a solution will be found. WV states he has liability insurance to fix said equipment.
- Mayor Weistra chastised CB for speaking out of turn.
- BS asks if zoom boom is used primarily to do trees – says his RV needed new roof after damage from trees. BS also states that zoom boom is an asset to the Village and unkempt trees are a liability to residents’ property.
- BB speaking of due diligence with WCB audits and when Public Works gets hurt – why hasn’t village done due diligence on asking for an audit.
- GF says his RV damaged by trees as well. Says Administrator chastised him for cutting trees on his property. WV says its ridiculous to come to office to get permit to cut tree when the tree is on your property. Mayor Weistra used an example of a resident who cut down a tree and knocked out power to the entire Village, which the Village then had to pay the repair costs for the powerlines. RT asks if tree permits can be done away with and just asking for permission instead. Deputy Mayor Gorzitza speaking on differences between trimming/cutting of trees on property versus trees on village property. RT in agreement that there is a difference between your own property and Village owned property. Mayor Weistra agrees that residents should be able to cut down trees on their property. BS asks about Elm trees and why they can’t be cut without permission. BS asks for policy re: cutting trees because of elm trees and risk of dutch elm. Councillor Tarditi says tree policy must be reviewed – no paying for permits. Mayor Weistra agrees there should be no cost for permit/permission. BB asked who decided to permit tree cutting. Mayor Weistra unsure.
- Street conditions – BB says Ed was personally attacking him in Mayors Message in November newsletter. Mayor Weistra states it was because of someone else’s concerns and not BB.
- BB asking for a Bylaw Enforcement plan along with written policies and procedures. Who decides who the bylaw officer goes after?
- BB and VW both say Bylaw receives instruction from office as to who the officer goes after. Mayor Weistra denies that Bylaw is directed solely by the office and reiterates that many residents contact the office with Bylaw related concerns, which are then forwarded to the Bylaw Officer by the Village Office. WV says, “I’m sure”.
- Councillor Tarditi states she has witnessed bylaw excusing others and going after certain individuals.
- BB still angry over bylaw coming to his property. Says it was the Administrator who ordered bylaw to come to his house. BB has issues with current enforcement – BB attacking Deputy Mayor Gorzitza for parking bus on boulevard, as well as his truck “backwards” on the boulevard – claims community could be beautiful but is bothered by the fact that Bylaw Officer drove across town to speak to him about his tent trailer. BB claims she avoids the hotel site completely and singles him out. Says Bylaws are too broad and singles everyone out for too many infractions. Says he has no issues with Deputy Mayor’s bus or ID’s truck.
- Why is ID still receiving fines for charges that were allegedly thrown out in court? Councillor Tarditi says Administrator is not doing her job by keeping these fines on his account. BB singles out Deputy Mayor Gorzitza for bus and parking truck but doesn’t understand why ID still has tickets. BB claims council is asleep at the wheel.
- ID’s Daughter -in-law says ID apparently has attended court and the charges were thrown out – says that this was not dealt with at the office and that these fines need to be removed.

- CB requests that a Bylaw enforcement plan be sent to each household. Bylaws should be posted on website.
- RT asking if Bylaw Enforcement can be informed by Council rather than the Office.
- Michelle asking for a report from ID stating these tickets were thrown out, and asks if this can be brought in so issue can be rectified.
- BS states Bylaw should be contacted directly rather than being directed by Council and/or the Office. SS agreeing as that person may have an opinion.
- BB asking if the Administrator holds peace officer status. Mayor Weistra responds no. Asking why Administrator considers herself a peace officer – can't tell what bylaw it is that states the Administrator is also a peace officer. Councillor Tarditi says it definitely has to be looked into.
- RT asking if we actually need bylaw enforcement. Mayor Weistra says yes, as what has already been stated re: untidy lawns, derelict yards, etc. shows. Deputy Mayor Gorzitza states RCMP does not want to deal with enforcement of bylaws.
- RT says Bylaw should be around more than 9-5.
- ST states that during the time we only had RCMP, no one was unhappy with services. No one happy now with having bylaw enforcement. SS agrees with ST but brings up derelict cars on numerous properties as reasoning why we need bylaw enforcement. SS says bylaw enforcement is a must.
- WV asks if neighbour has multiple vehicles why was he singled out for breaking unsightly/untidy bylaw – says bylaw officer can't tell him what part of unsightly/untidy he was breaking. Says Bylaw officer demanded plates and registration for his truck and says he has had enough time to deal with his property since moving in.
- RV asking about bylaw contract – is there other bylaw officers in Coalhurst? Mayor Weistra unsure. RV asking if villages similar size have bylaw enforcement. Mayor Weistra says unsure but RCMP won't do it. Councillor Tarditi says Carmangay has its own officer, Nobleford does inhouse bylaw enforcement. WV asking why we don't have our own bylaw officer in town. Mayor Weistra talking about costs for vehicle, training, etc. and how it was better to contract Coalhurst and let them bear the cost of vehicles, training, etc.
- RT states bylaw enforcement is bringing many issues, and these could be remediated without a bylaw officer or with minimal bylaw enforcement.
- BB invites Deputy Mayor Gorzitza for beer and speaks to bylaw issue again. BB says bylaw officer is unfair. Many yards are unsightly but no enforcement on them.
- BB getting worked up and subsequently is asked to calm down or he'll have to leave by Mayor Weistra.
- BB claims Mayor Weistra has spoken already re: newcomers and his opinion of "if you don't like it, move".
- BB saying he is sure he will not receive answers as Ed has made his position clear.
- BB demanding a bylaw enforcement plan and written policy and procedure, what is adequate time to remedy issues, when is first warning, second warning, etc.
- BB states Bylaw has been weaponized. BB thinks Bylaw Officer is unfair. Says there is no rhyme or reason to what the Bylaw Officer does and should be investigated by Council and Council only.
- GF asking why hotel debris not cleaned up. Mayor Weistra explaining how the owner has been evading the Village, the Village lawyer, and the sheriff. Village finally got the go ahead through the courts to begin clean up. Sherwood Environmental did testing of the site and found some asbestos in the floor tiles. Cost quote from Sherwood to clean up site is \$187,000. Mayor Weistra says we are fighting and trying to get this guy – pursuing his insurance again to try to get costs covered. The owner walked away scot free and left nothing behind and now village is stuck with problem along with bills incurred (firefighting costs, clean up, costs, etc).

- GF says asbestos is contaminating the entire village with the wind, and that if someone were to get asbestosis it is Village's fault.
- GF says Section 550 of the MGA states the village is responsible and has the authority to remedy the issue. Mayor Weistra states health minister and environment minister has been here and no one will give money to Village to help with cleanup costs.
- RT asking if we could just bury it. Mayor Weistra says no.
- CB states that she got breast cancer from cleaning up contaminants up north. She says get rid of contaminants now before all residents get cancer. Mayor Weistra says if we can't ipay to clean it, we may have to contain it.
- GF says encapsulation is available but not in this particular situation.
- ID's Daughter-in-law says go to the media and say the village is contaminated – plea for help. Crowd in agreeance that this but will make Village undesirable for tourism, newcomers, etc.
- WV states high winds has already spread asbestos.
- Mayor Weistra informs residents that testing alone cost \$58,000 to confirm that what was speculated to be asbestos was identified asbestos in the floor tiles for sure.
- BB asks what company it was that tested? Mayor Weistra looking for information.
- SS asks if owner of the hotel is still being looked for. Councillor Tarditi states that she hounds Council every meeting about it; Mayor Weistra confirms that he is still being looked for.
- BS asks if the MLA has been spoken to. Both Mayor Weistra and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza state that the MLA doesn't care to speak to them. Mayor Weistra recommends that residents undertake a letter writing campaign to the MLA.
- GF asks if caveats have been issued on the property. Mayor Weistra and Councillor Tarditi both say that we must wait for judgement from the courts.
- Asking of truck route – no signage. Mayor Weistra says signage for truck route will be placed soon.
- Mayor Weistra informs crowd that Public Works will be ordering breakaway posts if deemed needed. Mayor Weistra explains why current posts were placed (vandalism, theft of signage).
- WV going after bylaw again – says bylaw not enforcing people who vandalize posts.
- SS says people need to speak up and speak out and not be afraid of contacting bylaw.
- WV asks if posts have been ordered. Mayor Weistra says Public Works will be ordering posts.
- RT asks about buildings in town that should be condemned or improved. Mayor Weistra asks which. WV says Woodshop is #1. WV asks how long owner of old woodshop has had to fix up the building. Deputy Mayor says he believes he has until next summer.
- RT says bylaw needs to drive around and look at those things to improve the town.
- SS asking about home on Noble Street. Mayor Weistra says his permit has been extended. SS says you can't keep extending as they were told they had one year to build when they purchased their lot.
- BS says give a list to the bylaw officer of the unsightly properties so she can enforce.
- BB asks what the (1) one-year limit is about (purchasing empty lot and building within 1 yr). SS explains about the permit.
- BB speaking about people building within a certain time and how that is overstepping boundaries, but yet nothing has happened with the hotel. Village must lead by example.
- Councillor Tarditi states we need to be more communicative re: the hotel. Mayor Weistra says he should be communicating more and agrees with WV's letter stating Mayor needs to communicate more.
- Speaking of encroachment – Mayor Weistra uses the example of store encroachment.
- BS & SS ask for their Real Property Report (RPR) when they bought a lot and why the village gave them wrong dimensions and they never received an RPR from the village.

- WV asks when the last time the village was surveyed. BS & RT agree that cost is too great to survey entire Village.
- GF asking if fertilizer is stored next to fire hall. Mayor Weistra doesn't know. Deputy Mayor saying that anhydrous ammonia was tested, and it is not the explosive kind.
- GF asking if its been upkept. Deputy Mayor Gorzitza says that it shouldn't have changed.
- WV questions if the Village floods again and this gets into the water, council doesn't care.
- RT asks for MSDS sheets as to what is contained in the shop.
- GF asks for inventory list as well as if its over 3000 lbs it can't be within 300 ft of a household.
- Councillor Tarditi says she was never told that was held there and when she asked it was denied that anything was held there.
- WV states that it shouldn't be there at all.
- Councillor Tarditi asks if Fire Chief can go over and check it.
- WV asking if its pellets or liquid and what happens if we flood like we did again this year, and if this dissolves, it will contaminate water. BB in agreeance – uses roundup as comparable.
- Councillor Tarditi asks if Fire Chief can do inspection asap and let us know everything we need to know about it.
- GF asking where Fire Department is getting their fuel. Mayor Weistra responds that it is UFA. GF says about 10 years ago Deputy Mayor Gorzitza and him has a disagreement over fuel tanks given away. GF states that lack of access of fuel for Fire Department in the village is ludicrous. GF still angry that this was given away years ago and isn't rectified to his satisfaction.
- BB wants to see consistency. Says the ones who talk to him say this.
- BB asks if this meeting was posted correctly? Mayor Weistra says no because the meeting was meant to just be WV.
- BB says he wants hometown consistency. Back to attacking Mayor Weistra and the office. Speaking of the change to council meeting times and inaccessibility (1 pm). Mayor Weistra says it was convenient for him and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza. Councillor Tarditi angry that meetings aren't convenient for her.
- Councillor disputes that she was asked to leave from last meeting and that she didn't leave on her own accord.
- BB says we're communists, we're not free, and Barons lacks communication.
- BB says that baseball diamonds are shameful. Money given to Mennonites but no upkeep for ball diamonds.
- WV & SS asking where tax money goes.
- WV arguing that tax money is not going to maintain the town.
- BB says the Town of Coutts has (3) three town men and (1) part time Administrator. Claims that is why he came unglued on the office.
- Mayor Weistra speaking of taxes and how we collect for the village, the province, etc. WV disputing that.
- GF asking what salaries are.
- GF asking who is being paid by grant funding.
- BB saying that if we can get grants for salaries, why can't we do better for bylaw.
- GF asking why there are (4) four people in the office.
- WV yelling why the office is only open (3) three days a week and why are we paying for (4) four people when the office isn't open.
- GF asking why people are making \$80,000 for 19.5 hrs of work.
- BB doesn't think council should choose or sign the CAO contract.
- BB wants someone local as Administrator.
- Most people in agreement that Administrator knows nothing.
- Administrator in Carmangay makes less as per WV.

- WV Speaking of Laurie's experience and work experience.
- Representative of ID (does not live here), asking if Administration should be done away with and folding into the county. Councillor Tarditi asking if dissolution is what they're asking for.
- ID's rep. says yes and that all of this would be dealt with – we're too small and eating up too much with salary (again does not live here)
- Deputy Mayor Gorzitza speaking of prior dissolution study – no benefit to communities that dissolve – using Iron Springs, New Dayton, and Turin as examples. No mowing, no plowing, Fire Department goes away, etc. Deputy Mayor Gorzitza clearing up misconception of county taking over.
- WV arguing that Granum still has their townman so Deputy Mayor's history is null and void.
- BS asking for dissolution study.
- Councillor Tarditi asking for viability study.
- WV explaining viability study.
- GF asking for viability study.
- GF asks Deputy Mayor Gorzitza what largest hamlet in AB is. GF says Fort McMurray and Sherwood Park. GF explaining why Fort McMurray has never upgraded – better money in RM of Wood Buffalo due to oil sands. GF also saying Sherwood Park hasn't upgraded because of better money in county because of refineries revenue.
- GF says County has much better resources. Deputy Mayor Gorzitza saying County doesn't have much to offer us.
- GF interrupting Deputy Mayor Gorzitza, yelling that he is a liar - GF was the one who started the petition for dissolution back when, doesn't believe Mayor Weistra and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza. Says County has the resources we don't.
- Councillor Tarditi adamant that GF is right about County.
- Mayor Weistra stated that they've talked to councillors in the County and they confirm what Deputy Mayor Gorzitza was saying re: services going away.
- Councillor Tarditi states that council will start viability study with Municipal Affairs, then dissolution study, then public consultation.
- GF saying that (14) fourteen-day notice to present to Council is ridiculous. Says it is fine that Mayor Weistra doesn't know the information for this evening.
- GF says that Administrator is giving improper advice.
- WV reiterating that CAO is useless.
- Mayor Weistra called out WV for demanding Administrator not to be at the meeting.
- RT says Administrator is not liked. Says Administrator likes to tell stories to make people go away and not solve the problem.
- Mayor Weistra referred to Nobleford council meetings and the 15 mins prior to meeting being the "nitpicking session".
- Councillor Tarditi says back office should be Mayors chambers and that Mayor Weistra should be here (1) one hour per week to answer questions.
- GF says there should be a question period after council meeting.
- SS says there are positives but more negatives out there.
- SS asking about dust abatement on Noble Street – says she asked Administrator 1st year they lived here, 2nd year Administrator says that a grant was applied for. Mayor Weistra asked if their street was one re-gravelled – Councillor Tarditi says roads weren't done professionally and are garbage.
- SS says \$10,000 grant was not used for roads but instead the office got a new roof with those funds. Mayor Weistra says grant for abatement was \$8,000.
- BS asking about grants and whether they can be reallocated.
- SS asking why abatement hasn't been done on Noble Street.

- RV says we receive a lot of grants which is great but wants to see where the grants are allocated and where the funds are going.
- RV states that she would like to and doesn't mind looking at the financial reports for grant funding. Mayor Weistra explaining auditors' roles.
- RV questioning when grants are received, why isn't the public notified, and if this should not be part of the Administrator's job. Wants explanation of certain lines in the audited financial statement. Mayor Weistra explained the berm and how it was paid out.
- WV says manhole near his property has never been cleaned, even though Administrator says they're cleaned yearly. Says line drains all the way down railway.
- WV says he was using skid steer to pull water out of LS's yard during last big rainfall. Says Administrator didn't care about the water.
- WV says MPE/Drainmaster told him that the sewer line is held together with 3- 5 gal pails.
- RT speaking of his sump pumps and the drainage issues into his property.
- WV says streets are higher than properties.
- RT claims that office laughed off his request to stop the water from coming in.
- RT says the office hasn't responded to his request to have Public Works come look, and that he heard from the grapevine that he was laughed off. Felt he wasn't treated right in the office.
- GF speaking of ditch in front of his home – speaking of how Administrator sent Public Works over to rip out his culvert. Says Public Works dumped the cement in front of his door.
- GF says ditch needs to be graded – claims that neighbour had filled in her ditch years ago. Says village backhoe has torn up the ditch and then damaged his culvert. Says if the ditch is graded then the water will be diverted from RT's.
- WV making comments about the lack of the grader – Mayor Weistra responds then we'll look to hire one out.
- Mayor Weistra speaking of nepotism claim and explained that there was no nepotism.
- WV stating hiring of Assistant Administrator is nepotism, GF was laughing. Mayor Weistra explained the application process, explaining that all applicants were interviewed by Administrator & Deputy Mayor Gorzitza and that the decision was made by both.
- BB asking why we do not hire out someone to hire employees for the village.
- Duncan's rep. asking what kind of protections the village has in place to protect from scams due to nepotism. Says that family members will cover for one another – uses example of senior's home in Lethbridge, and how family members embezzled money from seniors and covered for one another.
- Councillor Tarditi believes that it is a conflict of interest to have the Assistant Administrator in the office because of being related and it is a conflict of interest in the village. Villagers are conflicted, so therefore it is a conflict.
- WV says that Mayor Weistra is “walking up to the gallows”
- Councillor Tarditi says that nepotism must be dealt with and council needs to deal with.
- Mayor Weistra say tourism has been tried but failed with past councils.
- WV interrupts with asking about tiny homes.
- Councillor Tarditi says that people she knows has tried renting RV spots in the campground long term and/or the baseball diamonds for \$750.00/month but was turned away from the office saying that the length of stay is 3 days maximum.
- RT says the same as Councillor Tarditi. Says if they speak out in the office and they leave twice as mad because of Administrator.
- Mayor Weistra reiterating that RCMP were called earlier by someone and asked to attend this meeting by someone and this is unnecessary.
- SS comparing Mayor Weistra to Trudeau (empty promises). Crowd unhappy with this comparison.

- Reno saying this is good communication, but upset that Administrator isn't here to give more "bullshit answers" and he would have liked Administrator to be here. Says he has nothing against the Administrator, but that Administrator needs to actually hear them. Says some people didn't come tonight because they thought Administrator would be here.
- Councillor Tarditi states many people feel that bylaw is being used as a weapon against them.
- Mayor Weistra commenting on bylaw report and how Bylaw Office hasn't handed in a current report yet.
- ST asking how many registered vehicles he can have on his property. Ed says it doesn't matter, but they have to be registered.
- Mayor Weistra spoke of BB's tent trailer on boulevard and how long it can be there as per Traffic Safety Act – Councillor Tarditi stating it is 24 hrs.
- BB says that he wants common sense in the village.
- BB says he wanted welcome wagon, got bylaw enforcement instead.
- Mayor Weistra says RT said it best – we need more compassion in the village.
- WV agreeing that he wasn't welcomed by council.
- BB suggesting immediately that council deal with bylaw the way Town of Coutts does. Says they assess the issue with council first, before sending bylaw officer over.
- BB demands a letter of discipline against Administrator re: Duncan's fines. States that is intimidation, bullying and harassment.
- BB says Administrator got \$4500.00 bonus last year as per financial docs.
- SS states this is put in as a bonus on financial statements.
- WV says council took a pay cut in the exact same amount as the \$4500.00 bonus for Administrator.
- Susan says communication needs to be much better – residents need to be better informed; council needs to be better informed so the residents can know what is happening.
- Councillor Tarditi says village needs to be heard.
- WV saying, "our tax dollars pay your wage".
- BB & GF say question period is needed.
- RT says Mayor needs to take over back office and put Administrator in smaller office. Mayor needs to be accessible.
- WA says Mayor Weistra should be here (1) one hr per week or every (2) two weeks.
- GF complaining of the Canadian flag in tatters again.
- RT & GF state the MLA and MP will provide flags free. Councillor Tarditi asking for replacement.
- Mayor Weistra stated that MLA Schow will have meeting with Mayor Weistra finally next year.
- BS asking where we go from here – will minutes be available for people. How long until people have answers.
- WV proposes that in (2) two weeks we reconvene and revisit things for answers. Mayor Weistra and Deputy Mayor Gorzitza agree.
- BB demanding council meetings be moved back to 6:00 pm and says he does not want to see a 1:00 pm meeting ever again.
- RT thanking council for listening to residents. Asking if we can have a town hall every few months, etc. as this was positive.
- RV says that not everyone is expecting answers immediately, but that tasks should be assigned to individuals to research.
- Mayor Weistra thinking more of a report/checklist to show people that things are being handled.
- WV says we should do this every (2) two weeks – most in attendance are opposed.
- RV says some report is better than no report.

- BS asking if minutes will be posted online – Councillor Tarditi speaking of when minutes will be ratified (next tentative Council meeting - Dec 8th).

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm

Mayor

Assistant Administrator