

**ADOPTED MINUTES
OF THE FOOTHILLS COUNTY AND TOWN OF OKOTOKS
INTERMUNICIPAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON JANUARY 25, 2022
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

PRESENT	<u>Foothills County</u> Reeve Delilah Miller Councillor R.D. McHugh Deputy Reeve Rob Siewert	<u>Town of Okotoks</u> Mayor Tanya Thorn (until 1:58 p.m.) Councillor Ken Heemeryck Councillor Brent Robinson (arrived at 1:03 p.m.) Councillor Rachel Swendseid (alternate)
STAFF PRESENT	Harry Riva Cambrin, Municipal Manager Ryan Payne, Chief Administrative Officer Heather Hemingway, Director of Planning Jeff Edgington, Manager of Infrastructure Julie McLean, Senior Planner Sherri Barrett, Legislative Services Manager Felicia Fairweather, Legislative Services	Elaine Vincent, Chief Administrative Officer Ralph Ettenauer, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Greene, Community Growth, Investment, & Sustainability Director Chris Radford, Operations & Utilities Director Angela Whitney, Corporate Services Director Janette Messer, Community Health & Safety Acting Director Jeremy Huet, Community Development & Engineering Manager Michelle Grenwich, Planner Janice Storch, Legislative Services Administrator
GUESTS:	Angela Alambets Project Manager, Colliers Project Leaders Councillor Suzanne Oel (Foothills - Alternate) Councillor Don Waldorf (Foothills) Councillor Barb Castell (Foothills)	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Delilah Miller, Foothills County Reeve, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: By Mayor Thorn that the January 25, 2022, agenda for the Intermunicipal Committee Meeting be adopted as amended to re-order item 4.3 – Intermunicipal Transportation as the first 'Business' item.

Carried Unanimously

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Intermunicipal Committee – December 14, 2021

MOTION: By Deputy Reeve Siewert that the minutes of the Intermunicipal Committee Meeting held December 14, 2021, be adopted as presented.

Carried Unanimously

4. BUSINESS

Councillor Swendseid left the position as a voting member of the Committee at 1:03 p.m.

Councillor Robinson joined the meeting at 1:03 pm.

4.3 Intermunicipal Transportation

Manager Huet provided an historical overview of the proposed median closures on Highway 2, including information on the 2019-2020 South and East Calgary Regional Transportation Study; Alberta Transportation's reviews in 2019 of intersections at 306, 338 and 370 Avenues and their recommendation for closure of the medians; Okotoks' desire to explore interim options to keep the intersection at 338 Avenue open with reduced accesses; and the subsequent August 2020 supplemental review which found that reduced access options were not viable as they did not alleviate the safety concerns.

Mr. Huet also provided an overview of the letters sent by Foothills County and the Town of Okotoks to the Minister of Transportation in the summer of 2020 regarding the median closures and requests, as well as the Minister's response letter. He noted that Foothills County and Okotoks then proceeded to jointly undertake an Intermunicipal Transportation Analysis to better understand the impact of the median closures and explained the key findings of the analysis.

Mr. Huet informed the Committee that Alberta Transportation had recently notified both administrations that a safety review of the Highway 2/2A interchange and the transitional usage of 306 Avenue as the "High Load Corridor" is being completed and explained that the current/proposed High Load Corridor network is used to accommodate over-size and over-weight loads. The Highway 552 bridge replacement and intersection signage are current barriers of using Highway 552 as the future High Load Corridor. Closures of 306 Avenue will require special or alternative transitional accommodations.

In conclusion, both municipalities will continue discussions with Alberta Transportation on specifics related to the potential median closures; as funding has not been secured for the closures the timing of the closures is not known.

Manager Edgington informed the Committee that he has been involved in the conversations with Alberta Transportation regarding the High Load Corridor and 306 Avenue, and noted options were provided for controlling access onto 306 Avenue, but no options involved removing access to 306 Avenue. Mayor Thorn inquired why 306 Avenue is being proposed as the High Load Corridor. Mr. Edgington confirmed that 306 is currently the Provincial High Load Corridor to provide access around the Okotoks interchange as it has a height restriction.

Councillor McHugh indicated that administration is still waiting for reports from Alberta Transportation for Highway 2 at 338 Avenue and the Highway 552 interchange but suggested it may be possible to look at placing dedicated lanes at 338 Avenue as an interim measure which could reduce accidents by 25%. In his opinion, this option could reduce vehicles congestion in the median, but this was not covered in the traffic study. Mr. Edgington explained that the option that was studied included a protected left turn off 338 Avenue heading northbound onto Highway 2 and Councillor McHugh is suggesting that a potential option is to close off the western most northbound lane which would essentially be the same thing. The Town of Okotoks traffic study shows this could reduce accidents by 25%. This option was provided by Okotoks to Alberta Transportation and was denied but could be presented again to Alberta Transportation as a joint effort, if the Committee felt that was appropriate. Mr. Huet provided background information that Okotoks was looking to preserve interim options prior to the interchange being constructed. Follow up discussion on that particular option indicated that, although it is a safer option, it is considerably over the operating capacity of what the road is rated. The option with the east lane closure also has operational capacity issues and therefore the recommendation was for the full median closure at 338 Avenue prior to the interchange being constructed.

Deputy Reeve Siewert inquired that if the dedicated lane at 338 Avenue were to proceed, would there be potential for an initial period of reduced safety due to driver confusion regarding new infrastructure, and further, whether or not that reduced safety period is incorporated in the 25% decreased accident rate found in the study. Mr. Edgington explained that the period of reduced safety would not be included within the 25% increased safety number found in the study, as the 25% is an overall number. Warnings and signage of the new infrastructure would be provided to decrease driver confusion.

Reeve Miller indicated that a concern with any of the median closures, particularly 306 Avenue and 2A, is the potential for increased pressure on other roadways. Reeve Miller noted it would be safer and would alleviate some concerns if traffic lights were placed at 306 Avenue and 2A, and requested the Committee's feedback on the installation of lights in that location. Deputy Reeve

Siewert inquired as to when Alberta Transportation will be informing the Municipalities of their decision on traffic lights at that intersection. Reeve Miller stated Alberta Transportation was going to review the study and provide recommendations within the next few months. Mr. Edgington confirmed the timeline and noted the 338 Avenue interchange review and recommendations are expected in December 2022. Mayor Thorn noted that she is not opposed to having discussions on the traffic lights at the 306 Avenue interchange and noted that administration is still waiting on the safety review on Highway 552, and the functional study for the 338 Avenue interchange. This will give a full picture of the impacts and the data from those reviews will be needed prior to making decisions. Councillor Heemeryck was in agreeance with Mayors Thorn's comments on waiting for the safety review on Highway 552, and the functional study for the 338 Avenue interchange prior to making decisions.

Councillor Robinson inquired if it was the Committee's intention to request that Alberta Transportation (AT) wait on the other median closures until the construction of the interchange at 338 Avenue, as the review and recommendations are only expected to be provided by December 2022 and it will be years before the interchange is constructed. Mayor Thorn responded that she believes this is the correct solution and specified the proposed motion says, 'full closure' and that median closure is still an option. Councillor McHugh explained that the interchange is extremely important and while administration is waiting on the safety review on Highway 552 intersection and the review of 338 Avenue interchange, he doesn't believe any action should be made until those reviews are received.

Councillor Robinson inquired about the volume of requests given to Alberta Transportation and indicated a concern of how Alberta Transportation would prioritize if additional requests were included. Councillor Heemeryck agreed that he would like to see Alberta Transportation use their time as efficiently as possible and focus on the most important goal being the overpass. Mr. Huet confirmed that both Councils have put in a request for the median closures and Alberta Transportation requires a budget and does have capacity constraints.

Reeve Miller requested that administration inquire with Alberta Transportation as to when the Highway 2A/Highway 2 Interchange Safety Study review can be expected and the possibility of having it by the next Committee meeting.

MOTION: By Deputy Reeve Siewert that the Foothills County / Town of Okotoks Intermunicipal Committee Intermunicipal Transportation Update be received as information.

Carried Unanimously

4.1 Foothills / Okotoks Regional Water Project Update

Angela Alambets, Project Manager with Collier Project Leaders, provided an update on the Foothills / Okotoks Regional Water Project.

The update included critical activities that require completion within the next two months to keep the project progressing on schedule. Items to be completed under the Governance portion are: the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) extension; grant confirmation; and the finance planning and budget approval for the 2022-2023 technical workplan.

Under the Technical portion, Colliers Project Leaders and Urban Systems are working together on finalizing the 2022/2023 workplan for any remaining design work. This includes reservoir water quality modeling study completion, reservoir phase 2 geotechnical investigation completion, pump station design scale-back (reducing the size of the pump station from its original design), procurement methodology, tender preparation and potential issuance of the tender.

Under the Land Acquisition and Consent portion, Foothills County's consent is needed for Okotoks (jointly or solely) to procure and use rights of way for the pipeline. The pipeline alignment land acquisition and consent for environmental surveys needs to be complete. In order to submit the conservation and reclamation plan the environmental surveys need to be complete for the full alignment. Lastly, intake lands consent is required for construction approvals and then that land can be acquired.

Under the Regulatory portion, the *Water Act* intake and construction approvals will likely be submitted by the end of January 2022 but are dependent on the landowner's consent. Okotoks license transfers will also be submitted at the end of January 2022. Lastly, the Pipeline EPEA Approval Application will be submitted in the summer 2022 and is dependent on the completion of the conservation and reclamation plan. In order for the survey to be complete, there needs to be no snow cover and this will be done once the snow is clear.

Mayor Thorn inquired if there was any other direction that the Committee needed to provide today other than consideration of the Regional Water Project MOU extension. Mr. Huet confirmed that all that is needed today is the extension of the MOU; other items requiring Committee input will be coming forward at a future Intermunicipal Committee Meeting.

Reeve Miller inquired as to what the Okotoks license transfer would entail and what the timeline is. Mr. Huet explained that Okotoks currently has a license transfer submitted to transfer to the new intake and there is another ~100 acres a developer is looking to transfer to the Town of Okotoks. Okotoks is looking to bring forward all public notices for this project at the same time with the exception of the conservation and reclamation plan. The original license applications were

submitted to Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) over 1-year ago, and Okotoks is hopeful that the transfers will be approved soon.

Reeve Miller requested an update on the land acquisition and timeline. Mr. Huet provided information including the applications on the *Water Act*, what consents are still needed, and that more right of ways and temporary workspaces will be required and will need to be brought forward to Foothills County and the Intermunicipal Committee for approval.

Councillor Robinson inquired if there is any information known to date that would make it unlikely that the necessary regulatory approvals would not be able to be obtained within the two-year window proposed. Mr. Huet noted he has been in contact with AEP and that AEP is supportive of this project and has not indicated any challenges. Administration will continue to work with them.

Deputy Reeve Siewert requested more information about the pump station design scale-back. Mr. Huet explained that the intent is to build the pump station with a capacity for a shorter time frame and in the future capacity may be phased in as required. If increased capacity is needed, additional pumps can be added.

MOTION: By Mayor Thorn that the Foothills / Okotoks Regional Water Project Update be received as information.

Carried Unanimously

Mayor Thorn left the meeting at 1:58 pm.

Councillor Swendseid assumed the position as a voting member on the Committee at 1:58 pm.

4.2 Regional Water Project Memorandum of Understanding

CAO Vincent advised the Committee that both CAO Payne and herself had a discussion on the extension of the Regional Water Project Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and recognized that it expired at the end of December 2021. CAO Vincent explained that there are different options for MOU time extensions and suggested that trying to align the extension timeline with the regulatory approvals would be appropriate however keeping the time extension shorter would foster a sense of urgency that is desirable. CAO Vincent noted the recommendation from both administrations would be a two-year extension of the existing MOU.

CAO Payne concurred with CAO Vincent and added that an additional extension could be approved if needed. This extension could signal to the province that the two municipalities are still collaborating on a subregional solution and should funding becomes available it may indicate to the Province that the Partners continue to work together beyond the original term.

Councillor McHugh expressed concerns regarding breaking ground without knowing where the funding is coming from, as currently work has been completed that is in contravention of the MOU and noted that in order for Foothills County to proceed it is critical to obtain grant funding. It is important to stay within the scope and understanding of this memorandum. Reeve Miller noted there is a clause within the MOU stating the municipalities have the option to self-fund and that option could be looked at in a broader conversation.

Deputy Reeve Siewert inquired if the map (schedule "A") within the MOU is still something the Town supports. CAO Vincent responded explaining that the map represents what was contemplated when the MOU was first negotiated in August of 2020, the layout and vision of the pipeline has since shifted and there have been conversations regarding the differing priorities of Foothills County and Okotoks. Having the relationship and keeping the conversations going is critical. CAO Vincent explained that timing and funding sources are critical pieces of the project that are anticipated to come together within the next 6 months, so that informed decisions can be made. CAO Vincent indicated that Okotoks Town Council would like to continue the conversation to build something that works for both municipalities moving forward.

Councillor Robinson indicated that he believes that the work that has been completed fits within the scope of schedule "A" and "B" of the MOU. He recognized that the schedule "A" differs from what has occurred thus far but does not believe the spirit of what was proposed in the MOU is materially different and a good way to address any comments or concerns is working together, which is of benefit to both communities.

MOTION: By Councillor Robinson that the Intermunicipal Committee recommend to both Councils, a two-year extension of the existing Regional Water Project Memorandum of Understanding.
Carried Unanimously

4.4 Big Rock Erratic/ UNESCO Site Update

Reeve Miller provided a verbal update on the Big Rock Erratic/UNESCO Site, indicating that during the investigation of potentially having the Big Rock Erratic dedicated as a UNESCO Site, it was found that the deadline for submitting the request was in 2021. UNESCO Sites are only designated every 10 years. The procedure for this application is very costly and includes submitting a request that goes before the UNESCO Committee for a decision, and they will respond back if they are interested in proceeding with dedicating the location as a UNESCO Site.

A discussion took place, and it was suggested that a future Council may investigate this opportunity further down the road and that this could be a potential project that the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board may be able to take on.

MOTION: By Councillor Swenseid that the Big Rock Erratic/UNESCO Site Update be received as information.

Carried Unanimously

5. CLOSED SESSION

None

6. MOTION(S) ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

None

7. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Intermunicipal Committee will be Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Councillor Robinson that the January 25, 2022, Intermunicipal Committee Meeting adjourn at 2:19 p.m.

Carried Unanimously