

**HIGHWAY 14 REGIONAL WATER SERVICES COMMISSION**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 1:00 p.m**  
**Ryley, Alberta**

**PRESENT:**

**COMMISSION members PRESENT at commencement:**

**Larry Tiedemann , Town of Tofield**  
**Norm Martineau, Town of Tofield (Alternate)**  
**Dale Pederson, Beaver County**  
**Travis Schiewe, Village of Holden (by Zoom)**  
**Sheldon Reid, Village of Ryley**

**COMMISSION member absent at commencement:**

**Town of Viking, no representative appointed**

**ADMINISTRATION members PRESENT at commencement:**

**Michael Bolch, CAO**  
**Bev Hutton, Records Coordinator**  
**Grant Kipling, Operations Manager**  
**Crystal Yeske, Office Manager**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Tiedemann called the Regular meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:**

6.1 COVID-19 Restrictions

**22-62 MOVED by CM Schiewe that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission to accept the agenda as amended.**

**CARRIED**

**3. MINUTES:**

3.1 Minutes of the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission Regular Meeting held June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.

**22-63 MOVED by CM Reid that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 as presented.**

**CARRIED**

**4. FINANCIALS:**

4.1 Monthly Bank Reconciliation Statement- June 30<sup>th</sup> & July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**22-64 MOVED by CM Pederson that the Monthly Bank Reconciliation for June 30<sup>th</sup> & July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 be adopted for information as presented.**

**CARRIED**

4.2 Quarterly Budget Report- July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

**22-65 MOVED by CM Pederson that the Quarterly Budget Report for July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 be adopted for information as presented.**

**CARRIED**

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

No unfinished business.

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

6.1 Covid-19 Restriction

**22-66 MOVED by CM Schiewe that the vaccination requirements be removed and the office be open to the general public.**

**CARRIED**

**7. REPORTS:**

7.1 CAO Report

**22-67 MOVED by CM Reid that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission to accept the CAO Report, documenting his report in the minutes and discuss further issues into closed session.**

**CARRIED**

The Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission board hired me for my extensive years of proven, successful, expertise in effectively operating water systems across Western Canada, and my relevant education and experience in public administration. I have worked effectively with boards to improve water utilities, operations, and quality, and make them sustainable well into the future. The board had some high goals to become sustainable by making improvements in the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission utility that will last long into the future. Specifically, by reducing its carbon footprint, establishing a maintainable asset management plan, and meeting the needs of growth with the ever-growing water insecurity and global warming effects. We have already been able to prepare an approved balanced budget that reduced spending and found areas of improvement and efficiencies. We will continue the same diligence into the future to control costs toward becoming sustainable. Our financial auditors are very impressed with the direction this board has taken. We have established plans for reducing costs, finding efficiencies, improving our operations, improving our safety, and developing plans well into the future that will see the commissions continued success. The board has proposed developing a plan to immediately start reducing some of our carbon footprint by getting rid of most of our inefficient gasoline guzzling fleet and replacing them with extremely high-efficiency vehicles. Some of these vehicles use less than one quarter of the fuel of the past vehicles. We have also traded some of our gasoline powered lawn maintenance equipment for electric equipment. Besides using less fuel, the new equipment requires much less costly maintenance. The board realized that water and transmission rates throughout the region were complicated and led to some customers and municipalities paying more than their fair share. Administration, along with our auditors have taken this as one of the projects to complete within the first couple of years. We are working to un-complicate the rates so everyone pays the same rate for water consumed. As customers use more water, they will pay a higher rate to alleviate the cost customers using less water would have paid in the past. This way the user pays. All municipalities will pay the same rate as other municipalities within the commission. The board was also concerned that the commission is not eligible for the same government grants and funding as municipalities are. The board realized that if the municipalities owned their own infrastructure and the commission operated the systems as per usual, that the municipalities would be eligible for greater amounts of funding at greatly increased amounts of granting up to 90%.

This is a huge advantage for municipalities. The board has directed administration to move forward quickly as the infrastructure deficit continues to grow. As franchise contracts come to maturity, administration is working to give the infrastructure back to the municipalities at their current depreciated market value. The commission is also offering to operate, maintain, and collect billing at cost. This will allow the municipalities to transition to ownership with much more ease and success. The municipalities will then be eligible for a wider range of grants and funding that is not available to the commission. This would greatly reduce the cost of infrastructure upgrades for the municipality thus decreasing the tax load. The commission and BESC have recently resolved issues affecting both parties. BESC and the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission have had several very successful meetings this summer and have developed a communications plan that will assist all of us in providing Water and Fire services to the residents of Beaver County. BESC and Beaver County have both expressed interest in improving fire protection to residents in rural areas. The Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission has informed both parties that we are interested in their plans and will work to accommodate them when possible. Since the current Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission building has been occupied staff have complained about sore throats, nausea, and other ailments. In 2020 there were issues with water condensing inside the building and moisture coming up thru the floor, also cracks were noticed in the walls and doors stopped fitting. In 2021 Alberta OHS was consulted to investigate the office. Our insurance company brought in several specialist including air quality engineers, and structural engineers. It was discovered that the building was constructed poorly on unsuitable soil. Other tests showed water was wicking through the foundation and the steel skin of the building leaked and was prone to excessive condensation. Air quality tests showed that there was excess quantities of mold, mildew and fungi present in the office. Our insurance informed us that none of these issues would be covered by our insurance, and that the cost to remedy the situation would be more than the cost to build new. Administration immediately implemented procedures to limit the effects of these conditions while looking for solutions. The board directed staff to look for alternate locations for the office. We looked at several buildings that would meet our needs both as rentals and purchase. After several months of disappointment, we went back to the original site in Ryley and determined it would be the most cost effective and best location as it is only a block away from the current building.

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The board directed us to purchase the building and renovate it to house the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission operations. We are currently investigating the building, developing designs, and should be going to public tender this month. The new building will be a better location for all as it is on a main street. It will be more secure, and the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission is adding a 20-litre bottle fill station to the building for customers to fill their own water bottles. Once renovated, this building and location should be acceptable for the next 30 years or more. Staffing has improved greatly to facilitate the demands of the community. We have moved to a longer work week to allow customers more time to access our services while decreasing staff time. This is an efficiency that allows staff to work longer days, but to have a 4-day work week. Shifts ensure that we have more coverage when needed. We have replaced our safety consultant with one that is recognized across Canada for their innovations. We now have an in-house safety coordinator that in a very short time has had all staff certified to the required level to receive our SECOR designation, and we are saving \$20,000 per year. All current operations staff are in some level of training towards achieving their level 2 AWWOA certification in Water Transmission. The board has put out to administration to utilize all efforts to make the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission sustainable and affordable into the future. Administration has used the resources available to water commissions in Canada and is striving to lead the way in innovative methods to improve our service, making it sustainable and affordable into plan that would guide the commission well into the future. Over the past many years several of the boards have tried without success to develop a strategic plan that would guide the commission well into the future. Others have tried to have reports prepared on the water system as well as the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission. All the reports have fallen short of meeting their objectives, with the last engineering report not even being submitted in a final format because it was so convoluted. All the previous reports were too short-sited and just rehashed outdated ideas that could not be implemented for our model. Administration has conducted an exhaustive search last year to find the most qualified engineering company to help us develop an outline suitable for our needs for at least the next 50 years. M2 engineering has been retained for their expertise in water transmission lines and for their innovative and productive, positive, improvements in this area.

We are working with M2 to develop an outline specific to the needs of Beaver County and the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission. M2 is also working to find relative funding for this project and other projects identified by the board. As plans proceed, and we look further into the future of the commission we are able to plan for changes that are coming rather than to react as they occur. We have many plans in the works that will see the commission become sustainable and also meet all economic development plans well into the future. We will continue to work with BESC to enhance their firefighting capabilities and we will assist municipalities with their infrastructure needs and operations. The Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission is looking forward to offering the safest water available to its customers at sustainable rates well into the future.

7.2 Operations Manager – Verbal Report

**22-68 MOVED by CM Pederson that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission to accept the operation's Manager report for information.**

**CARRIED**

7.3 Commission Report-Verbal

CM Schiewe, email vaccination requirements

Chairman Tiedemann calls a break at 1:50 p.m.

Chairman Tiedemann reconvene the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

**8. CLOSED SESSION:**

**22-69 MOVED by CM Reid that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission go into Closed Session at 2:05 p.m.**

**CARRIED**

**22-70 MOVED by CM Reid that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission come out of closed session at 2:35 p.m.**

**CARRIED**

**22-71 MOVED by CM Pederson that the Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission accept the CAO report.**


**CARRIED**


Next scheduled meeting is September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**22-72 MOVED** by Chairman Tiedemann to adjourn the regular meeting at 2:44 p.m.

**CARRIED**

  
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Chairman

  
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CAO