

RM 220 NEWSLETTER

April 2020

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HIGHLIGHTS

Spring Road Weight Restriction

RM 220 will be following the Dept. of Highways posting of the 2020 Spring road weight restrictions. These restrictions apply to all roads in the RM, and it is anticipated they will last until May. See our website for more info.

RM Shop

We are in the process of planning to build a new shop. The RM has been renting a shop located in RM 219 for a cost of about \$30,000 annually since 2018. More to follow soon.

New Website

We are getting close to rolling out a new website that will be user-friendly and easier to manage in-house. This website should improve RM communications. Watch for it.

RM Financial Accounts Moved to New Financial Institution

After a review of the RM's business banking needs, proposals were requested from various institutions. As a result, the new arrangements will maximize revenue, minimize costs, and improve operations.

Water Wells

Council realizes the need for more access to water in the RM. Another water well along with an underground water storage tank with a fast-fill pump for firefighting support, is being investigated.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC UPDATE

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Gov't of Saskatchewan is limiting the size of public and private gatherings to a maximum of ten people. The public health orders are available at saskatchewan.ca/COVID19.

Due to the pandemic and to adhere to the preventative measures requested by the provincial government and health authorities, our municipal office will be closed to the public until further notice. Also, recall of seasonal employees has been suspended to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transfer to ensure that we safely continue to provide critical services to the community. RM permanent staff are still working and should you have any questions or concerns, please call us at (306) 725-3230 or email us at rm220general@rm220.ca.

Council and RM administration will continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and will post updates regarding the office closure and RM operations on our website.

During this time we ask that you keep in touch and look out for your friends and neighbours, especially the elderly.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

OCP (OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN) AND ZONING BYLAW

The draft OCP and Zoning bylaw were submitted to Community Planning last September for approval after years of review and public consultation. However, after critical examination, they were returned to the RM by the Government in December requesting a variety of changes.

After further assessment and revision by Council, our municipal planner, and the contractor who authored the original drafts, the required public hearing was held, and the two documents were resubmitted to Community Planning in March.

On approval, RM administration will contact all ratepayers waiting for this matter to be concluded so that they can continue with their plans.

2020 RM BUDGET

Preparation of the 2020 RM budget started last fall, and all significant expenses have been identified. The final budget is expected to be completed this month after Council has had time to review the soon-to-be delivered 2019 audited financial statements.

2020 TAXES

The RM assessment roll is nearing completion, but the usual public viewing opportunity must be modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A searchable electronic version of the assessment roll will be available on the RM website allowing ratepayers the ability to view their property assessment. Other options include receiving copies of your assessment by mail or reviewing your assessment using the SAMAView available on the SAMA website.

If you believe there to be errors or omissions in your assessment, you can file an appeal to the Board of Revision. There is a document available from the RM office by request concerning the assessment appeal process. Also, if you received an assessment notice this year, it means that some type of development took place on your property last year.

After the appeal period expires, tax notices will be sent out. We are hoping that this takes place by July so that appropriate early payment discounts can be applied. Contact the RM office if you have any questions related to assessment or taxes.

HAMLET OF SUN DALE

Last October an updated water and sewer rate application for the unorganized Hamlet of Sun Dale was resubmitted to the SMB (Saskatchewan Municipal Board). In November, rate approval was provided for six months, with the per month rates for water being \$265 and sewer being \$220. Council recently approved the submission of the next rate period application to SMB using the same cost recovery rates.

The cost of sewage disposal was reduced by 32% over previous years due to the RM entering into a tendered contract for the large volume hauling of wastewater from the Sun Dale water plant and other properties in Sun Dale. The RM is also exploring other opportunities to further reduce the Sun Dale utility operational costs and possibly create a utility board.

FIRE SERVICE AGREEMENTS

January 1st, a new agreement for fire and rescue services was executed with the Town of Strasbourg. This new agreement included the sale of the significant assets co-owned by the RM and Strasbourg back to the town. Strasbourg is now the sole owner of the SDFRD (Strasbourg & District Fire & Rescue Dept). RM 220 will no longer contribute any capital or operating funds directly. Our contracted rates for fire and rescue services are based on RM property assessments.

For all properties located north of the Foster Dale road, the SDFRD call-out fees for **FIRE** calls will be \$5000. An additional \$1500 per hour fee will be charged after the first three hours of service, and an extra \$1500 cost plus \$5/100 gallon water fee will be charged should the SDFRD have to return to Strasbourg to refill their water tanker. The Village of Siltion Fire Department provides **FIRE** services to all properties located south of the Foster Dale road at a call-out rate of \$3000. Siltion FD does not provide rescue services.

For all properties in the RM, the SDFRD call-out fees for **RESCUE** calls will be \$5000 with an additional \$1500 per hour after the first three hours of service. SGI usually covers call-out fees for rescue services on roads. Please check your insurance policy to ensure adequate coverage for call-out fees on your RM 220 property.

FORENSIC AUDITS

The financial and management audits which were recommended by the Government Inspector's Report in 2018 and then ordered by the Minister of Govt. Relations were completed January 6th 2020. The report from MNP is available to the public. Council has been working diligently on ratepayers' behalf to mitigate and resolve all issues identified by the audits.

APAS MEMBERSHIP

RM 220 is now a full member of APAS (Agricultural Producers Assoc. of Sask.) which has been the voice of Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers since 2000. APAS is Saskatchewan's only democratically elected, producer-run, non-partisan, grassroots, general farm organization. Check our new website for more information on APAS and about member benefits.