

WASTEWATER UPDATE NOVEMBER, 2017

COUNCIL NOW HAS A PLAN TO GET YOU CONNECTED!

Your previous Council worked hard to develop the wastewater system from the Mulhurst lagoon, down highway #13, along range road 11 and through the community to each property line. The final stage of home connections was left to the current Council. After two months of consultation Council approved a plan on November 14. In developing that plan, Council talked to residents, met with engineers, lawyers, finance personnel and construction companies to examine technical, human, legal and financial issues. Council then issued a Request for Proposal and received estimates from three operators. In summary, the plan focuses on incentives rather than compulsion, will pay most of the costs through grant support and loans, will oversee all of the logistics and will maintain the system into the future. While the plan still requires the passing of several bylaws including a borrowing by-law, all of the details have been agreed upon and are now being finalized. The following principles served as the basis of the Crystal Springs strategy.

- Environmental and health issues were considered primary
- Participation would be encouraged through incentives and disincentives rather than legislation
- Understanding that a **system** is interdependent in both construction and maintenance
- Reducing cost through competitive bids and bulk purchases
- Minimizing resident complexities in both construction and maintenance
- Reducing resident direct costs and providing financial support where viable and desirable
- Ensuring fairness and equity in municipal support.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO RESIDENTS IN SPECIFIC TERMS?

- You will be contacted, or you may contact **Kim at THS Septic Phone 403-844-2559 or thsseptic@gmail.com in early 2018** in order to arrange inspection of your tank and property. They will provide you with a specific quote to complete all aspects of the wastewater installation. *THS Septic* from Rocky Mountain House was selected from companies pre-approved by engineers and invited to bid. This large well resourced company with superb references will serve the entire community. (Other municipalities have experienced inconsistent quality with multiple contractors and Crystal Springs homeowners will be required to use the approved contractor in order to be eligible for grants and loans and to avoid the cost of inspections and permits.)
- The municipality will provide **support** to cover the \$4500 cost of the pump and peripherals. The municipality will also attempt to amortize an additional \$3500 per household to be repaid at a published rate of 3.2% over 20 years, for a monthly cost of about \$20.00. (Our legislated "credit limit" will not allow us to borrow more without ministerial approval.) The cost of improvements for each property will vary - new tanks, pipe and conduit length and landscaping are examples - but the average total price has been costed at \$10,600. The difference between the **support** – and the amortized funding - if requested - will be paid directly to the contractor by the homeowner.
- Future maintenance and repair of the pump and system (except electricity costs) will be managed and paid for by the municipality through a monthly utility charge of about \$10.00, added to the current sewage fee of \$20 - for a total monthly fee of \$30.00 - or \$50 if the \$3500 amortized funding is chosen. Council is now working with neighbouring villages in order to provide qualified maintenance and emergency service 24/7.
- Resident participation is voluntary, however connection requests after April 15th 2018 may not be subsidized, will require a specific application to Council and will be dependent upon the availability of funds. **Residents who decide not to proceed** after a property assessment and quote or who **opt out** of the plan from the outset, will be required to **complete a tank inspection** from a Council approved list of certified tank installers before April 15th 2018 and every second year thereafter at the homeowner's expense. There will also be a "heavy truck **levy**" on all unconnected properties after road reconstruction.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND.

Through grants and savings your previous Council completed the lagoon updates and line to the Village at a shared cost to Crystal Springs of \$114,000. The line from the Village to Crystal Springs will be completed by the County by Spring. The line down Crystal Springs with the connecting lines and a valve stopping at each property line is being completed this Fall at a cost of \$1,500,000 on a budget of \$1,650,000. (A few residents have paid to carry the line from the valve through to their tanks.) Through the foresight and conscientious work of several previous Council's we have a grant surplus of \$269,000 and a wastewater reserve of \$369,000 to help defray the cost of residential connections. **NOTE: There was never a supplementary wastewater tax. What you see on your tax form as a "sewage fee" is the operating charges paid in all villages for sewage treatment. In summary, all capital reserves have come from budgeted resources and surpluses.**

WHAT ARE THE OTHER VILLAGES DOING?

Each summer village has taken a slightly different approach to local connections. Viola has compulsory connections and is funded through taxation (the County can fund as a “local improvement”– we cannot.) Norris obtained a ministerial exemption to borrow beyond their credit limit. Grandview is compulsory and has an “estate” to cover most of the costs and Poplar Bay has been allowed to operate by “local improvement” rules because of other property in the municipality. Ma-Me-O has voluntary connections with no financial support.

IS THERE MORE HELP FOR SENIORS ON A FIXED INCOME?

Seniors on fixed income may be able to receive government “special assistance” or obtain loans for “costs associated with remaining in your home” through the “**seniors home adaptation program.**” Loans do not need to be repaid until the home is sold. Search the internet for seniors-housing.alberta.ca for “Information for Seniors.”

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

If your questions are about any aspect of the installation contact Kim at THS Septic. If questions are related to municipal policies contact any member of Council.