

CAO's REPORT

October 22, 2019

1. The Province of Alberta is currently reviewing funding model for policing in the province, which includes the proposed change to include rural and small urban municipalities contributions to policing. The Province solicited input from municipalities via webinars and survey this Fall. Following participation the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) conference call on September 23, 2019, Council also indicated the desire to submit a letter to the Minister of Justice and Solicitor General to indicate Clearwater County's support for RMA's written submission dated October 15, 2019 in response to the Police Costing Model Engagement.

The attached letter was signed by the Reeve and sent to Minister Schweitzer and included Clearwater County's situational position and recommendations for ministerial consideration.

2. 2020 Budget Discussions takes place December 11, 12, 13. A Special Meeting of Council to approve the 2020 Budget is scheduled for December 17 at 1:00 pm.
3. Economic Development Update:
 - The Economic Development Officer will attend the Economic Developers of Alberta Ministers Dinner and the Travel Alberta industry Conference.
 - The Next Tourism Business Forum is planned for Thursday, November 7, at the Rocky Mountain House Museum. The Poster has been included. The new tourism map and brochure for David Thompson Country will be rolled out at the Forum.
 - The Central Alberta Tourism Alliance is holding a "Big Ideas" workshop regarding trail usage, development and promotion in Central Alberta.
 - The EDO continues the business visitation program learning about local companies, their industries, and their obstacles and opportunities. This information helps determine some of the actions needed to implement the Economic Development Strategy.
 - The Community Profile is being reviewed and will be posted on the Clearwater County website.

Upcoming Events

November 5 – Council's Regular Meeting
November 7 – 'Talking Rural Crime Tour' – Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
November 7 – David Thompson Tourism Business Forum
November 11 – Remembrance Day (Clearwater County Offices Closed)
November 12 to 15 – Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) Fall Convention
November 20 – CAEP Fall General Meeting
November 23 – Parade of Lights
November 29 – Nordegg Open House
December 2 to 3 – Munis 101 Course
December 4 to 6 – Budget Discussions
December 6 – Annual Town/County Christmas Party
December 6 – Village of Caroline Christmas Light Up
December 11 – Central AB Mayors' & Reeves' Meeting
December 11 to 13 – 2020 Budget Discussions
December 17 – Special Meeting of Council to approve 2020 Budget
December 24 to 26 – Christmas (Clearwater County Offices Closed)



October 15, 2019

Honourable Doug Schweitzer, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Deputy House Leader
Office of the Minister
Justice and Solicitor General
424 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

ministryofjustice@gov.ab.ca

RE: Police Costing Model Engagement

On behalf of Clearwater County Council, thank you for the opportunities to provide input into the Province's plans for future *Police Costing Model*, via webinar and surveys this fall, although we are concerned with the short consultation period. Our Council felt that it was also important to send this letter to indicate our support for the Rural Municipalities of Alberta's (RMA) written submission dated October 15, 2019 in response to the *Police Costing Model Engagement*.

We also wanted to provide you our somewhat unique perspective as a large rural municipality. The *Police Costing Model* proposal presents several dynamics that concern my Council, including: the funding formula not taking into account existing partnerships; the potential to negatively impact local community service levels; the potential to impact the viability of small urban municipalities; and, the lack of understanding of how RCMP funding is collected and allocated.

Within Clearwater County's municipal boundaries there are three urban municipalities (Village of Caroline, Summer Village of Burnstick Lake and Town of Rocky Mountain House) as well as three First Nations communities (Sunchild First Nation, O'Chiese First Nation and Bighorn First Nation). Clearwater County spans over 18,000 square kilometers and touches into the jurisdictions of five RCMP detachments (Rocky Mountain House, Sundre, Rimbey, Breton and Innisfail).

Through existing partnerships with Rocky RCMP detachment and the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Clearwater County currently provides annual funding of approximately \$300,000.00 for 3.5 full-time administrative positions in the Rocky RCMP detachment and 1 full-time School Resource Officer (SRO). The County also employs 4 full-time Community Peace Officers. Over the years, the County has also contributed to capital upgrades of the Rocky RCMP detachment. Of late, we've received operational and capital funding requests from both Sundre and Rimbey detachments.

On top of our funding to enhance Rocky detachment, the County also provides the Town of Rocky Mountain House (\$750K) in revenue sharing, in large part to assist with offsetting the cost of policing to which the County has not funded directly previously. The proposed changes to police funding model requiring a direct contribution from the County may mean the need for amendments to existing agreements to counterbalance the additional costs to County taxpayers.

In order for Council to better understand the *Police Costing Model* proposal, we'd like a more complete picture as to funding of RCMP services in the Province. This includes how First Nations policing is funded and whether additional resources are also being requested of our federal and provincial counterparts.

Council is also worried about the timing of the *Police Costing Model* proposal in midst of the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) development, that in essence could pit urban municipalities against their rural neighbours. We feel this is counterintuitive to the intent of the ICF, and in some cases the *Police Costing Model* itself could very well jeopardize the viability of small urban municipalities.

Clearwater County questions the funding model's use of equalized assessment, as Council sees RCMP service provision as a "people service" and fails to understand how this can be related to equalized assessment. A formula based on population, including transient populations and visitors to a region, would be a more appropriate metric than simply the municipality's ability to pay.

We've heard through the engagement process that additional funds generated by the proposed *Police Costing Model* will go towards improved services and not be used to offset cost for municipalities "over 5000" that are currently funding policing costs in part. Council is supportive of these components of the model. But we are cautious as we know that many detachments have fully funded RCMP positions that are currently sitting vacant, as the number of RCMP members is not sufficient to fill these spots. Enhanced recruitment and retention campaigns are needed, to help ensure the sustainability of RCMP service within rural Alberta.

Thank you for your consideration as part of the consultation process for the *Police Costing Model*. Council respectfully requests that the Province provide municipalities additional assurances that should the *Police Costing Model* proposal proceed that any existing cost-sharing partnerships be considered in the funding formula; that new policing funding dollars collected will flow directly into the rural and small urban communities; and, that resources will be put towards promoting RCMP recruitment and retention in rural Alberta.

Sincerely,



Jim Duncan, Reeve

cc: Clearwater County Council
Rural Municipalities of Alberta
Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Environment and Parks
Member of Parliament for Yellowhead, Jim Eglinski
Honourable Kaycee Madu, Minister of Municipal Affairs