



The third annual Bow Island Easter Egg Hunt will be held on April 15th at Centennial Park from 9:30 to about 10:30 am. This is great fun for the whole family and is for kids aged 2-9 to participate and only costs \$1 per child. Please register at the Town Office. This winter were you the recipient of kindnesses from people who shoveled snow for you as a favour? Would you like to thank them with a small token of appreciation? One way to do that is to contact the Town Office and receive coupons for this person or persons to have a coffee and a doughnut at the Rolling Pin Bakery for themselves and a friend.

On the subject of snow, I have received many compliments about the terrific, pro-active job our public works crew did removing the dreaded white stuff this year. Council appreciates the efforts of our staff and have our fingers crossed that we have seen the last of the darn stuff for this season.

This past week management and our engineers reviewed a number of submissions from contractors hoping to qualify to bid on the next phase of the Westview subdivision and storm pond development. I expect the tender documents to go out shortly and hope to award the contract before the end of the month. The Town intends to borrow the money for this project thereby maintaining our grant funding for other projects, especially water/sewer and street upgrades. We have adequate room on our borrowing limit and the rates are still low. The demand for lots remains high so we feel the payback on this spending will be quicker than what we have seen in the past. The recent Provincial budget saw our total grant funding go down only slightly and the incorrect census numbers were not used in calculating the amounts for this year, so far.

After reviewing what the Provincial budget had instore for us, Council passed the 2017 operating budget. We have been operating on an interim budget since January 1st. While the grant funding that we count on for projects is down somewhat the cost of operating is undoubtedly impacted by the carbon tax with increases in heating and fuel. Looking for improved efficiency is still the main tool we have to fight this but any substantial investment in energy saving infrastructure will be tough while we continue to look for ways to fund upgrading our existing infrastructure. There are grants for municipalities, homeowners and businesses to install everything from LED lightbulbs to solar panels. This program is funded by carbon tax and these are matching grants. The struggle for the Town is taking money away from other important infrastructure projects to invest in significant energy infrastructure.

The overall assessed value of the properties in Town is up somewhat thanks to the building that has occurred over the past year. I am hearing that some individual assessments are down and some are up, depending on the sales that happened in the various categories. Council and management have reviewed the expenses very carefully and made a number of adjustments to offset some of the increased expenses however there will be a small increase in the millrate for the municipal taxes for the first time in 4 years. If your assessment didn't change the net increase will be quite small and in fact some assessments are down. At this point we have not been told what the School requisitions will be. The Lodge and Landfill requisitions will be quite similar to last year. You can be assured that Council and staff have reviewed areas where savings could be found and will continue to do so in order to keep costs in line. This increase was a last resort not taken lightly and was considered a better option, at this time, than reducing services.

This Thursday players from the Calgary Stampeders will be in Town for a workshop titled, Leading Change, aimed at ending abuse and violence toward women. The program is open to anyone but it is hoped that we will have a number of our youth in attendance. For more information contact FCSS or the Town website.

Mayor Gordon Reynolds