



I wrote last month about the rash of property crime in and around Town and urged people to call the RCMP to report incidents or suspicious behaviour. You may have seen the press release from the police that as the result of thefts being reported they were able to arrest 2 people and recover stolen property. Unfortunately, they have been released from custody pending a hearing on February 19th. This sort of catch and release seems to be all too common and has many in the community very concerned. Our **Safe Streets Committee** is asking everyone to write to MP Motz and the Federal Minister of Justice calling for bail reform. The contact information can be found on the Bow Island Safe Streets & Community Protection Group Facebook page.

Another initiative from the RCMP is the **CAPTURE program**. This program allows businesses and residents with security cameras to register them with the police so that if there is a crime in your area they may contact you about reviewing your footage. There's some more information at the Town office or you can email the program at KCAPTURE@rcmp-grc.gc.ca if you have more questions. You may also sign up at ruralalbertacapture.ca and start supporting the program right away. Let's work together for justice and crime prevention.

On the subject of policing: in 2008 Premier Stelmach introduced a program that **provided police services** to communities under 5000 in population **at no cost**. In 2020 the UCP government began to phase in those costs with a new police funding model supposedly based on population, detachment size, number of incidents, geography and other factors. We are told they will increase the rates until the Town is paying 30% of the costs of policing the community although we aren't totally clear on what the actual costs are. We have included \$139,000 in this year's budget and they are estimating our annual cost will rise to \$277,850 by 2030, a very big hit on local taxpayers. This is **not** imposed on us by the RCMP, but by the Provincial government and feels like it is part of some political posturing between two higher levels of government with us paying the bill.

Our **population** has jumped again according to the Alberta government's Provincial Dashboard. Bow Island's population is now **2310, an 18.1% rise** over the past 5 years. [Bow Island - Population](#).

Batteries and battery powered devices being put into household garbage or the blue recycling bins pose risks of fire and damage to the environment. Currently, discarded smartphones and tablets can go into the electronics recycling area at the landfill. There is a separate container on site for all types of batteries. Battery recycling is available at a number of retailers in Medicine Hat, and we are investigating having one in Bow Island. Batteries and/or a device may have been the cause of the very costly fire last year at the landfill. While fighting the blaze, firefighters reported a number of explosions in the trash and many of these objects became projectiles that could have seriously injured someone.

The **Bow Island Elks #440** held their 35th annual supper and auction this past weekend and it was well attended by over 200 people. I am told this is one of the largest and most active Lodges in Canada and they are to be commended for what they do for our community. It also appears to be one of the youngest too! The money they raised in the past has supported a number of projects and programs in and around Bow Island, such as Meals on Wheels, the Health Foundation, the Food Bank, HALO, Emergency Services, Minor Sports, 4-H and other youth programs. The Elks have helped fund new playgrounds, parks and other projects in Town. The businesses and individuals who sponsor auction items and make cash donations along with all the attendees who generously turn out for the event certainly help make it all work. Thank you and Congratulations to BPOE #440 for all you have done and continue to do for our community!

Some painting, minor flooring and other repairs are underway at the Harry Strom building, but the Town has not set a date yet for moving administration and Council to the new site.

Feels like spring out there but.....

Mayor Gordon Reynolds