



## Mayor's Report – February 13, 2023

On Friday, you may have heard, the Provincial government announced a one-time \$1 billion in funding to be distributed to the 188 local governments in B.C. to address infrastructure demands.

We are still waiting to hear how they will allocate the funds, and how much we can expect to receive, but we do believe it will come without strings attached. Which means we'll be able to use the money for any infrastructure project, or projects, that we decide.

The Province has acknowledged that its usual infrastructure funding programs are routinely heavily oversubscribed. For example, there are six times more requests to the Community, Culture and Recreation stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program than what's available.

So this new money, called the Growing Communities Fund, is very welcome news. It supports our Council priorities, and I think it shows a commitment from the Province to invest in local infrastructure. It also demonstrates the cross-government co-operation that Minister Anne Kang spoke of when she visited Summerland last month.

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In other news, the Mayor's Podcast is now streaming. You can access it from all popular podcast apps like Apple podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon, as well as the District of Summerland website.

The plan is to record one podcast every month. Each time I'll sit down with a different person of interest to discuss the relevant topic of the day. Deputy Mayor Trainer and I set the stage in the first episode by talking about Council's priorities.

The Podcast, together with the new 'Council Highlights' package, are in addition to our pre-existing communication channels, like social media posts, web site updates, the newsletter, and newspaper columns.

People get their news and information in many different ways. It's not like the old days when everyone just picked up the newspaper – although a lot of people still do that. In today's world, we need to use a range of communication channels, old and new, to reach as many residents as possible.

One of the true and tried methods of disseminating information is town hall meetings and open houses. That was demonstrated the week before last, on February 2nd, when we had a good turn out to the Budget open house at the Arena Banquet Hall. Thank you to staff for the informative displays and to the director of finance, David Svetlichny, for his presentation. And thank you to all members of the public who came to ask questions and provide their feedback.

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Also on the 2nd, just prior to the budget open house, Councillor Barkwill and I attended a meeting of the newly formed Summerland chapter of the Men's Shed.

The Men's Shed is a worldwide movement that expands the tradition of the backyard shed into collaborative, community space. It recognizes that many men, especially after the retire, have time on their hands and risk suffering from isolation and depression. The idea of the Men's Shed is to help men come together, stay productive, and contribute to the community—all of which are keys to good overall health.

Men's Sheds chapters usually involve a space where they can work and keep all their tools, and the new Summerland chapter is looking for space in the community that they can use.

I should note the Sheds serve as a gathering place primarily for men but all are welcome. They also benefit the community by undertaking community projects and holding workshops and so forth.

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Also on the 2nd, prior to the budget open house and the Men's Shed meeting, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the RDOS board meeting. The board approved a number of resolutions to take to SILGA, including one to ask the Ministry of Health to provide additional funding to expand Primary Care Networks to ensure they address healthcare needs closer to home, so people don't have to travel to another community to see a family doctor.

Another resolution will be to ask the Province to restrict the commercial sale of plants identified as invasive species.

The RDOS is also reviewing its emergency management program and is asking residents in the region for their views on how the program is working and if can identify any gaps. For anyone who would like to contribute, they'll be in Summerland at the Community Centre on Brown Street this Sunday from 2 to 4pm.

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Finally, on Feb 3rd, I joined Councillor Betts, who is our liaison to the Chamber of Commerce, for a coffee with Chamber president Luke Johnson. One of the things we talked about was organizing a joint meeting with Council and the Chamber board, so that will be upcoming.

We also talked about the Celebrate Summerland Family Day weekend events coming up this Saturday and Sunday. Like Light Up, this new event is another great example of the District and Chamber working together to build an active and vibrant community.

Hope to see everyone there!

Doug Holmes  
Mayor of Summerland