



Mayor's Report

December 13, 2021

Council continued with the 2022 budget process at a Committee of the Whole meeting November 23. Following a discussion on the proposed utility operational and capital budgets for 2022 we recommended proposed utility rate increases for 2022. An open house on the proposed rates was held December 2, and at our Council meeting this afternoon we had first, second and third readings for the proposed utility rates amendment bylaw. A portion of the increase for each utility is going into a reserve fund for future capital projects. Should the proposed rate increases be adopted this Friday, they will go into effect on January 1, 2022. A reminder that budget meetings are open to the public.

The following day, on behalf of the Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA), I hosted the second in a series of three speakers in SILGA's Fall Speakers Series. Dan George of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation and Kelly Mortimer gave a presentation titled "Best practices for building relationships between local governments and First Nations governments". Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations Minister Katrine Conroy is the final speaker in the series on January 12, 2022.

On November 25 I attended the Summerland Chamber of Commerce AGM and was pleased to swear in the board of directors. More about the Chamber later in this report.

In a Committee of the Whole meeting on November 29 Council enjoyed a second presentation by Anona Kampe of the Penticton Indian Band; we hope to get out on the land for a guided tour in the spring. Later in the meeting, Council received a presentation on the design concepts that came out of the community engagement and first 1/2 day of the two-day Eco Village Design Charrette.

I attended the virtual 2021 Community Water Forum on November 30. This annual event is hosted by UBCO in partnership with the Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) and the Okanagan Nation Alliance. This year, project leads shared their knowledge and expertise and introduced the research project taking place in the Peachland Creek Community Watershed. This project will be of particular interest to the District, as the two watersheds that we rely on border the Peachland Creek Watershed.

Source water protection is a big deal for local governments and is one of Council's strategic priorities. Last fall the BC government committed to developing a BC Watershed Security Fund above and beyond the \$27 million for the Healthy Watersheds Initiative. The timing of the 2021 Community Water Forum and OBWB's November release of their Source Water Protection Toolkit aligned perfectly with the December 7 webinar on the BC Watershed Security Fund Strategic Directions Paper developed by the Sustainable Funding Working Group. We met regularly over a four-month period, following our mandate to: investigate the opportunity and potential for the BC Watershed Security Fund; outline a bold vision for the Fund; and develop recommendations or options for what the Fund could do and how it could be created. The Fund will help local and First Nations governments throughout BC with projects that protect and make the best use of this critical natural resource.

Jumping back a week now to the evening of November 30, when I joined Chamber president Ron Kubek and MLA Dan Ashton at a virtual Light Up Summerland message. Due to COVID restrictions, Council asked the Chamber to revise their plans for the 2021 Festival of Lights celebration. The Chamber returned with a terrific plan that Council unanimously supported for funding and in-kind contributions by District staff. The three-day event—December 4, 11 and 18—includes some new activities and honours traditional activities and are all done in a COVID-safe manner. Based on what I've heard, the community is enjoying the Light Up Summerland activities and participation has been very good. My thanks to the Chamber for organizing three weekends of events; to downtown Summerland businesses, the Museum and George Ryga Arts + Culture Centre for their decorating efforts and for extending their hours for Christmas shoppers; to homeowners who have decorated their houses and yards for the enjoyment of others; to the Winter Series at Bottleneck Drive events; and to District staff for all their behind-the-scenes work. Summerland has never looked so festive! Visit summerlandlightup.com for more details.

Lastly, Council received a presentation December 6 on proposed design concepts for Memorial Park as well as concepts for the upgrading of the playground at Memorial Park. Both concepts (Memorial Park is part of the Downtown Neighbourhood Plan concept) will be available at summerland.ca later this week.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Toni Boot