

## Mayor's Report – November 12, 2025

Yesterday, November 11th, I had the honour of laying the wreath on behalf of the District of Summerland at the public Remembrance Day ceremony at Memorial Park. This was the first Remembrance Day to feature the upgraded cenotaph that includes an additional 31 names and was relocated to the entrance of Memorial Park across from the newly established Veterans Memorial Square. The community came out in numbers, as we always do, to hear the rolls of honour of fallen Summerland soldiers and to pay their respects. Many thanks to the Royal Canadian Legion Summerland Branch for continuing to organize this important ceremony.

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On November 7, I was joined by Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillors Barkwill, Betts, Patan and Peake at an official ground breaking ceremony to mark the start of construction of the Okanagan Food and Innovation Hub on Highway 97 at Jones Flat Road. The event was attended by 180 people, including Agricultural Minister Lana Popham. The state-of-the-art facility is slated to open in May 2026 and will specialize in value added processing and the distribution of local crops. The development of a regional food and innovation hub based in Summerland is one of Council's strategic priorities, and is something successive councils have worked towards for the past 10 years.

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On November 6, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where Area 'A' Director Mark Pendergraft and Penticton councillor Campbell Watt were reconfirmed as board chair and vice-chair for the remainder of the term.

The Board also agreed to hold a referendum on April 11, 2026 for residents of Sage Mesa regarding the RDOS's acquisition of the Sage Mesa Water Utility and approval to borrow \$33 million for capital upgrades. Much like our recreation centre referendum in 2023, the board is in the difficult position of not being able to secure grant funding until after the referendum results are known.

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On October 29, Council began its budget deliberations with a review of the 2026 financial plans for the water, sewer and electrical utilities. It is a Council priority to invest in our core infrastructure and an average rate increase of 6.32% is therefore being proposed in order to maintain healthy reserves for future infrastructure renewal, as well as to cover inflationary pressures. The utility budgets will be presented and residents can provide feedback at a public open house to be held this Thursday, Nov 13, from 5 to 7pm, at the Ryga Arts and Cultural Centre.

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On October 24, Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillors Peake, Barkwill and Betts joined me on the ice at the South Okanagan Events Centre for the ceremonial puck drop at the Penticton Veers' first 'Summerland Night', for which Summerland residents received 25% off the price of their game ticket. We were told that the Veers intend to make Summerland Night an annual event and that next year the Veers players will skate out wearing special Summerland warm-up jerseys.

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Finally, it's with much sadness that I mention the passing of Peachland's deputy mayor, Keith Thom. Keith was well known throughout the region for his kindness and diplomacy, and he will be missed. Council has written to Peachland Council with our condolences.

- Mayor Doug Holmes