



## AGENDA ITEM

### Councillor Orientation Training

**April 8, 2021**

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#### **BACKGROUND**

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) requires that a municipality must offer orientation training to each Councillor within 90 days after the Councillor takes the oath of office.

Lacombe County management staff have always provided the new Council with an orientation shortly after each election and will do so again after this upcoming election. A date for this workshop needs to be established.

In addition to this in-house orientation Council decided at the January 28, 2021 meeting that the new Council would participate in the Muni 101 course offered through the Elected Official Education Program. The dates for this course will be provided to Council once they have been set.

We have recently learned that the law firm Reynolds Mirth Richards and Farmer (RMRF) LLP is offering customized training for new and returning municipal elected officials. The cost for two senior RMRF lawyers to provide a full day, in-house or virtual session at the County office is \$5,000, plus GST. Travel and prep time in this amount. If Council is interested in this a date also needs to be established.

Actions requested of Council regarding this matter are:

1. Select a date for Lacombe County management staff led new Council orientation.
2. Determine whether a RMRF led orientation training session should be held and if so, select a date for this session.

#### **ANALYSIS**

In previous elections the County has participated in a consultant led, regional orientation training workshop with neighbouring municipalities. Due to insufficient interest from the urban municipalities within the County and our neighbouring



counties Council opted not to host a joint session following this year's election. In the alternative Council committed to participating in the Muni 101 course.

The RMRF training will address the following topics:

- Code of Conduct
- Pecuniary Interest
- Councillor Disqualification
- Conflict of Interest and Bias
- Relationship to Chief Administrative Officer
- Role of Chief Administrative Officer
- Personal Liability of Councillors
- Confidentiality Obligations
- Access to Legal Counsel and Obtaining Legal Advice
- Authority of Individual Councillors
- Council Decisions
- Meetings, Boards and Committees
- Additional Responsibilities

In addition to the above the RMRF training can be tailored to any specific area of interest.

Alternatives:

Establish Date for County Management Staff Led Orientation

1. Select October 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, November 1<sup>st</sup> or November 2<sup>nd</sup> for this orientation.
2. Council to select a different date for this orientation.

RMRF Training Session

1. Proceed with a RMRF training session and establish the date for this session.
2. Receive the report regarding the RMRF training session for information.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

While there is not a specific allocation in the County's 2021 operating budget for the RMRF training the \$5,000 cost can be accommodated in the Council section of the budget.

**LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Section 3 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) states the purposes of a municipality are: 1) to provide good government, 2) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality, and 3) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

Section 201.1(1) of the MGA states that a municipality must, in accordance with the regulations, offer orientation training to each councillor, to be held within 90 days after the councillor takes the oath of office.

Section 201.1(2) of the MGA states that the following topics must be addressed in orientation training required under subsection (1):

- (a) role of municipalities in Alberta;
- (b) municipal organization and functions;
- (c) key municipal plans; policies and projects;
- (d) roles and responsibilities of council and councillors;
- (e) the municipality's code of conduct;
- (f) roles and responsibilities of the chief administrative officer and staff;
- (g) budgeting and financial administration;
- (h) public participation;
- (i) any other topic described by the regulations.

Please note, the Provincial Government has not yet adopted a regulation for this.

In addition, Lacombe County Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 1323/20 states:

- 13.1 Every member must attend the orientation training offered by the Municipality within 90 days after the Member takes the oath of office.
- 13.2 Unless excused by Council, every Member must attend other training organized at the direction of Council for the benefit of Members throughout the Council term.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The following elements of the County's Strategic Plan are relevant to this issue:

### Our Mission:

"Building a safe and vibrant community through leadership, innovation and the development of healthy relationships".

### Our Key Principles:

"Recognizing our history and solid foundation, we approach the role of providing the best possible level of municipal services for our citizens through a base of collaborative and supportive teamwork".



Recreation Strategic Priority 7.6:

“Partner with other municipalities in the provision of recreation facilities/lake access.”

Service Delivery Strategic Priority B

“Maintain effective cooperation and collaboration with neighbouring urban and rural municipalities.”

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Lacombe County sees the value in engaging and informing the public/stakeholders through a variety of mediums as outlined in the *Policy AD(40): Public Participation Policy*. The appropriate level of engagement for each public participation opportunity is selected on a project-to-project basis.

For this item, the following engagement will take place:

- *Inform:* To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions

Highlights of all County Council meetings are published on the County Website and in the County News.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the following resolutions

1. That the County management staff led Councillor Orientation Training session be held on October 25, 2021.
2. That Reynolds Mirth Richards and Farmer be engaged to provide a one-day in-person customized training workshop for new and returning Lacombe County elected officials and that such workshop be scheduled for October 27, November 1 or November 2, 2021.

**PREPARED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager**

**REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager**

