

**Minutes of the Red Deer River Municipal User Group Regular Meeting held on September 17, 2015 at 1:00 PM, Badlands Community Facility, Drumheller, Alberta**

**1.0 Call to Order** – Co-Chair Jean Bota called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

**Attendance:** Co-Chair Patt Churchill – Town of Innisfail, Co-Chair Jean Bota – Red Deer County, Ray Reckseidler – Village of Delburne, Les Stulberg – County of Stettler, Murray Marshall – Starland County, Terry Leslie – Town of Sundre, Gerald Campion - Town of Hanna, Thomas Tracy – Town of Oyen, Harvey Walsh – Town of Olds, Dianne Wyntjes – City of Red Deer, Gordon Christensen – Village of Alix, Al Campbell – Town (not County) of Stettler, Ron Howe – Town of Three Hills, Richard Poole – Town of Blackfalds, Rod McDermand – Lacombe County, Rocky Dahmer – County of Paintearth, Myron Thompson – Town of Sundre, AnneMarie Philipsen – County of Newell, Sean McIntyre – Town of Sylvan Lake, Curt Maki – Clearwater County, Terry Yemen – Town of Drumheller – Mark Garneau – Town of Trochu, Bill Shaw – City of Red Deer / RDRMUG, Rene Michalak – RDRMUG, Keith Ryder – RDRMUG, Recording Secretary – Linda Handy.

Guests:        MLA Ron Orr - Lacombe/ Ponoka  
                  MLA Jason Nixon – Sundre  
                  Patrick Turnbull – Assistant to MLA Rick Strankman – Drumheller/Stettler  
                  Charmaine Mifsud – Constituency Assistant to MLA Kim Schreiner – Red Deer North

**1.0 Call to Order**

Co-Chair Jean Bota called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Introductions were given.

**2.0 Adoption of Agenda**

**MOTION** Wyntjes moved that the agenda for the September 17, 2015 Red Deer River Municipal User Group Meeting be adopted as presented. Carried unanimously.

**3.0 PRESENTATION**

K. Ryder stated that invites were sent to all MLAs within the Red Deer River Basin. MLA's (or their representatives) in attendance were given an opportunity to provide an introduction and statement to the group. Their attendance at the meeting was a starting point for MUGs to open dialogue with our MLAs.

K. Ryder provided an overview of the formation of the RDRMUG (2006) and the group's mandate which is a forum to discuss and lobby on issues such as safe water for future economic growth, water conservation for municipal use and water quality. He explained that MUGs is funded by the member municipalities. He further explained that the Red Deer River is a distinct basin within the SSRB (South Saskatchewan River Basin). The RDRMUG contracted Hart Water Management in 2008 to prepare a Water Assurance

Study and again, in 2014 for an update. The priorities are as follows:

- Crown Reservation – RDRMUG is asking the government to bank water strictly for municipal use for population and economic growth; current allocation of 550,000 cubic decameters (licenses currently at 329,046 dam<sup>3</sup> (56% of allocation limits); municipal usage is at 11% of the allocation pie – current municipal licenses are 130; concerns include: water sharing plans for periods of deficit, update statistics, allocation licenses and priorities in comparisons with SSRB Management Plan; characteristics of river; in-stream flow and objectives, and implications of flood planning and mitigation.
- Storage - update on Dickson Dam, identify potential storage needs, drought, SSWM Plan (RDRMUG does not want to duplicate what other groups are doing). Dickson Dam was built in 1983 and is 100% filled at this time of year (203,000 d. It is regulated at 16 cubic metres per second (equivalent to a dishwasher amount).

K. Ryder summarized the RDRMUG's concerns as follows:

- Need for a strong working relationship with Alberta Environment especially in light of recent changes. Spruce Grove is the RDRMUG's contact and there is no longer a planning role at this level which is important for water allocations.
- Apportionment – 50% must flow into the Province of Saskatchewan. Red Deer River contributes significantly higher amounts and this needs to be addressed.
- Future storage – requirement to maintain conservation objectives with a storage structure.
- Crown reservation - key message is that municipalities want an assured water supply and licensing priority dates (not based on Alberta's "first in time – first in right" priority allocation system. The government needs to set new perimeters on water sharing and secure an appropriate amount for future municipal growth. RDRMUG's perspective needs to be shared with government officials.

### **Questions / Comments**

MLA Orr – Does your group address major disaster / pollution?

K. Ryder – Environment has a monitoring system and any abnormalities are reported to Environment.

MLA Orr – What if the river water cannot be used for months?

K. Ryder – Most municipalities have reservoirs and have sufficient water to run for a short period of time.

MLA Orr – What is your timeline to achieve crown reservation?

K. Ryder – It involves public consultation and the green light to proceed.

MLA Orr – Green light?

K. Ryder – Environment needs to accept our application.

P. Turnbull – Water is a commodity of critical need, such as the economic value of irrigation and for substantial development in Alberta.

Co-Chair P. Churchill – The Water Assurance Study looks at storage and it needs to move forward as it will help with flood mitigation (not just drought). MLA's requested a copy of the document.

MLA Orr – With agriculture use encroaching on river corridors, protection of the river is critical.

Co-Chair P. Churchill – This issue is being addressed by the RDR Watershed Alliance and is one of eleven recommendations for public consultation – source contamination. Ripples in the Watershed is available online September 26<sup>th</sup>. It will address practices that need cleaning up to improve water quality.

MLA Orr – The list should include pharmaceuticals.

Co-Chair J. Bota – Referenced Best Practices from Ecotrust Canada.

MLA Nixon – With regards to flood mitigation, what are the top three priorities for this issue.

K. Ryder – 1) water stability; 2) water storage – future planning (formal sharing plan); and 3) crown reservation (concerns for RDRMUG are city of Calgary's allocation is for 3M people; Red Deer is the only river that has allocations left; government granting expansion to irrigations without allocations; water protection for the future growth in the next 20 -30 years).

R. McDermand – Discussion on disposal of wastewater regulations.

M. Thompson – Discussion on 2013 flood predictions – concern of what the future will hold if action is not taken – Province is the action component. Dickson Dam should have been built upstream of Sundre.

MLA Nixon – Agreed with M. Thompson's comments – if things go wrong in Sundre, it will impact the entire watershed.

D. Wyntjes – Issues for Provincial action include: flood mitigation; water sharing; infrastructure dollars for water infrastructure; irrigation issues; crown reservation in terms of how it can be done; headwaters – recreational damage – how can we educate and protect.

R. Reckseidler – Discussion on ground water and how the Province needs to work with the industry sector as industrial activity is disturbing the aquifer.

MLA Orr – With regards to flood mitigation, municipalities need to take a closer look at where they are issuing development permits.

MLA Nixon – Flood mapping needs to be done.

Co-Chair P. Churchill – Flood mapping is already done. Referenced the WaterSMART – and how SSRB modeling can be used for various scenarios.

B. Shaw – Discussion on crown reservation and that only 200,000 dam<sup>3</sup> are left and of that municipalities are only asking for 1/3. Policing needs to be place to protect the Red Deer River water so that it can serve the basin far into the future. For example, RDRMUG had a voice in protecting the water from going to Cross Iron Mills.

Charmaine Misfud - Assistant to MLA Schreiner – Who leads in practices because of the diverse use for the water, i.e. irrigation, industry, municipality. How will the model be supported?

Co-Chair J. Bota – RDRMUG working with groups involving grassroots, municipal and province will lead in best practices.

Co-Chair P. Churchill – SSRB dictated for the RDRMUG to come up with a plan. RDRMUG lobbied for the Red Deer River to be removed from the SSRB basin and start a RDR basin. No sure if this is moving forward as it involves all sectors.

K. Ryder – There is diversity within our own group and use of resources from our own municipalities. RDRMUG shares documents not only with member municipalities but with the Watershed Alliance.

Co-Chair P. Churchill – RDRMUG has not asked for any funding from the government.

G. Campion – Discussion on water shortage in the Special Areas.  
M. Thompson – Discussion on removal of silt from river.

Co-Chair J. Bota thanked MLAs/Assistants for their attendance and comments.

#### **4.0 Confirmation of Minutes**

4.1 Confirmation of minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 21, 2015 and July 16, 2015

**MOTION** Walsh moved that the Red Deer River Municipal User Group Meeting minutes of May 21, 2015 and July 16, 2015 be adopted as presented. Carried unanimously.

4.2 Business arising from minutes of May 21, 2015 and July 16, 2015

#### **5.0 Financial Reports to August 30, 2015**

5.1 Balance Statement

5.2 Revenue and Expense

5.3 Accounting Notes

K. Ryder, Executive Director provided an overview of the unaudited financial statements to August 30, 2015 as follows:

Balance Statement: Closing Surplus – \$125,517.40 (large surplus is due to dollars not being expensed for special projects as of yet – Hart Management)

Statement of Revenue and Expenses – Revenue - \$43,755.06; Expenses - \$62,251.26

Surplus (Loss) for Year – (\$18,496.20).

**MOTION** Stulberg moved to accept the Financial Report to August 30, 2015 as presented. Carried unanimously.

#### **6.0 Review RDRMUG Water Quality Action Plan**

6.1 Review / update provided from Rene Michalak, Project Lead Coordinator as follows:

- Finishing Intro Conversations with MUG members (Mountainview County, Clearwater County, County of Paintearth, Sylvan Lake, Blackfalds, Didsbury, Sundre)
- Meeting with Alberta Environment and Parks (Central Office) on October 22 to detail and confirm Provincial concerns regarding water quality
- Completing Water Quality Backgrounder with conversation input
- Compiling Municipal Inventory (plans, policies, regulations, statutory plans, etc.) through September and October
- Developing Key Project Outcomes, Goals, and Action Opportunities through October and November for Executive Committee review
- Second consultation for MUG members and municipalities to provide feedback on Key Project Outcomes, Goals, and Action Opportunities in December (approx.) - working to align with RDRWA's IWMP Phase 2 (watershed health indicators)
- Project Blue Thumb Social Lab - Round Three scheduled for October 28 & 29 at Red Deer College - my focus group is "**A** **W**atershed **E**nvironmental **S**ystem **O**f

**Municipal Excellence**" (AWESOME) - developing a toolkit for municipalities to address watershed issues with confidence (e.g., wetlands, riparian areas, land use BMPs, etc.), currently developing a questionnaire for municipalities to identify greatest needs - aligns with MWQPAP conversations, excellent representation from complementary groups (e.g., AEP / AWC, NAWMP, WRRP), Round Four lining up for spring, 2016.

- RDRWA is hosting its 10th Anniversary Celebration on September 27 - guided river raft tour from McKenzie Trail to Riverbend Golf Course, followed by a BBQ at 1pm, all RDRMUG members invited to attend (registration required) - <http://www.rdrwa.ca/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=124>
- Intro to Rainwater Harvesting Seminar on Oct 30 (12pm - 4pm) at RDRWA Office (registration required) - <http://www.rdrwa.ca/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=129>
- Heading to Long Beach, CA for the ARCSA Rainwater Harvesting Conference and AP Certification Training - Nov 7 - 14 (under separate project budget)

## **7.0 Executive Committee Recommendations**

### **7.1 Hart Water Management Update / Review**

K. Ryder advised that a meeting was held with Dick Hart on September 14<sup>th</sup> to review the following priorities:

7.1.1 Crown Reservation Status - based on the 2008 David Thompson Health region population growth predictions for the Red Deer River basin.

7.1.2 Water Sharing Strategy – for times of drought.

7.1.3 River Characteristics – allocation license viewer available on website.

7.1.4 Review Apportionment Agreement – Red Deer River is the main contributor to SSRB (currently 70% of its flow) – summary of report available on the website.

7.1.5 Next Steps – prepare a letter to provincial officials requesting a management strategy plan for the Red Deer River.

7.2 Current Allocation Information was available as of this date.

Dahmer moved to accept the Executive Director Report as presented. Carried.

## **8.0 Agenda Additions**

**9.0 Municipal Project Review:** *An opportunity for all representatives to share their current and future water/waste water projects.*

## **10.0 Correspondence & Articles:**

1) *Handouts at the meeting*

**11.0 Next Scheduled Meeting Date:** Thursday, December 3, 2015.

## **13.0 Adjournment**

**MOTION** Bota moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 PM. Carried unanimously.