



Minutes

MRWCC Board Meeting

January 25, 2018 – 1:30 PM

Town of Milk River Office

Present: William King, Warren Cunningham, Ed Sloboda, Ron McNeil, Lorraine Nicol, Ross Ford, Joan Hughson, Ben Ellert, Ken Miller, Jim Willett, Brian Hills, Roy Audet, Darcy Wills, John Ross, Aaron Domes, Kandra Forbes, Tim Romanow, and Mary Lupwayi

Absent: Dennis Spackman, Kristen Dykstra, Scott McGarty, Will Lindeman, Suzanne Liebelt,

Guest: Peggy Losey, Mayor, Town of Milk River

1. Welcome and introductions

- John Ross welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought the meeting to order at 1:38pm
- Introductions were conducted

2. Minutes from November 23, 2017 meeting

- Past minutes were reviewed

Motion: Ron McNeil moved to accept the minutes as presented. Warren Cunningham seconded. **Carried.**

3. Financial update

a. Financial statements update

- November closing balance was \$323,422.91
- December closing balance was \$277,583.87

Motion: Darcy Wills moved to accept the financial statements as presented. Roy Audet seconded. **Carried.**

b. 2017/18 AEP Core funding status

- Have not received the balance of the core funding
- Got confirmation that the money will be deposited in 2 weeks
- Some of the WPACS are out of funds
- Emailed Andrew Schoepf with AEP to inquire about the deferred contribution status and we have yet to receive a response

c. 2018/19 AEP Core application - proposed project work plan discussion

- General amounts for core operations will be the same as last year
- Will be applying for the following 3 projects:
 1. Milk River storage options review project - \$30,000
 - Working on the RFP for the project to be reviewed by the Board

- Looking at compiling a summary of 3 or so top studies conducted and would focus on:
 - Regulatory scan
 - Social impact assessment
 - Economics
 - Potential for green energy projects and how it would fit in the policy objectives for climate change adaptation
 - Seeking further feedback and support from the Transboundary Waters Group (AEP)
- 2. Source Water Protection planning (SWP) - \$20,000
 - To continue with the SWP plan for whiskey valley Aquifer
 - Completing the Terms of Reference development
 - Plan development focused on water coops and private well water users
 - 2 to 3 meetings and summary report preparation
- 3. Research and Science summary note project - \$15,000
 - Long-term surface water monitoring data summary and full statistical trend analysis (~\$5000)
 - Long-term ground water monitoring data summary. Including partnership with AHS on the analytical interpretation
 - Under-ice investigation summary
 - Milk River riparian stewardship and restoration guide based on the WRRP projects conducted and other producer-based stewardship projects that have been conducted:
 - Summary document (6 or 8 case studies on lessons learned)
 - Noted that the WRRP Phase 1 funding was not intended to develop a project summary and case study document, that is intended to profile successful stewardship and spark further involvement of watershed producers and landowners

4. Draft Policies

- Comments that were provided were incorporated
- There was a discussion on the draft Conflict of Interest policy
 - Some felt that the wording was too stringent for a WPAC policy and that there was need to soften the wording and remove part 4 and 5
 - Lorraine would like it noted that she had added part B to strengthen the policy and would like it specifically noted in the minutes
- To comply with new Work safe Alberta legislation, we are required to add additional policies

Action: Board members to forward his comments on the draft Conflict of Interest policy to Mary to be reviewed and approved at the next Board meeting

5. Planning and Policy Team development update

- Under structure

6. Community Appreciation Forum

- Scheduled for March 27, 2018
- There will be a silent auction and we are looking for donations for the auction
- Looking at same format as last year
 - Proposed agenda and presentation:
 - Welcome and Brief MRWCC Activity Report
 - WOSPP – Rock-art presentation?
 - Birds of Prey
 - Milk River Watershed Alliance (MRWA)/Mussel status
 - Another WPAC – give a presentation on their activities
 - Holden Hepler – presentation on Devil’s Coulee
 - Birds of Prey can be key note Speakers
 - Awards:
 - YRDs top hand winner
 - Environmental Stewardship Awards
 - Heritage Tree
 - School Poster Contest
 - Dinner by Laura Balog Catering Services
 - Displays and end of Silent Auction

7. 2018 AGM

- Scheduled for May 24, 2018
- Same format as last year
- Will have a Board meeting after the AGM

8. Alberta Water Council – Drought Management Toolkit project

- WPACs have 2 projects approved for further investigation and funding:
 - Multi-year drought resiliency tool kit
 - MRWCC and BRWA are the 2 WPACs representing on project development
 - Outcomes:
 - Building the work of the Miistakis Institute
 - Resiliency for small Municipalities
 - As the climate changes, Alberta’s municipalities will be required to make decisions that encourage adaptation to the new climate conditions. Critical to that is support Alberta communities in better understanding climate-related risks and adaptations in the context of ecosystem services and biodiversity
 - As part of the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute’s (ABMI’s) Biodiversity Management and Climate Change Adaptation project, Miistakis

- undertook to develop a decision-support system for Alberta municipalities
- Adapt-action is a free, web-based, climate resiliency 'discovery tool' for Alberta municipalities that allows user to explore two critical adaptation issues (Adapting to Water Scarcity and Adapting to Flooding)
- There will be a train the trainer session for WPACs on how to deliver the Adapt-action sessions

9. Team update

Community Awareness and Involvement Team (CAIT)

- Held a meeting January 16, 2018
- In the process of reviewing draft CAIT ToR based on comments made at the meeting and incorporating necessary amendments. The amended draft ToR to be brought back to the next team meeting for further review

Youth Engagement Program

- Program development update
 - i. Working on grade 4 program and high school programs for grades 9 and 10 on biodiversity and stewardship
 - ii. Will have a display and presentation at the teacher's convention February 22 and 23
- School programs
 - i. Have done 3 in class presentation, 2 at Warner School and 1 at the Milk River Elementary School. The presentations were on cool animals of the watershed and their habitats.
 - ii. Promoted the poster contest program
 - iii. Two more teachers have invited Kandra to do presentations in their classrooms
 - iv. Planning to incorporate the watershed wise board during presentations
- Caring for Our Watershed Program
 - i. Karen is interested in getting the Erle Rivers students participate in this year's contest
 - ii. Warner and Foremost schools have also shown interest in this year's contest
- Field Tours – WOSPP partnership
 - i. WOSPP has started program promotion and booking schools
- 2018 YRDs
 - i. Had a meeting January 12
 - ii. Scheduled for July 10th to 12 to avoid overlapping with other youth programs
 - iii. Confirmed venue will be the Range View Ranch within the County of Warner. Trail riding is available

- iv. In the process of developing the agenda
 - 1. Sandstone Ranch – wildlife assessments and insect programs
 - 2. Leta Pezderic with NCC will be on the committee and will help secure Sandstone Ranch
- v. Save the date flyer has been developed
- vi. Cardston County rep will be responsible for registrations
- vii. Sponsorship request responsibilities will be divided among the committee

Award programs

- o Environmental Stewardship Awards
 - i. Deadline to submit nominations is February 2
 - ii. Have received one nomination for Ken and Lora Balog
 - iii. Roy Audet advised that he will be submitting a nomination for Ken Brown for the Milk River Rafters
- o Heritage Tree
 - i. Have received one nomination from Roy Audet
 - 1. The tree is named “Jesse Tree” after the Audet’s youngest son Jesse J. Audet, for caring and watering the tree to make sure the tree had a chance to grow in the harsh environment. He did so, just as his brothers would have, because they all know how precious a tree is on the prairie landscape

Past events report

- o Science Forum
 - i. Great meeting
 - ii. Good variety of topics
 - iii. It was good to have school kids’ participation
 - iv. Worthwhile to continue having the Science Forum

Upcoming events

- o Spring Hike Tour
 - i. Scheduled for April 20th, 2018
 - ii. Proposed location is Tree Coulee and can visit:
 - 1. North West Mount Police Barracks
 - 2. Original site for the Spite Ditch
 - iii. Ed will kindly provide the 15-seater van and also look into the rental status of the Warner Hockey school bus
 - iv. Also considering requesting WOSPP for their bus availability
- o Community Appreciation Forum
 - i. Scheduled for March 27, 2018, from 2 to 6 and free dinner afterwards
 - ii. Proposed agenda and speakers: as stated above

- Awards programs:
 - a. YRDs' top hand winner
 - b. Environmental Stewardship Awards
 - c. Heritage Tree
 - d. School Poster Contest
 - 2. Planning to have a silent auction and looking for donations
 - 3. Looking for volunteers to help set up
 - AGM
 - i. Business meeting – scheduled for May 24, 2018
 - ii. Venue – Council Chambers
 - iii. Same as last year's format
 - iv. A Board meeting will be scheduled after the AGM
 - Canoe Tour
 - i. Scheduled for June 15, 2018
 - ii. Location: Finstead's lease to lower level crossing on the Pinhorn
 - 1. Will need to get permission from the Finstead's lease
 - 2. Will need to ask John Ross to request permission to access the Finstead's lease
 - iii. Ed will kindly provide the 15-seater van and also look into the rental status of the Warner Hockey school bus
 - iv. Also considering requesting WOSPP for their bus availability
 - Xeriscape Project:
 - 1. Kandra will take a lead in program development
 - 2. The Town Council is already committed and had a budget set aside for the project
 - 3. MRWCC will donate in-kind contributions
 - 4. It will be costly to contract all the work to Steve. Since the workshop was conducted to give the community the tools to do the landscaping, it will be fiscally responsible to contract out the designing part and have volunteers complete the work

Research and Monitoring Team

- A meeting has been scheduled on January 29, 2018
 - i. In the process of restructuring the team
 - ii. Team members have been contacted to confirm their interest in the team going forward
 - iii. ToR drafted and has been circulated to the team to be reviewed at the meeting
 - iv. New team members: Dan Johnson with U of L and Ben Ellert
- Surface Water Monitoring:
 - i. Have received preliminary data from AEP which is not fully validated
 - ii. Still waiting for the final validated data from AEP
 - iii. Planning discussions to review the joint project alignment from 2017

- iv. 2018 objectives subject to Board program approval
- o DFO – Overwintering Habitat Stewardship Project
 - i. Received a service agreement and framework from Rangeland Conservation Services Ltd
 - ii. Planned to do the field data collection before Christmas break, but due to unfavourable weather conditions, the work was rescheduled to be completed between January 17 to 22, 2018
 - iii. Have identified nine sites which include: Hoyt Bridge, Hilmer/Morton, Upstream (of Milk River Townsite), Coutts Pump Site, Writing on Stone Rodeo Grounds, Deer Creek, HWY 880 Bridge, Ross and Pinhorn Ranch
 - iv. The field assessments will help to quantify and qualify winter habitat availability, species present at low flow pool refugia, winter habitat conditions of the identified locations
 - v. On the first day, January 17th, field work was done on the upstream Milk River site
 - vi. The first data collected at the upstream Milk River looks good – fish presence confirmed, and non-invasive camera traps were effective
 - vii. Stewardship materials still available for sites, including a site at the WOSPP, Rodeo grounds. Additional projects are underway near the Hoyt Bridge on the North Fork Milk River.
 - viii. Final grant still outstanding is \$25,000
 - ix. Final report will be submitted in March 2018
- o WRRP Phase 1 and 2 Projects
 - i. About \$15,000 remaining for phase 1 program
 - ii. Have identified sites to spend the rest of the grant by closure date
 - iii. Phase 1 program will be closed March 31, 2018
 - iv. In process of soliciting projects for phase 2 projects
 - v. Starting to receive applications

Water Supply and Management Team (WSM Team)

- The team committee met November 23 before the Board Meeting
- Team structure reviewed
- In the process of incorporating new members
- Proposed work plan in place
- Team's ToR being reviewed
- Water users meeting held January 11, 2018
 - o 2 meetings were held:
 - First meeting in the morning between MRWCC and AEP - to discuss the challenges with communication, LOI interpretation, and potential projects to address water security and long-term storage capacity needs

- Second meeting was a public meeting with licenced water users in the afternoon – discussed concerns regarding water management on the Milk River; particularly, the events of 2017 and improvement to communication and working together on collective solutions
- The objectives were to:
 - Have an improved relationship with provincial officials to ensure they effectively represent Milk River interests in discussions with federal officials from Canada and the USA who make water management decisions on shared international waters
 - Understand what plans are being discussed to address water supply in the face of a changing climate (e.g. changes to the 2001 Canada-USA Letter of Intent)
- Good discussion
- Meeting resulted in the community forming an independent irrigators association - steering committee to help deal with water supply issues
- Community first organizational meeting has been scheduled for February 6, 2018

Transboundary Watershed Team

- Transboundary Grasslands workshop will take place on February 13 to 15, 2018, in Glasgow, Montana, at the Cottonwoods Inn
- An agenda has been circulated
- Currently taking registrations
- Tim and Ron will assist with facilitating sessions

Planning and Policy Team

- In the process of team structuring

10. Upcoming Events

- a. Transboundary Grasslands Conservation Workshop – February 13 to 15, 2018, Cottonwoods Inn, Glasgow, MT
- b. Community Appreciation Forum – March 27, 2018, Milk River Civic Center
- c. Spring Hike Tour – April 20, 2018
- d. AGM – May 24, 2018
- e. Canoe Tour – June 15, 2018

11. Round table discussions

- Tim:
 - Investigating if we need an event insurance to cover our ongoing events
- William:
 - Putting up the fence that was burnt within the natural area and Ecological Reserve

- Roy:
 - Keep track of the ice jam for flood detection
- Brian:
 - Montana Fish and Wildlife has approved translocation of Sage grouse from Montana to Alberta
 - Sage grouse numbers have been going up for the past 2 years
- Aaron:
 - Nomination has been submitted and in Paris by February 1st deadline
 - Confirmation of acceptance by February or March
 - Summer time there will be site evaluation tour
 - A copy of the nomination contents was circulated
 - WOSP Management Plan draft was submitted
 - Will still accept public input to revise the draft
 - Finally, will go out for public consultation
 - Brad will be available for more feedback from the Council if needed
 - Minister committed to biannual meetings with Park neighbours. Targeting next door neighbours to build relationships and trust
- Ross:
 - County of Warner has done extensive work for land owners around the park
 - Conducted a survey but there wasn't much support from the community
- Ron:
 - Requested to go in camera to discuss the Education Outreach Coordinator's position

Motion: Ron McNeil moved that Council support the extension of Kandra's position for 2018/19 fiscal year. Darcy seconded. **Carried.**

12. Other items

13. Meeting Adjournment

- William moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:30pm. **Carried.**

14. Next Meeting Date

- March 22, 2018 in Milk River

Signatures:

Chairman: _____

Secretary: _____