



McKillop's. musings

COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

What is Required
& What the RM is Doing

McKillop Contact List

Who are We?

September 17th, 2021

McKillop's Musings

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#1 Concern in Community Survey of Ratepayers Communication & Transparency

For the first time in RM of McKillop history, the Council engaged in a public strategic planning process. On April 7th, via Zoom, ratepayers were invited to register to participate in a planning workshop focusing on the vision and goals for the RM. From that process an online community survey was released from June 2nd to June 22nd. Four hundred and fifty seven participants started the survey with 60%, approximately 274, continuing to the end. The community survey highlights were posted on the RM website and on September 8th a Zoom workshop was hosted by the RM to discuss the results.

Survey results indicated that ratepayers (regardless of role in RM, permanent or seasonal resident, AG operator or non-AG) are most concerned about communication and transparency. This Musings newsletter is a communication tool for the RM that started this spring. There have been 7 newsletters released with 5 distributed by All-Net Connect (to those registered), available on the RM website and can be sent via hamlet distribution methods. [Click here](#) to register for All-Net Connect to receive RM communications. Paper copies of the Musings mailed to ratepayers would result in increased administrative costs and taxes for ratepayers. It is the responsibility of ratepayers to visit the RM website for the most up-to-date information. Thank you for keeping our communications costs reasonable.

Municipal Governments in Saskatchewan Need to be More Transparent

This year the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) called on the Saskatchewan government to strengthen transparency for municipal governments by posting basic financial documents online. The CTF has released a report detailing spending in hundreds of Saskatchewan municipalities. The CTF says it was able to secure financial statements from 146 out of 296 rural municipalities. The RM of McKillop provides more than the CTF's requested financial documents online and in a timely fashion (audited financial statements, budgets & monthly financial reports). This goes above and beyond the suggested requirement of the CTF. Further, all Council meeting agendas and minutes are provided on the [RM Website](#) as required by legislation and the [RM's Administrative Policy](#) revised August 2020.

TRANSPARENCY IS A TWO WAY STREET



**COUNCIL SHARES INFORMATION
RATEPAYERS ACCESS
& READ INFORMATION**

- ☒ The RM of McKillop Council will continue to promote awareness of the link between paying taxes and the programs and services that are funded as a result.
- ☒ We invite all ratepayers to visit the RM website for relevant financial, administrative and educational materials.
- ☒ We also continue to invite ratepayers to engage in the Zoom Council meetings and thank those who have been attending.

'Public shut out from observing RM meetings' LMT Article RM of McKillop Response

On August 5, 2021 the Last Mountain Times' (LMT) Local Initiatives Reporter, Jennifer Argue published a report titled **Public shut out from observing RM meetings**. She states that,

'...the RM of McKillop appears to be moving further away from transparency as they continue to stop the public from observing its council meetings.'

She also reported that the RM of McKillop only provided audio and not a video feed to the public in attendance and that the public was **'relegated to the basement for council meetings'**, and adds that

'While the RM of McKillop seems to be going backwards in terms of transparency, another municipality is enhancing its live-streaming capabilities. Lloydminster [sic] is one of a handful of municipalities that live streams their meetings for the public.'

Inaccuracies and lack of context abound in this reporting. It is highly inaccurate to say that McKillop's Council is "going backward in terms of transparency," particularly respecting the public's access to live meetings. Saying that the public are 'relegated to the basement' intentionally ignores that realities of a 221 sq foot boardroom to house a table, chairs, Council members and staff not to mention the realities of Covid.

She compares McKillop to no other RMs, towns, villages or resort villages in the LMT coverage area in terms of transparency. If she had, her report would have shown that McKillop has one of the most user-friendly websites and a quick turn-around time for placing governance documents on the website, and that only 3 municipalities of about 25 in LMT's coverage area since the pandemic now offer regular Zoom viewing of Council meetings.



This particular LMT article comparing McKillop to Lloydminster is also misleading. What is not mentioned is that Lloydminster is not a rural but urban municipality, is not in the LMT coverage area, and has a 2021 revenue budget of **\$83,030,871** while McKillop's is **\$2,535,789**. The resources that the City of Lloydminster can designate to support the costs of equipment, live-streaming capabilities and support technicians are obviously much greater. This is not accurate and balanced reporting. While the News Media Canada complaint guideline allows that journalists have prerogative to choose their sources, it also says that they must report arguments proportionate to the "evidence so as to avoid false balance," or "false equivalency." In other words it is unbalanced and bad reporting to compare apples and oranges without including the facts relative to each one.



The RM of McKillop has been offering Council meetings via Zoom since May 2020 (barring occasional internet outage). No other RM bordering McKillop with a comparable budget offers live Zoom Council meetings. This is transparency moving forward and getting better. Council is making a concerted effort to keep in-camera meeting time to a minimum and only for privacy related issues as per legislation.

McKillop Contact List

With all the emergency alerts in the RM in this summer (e.g., heat, air quality, storm, wildfire, etc.) please consider adding your contact name to the RM's Connect system.

Register with us to stay up to date with all the latest RM news, upcoming events, emergency alert messages from Canada's national emergency alerting system (Alert Ready), and weather for the RM of McKillop. You can be added to the All-Net Connect system by either contacting the RM office by phone (306-725-3230), emailing us rm220general@rm220.ca or using the All-Net Connect portal on our website <https://rmofmckillop220.com>.

OR

Click on the Connect link below to add your information and adjust your setting on the RM website.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter.



Connect By all-net

Who are WE?

Don Whitrow

Don is the elected Councillor for Division 1. He is Chair of the RM Administrative & Public Works Committee and a member of the Hamlet Committee. Don represents the RM on the Wascana & Upper Qu'Appelle Watersheds Association Taking Responsibility (WUQWATR) Committee.

Questions on the RM generally or specifically Division 1? Don Whitrow can be reached at div1@rm220.ca



Jackie Wigg

Jackie is the Administrative Assistant in the RM office primarily responsible for reception (walk-ins, phones & emails), receipting & she organizes accounts payable.

Questions about the RM? Jackie can be reached at rm220general@rm220.ca or by phone at 306-725-3230.

The RM Council and Staff send their thoughts out to the RM families & business owners grappling with the aftermath of severe winds and hail from the summer storms.

Everyone have a safe autumn.