

# Mayor's Communiqué

April 2012

## **Municipal Policing for the Town of Creston: A Growing community**

### TRIGGER –

In the Province of British Columbia, when a community grows and exceeds 5,000 in population, the requirement for a Municipal Police Unit Agreement (MPUA) is mandated and the municipality becomes financially responsible for 70% of their community policing costs. On February 8, 2012, the 2011 Canadian Census was released and, officially, the Town of Creston grew to 5,306 from 4,826 (9.9% increase from the 2006 Canada Census). Growing to a community with a population exceeding 5,000 has been anticipated by the residents of Creston for over 15 years and we finally made the leap. Maybe the secret is getting out about just how great this community is to live in !

### NEGOTIATIONS –

In January 2012, a conference call meeting was held with the Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General staff. Town Council and staff were advised that 8 of the 13 officers serving at the Creston RCMP detachment would be assigned to the Town. As such, the municipality would be responsible for all associated expenses. With this call, negotiations began.

The Town's request to lower the number of assigned officers was given consideration by the Ministry staff and, subsequently, the Town was assigned financial responsibility for 7 of the 13 officers. In addition, the number of required civilian administration staff; the Town will now be responsible for 1.5 FTE (full time employment positions) instead of the originally assigned 2 FTE. With both of these concessions by the Province, the Town has successfully negotiated savings of approximately \$190,000 per year.

Our new MPUA will be effective April 1, 2012. This is a 20 year agreement with a 5 year review clause and a 2 year "opt out" notice clause.

### PROCESS –

Our existing Creston RCMP detachment will continue to be staffed with 13 officers and 3 public support staff, with the Town being responsible for the 70% costs of 7 officers and the 1.5 administrative support staff. The costs for the remaining 6 officers in the detachment will remain the responsibility of the Province and the Federal Government.

At this time our local detachment has one Staff/Sgt; 2 Corporals; 9 constables; one GIS (General Investigation Services) officer and 3 public service employees.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT –

The ability to set objectives, priorities and goals for the MPU with our community is a notable benefit of the new policing arrangement. As Mayor, I will meet with the Detachment Commander on a regular basis to review and set local objectives. It is important that I receive input from citizens to assist in these meetings.

### POLICING RESERVE AND TAXES –

On your 2012 Property Tax Notice, the "Police – Residential" line will be replaced with a "Municipal RCMP" line.

The Town's Policing Reserve contains \$1.1 million, this was created by previous Town Councils about 15 years ago in anticipation of going over a population of 5,000. This reserve will be used during the next 5 years to offset the initial costs of increased policing. At the end of five years, residential property owners will see a 12.72% increase on their total tax bill, if everything else that determines taxation doesn't change.

In 2011, for a \$200,000 residential assessment, last year your police tax was approximately \$60. In 2012, the same \$200,000 house will be taxed at approximately \$110 to \$115 to accommodate the increased costs for policing.

Beyond the increase for policing costs, of which Council has no control, your elected representatives are striving to achieve a zero (0%) tax increase for the municipal portion of your taxation bill.

#### COUNCIL COMMITMENT –

I want to assure all Creston taxpayers that your Council is working diligently to find ways to reduce the impact of the increased policing costs, where ever possible. As a result, 2012 budget discussions have been difficult to say the least. All areas of the budget have been affected by this increased cost and Council and staff have worked hard to establish a budget that maintains current services, but leaves little to no room for expansion of services. The challenge to Council over this next year will be to continue to find improvements and efficiencies that will benefit our taxpayers.

#### *I want to hear from you:*

**Please share your concerns, your experiences, and your issues (both positive and negative) on how we can improve the quality of life in our community (the Town and the Creston Valley).**

Thanks

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