# MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER



First, I wanted to start with an apology for not issuing a regular update in quite some time. Life got a bit hectic, but I do my best to provide regular updates.

As it has been a while, I will use this issue as an opportunity to report on municipal and regional activities over the past year and try to provide some info on upcoming initiatives and activities.

2026 has been a busy year for the Town, accomplishing numerous tasks and general improvements to infrastructure and services for everyone's benefit.

## Phase 2 of Pathway Project

Thanks to ongoing great work by our admin office, in collaboration with public works, we were successful in securing a grant through the SGI Traffic Safety Fund for the extension of the pathway and solar lighting along Third Street between Railway and Dundurn Avenue. The section of pathway that crosses the rail requires significant investment. A pedestrian crossing will be looked at in the future when CN upgrades the crossing.

## Dundurn Recreation Grounds

Over the past few years, the Town and RM had been working with the Dundurn Lions Organization to acquire the previous Lion's Grounds and utilize them for future recreation and community uses. The formal transition of these lands occurred in February 2026, and a municipal committee was struck to work on initiating planning for the future of these lands. Since the change in ownership the grounds have been formally renamed as the Dundurn Recreation Grounds and work is ongoing to create a plan and strategy for the area. We also installed a section of sidewalk connecting the grounds to Third Street. If you have any questions about using the grounds or renting its facilities, please contact the Town Office to inquire.

## CAO Succession and New Staff

This past March we completed the CAO succession plan with the hiring of our new CAO, Natasha. She has been with the Town for 3 years and made an immediate positive impact on the organization. Fun fact, she has been responsible for the successful acquisition of $400k in grants in her first 2 years and another $110K this year. Council is delighted to have her lead the organization, and we look forward to working together to achieve the Town's strategic objectives.

As a result of the CAO transition, Valerie transitioned to a part-time Special Projects Manager position leading several key initiatives over the past 6 months. A special thanks to Valerie for all her work and contributions as our previous CAO. We also hired Daphne Buchanan as the Office Assistant in March, and she has been a great addition to the admin team. In October we also bode farewell to Public Works Operator Patrick Anderson as he decided to pursue other opportunities. As a result, we are happy to

announce James Boswell as our new Public Works Operator, and our Seasonal Rink Operator is Wade Forseth.

**Water and Sewer Utility Review**

With the recent completion of the water meter replacement project, we were able to use the data and analytic tools to identify and reduce unmetered water consumption and better understand the water loss magnitude to mitigate impacts to our utility finances. This work was significant in planning for future capital expenditures, as a resulted changes to our rates were established a dedicated restricted reserve to save for these future needs. Utility reviews will continue yearly.

**Sunshine Meadows**

We continue to see building activity in Sunshine Meadows. In 2026, there have been 13 houses either started or completed, and another 6-unit rental townhouse complex. Of these starts, 5 new homes belong to a new builder in our Town - Avela Development. We are happy to see the continued build-out and are working closely with the developer to explore the next phase of the development.

This summer, our Public Works team formally assumed maintenance responsibility for the Sunshine Meadows subdivision, including the park and pond complex. As part of this transition, the team acquired additional equipment and resources for operation and maintenance tasks.

**Facilities Upgrades**

This summer we invested in three projects to maintain and upgrade our facilities. The Community Hall, with support of our partner the RM, received a new exterior with replacement of the siding and exterior metal soffit. The Town Shop had its metal roof replaced including the application of spray foam insulation. Lastly, a section of the arena lobby roof was repaired. These investments help keep our facilities in good shape to continue providing services to residents.

**Grant Funding Success**

As I mentioned earlier, Natasha and team have been responsible for the successful applications for grants. These grants are extremely helpful to complete important work and planning and reduce the reliance and pressure on property taxes and mill rate increases. The major grants acquired in 2026 were as follows:

- SGI Traffic Safety Fund Grant - $75,478.00 – Construction of Phase 2 pathway including solar lighting
- SaskPower Energy Efficiency Grant -- $33,000.00 – Evaluation of Facilities and preparation of comprehensive building asset management and energy efficiency plans.

Thank you to the team for taking on additional tasks and effort to continually work towards attaining these important grants.

## Community Events

Dundurn Fire Department Ball – The DFD held their annual ball in May, and I had the pleasure of serving as the MC. It was a wonderful night of festivities, and I was honoured to be a part of it as the Chair of the Fire Commission.

Canada Day – This year the formal Canada Day activities were held in Shields. The events were postponed to a rescheduled date due to the threat of rain. I thank the community of Shields and volunteers of the region for hosting and celebrating our country. That said, I do want to mention that the Town staff and Councillor Doroshenko and our amazing community volunteers stepped up on short notice to host an impromptu Canada Day celebration in the Town on July 1. This was a great success and much appreciated by the residents. Thank you for the extra efforts for this event and many others over the past year.

Playground Opening – In September the Dundurn Elementary School held a BBQ and grand opening of their new playground structure. The Town contributed through the award of the Sask Lotteries Grant Funding, and I was happy to attend the opening and watch the kids enjoy their new area.

Haunted Barn – The annual haunted barn exhibition was another great success and Amanda, and her team should be commended on a job well done.

Remembrance Day at Elementary School and CFB Dundurn – Councillor Doroshenko attended the school's ceremony, and I attended the base ceremony to represent the Town.

## Town Hall and Coffee with Council Events

Council held the 2nd Annual Town Hall Meeting in May. This meeting is an opportunity for the ratepayers to come and hear from Council regarding general updates and information, and to ask questions.

In September we held our first Coffee with Council event at the hall. This was an informal opportunity to come meet Council and ask questions in a more casual atmosphere. We ended up sitting in a big circle and had a great conversation on several topics. We plan to hold these about 3-4 times per year, so keep your eyes out for the next one.

## Regional Planning

We continue to work together with our regional partners utilizing the TSS Grant Funding to review and update all agreements related to our shared Fire Commission.

## Highway Intersection Upgrades

We continue to communicate with the Provincial Highways Ministry to stress the importance of completing the much-needed upgrade to the Hwy 11/211 intersection.

Following installation of the flashing lights, the next step was to pursue a speed reduction through the intersection. At the November Council Meeting, Council received communications from the Ministry seeking our consent and support for the speed reduction. We resolved to do so, and we hope this reduction can be implemented soon to help provide another element of the long-term plan for this intersection.

**New Reserves and Investments Bylaw**

And finally, I wanted to point you to a recent change in how reserves are established and managed to provide improved transparency to residents. We previously had a reserves policy which outlined the reserves we have and how money is allocated and utilized. While that met minimum requirements, we felt by embedding the reserves policy into bylaw it would provide better visibility and transparency about each reserve, how it is managed, and what it is intended for. Furthermore, another reason for this change is if this or future Councils want to make a change to these reserves, it will require a public bylaw consideration which not only provides visibility but offers opportunity for residents to provide their feedback on the change.

Of course, there were many more things that transpired during the last year, but I hope this was a helpful brief update on some of the major work happening in our community.

Moving forward, there is much work to do and below are some of the noteworthy activities for the next 3 to 6 months.

- Year End Activities and Financial Audit
- Planning for the 2027 Operating and Capital Budgets
- Dundurn Recreation Grounds Master Planning
- Town Water System Assessment

As we get close to the holiday season, I want to wish you and your loved ones a safe and festive season and hope that we can all treat each other with mutual respect and compassion throughout the upcoming year.

Until next time.