

Village of Elbow Council has been made aware of the following email circulating to some of the Village of Elbow ratepayers. Council has chosen to make comments in regard to content and answer questions that are part of the email. Council is planning a ratepayer meeting in the near future to address some of the concerns in public.

The Line 19 Multiplex Committee is also planning a public meeting in August. We certainly hope our ratepayers will be able to attend. Please watch for notifications regarding place and time of these meetings.

In the meantime Jocelyn Veikle our Project Manager has provided us with the following “at-a-glance” comment in regard to the proposals received:

“We have received a number of exciting submissions from qualified, well-known bidders, each coming in under the \$5,519,000 (plus tax) top-end budget number that we included in the RFP. This leaves a healthy contingency for us to work with the successful bidder to upgrade some items and keep a healthy reserve for unforeseen challenges.

Proposed building sizes all exceed the 17,000 sq ft. facility we had in mind.

All bidders included very thoughtful designs and have demonstrated consideration for the many possible user groups sure to use our facility.”

EMAIL:

Council has provided their responses in red.

BINDING VOTE ON THE NEW “LINE 19 MULTIPLEX”

SPREAD THE WORD EVERY VOTE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT in favor or not the end result must be the voice of majority of ratepayers!!!!!!

AUGUST 28 - Advance poll

SEPTEMBER 8 - Vote day

IF YOU CAN NOT BE PRESENT TO VOTE ON AUGUST 28 or SEPTEMBER 8, a mail in ballot option is available. YOU MUST register at the Village Office 30 days prior to September 8 (approx. AUGUST 8). You can do this in person, or by postal mail. THE MAIL MUST BE RECEIVED IN VILLAGE OFFICE no later than August 8. The forms that must be filled in are attached.

Council agrees, every vote is extremely important.

- August 28th, 2021 – Advance poll from 5pm to 8 pm at the Civic Center in Elbow**
- September 8th, 2021 – Voting day from 9am to 8pm at the Civic Center in Elbow**
- Mail in Ballot registrations – Mail in ballot registration requests will be supplied in person, by phone or by email. The mail in ballot registrations must be completed and returned to the Village office no later than August 8th, 2021. August 8th, 2021 is a Sunday. Village staff will be accepting the registrations at the office until closing on Friday August 6th, 2021. After hours or on August 7th and 8th the ballots may be dropped off in the drop off box on west side of Village office.**
- Mail in ballots must be received by the village no later than September 8th at 8pm. If handing in your mail in ballot on the day of the vote it must be handed in at the polling station which is the Civic Center in Elbow and must be handed in no later than 8pm.**

INFORMATION UPDATE

Check your tax notice, taxes are on the rise in Elbow!

Property taxes increased throughout Saskatchewan:

- **On residential properties education taxes rose 8.26%.**
- **Saskatchewan is in a reassessment year therefore if your taxable assessment went up so did your taxes accordingly.**
- **The Village of Elbow increased their base tax by the amount of \$180.00. The first tax increase in 3 years.**

Tax increases are imminent when the cost of operations increase. Operation costs that tend to increase annually are utilities, salaries, wages, RCMP costs and maintenance of streets and facilities. We compared some base taxes and mill rates for residential properties in other Communities around Lake Diefenbaker.

Village of Loreburn – Mill Rate 14: Base Tax \$1200.00

Village of Lucky Lake – Mill Rate 6.25: Base tax \$900.00

Town of Outlook - Mill Rate 6.50: Base Tax \$1075.00

Elbow – Mill Rate 4.75: Base Tax \$900.00

Are there grants available that may better suit Elbow; upgrading our water, dust suppression etc.?

There has never been a grant that we are aware of for dust suppression. The Village of Elbow Council investigated the cost of dust suppression a couple of years back. The Cost to put down dust suppressant throughout the Village at that time was \$60,755.00. Knowing the Village has ratepayers that do not want their taxes spent on dust suppressant Council agreed individual taxpayers could organize to have their individual streets done at their direct expense. This was an action recommended by the infrastructure committee to continue in 2021. Regardless if the Village does such or the individuals, the cost comes from taxpayers' pockets.

Council has been working on an alternative to dust suppressant that is longer lasting and does not have the high cost of pavement. It is called chip sealing. Council completed 3 blocks on Railway Avenue in July of 2021. The stretch runs from Saskatchewan Street to King Street.

Council has discussed on several occasions the idea of a backup generator system for the water plant. It is not as simple as one would think. To have a backup generator at the water plant we must also have backup generators at the lift stations to carry the waste away. Wiring capabilities also need to be considered, placement, compatible sizing etc.

In early July we received a grant to complete an updated study of our water plant. This information shall provide us with the information needed to look at moving forward with backup generators for the water plant and lift stations when the power goes out as well as the water usage and storage capabilities in the future. The study is to be complete in September 2021.

The Village of Elbow is consistently looking at grant opportunities. At the time the ICIP grant was announced and included Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure to build stronger communities and improve inclusion, the Village of Elbow knew the state of our existing buildings and the need to plan for the future. This grant opportunity would make a New Building affordable and projected that the cost to the

taxpayers would be less than maintaining our existing facilities. Council also recognized the fact that this grant opportunity may come along only once in our lifetime, as grants for recreational capital costs to build new - are rare.

ONLY ELBOW ratepayers are on the hook for the remaining \$1.7million (at a minimum) of the proposed building budget, plus operating budget each year.

Per the December newsletter, the estimated operating costs were set at \$40,000 per year. This does not include insurance cost per year (estimated \$20,000). The cost of Janitor, building operator or the proposed Recreation Director are also not included.

Elbow's share of the 6.5 million budgeted for the New Line 19 MultiPlex is \$1,733,550.00. The remaining amount that has been approved by both the Federal and Provincial Government is \$4,766,450.00. These grant monies are a gift for the Village of Elbow and do not have to be paid back. This grant that we applied for and is approved is for recreational infrastructure only and cannot be used for streets or water upgrades.

The above funding translates into the Village of Elbow being able to put up a New Line 19 Multiplex for less than 30 cents on the dollars. The Village of Elbow already has \$380,000.00 in a reserve for such (donated by the ArenaPlex Committee for a new building), along with \$100,000.00 committed from the RM of Loreburn (RM taxpayer dollars). This makes the cost of the building with absolutely no fundraising 20 cents on the dollar. Our minimum fundraising projections for capital costs are \$500,000.00 which bring the cost to 12 cents on the dollar or a cost of \$753,550.00.

At no time did Council ever estimate the operational costs of our New Building to be \$40,000.00. Council stated that other nearby communities operating costs for their buildings are around \$40,000.00 per year at the top end. These are buildings that are already many years old. Council and the Line 19 MultiPlex Committee has stated many times that the RFP (Request for Proposal) included an operating budget component, we will release those numbers when they are available.

Yes, it is only the Elbow ratepayers that are directly on the hook for their share of the New Building and it also only the Elbow ratepayers that are directly on the hook for the costs of our existing buildings.

The New Line 19 Multiplex has gathered lots of interest from ratepayers in all our communities who have stepped up to the plate to help raise funds to build the new building and lower the costs to the Elbow ratepayers. We are fortunate it is Elbow that the building will be constructed. It will benefit our businesses and real estate values the most.

Our neighboring communities do not ask the Elbow ratepayers to contribute taxpayer dollars to their facilities such as the Loreburn skating rink and Strongfield curling rink enjoyed by many from our Community.

The current Elbow infrastructure already incurs the cost of cleaning and operation. The insurance cost of the building is based on the value of the building. A multi-recreational building valued at 7 million dollars is estimated to have an insurance cost of \$19,600.00. Currently we have 2 million dollars' worth of insurance on the rink at a cost of \$6000.00 annually which is not a replacement cost value. Total insurance cost for the 3 existing buildings in 2020 was \$14,150.00.

How much rental income will be generated in the winter for this multi-million dollar facility? Arenaplexs' around the province (i.e. Aberdeen) are going bankrupt.

This is not an Arenaplex. We use the term multiplex to define our new building – why? We are incorporating 3 of the existing buildings we maintain and operate into one (Civic Center, Library and the Rink which includes the fitness center) and have asked for the designed space to be multi-functional. For years we have maintained and operated these facilities and project that once under one roof the cost of operating and maintaining them will be less in a new energy efficient building.

Comparing an arenaplex with artificial skating and curling ice that operates year round is not a fair comparison. The Aberdeen Recplex has an NHL sized skating rink, 6 dressing rooms, curling rink with four sheets of ice, and multiple heated viewing areas. The proposed Line 19 Multiplex will be entirely different in nature. While there is an opportunity to learn from other community's infrastructure projects, this is not a comparison of similar structures.

The Village of Elbows existing facilities operate at a deficit. It is the taxpayers that carry the average debt of \$43,000.00 each year (refer to July 2021 newsletter). It no longer makes economic sense to spend good money on these facilities when they have outlived their lifespan and require hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep them viable for a truly short term.

The Village of Elbow as part of Lake Diefenbaker is rapidly growing as a tourist destination not only in summer but also as a popular ice fishing spot during the winter months. Our Village is centrally located, and the new building is designed to host events up to 400 people. This new building will be marketed as a great, central location for meetings, conferences, destination wedding, and large gatherings. With the right marketing tools, the new building has an opportunity to bring in more revenue than the existing buildings, increasing the rental revenue and decreasing the overall cost to ratepayers.

Would we be in this position today if we started with a feasibility study and then asked Elbow ratepayers if they were in favor of their 1.7m before proceeding?

Presenting a feasibility study on numbers based totally on projections with not knowing what kind or how big of a facility we would be getting did not make sense to Council. To be honest and transparent Council's preference was and still is to use numbers that are research and fact based according to the proposals submitted for the New Build and based on the type of building chosen that fits the criteria and is within the budgeted dollars. Council has stated all along that these numbers will be released when they are available. We have also stated that the SMB (Saskatchewan Municipal Board) would not engage in financing conversations with us until we had final grant approval, and such was publicly announced. We have met with SMB since the announcement (July 9, 2021) and are in the midst of developing a financial plan.

Ratepayers were made aware at the ratepayers meeting that an expression of interest for a new building application was submitted to the Government in the spring of 2019. No one spoke against such at the ratepayers meeting nor did anyone notify Council of them being against such following the meeting.

Council and Administration did work on the cost of the existing buildings both operational and capital costs along with comparison costs of other communities' recreational buildings. It was tough to find anything that had been built in the area recently and used the best comparisons available. Knowing the Village must sustain some sort of recreational infrastructure to take us into the next 50 to 60 years, it was clear that

investing in a new building was the wiser choice and made the most economic sense instead of investing taxpayer dollars for capital costs and major repairs on the existing buildings.

Council knew applying for the 4.77-million-dollar grant and being successful in such would be an opportunity we cannot let pass by considering the needs of our existing buildings. After several meetings, working with numbers and discussions around what we could afford as a Village, Council determined we could afford a budget amount of 1.77 million dollars and still be further ahead than investing in our existing buildings.

Elbow's population is 337, 105 residents are over 65, and 205 are over 50. Elbow is largely a retirement community. Will there be enough young energetic volunteers to organize and host all the proposed fundraisers and concerts?

The Village of Elbow is largely a tourist destination. We have seen this from every angle with a large increase to the surrounding developments such as RV parks, cottage developments and new businesses.

The New Line 19 Multiplex will certainly be an attractive venue to host large fundraisers and concerts. One cannot predict the number of volunteers that will be around but this will certainly be something that will be needed no matter if we have a new facility or are trying to pour money into leaking roofs and crumbling structure of our existing facilities.

We currently have multiple building suitable to rent for various functions – giving our community the ability to host different events at the same time. What happens when these are combined into just one building?

The new building is designed so that it may host different events of different sizes at the same time and is a building that will be able to be used for all different types of events and activities year-round.

In the latest newsletter from the village it states that two petitions for a referendum were received, costing the Village \$10,000. In researching a referendum, we found the cost is likely to be no more than \$2000. What they fail to include, is that there was a 1st informal petition sent, showing concern by numerous ratepayers that to this date, has not been responded to. Acknowledging the 1st petition (over 150 signatures), and giving rate payers a say at that time would have had minimal cost and saved all the additional meetings, legal fees, etc. that they are suggesting.

The Village of Elbow News stated that the \$10,000 in costs to date were resulting from “extra meetings of council, consulting a law firm, consulting Government Relations Advisory Services, consulting with other communities and administrators, and having a vote for referendum.” There have been multiple steps required in order to ensure the Village follows the necessary steps to have a fair and lawful referendum, over and above the vote.

Expenses directly related to the operations the day of the referendum, mail in ballots, and advance poll may estimate to be around \$2,000.

At the April 12th Council meeting, a delegation representing the petitioners attended the Council meeting asking for up-to-date information and presented Council with a petition requesting an answer within 2 days of their presentation. This petition had many errors as to what qualifies or is deemed to be a proper petition. Council did agree that although they had no new information, they would work on getting out as

much information as they had. Council and the Line 19 Committee immediately went to work on preparing a power point presentation to get more information out to the public as requested.

Council acknowledges that a letter was not sent directly to Kim Trew following the April 12th meeting. Our focus was to continue our work and do our best job in being transparent and sharing any information we have with the ratepayers. This presentation was delivered door to door, put on our website, Facebook page and hard copies were available at the Village Office as soon as April 16th, 2021.

Another petition was started immediately by the same group and was submitted to the Village office Administrator on April 19th, 2021. After consultation with our Municipal Legal Office our Acting Administrator deemed the petition to be invalid.

Council and the Line 19 Multiplex knew there was a need for a series of public meetings and has worked to do their best in providing up to date information and answering questions. The Line 19 Multiplex Committee took the lead on the 1st meeting and announced a public meeting to be held on Saturday June 19th, 2021 and released an FAQ document on June 17th, 2021.

As soon as a public meeting was announced on social media, the petition group put out a post on Facebook on June 17th, 2021 stating that there would be another petition going around asking for a referendum. This post stated that "we are doing petition #2. Council is holding a public mtg on build on Saturday. Once they hold a mtg. they no longer have to accept petitions on this subject for a year. We are scrambling to submit petition by tomorrow. Glen is walking up the street if you see him I hope you will sign. If you don't see him can I drop by or can you go to Bakery before 2 to sign?"

Council would like to clarify for the ratepayers that there is no reference in the Municipalities Act that the Village would be able to turn down a petition following a public meeting. Additionally the petition group did phone to clarify with the Village on the proposed date of the public meeting and were informed that same morning by Joanne Brochu to Dawn McTavish that it was the Line 19 Multiplex hosting the meeting, not Council. Council was disappointed to hear that the petition group still moved ahead and was racing to put together a petition prior to the informational meeting. Why rush to a vote before the information is available and factual?

The Line 19 MultiPlex Committee also published an FAQ document and provided such to the public through social media, Village website and paper copies for those who asked. This document was also made available at the public meeting. Council responded to the ratepayer vote question in a FAQ put out by the Line 19 Multiplex. This was distributed before the Village of Elbow was presented with another petition.

Additionally, Line 19 Multiplex committee has put together a 'Line 19 Foundation' to aid in the operating costs of various Line 19 infrastructure, such as the Elbow Trail, Loreburn Rink, and New Multiplex etc. This is wonderful for our communities, as the idea is that there will be opportunity for people to include the Line 19 Foundation as part of their "planned giving" to ease tax burden. The fact is, there are so many unanswered questions surrounding this, including their claim to have received between \$1,000,000 and \$2,000,000 in pledges. When do you receive your first \$1? Who decides which of the included infrastructure receives what portion of the funds? This is "planned giving" in your estate. We have not received any more information, but in researching this type of 'estate planning', it indicates this money is not received until you pass, and even then is not a guarantee.

The Line 19 Foundation is brand new to our community. Ongoing operational costs are a concern for all. Creating a Foundation as one of the solutions is taking a proactive step in the right direction. The Volunteers that are working on this foundation for the future of Line 19 and their recreational facilities have years of experience behind them as well as advice from chartered accountants and lawyers. We look forward in bringing this huge opportunity to our area and will certainly provide all the information as it becomes available. There is a lot of work to be done, Foundations take years to grow and a lot of volunteer effort. To date it is true that the Line 19 Foundation has secured planned giving estate pledges between one and two million dollars. To our volunteers working diligently on this foundation and to our donators – **THANKYOU!**

On July 14, 2021 at 9:00am, a community meeting was held to determine the wording of referendum question. When the Village Office was contacted (July 8) in regards to what questions or feedback would be included, we were informed that no input from the community would be allowed, so it was determined that attendance of our group members, or a prepared agenda was not necessary. The night before the mtg. notice was posted that 5 days' notice would have been required to address council, however, at 8:55 on July 14, the meeting was amended to include open discussion, in direct contradiction to the inquiry a week prior. Due to this, our Referendum group was not present, and unable to speak or offer input as to the proposed wording.

On June 23rd, 2021 Council was notified that our Acting Administrator deemed the 2nd petition for a referendum to be legitimate and Council would have to move forward with a referendum. There are many strict guidelines that must be followed due to Village bylaws and Provincial legislation including that the referendum question must be formed 8 weeks prior to the vote day. In order to meet the "Award of Contracts" date in the RFP, Council had to call a meeting on Friday, June 25th. At this meeting Council set a date of Sunday, June 27th to meet with the representatives of the Petition and invited representatives from the group that submitted the petition. At the June 27th meeting Council communicated to the representatives that we would be required to form the question for the referendum at this meeting due to the timeline detailed in the RFP. The petition group representatives chose to leave the meeting prior to the question being formed. Council passed a resolution of the question to be used on the ballot of the referendum.

On July 7th, the Village of Elbow put out a Public Notice that there would be a public meeting to discuss the petition for Referendum and this meeting would be held at 9:00 am on July 14th. This meeting was set primarily to pass the bylaw needed weeks in advance of the referendum.

Both the Administration and Administration Assistant state that nobody called the Village office asking to speak at the meeting to be held on July 14th, 2021. One call was made asking what the meeting was about and if there would be a public vote at the meeting. Arriving at the meeting and seeing we had a few people that were going to join the meeting Council agreed we could allow them to speak or ask questions.

If you have any questions for this group or do not want to receive any future emails from this group please reply to this email. If you know of someone who may like to receive this information please pass on to them or reply with their email address.

We all love Elbow and its community spirit. Please vote and have all voices heard so we can come together as a community moving forward.

Thank you!

Council does have a question for this group.

Council has never been presented with alternatives by the petitioners in regard to the state of our existing building and the future of recreational spaces. Citizens Guide to Shaping Council Decisions – page 5, 6, and 7 make reference in regards to the petitioners doing their research and providing alternatives.

Knowing that it is the responsibility of the Village and in the best interest of its ratepayers to provide recreational spaces for the health and wellbeing of its residents and that trying to keep the spaces we have (Library, Rink, Civic Center, Fitness Center) viable over the next ten years will incur huge costs at an estimated minimum of \$400,000.00, what alternative do you offer? What will this cost the taxpayers?

Council is always open to discussion and providing information and we look forward to the public meetings. The question on the ballot will read as:

Do you support the proposed construction of the Line 19 Multi-Purpose Facility?