2026 ANNUAL RATEPAYER MEETING
SPECIAL AREA NO. 4, SUB-DIVISION NO. 1, 2 and 3
Gem Centre, Consort
June 18, 2026

Meeting was called to order at 1:34 pm with 5 ratepayers in attendance.

Laurie Ference nominated Doug Noble as meeting Chair. Gordon Long moved nominations cease. CARRIED

Taryl Abt read minutes from June 5, 2025, ratepayer meeting.

Minutes were declared adopted on a motion by Murray Sankey; seconded by Rick Strankman. CARRIED

<u>OLD BUSINESS</u>

Esther Hay Meadow discussion.

<u>ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS</u>

<u>Laurie Ference, SD #2</u>
Shirley McClellan Regional Water Service Commission
- water line extension has been completed from Pemukan to Compeer

East Central Housing Society
- committee continues to fundraise for Gem Centre

Consort Medical Board
- signed new contract with Christie and new NP
- demolition of interior of new clinic is complete

Alfred Brown Handibus
- have started to make trips to local medical appts and downtown for lodge residents.

Discussion on New Medical Clinic renovation plans, clinic services and emergency department. Jordon gave update on conversations being had with AHS. Our team of NP's is creating stability but is a work in progress. Amy Deagle is contracted and works regionally. Suggested that a questionnaire be offered asking community for type of services wanted.

<u>Gordon Long, SD #1</u>
East Central Ambulance
- Our area has had 218 calls this year; looking at changing coverage area to include Hanna and Oyen for next year.
- Negotiating 10-year contract with AHS
- New ambulance being placed in Consort.

Acadia Foundation
- Consort occupancy is at 52%
- Update on Oyen SL4 unit

Big Country Waste
- 28 sites aging out; New drop off bins for bagged garbage, all other garbage will go to Youngstown transfer station. This is more cost-effective option rather than replacing existing or closing of sites. Est cost to repair $6M.

Discussion on chem jug sites; Hemaruka and Monitor only sites open in SA4, otherwise must be returned to retailer. Discussion on Regional Health Initiative contract.
Discussion on 911 dispatch and the lack of cell service in the east area.

<u>Doug Noble, SD #3</u>

Endangered Species Council- no longer have seat at table.

SPECIAL AREAS BOARD RESPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Shaune Kovitch, Chair

Shaune introduced Sean Murphy, SA4 Ag. Fieldman; Ryley Girletz, Director of Municipal Services; Jordon Christianson, Director of Regional Initiatives.
Shaune presented a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

- **Advisory Council & Board:** Advisory Council meetings 4 x /yr. Yesterday combined with presentation with STARS with unveiling of SA logo. Reviewed board appointments and governance. In 2028 will be needing new representative to sit on Board to replace Doug Noble.
- **Strategic Planning-** Updating and reviewing our Mission, Vision and Business Plan, review of current operations and delivery standards.
- **Empress Viability Review:** Initiated by the residents of Empress. Once review is complete, options will be provided to Empress residents. 12-18 month process.
- **Municipal Partnerships:** Partnerships with urban municipalities within SA and neighboring municipalities. Explained Industrial Tax Transfer funding. Other partnerships, SMRWSC, Henry Kroeger
- **TRLS Policy:** expires July 16, 2026
- **Resident Satisfaction Survey:** reviewed key findings of 2025.
  Priorities: local healthcare, road maintenance, surfacing and lower taxes. New survey open until October 2026.

Ryley Girletz, Director of Municipal Services

Ryley presented a PowerPoint presentation on the following:
Reviewed 2026 department priorities

- **Roads-** Reviewed 2026 Road program; construction, recrowning and surfacing. Explained partnership with AB Transportation on secondary highway maintenance. Continue conversation on long term pavement plan.
- **Water:** Water Stations being developed in Compeer (including truckfill) & Kirriemuir, Discussed rural potable waterlines potential.
- **Emergency Service**: AFFRCS radio transition complete, Regional Emergency Management- full function exercise next week in Oyen.
- **Parks**- Improvements at Prairie Oasis Park and Blood Indian Park. Discussed annual visitor surveys and operational agreements with the Province for Little Fish and Gooseberry Provincial Parks.
- **Facilities Management**- New facilities manager has been hired. Upgrades to communication towers, demolition of Cereal Hall and dam safety review.

Discussion on Road construction deferrals. Discussion on the responsibility of dam safety; Dams are managed by Alberta Ag & Irrigation
Presented path to Pavement presentation- history on staged road surfacing.

Trent Caskey, Director of Property Administration

Trent presented a PowerPoint presentation on the following:

- **Annual Rate Review:** Cultivation rates-no change, Grazing Leases-41% increase ($85.15-$120.39). Explained formula. Presented history of grazing lease rates.
- **Community Pasture:** $1.15/head/day, stocking rates expect to be at full capacity. Buffalo Attle Co-op entered 3-year agreement. SA will continue to set stocking rate, with Co-op running operations
- **Tax Recovery Land Sale:** Application deadline is July 16th. Explained voluntary exchange list process.

Discussion and review of the TRLS approval and appeal process. Discussion on money generated by TRLS.

- **Sheerness Industrial Park:** Construction completed in 2025, Sale of lots on-going (75% of lots currently have agreements to sell).

Discussion on Deadfish & Sheerness Reservoir. Discussion on soil classification and suitability for irrigation

Sean Murphy gave update of Strychnine program.

Jordon Christianson, Director of Regional Initiatives

Presented on:
Regional Health Initiatives-

- **Regional support of health services**, collaboration of Hanna, Oyen, Consort medical board clinics, recruitment and retention. Gave update on Clinics
- **Consort Nurse Practitioner Program**- community led initiative, SA helping fund this program in partnership with Province
- **Oyen Assisted Living/Dementia Care Facility**- 14-unit DSL4/4D spaces. Government of Albera funded through capital grant to Acadia Foundation
- **Joint Irrigation Project**-Phase 2 completed in 2025, next step to create Municipally Controlled Corporation
- **Regional Economic Development-** 2026 Focus
    - Palliser Economic Partnership
    - Special Areas & Oyen Development Corp- Part 9

Darren Jones, Director of Finance & Administration

Darren presented a PowerPoint presentation reviewing:

- **Taxation and Assessment notices**: appeal deadline July 21, 2026
- **Assessment Trends:** Renewable projects continue to increase assessment base $869
- **Millrate Trends:** increased 3% compared to 2025 due in part to increasing provincial school taxes (7-11%)
- **2025 Financial Statements:** Reviewed 2025 revenues, seeing slight decline in MSL revenues. Reviewed 2025 expenses
- **2026 Budget:** Total revenue $94 million, total expenses $ 96.3 million. Initial plan to do Hwy 899 (14M) was deferred, therefore 4.5 M surplus expected.
- **Long term finances:** accumulated operating surplus of 20.9 M, strong reserves mean support for future.

Discussion on priorities- health care and emergency response top priority in this area. Discussion on the importance of maintaining our assets; was suggested that the interest of TRLS funds be used for maintenance of the roads.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion on ditch cutting of roads and trails. Suggestion to obtain a mower attachment for grader units. Trails have become more utilized by ratepayers, so service needs to be considered. Recommended to ratepayer, to contact local Road Committee member as this committee drives the road program.

Doug Fawcett made motion that SA consider obtaining grader attachments to cut grass and weeds on backtrails or look at rental of equipment. Murray Sankey seconded. DEFEATED.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27pm by Doug Noble.

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Taryl Abt, Administrator
Special Area No. 4, Consort

Motion to approve minutes to occur at the next annual ratepayer meeting.