

ANNUAL RATEPAYER MEETING
Special Area No. 2, Subdivision No. 2
Homestead Coulee Hall
June 24, 2026

Shaune Kovitch, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. with approximately nine ratepayers in attendance.

Neal Roes nominated Rod Moench as meeting Chair. Seconded by Duanne Venio.

Brett Richards read the 2025 minutes. Jim Faubion moved the 2025 minutes be adopted as amended. Seconded by Richard Mashon. **Carried.**

ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

Rod Moench – Subdivision 2

- Elected in fall, sitting on three committees, anticipating that it will get busier.

SPECIAL AREAS BOARD REPORTS

Shaune Kovitch, Chair, Special Areas Board:

Commented on:

- 2025 Ratepayer motions:
 1. Radio dead zones - Radio systems for fire now on Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System (AFRRCS);
 2. Increased water storage – Board will monitor and review the need; and
 3. Photo turn-out at Dorothy elevator has gone to AB TEC as well as a brake check lane.
- Ryley Giritz new Director of Municipal Services
- Jordon Christianson, now Director of Regional Initiatives.
- Advisory Council and Board composition
- Strategic Planning; including Business Plan and a review of service standards
- Empress Viability Review, ongoing with Municipal Affairs
- Municipal Partnerships, partnership projects, industrial tax transfer
- Tax Recovery Land Sale Policy, expires July 16, 2026, applications must be submitted
- Resident Satisfaction Survey, intended to help guide long term planning.

Ryley Giritz, Director of Municipal Services:

Commented on:

- 2026 Priorities: focus on service standards, to ensure alignment with Advisory Council
- Road Program, including construction, surfacing, recrowning
- Water Services, programs and possible expansion lines
- Emergency Services, Regional Fire switched to AFRRCS, recent Emergency Management Mock Exercise was successful
- Parks and Campgrounds, improvements planned, push button showers installed included in fee
- Facilities Management, new manager hired, Blood Indian new spillway and Bartman Dam repairs.

Mr. Giritz also presented the Path to Pavement Strategy regarding surfaced roads in Special Areas and a current update on what is proposed for the next 10 years.

Trent Caskey, Director of Property Administration:

Commented on:

- Annual Rate Review: cultivation leases (no change) and grazing leases (41% increase from 2025)
- Community Pastures: Rate at 1.15/head/day, close to full allotment, Nolan Ball overseeing Special Areas Community Pasture program, Buffalo-Atlee managed by Grazing Cooperative for three-year trial, Dustin Aebly is the contact, Special Areas charges the cooperative rental and taxes, and capital agreement
- Tax Recovery Land Sale, applications due July 16th, 2026, process will continue after the date but with timelines
- Sheerness Industrial Park and Reservoir: three lots sold, two under option, interested parties on the other lots. No development permits have been issued.

Jordan Christianson, Director of Regional Initiatives

Commented on:

- Regional Support for Local Health Services: recruitment and retention, new clinic buildings in Oyen and Consort
- Consort Nurse Practitioner Pilot Program
- Oyen Assisted Living/Dementia Care Facility, nearly complete
- MD of Acadia & Special Areas Joint Irrigation Project; phase 2 complete, \$2.6B cost to build, creating a municipally controlled corporation is next step
- Regional Economic Development, Palliser Economic Partnership, Special Areas and Oyen Development Corporation.

Darren Jones, Director of Finance and Administration:

Commented on:

- Taxation and Assessment Notices: have been mailed, assessment appeal deadline July 21, 2026
- Assessment Trends: up to \$5B of assessment
- Mill Rate Trends: 2026 mill rates increased 3% (largely provincial school portion)
- 2025 Financial Statements: \$85.2M in revenues, \$89M in expenses, with planned deficit spending
- 2026 Planned Budget: revenue \$94M, \$96.3M in expenses, with planned deficit spending of \$2.3M to draw down accumulated surplus (included paving on SH 899, which is now deferred to 2027).

Discussion:

- Funding for recreation in the Town of Drumheller, Board is meeting with them soon
- Special Areas residents have to pay for parking when accessing rec facilities in Drumheller
- Talks with AB TEC regarding gravel secondaries is ongoing, they would look into treatments and testing, Special Areas Board will circle back with them in fall
- Question regarding further surfacing on Highway 570 east up the hill
- Flashing light at the top of the Dorothy Hill to warn drivers of the hazard
- The price effects of an oil and gas well in the Tax Recovery Land Sale where the company has not paid for years – still worked into the price as we don't know if they have paid or not
- Questioning the benefit of the Buffalo Atlee Pasture Co-op if the operation is under the same rules
- Repayment terms for money loaned to Special Areas and Oyen Economic partnership
- Difference in revenues between 2025 and 2026
- Strychnine availability in 2026/2027, SAB has no supply currently, likely will add to supply to release next spring if any is received.
- Cemetery lot price increase was very high
- Sunterra nursery barn feed bags flying around the country, SA Ag Fieldman possibly reach out
- Lagoons and Data Centres being built; stormwater ponds and a reservoir are a part of the Sheerness Industrial Park
- No development permit applications have been received on Sheerness Industrial Park, nothing is permitted.

Motions:

SA2SUB2 - Motion 1: Moved by Frank Roes to appoint Zane Hansen to Road Committee in Special Area No. 2 Subdivision No. 2. Seconded by Duanne Veno. **Carried.**

SA2SUB2 - Motion 2: Jim Faubion moved that Special Areas Board reconsider the price of Special Areas Cemetery lots and lower it to \$250. Seconded by Richard Mashon. **Carried.**

Rod Moench adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.



Brett Richards, Administrator
Special Area No. 2

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