

Mayor's Year-End Report 2021

Delivered on December 21, 2021, by Mayor Bryan King

I am pleased to provide this year-end report to Council and our residents that outlines the Town's work over the past year. As you know, our work is guided by Council's strategic plan, which is implemented primarily through operational plans in the various Departments. My report will focus on the Departmental achievements in this context, along with our capital works projects. I'll begin with the latter.

Capital Works Projects

We launched or concluded nine (9) capital works projects in 2021, and they are as follows:

- Fallsview Park boat launch and dock: This year, we finished phase 1A of the *Exploits River Development Strategy* with the construction of the Fallsview Park boat launch and dock. It is a truly beautiful river asset that will improve access to recreation salmon fishing. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project (approx. 67%), and Council used its gas tax for its share. No borrowing is required.
- Riverside Drive Access Point: Construction on the last component of phase 1 of the *Exploits River Development Strategy*, the site on Riverside Drive, began this year and will be finished by July 31, 2022. This site is designed specifically for kayaks and canoes, but it will be another beautiful addition to our river assets. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is funding this project (approx. 67%), and Council is using its gas tax for its share. No borrowing is required.
- Main Street Linear Park: In June 2021, the Town learned about a new program through the Government of Canada called the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF). The program had a quick application period, but we had a project ready for submission, and the Town applied in July 2021 to complete the Main Street Linear Park. We received approval in August 2021, and work began immediately. Unfortunately, given supply chain issues and COVID-19 interruptions, this project could not be completed in the Fall as intended. It will, however, be finished by July 31, 2022. The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) is funding this at 57%, and Council is using its gas tax for its share. No borrowing is required.
- Beaumont Heights Brook Infrastructure Improvements: Work began this year to complete improvements to the Beaumont Heights brook infrastructure around the Main Street intersection. We had intended to complete this project in 2021; however, by the time we

received the necessary permit from the government, we were outside the desired construction period. The contractor for this project is engaged, and the work will be finished in 2022. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is funding this project by 80%, and Council's share is covered through general revenue.

- **Greenridge Road Waterline Loop Project:** In February 2021, the waterline loop, which was constructed in December 2020, was opened. Unfortunately, the Town began to receive residential reports of dirty water shortly after that, and the bleed line was reopened. The engineers reassessed the situation and determined another fire hydrant was required, which was installed during the summer. We have since learned about other issues in the area, and Council recently applied for funding to replace the entire waterline on Greenridge Road. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project by 80%, and Council acquired a loan for its share.
- **Main Street Road Upgrade:** This year, we replaced another 750 meters of asphalt on Main Street in the west end. We also addressed a storm drainage issue in the area. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador funded this project by 67%, and Council acquired a loan for its share.
- **COVID-19 Stimulus Projects:** Eight (8) projects were completed with the COVID-19 stimulus funding, which was given to the Town by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The projects include the following: Diamond Pond walking trail upgrades; Town Hall renovations (kitchen cabinets and lobby); stadium LED lights; stadium canopies; ammonia safety relief header upgrade; Fire Hall canopies; Fire Hall electrical upgrades; and the Public Works Department storage shed. These projects cost \$152,034.23 after the HST rebate, and the Town covered \$17,034.23.
- **Recreation Storage Shed:** A new storage facility was constructed by the stadium using the Town's gas tax funding.
- **Chlorine Booster Station:** With support from the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor, a chlorine booster station is being added to our water distribution system. Council is contributing \$35,840.51 (including HST) to this project, with the balance covered by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor.

Public Works

The Public Works Department was tasked with 13 initiatives in its 2021 Operational Plan. I am pleased to report that it completed the following:

- Implemented the 2021 curbside residential Spring clean-up program. Over the three weeks (May – June), the Department collected approximately 102 tonnes of debris and waste.
- Repaired, through a contract, approximately 1,200 square meters of asphalt, including sections on Greenridge Road, Main Street, Beaumont Heights, Riverside Drive, and Kinsmen Drive. Council invested roughly \$98,000 in regular asphalt repair in 2021. The Department directly distributed around 95 tonnes of asphalt to fix potholes, which is an increase of 171% over 2021.
- Reconstructed 1 km of road shoulder on Main Street.
- Repaired five (5) waterline breaks as of December 20, 2021.
- Lowered catch basins on Newtown Road.
- Installed the new guardrail and posts on Riverside Drive.
- Reconstructed 1,360 meters of ditches throughout town.
- Sealed cracks that developed in our road network.
- Began reconstructing Vokey's Lane.
- Developed a parking lot behind the Fire Hall.
- Swept streets and roads throughout the town with the new sweeper.
- Reconstructed the ditch behinds Adams Construction.

It is important to note this list is not exhaustive, and many other things were completed that I have not indicated. Services and works such as snow clearing, line painting, chlorine sampling, and many other things happen that are very important.

Recreation

The Recreation Department was, once again, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to close the stadium in February 2021 when the province moved to alert level 5, and it did not reopen for that season. Despite this, however, we were able to resume many of our programs, events, and services in 2021, albeit with COVID-19 adjustments. This year, we completed the following:

- Four (4) summer students were hired through the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program, and they focused exclusively on maintaining grass and cleaning ditches throughout the town.

- The summer recreation program went ahead this year! While the numbers were low with 56 participants, we did provide some interesting experiences with kayaking/canoeing and interactions with horses at the Stable Way facility.
- We began coordinating activities associated with the Exploits River. During the summer, the Department arranged a kayak/canoe trip from Grand Falls-Windsor to Bishop's Falls led by experienced guides. We would love to see private sector initiatives along these lines that utilize our new river assets!
- With funding under the New Horizons for Seniors Program, we hosted quilting and painting workshops that were both 12-weeks long.
- We celebrated Canada Day on July 1, 2021, with a drive-thru event at the stadium and a seniors/war veteran banquet.
- The community garden was enhanced this year with the addition of the pergola and herb planter. We also upgraded soil conditions and added two raised planter boxes.
- With funding under the Community Healthy Living Fund, we implemented
 - o the Community Garden Harvest Program, which involved a series of workshops on growing and preserving fruits/vegetables; and
 - o the Youth Healthy Cooking Workshop.
- Harvest on the Exploits was scheduled to occur this year, with all the details arranged, but was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Nonetheless, we moved forward with the zombie walk and the outdoor Halloween movie in October 2021.
- The pumpkin people/scarecrow contest was a big hit this year! We had 19 entries, and over 1,700 people voted in the online poll.
- Christmas on the Boardwalk began on December 1, 2021. This event, which takes weeks of preparation and thousands of dollars, will run until January 6, 2022.

Again, the above list does not represent all the Department's responsibilities or accomplishments, but it provides a good summary relative to the operational plan for 2021.

Other

In addition to the activities carried out by the Public Works and Recreation Departments, the Town also;

- established a long-term maintenance plan for the wastewater treatment plant.
- implement the activities attached to the Marathon Gold Community Grant. With the \$10,000, we held the best garden contest, purchased Fire Department equipment, purchased supplies for

Christmas on the Boardwalk, and engaged a consultant to assess options to re-illuminate the Trestle.

- engaged a consultant, using funding through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to develop an asset management strategy/plan.
- successfully obtained funding for the 2022 Community Garden Harvest Program (\$2,900). A \$25,000 application was recently submitted to the New Horizons for Seniors Program to deliver *Connecting Seniors 2022*, a project for seniors that involves quilting, painting and crafting.
- organized the Memorial Day Service, Remembrance Day Service, and “*Lookout! Here comes Christmas*”, a new event that replaces the tree light-up at the Town Hall.
- administered the 2021 municipal general election.
- acquired a new backhoe and disposed of the old one.
- processed the following permits:
 - o 9 new dwellings (the same as 2020).
 - o 1 demolition (the same as 2020).
 - o 7 extensions (down by 1 from 2020).
 - o 15 accessory buildings (down by 10 from 2020).

While COVID-19 has and continues to impact our operations, it is clear that we are still moving forward. We continue to invest in our equipment, infrastructure, programs, and services, and we know more is required. Our accomplishments are only achieved as a team, and I express sincere appreciation to Council and staff for their commitment and effort. It does not go unnoticed.

I wish everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.