

### **Grand Forks Social Service Advisory Group Sept. 17th**

At this meeting the group mulled over several possible sites for an extreme weather shelter. The old Women's Transition House by the hospital was one possibility of several discussed. It was decided that letters to several agencies and churches would be written appealing for space and funding. Unfortunately, the chair, Everett Baker, announced his resignation shortly afterwards. The group will have to pick a new chair at the next meeting from those attending.

### **The Recreation Commission Sept. 19**

The new pool decking is significantly under budget and should be substantively completed by the end of September. The costs are well covered by the new requisition. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that user fees will go up about 2% in the new year. A trial contract for new digital signage services has been signed, so look for new screens in the arena and the pool. The Rec Director, Tom Stoppard, retired this past month and I would like to thank him for his years of service. He has been an astute and dedicated director for these programs and the infrastructure that provides them.

### **UBCM Sept 23 - 27**

This was my first UBCM since 2010 and once again I was impressed by the array of resources spread before the representatives of local government. It is an exhausting 5 days of workshops, speeches and resolutions and it is difficult to report on everything. Here are some of the more significant take-aways for this councilor.

#### **Emergency Services**

The events of 2017 and 2018 have left a lasting impression on the provincial government. They have started the process of rewriting the Emergency Program Act which will outline the responsibilities of the different levels of government. There will be new emphasis on recovery and mitigation. They will also be streamlining support agencies for those impacted by disaster. A great deal of interest and awareness has been directed to Grand Forks and the Boundary as the rest of the province watches closely to see how our community handles recovery. In fact, the folks of the Fraser Basin Council would like to invite Boundary flood victims to respond to the development of their new Flood Management Strategy. You can find out more online at their website [floodstrategy.ca](http://floodstrategy.ca)

#### **Assistance for North Ruckle**

The purpose of two ministerial appointments was to advocate for more cash and in-kind assistance for the families faced with losing their homes. The city brought forward its plans to develop parcels of city and provincial lands with the infrastructure necessary to support residential and industrial lands; and requested provincial assistance. The hope is to retain people and attract development into the community by creating affordable land. Both the premier and the minister were impressed and asked staff to look into contributing to this opportunity.

#### **The Housing Crisis**

The provincial government's response to the housing crisis has been significant. Minister Robinson stated that more low-rental, transition and supportive housing units have been built in the past 24 months than had been built in the previous 16 years. The government is committed to continuing this building using BC built modular construction that is quick to assemble and occupy. The Minister advised local governments to prepare applications for a second phase coming this year.

#### **CleanBC and Active Transportation**

The BikeBC initiative is being replaced with the active Transportation strategy: Move Commute Connect. This comes with detailed plans on the construction of cycling infrastructure. This is all very timely as we need to install a new bike friendly riverfront with the mitigation works. Incidentally, our staff is preparing an application to further develop our cycling network. This increased provincial investment is a real opportunity to stretch municipal dollars.

#### **Keynote: Peter Mansbridge**

The iconic Canadian journalist started with a tip of his hat to the audience by saying how standing for public office is one of the most courageous things a person could do. Once again, he is doing a documentary for the election and has been interviewing everyday citizens everywhere. He identifies a growing disconnect between the media and the people. His advice to young journalists is to start local. The big issues always start in the small communities. And those issues play out across all the cities of the country with remarkable similarity. He has interviewed all the prime ministers since 1972 and has an amazing perspective on the history of our country. He maintained that it is our responsibility to make sure the children of today have the same pride in the country. "We are lucky to be Canadian."

**The Grand Forks Community Action Group Sept. 30**

Over 25 people including emergency and health professionals as well as community members participated in a session led by Amanda Erickson in an examination of the four pillars of the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy. Amanda is planning to return twice a month to continue this awareness training and lateral knowledge exchange between services that is critical for reducing overdose deaths.

**Celebration of the Mennonite Disaster Services Oct. 2**

Council members attended a brief reception for this amazing group of volunteers that has provided such an amazing service to our community. It is hard to express the gratitude that we have for these fine people who take it upon themselves to make a real difference in the lives of disaster victims. THANK-YOU.

**Tony N' Tina's Wedding**

My wife and I attended this remarkable experience this past Saturday. Hats off to our local thespians that guided us into the workings of an Italian wedding. The Bride and Groom are going to have to come back to renew their vows. Congratulations everyone!

**And a BIG WELCOME to Ron Mattiussi**

I am looking forward to taking advantage of his years of experience in Kelowna as a planner and the CAO. He was with the city when it went through the flooding of 2017. He also has valuable experience working with BC Housing to build a wide spectrum of housing in the Okanagan. I am confident that his work in our city over the next several months will leave a lasting impression and enable us to tackle the huge challenges ahead.