

July 7, 2026 Council Meeting Notes

Delegations

Sinister Sports – Brian Gallant, Owner & Director

- Brian Gallant said Sinister Sports currently organizes 11 events across Canada.
- Gallant said The Vertical Vendetta, Sinister 7, The Divide 200, Castle Alpine Race and The Dark bring more than 6,000 visitors to the Crowsnest Pass region each year.
- He said Sinister 7 is the second-largest trail race in Canada.
- Gallant said the organization aims to provide participants with an experience rather than simply a race.
- He said Sinister Sports hires local crews and contractors for events in the region and donates to several community groups.
- Gallant said approximately half of event participants stay in local hotels, holiday homes and campgrounds, while the remainder use informal camping areas or event-specific camping locations.
- He said the average visitor stays 3.25 days and travels in groups of approximately 2.2 to three people.
- Gallant estimated events attract approximately 2,000 participants, resulting in between 4,400 and 6,000 visitors staying in the community.
- He estimated visitor spending generates more than \$3.5 million for the local economy.
- Gallant said approximately 80 per cent of event participants return to visit Crowsnest Pass outside of Sinister Sports events.
- He identified several challenges, including land-use changes, trail network pressure and accommodation shortages.
- Gallant said events such as Sinister 7 and the Kananaskis Pro Rodeo provide opportunities to promote the municipality.

Crowsnest Conservation Society – Brenda Davidson, President

- Brenda Davidson said the Crowsnest Conservation Society opposes open-pit coal mining from an environmental perspective.
- Davidson said nearly 1,000 kilometres of Alberta's Eastern Slopes are protected, with the exception of the Livingstone Public Land Use Zone.
- She said the Crowsnest Pass portion of the Eastern Slopes is a narrow band with no front range.

- Davidson said the Crowsnest River had the lowest flow on June 1 compared with other rivers in southern Alberta.
- She said headwaters are affected by watershed size, elevation and vegetation cover.
- Davidson referenced a publication reporting selenium in fish from Crowsnest Lake and said the source was believed to be the former Tent Mountain Coal Mine, which closed in the 1980s.
- Davidson said selenium treatment systems can remove 95 to 99 per cent of selenium from water that passes through them, but not all water can be treated.
- She said an online search asking whether any coal mine had avoided affecting water quality concluded that none had.
- Davidson said removing selenium from water is costly and estimated treatment could take between 60 and 100 years.
- She said habitat for grizzly bears, elk, ungulates and other wildlife has been significantly reduced.

Requests for Decision

2027 Budget Calendar, Development Guidelines and Community Survey Results

Council reviewed proposed budget development guidelines for the 2027 budget, including:

- Using a Consumer Price Index inflation rate of 2.3 per cent.
- Prioritizing items deferred from the 2026 budget.
- Working within the 10-year capital plan.
- Maintaining existing service levels.
- Identifying operational efficiencies.
- Presenting new services separately.
- Using reserves to support long-term planning.
- Borrowing in accordance with the 10-year capital plan.
- Maintaining transparency with the public.
- Including committee and board budgeting.

Council also reviewed results from the Community Priorities Survey, which was open from May 1 to 31 and received 391 responses.

Survey results identified:

- Roads as the highest community priority.

- Economic development and business attraction as the second-highest priority.
- Support for an indoor recreation facility if funded through partnerships or external funding rather than debt.
- Interest in expanded recycling options and bear-resistant bins.
- A desire for greater transparency around council decisions, budgeting and financial planning.
- Feedback indicating residents were concerned about wasteful spending rather than taxation.

Council also reviewed results from the June 16 Town Hall, attended by 48 residents. Key priorities identified included:

- Development and long-term planning.
- Economic development.
- Bylaw enforcement and nuisance properties.
- A grocery store.
- Fiscal responsibility and municipal spending.

Additional Funding Request – Fire Training Structure Project

- Administration requested an additional \$65,000 from the Emergency Management Reserve to complete the Fire Training Structure Project.
- The current project budget is \$300,000.
- Administration said the additional funding would cover construction of the required foundation.
- Administration said the facility would reduce travel costs for firefighter training while supporting ongoing competency.
- Council approved the additional funding. The motion carried with two councillors opposed.

Public Input Period

Mindy Pawluk, Blairmore

- Mindy Pawluk asked whether environmental studies conducted near the former dump site had been published.
- She questioned council's support for designated Sinister 7 camping near the former Sartoris staging area.
- Pawluk noted the same site had previously hosted a skijoring event that disturbed the soil.
- She expressed concern about the potential for contamination to migrate because of ground disturbance and questioned whether the area was safe for public use.

Derek Medland, Coleman (Bushtown)

- Derek Medland said trucks hauling material from the York Creek area sometimes miss the Highway 3 turn and must turn around in a residential neighbourhood.
- He suggested improved signage directing truck traffic to Highway 3.
- Medland identified potholes at 13 Avenue and 83–84 Street that require repair.
- He also expressed concern about the lack of a long-term plan for local roads.

Councillor Inquiries and Notices of Motion

2027 Budget Motion

- Councillor Johnson introduced a motion directing administration to prepare baseline 2027 operating budgets showing a 10 per cent reduction in expenses from 2026 levels.
- Johnson amended the motion, replacing the 10 per cent reduction with "the maximum possible savings." Council approved the amendment.
- Councillor Ward successfully amended the motion to specify there would be no reductions to staffing levels, programs, service levels or Category 1–3 funding.
- Council approved the amended motion.

Bringing Hearts Home Campaign

- Council approved providing up to \$20,000 to the Bringing Hearts Home campaign led by the Chinook Regional Hospital Foundation.
- The campaign supports development of a Southern Alberta Cardiac Care Centre of Excellence at Chinook Regional Hospital in Lethbridge and Medicine Hat Regional Hospital.

Water Not Coal Petition

- Councillor Ward introduced a motion directing council to send a letter reaffirming its previous vote regarding coal development in the municipality.
- The letter will also state council's support for the Alberta Energy Regulator's approval process.
- Council approved the motion.

Blue Squall Media

- Council approved a proposal from Blue Squall Media for the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass to become an anchor community in the Backroads Alberta initiative.
- The agreement will cost \$15,000 over two years.

Letter of Support – Crowsnest CanDo Revive the Roxy Project

- Council approved providing a letter of support for Crowsnest CanDo's Revive the Roxy Project.
- The organization is seeking funding from the Government of Canada.

Status of Community Projects

- Administration said construction of the new municipal office remains on schedule for completion in October or November, with a possible public open house.
- Construction on the skateboard park is expected to begin within two weeks. Concerns were raised about tree removal at the site.
- Bellevue infrastructure work has begun.
- Alberta Environment inspected the Coleman coal pile on July 7. Administration said it is awaiting feedback.
- A resident expressed concern about the condition of Tecumseh Road, stating repairs have not been completed properly and the road continues to deteriorate.

Documenter: Allison Capron

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