

Small but Mighty: Finding strength in collaboration

March 30, 2023



**Alberta
Municipalities**
Strength
In Members

Town of Cardston's Collaboration Story

By Jeff Shaw



Town of Cardston
v
Minister of Municipal Affairs of
Alberta

Re: Judicial review of Ministerial
Order



Libraries and ICF

- MGA 708.29(1) A framework must describe the services to be provided under it that ***benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities*** that are parties to the framework.
- ICF Workbook 2018 – Municipalities to inventory all services provided by municipalities including those provided by third parties.



“Third Party”

- Town of Cardston Bylaw 1539
- Town covers 81.4% of all annual expenses
- Owns the building
- Employs the manager
- Provincial Libraries Grant 6.2%

- Initially included and negotiated
- Interpretation changed in 2020



Arbitration

- MGA provides for arbitration of ICF items in sections 708.34 - 708.36, 708.38, 708.41, 708.48
- If unable to agree by deadline, required to submit to arbitration process as set out in Division 2.
- Town and County “agreed” to arbitrate
- Notice of arbitration
- Submitted ICF



Ministerial Order

I, Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs, pursuant to Section 708.412(1) of the Municipal Government Act, make the following order:

That the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) as set out in the attached Appendix is hereby established for the Town of Cardston (town) and Cardston County (county) notwithstanding:

Libraries clause is excluded and redacted.

Reference to adoption by bylaw and signature blocks for the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Cardston, and Reeve and Chief Administrative Officer of Cardston County are excluded and redacted.



Judicial Review

- Unreasonable interpretation of Part 17.2.
- Ministerial Order serves to frustrate the purpose and objects of Part 17.2
- Minister has knowledge of submitted ICF's including Libraries



Conclusion

- December 1, 2022 – “The Minister's decision that library services are third-party services and are not inter-municipal services for the purposes of ICF’s reflects a reasonable interpretation of Part 17.2 of the MGA”
- Judicial review is dismissed



Moving Forward

- Relationship stayed intact
- There was definite net benefit of ICF
- Issue was with Municipal Affairs, not County
- Political Leadership managed things well
- Administration continued to look at areas for cooperation



Emergency Management

- Established Regional Emergency Management Partnership, Agency and Committee with Regional Director
- 2 Towns, 1 County and 2 Villages
- Adopted by Ministerial Order



Fire Services Agreement

- Nearing completion of a joint fire services agreement with 2 Towns, 1 County and 2 Villages, numerous hamlets (+ Waterton park)
- Established
 - Joint Governance Committee
 - Joint Emergency Services Committee
 - Fire Chiefs Committee

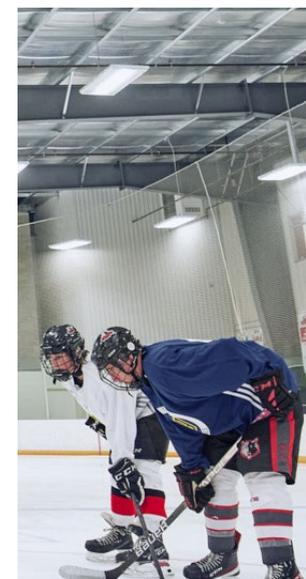
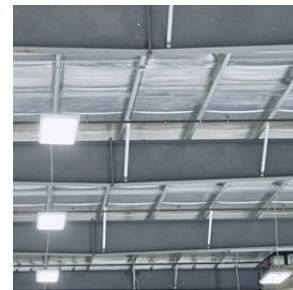


Lessons

- Focus on the problem(s), not the person(s)
- Reeve and Mayor played large role
- Administration prepared and stayed neutral
- Concede a battle, to win a war
- Governance, liability, regulatory compliance, and efficiency are rationale for change



Question and Answer



Mentimeter Survey

www.menti.com

1. Does your ICF include libraries?
2. Does your ICF include other services not delivered directly by a municipality?
3. If so, please provide examples.

Town of Diamond Valley's Amalgamation Story

By Barry Crane and Shawn Patience

TOWN OF DIAMOND VALLEY



A Story of Collaboration

**Black Diamond and
Turner Valley amalgamate
to become Alberta's newest
town...**

Diamond Valley

Barry Crane - Mayor – Diamond Valley, AB
mayor@diamondvalley.town

Shawn Patience - C.A.O. - Diamond Valley, AB
cao@diamondvalley.town

Timeline

Decades of discussion

Multiple attempts made at amalgamating the two communities.

July 2017

Completion of the Amalgamation Feasibility Study

September 2021

Both Councils vote to recommend the amalgamation by forwarding the 451-page Amalgamation Report and application to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

May 2022

Received the Order in Council to approve the formation of the Town of Diamond Valley, Alberta effective January 1, 2023.

March 2012

Both Councils agree to establish a 'Joint Friendship Committee' made up of all members of both Councils

September 2020

Letter of Intent forwarded to Minister of Municipal Affairs. Work began on the actual application.

February 2022

Both newly elected Councils vote to approve the amalgamation at request of Municipal Affairs Minister.

January 1, 2023

It's official – Alberta's newest town, Diamond Valley, is born.

Mandatory requirements of the Application

Municipal Name

Municipal Boundaries

Municipal Status

Electoral Wards

Proposed Incorporation Date

Annexation of Land to Achieve Contiguous Boundaries

Council Representation

Location of Municipal office

Other Matters

Interim Council

Interim Chief Administrative Officer

First Election

2021 General Municipal Election

Appointment of Returning Officer

Employee and Labour agreement

Bylaws and Resolutions of Existing Municipalities

Library Services

Compensation to other Municipal Authorities

Financial Transition

Interim Tax Treatment

Tax Treatment (annexed properties)

Authority to impose Additional Tax

Assessment Matters

Continuation of Emergency Services

Consultations w/ Public and Local Authorities

Since the Approval

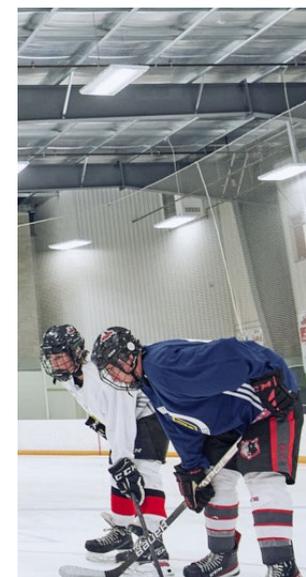
- Developed an Amalgamation Implementation Plan outlining roles of Council and Staff
- Initiated a Management Transition Team to oversee the process
- Department heads complete worksheets and task listings to determine what needs to be done, when, by who and the resources required to determine budget requirements
- Developed TEAMS site for staff information and FAQ's
- Established a new organizational structure
- Develop new job profiles for all positions
- Selected new Managers and Supervisors
- Prioritized policies and bylaws for Council consideration
- Develop new Human Resource policies
- Align salaries and benefits
- Review staffing and resource requirements

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What We Learned

- Collaborative spirit, putting egos aside and trust among Council members is key to success
- Ensure that enough time is allocated from approval to amalgamation to ensure organization success
- Building a strong, positive organizational culture and being responsive to staff related issues is critical to the process
- Engage an excellent Human Resources firm with abundant resources to assist in the process
- Ensure your IT department has sufficient resources since timing will be critical
- You can't over-communicate to staff or the public
- Aligning policies and bylaws ahead of time will save extra work after amalgamation
- It's going to be a lot of extra work for the staff, especially management
- Council is well served by being patient and minimizing all other workloads and projects
- Expect the unexpected despite the best planning and foresight

Question and Answer



Mentimeter Survey

www.menti.com

1. Do you see amalgamation as a potential option for your municipality?
2. Why or why not?
3. If amalgamation is of interest to your municipality, what is your biggest obstacle to making it happen?

Would you rather?

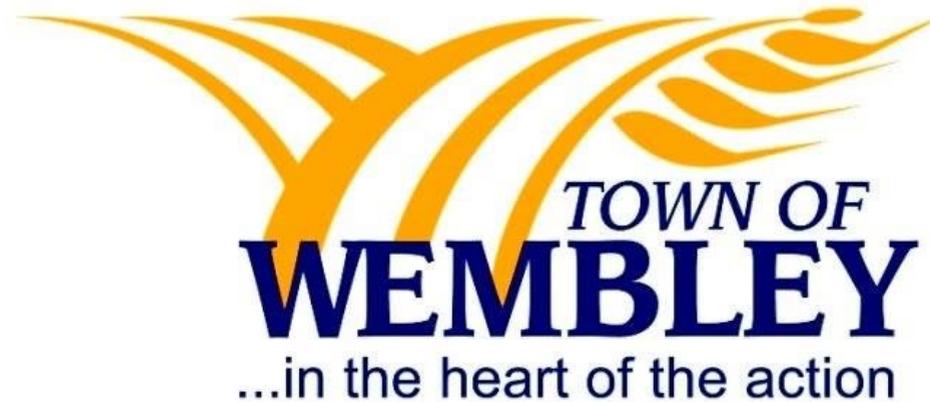
Mentimeter fun with Mayor Kate Potter and Councillor Anna Underwood

- Spend the weekend with pirates or ninjas?
- Buy 10 things you don't need every time you go shopping or always forget the one thing that you need when you go shopping?
- Save the world and get no credit or let the world go up in flames with no blame?
- Be rivals or allies with your neighboring communities?
- Earn more money and be busier or earn less money and have more time to yourself?
- Be a Slytherin or a Hufflepuff? (Harry Potter reference for anyone who's confused.)

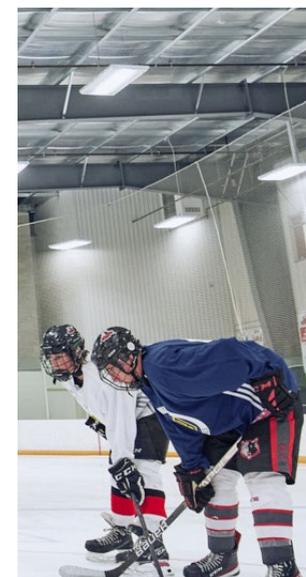
And lastly: What is your top priority for your community?

Building regional relationships

By Kate Potter and Anna Underwood



Question and Answer



Mentimeter Survey

www.menti.com

1. Do municipalities in your region work collaboratively on initiatives?
2. If so, please provide examples.
3. What is the one change to legislation, funding, or available resources (i.e. guidance documents) that would best support collaboration?
4. What is the best tip you took away from this session that you can implement in your municipality?

Break until 11:30

