

Subject: **2025 Budget – Question Responses and Deliberations**  
 Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2024  
 Prepared By: Marika von Mirbach, Manager of Financial Planning  
 Presented By: Marika von Mirbach, Manager of Financial Planning

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)**

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION:**

**Provincial (cite)-** The County is required under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) to annually approve both an operating and capital budget which are balanced and fully funded.

**BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:**

This report and the attached presentation represent the third stage of the 2025 Budget process.

The planned stages for the 2025 Budget process include:

- **October 8 – Setting the Stage and Proposed Projects**
  - This step intends to provide context on how the budget was prepared and outline proposed projects for consideration in the 2025 Budget.
- **October 22 – Proposed Core Operating Budget**
  - This step will outline the core operating budget, which is developed based on maintaining existing service levels and Council approved guidelines.
- **2024 Third Quarter Variance Report**
  - While not a formal part of budget deliberations, the third quarter variance report will inform Council of the County’s projected results for 2024 to provide additional context for 2025 Budget requests and adjustments.
- **November 12 – Budget Discussions**
  - This step allows Administration to respond to questions and information requests received from Council resulting from the first two presentations. This time will also be utilized to obtain guidance from Council required to balance the budget for future adoption by Council.
- **November 26 – Budget Discussions**
  - This meeting provides an additional opportunity for budget discussions by Council and seeks to determine a balanced budget to be presented at the final stage.
- **December 10 – Budget Adoption**
  - The intention for this final stage is for Council to adopt a balanced budget.



**DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

As part of the 2025 Budget process, Administration has prepared the third presentation to Council. This presentation includes:

- *Current State* reflects the current state of the proposed budget to the Council; it also provides an overview of any budget amendments made since the October 22<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting.
- *Responses to Questions* to respond to questions asked during the budget presentation process.
  - Some questions have been addressed solely in the attached PowerPoint; others have additional information provided within the body of this report.
  - There is also a listing of questions which have been asked during the budget process attached to this report as an appendix, which details which questions are being addressed during this report and which questions will be addressed at the November 26<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.
- *Next Steps* to provide an overview of the deliberations required to move towards a balanced budget for presentation to Council at the December 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

**Supplemental Information Related to Budget Questions**

*Fourth CPO and Equipment: Support for the additional CPO*

What are the contracts with the urbans, and what is the impact?

- We provide enforcement services to Acme, Carbon, Linden, and Trochu on an on-call basis.
- We amended Acme’s contract in 2023 as we could no longer dedicate 3 hours weekly to them. Acme has contracted Beiseker to help with enforcement in their Village.
- We have 4 hours a week in the Three Hills contract and meet this most months due to its proximity.
- The hourly rate is for both patrols and bylaw enforcement and at the time of the contract signing, was full cost recovery rates. These have shifted slightly, and with new contracts, we would adjust these.
- There is no “base” amount to hold the positions and it only covers the cost of the officers plus vehicle, not the cost of administering the program.
- The contracts are formed under the guidance of the Alberta Solicitor General’s Peace Officer Manual and are submitted to them for review.
- These contracts are due December 2024, but most have a clause that a continuation may occur with a 2% increase. Three Hills contract is being looked at now, as it expired in 2023.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 estimated
<b>Municipal Contract Sales</b>	\$ 36,575	\$ 26,660	\$25,832	\$ 21,630	\$ 10,000
<b>Municipal Contract Hours</b>	446	325	315	257	115

What factors have we used to determine the need for a fourth officer?

- Provincial wide and municipal wide, positions in enforcement are usually not long in tenure. We have an average of 4 years at Kneehill County.
- Capacity and coverage with 3 positions is a challenge through sick time, training, and leaves, impacting us being under-staffed for months at a time. It takes 6 months to replace a full functioning Peace Officer when they leave our organization due to hiring process, training and provincial appointment process.
- Challenges this past 2 years with maintaining the Service Levels with this limited capacity.



- Out of the 5022 serviceable hours of 3 Officer positions, in the past two years, due to inconsistency in staffing levels, the number of hours we had available was 3075 (1-2 Officers during some of those months).
- The schedules would change with 4 Officers, allowing for greater patrol coverage throughout the County, more programming opportunities, and internal coverage support.
- Recent changes to Council priorities has impacts on the department, especially on files pertaining to planning support in enforcement as well as targeted patrols and bylaw updates.

Comparison to other Counties

- Mountain View County – 4 Officers, 3 are under Patrol and 1 is under Planning and Development. Towns and Villages have their own officers, do not fall under the County.
- Wheatland County – 3 Officers
- Stettler County – 4 Officers total with 1 being an Officer/Manager
- Red Deer County – 6 Officers, 1 Manager, 1 Assistant
- Starland County – 1 Officer
- Drumheller – 3 Officers with 1 being an Officer/Manager, 1 Bylaw Enforcement Officer
- Beiseker – 1 Officer, 1 Bylaw Enforcement Officer
- Many factors considered across municipalities including program priorities, land mass, population, level of service, and development activity.
- The challenge with a dedicated Bylaw Enforcement Officer includes the inability to have the same monitoring and radio system as the CPO's, working alone and not permitted to carry protective tools such as OC Spray, Baton. This increases the risk to the municipalities that would need to be managed through additional systems.

Is there enough work for 4 Officers?

- Yes!
- The schedule and coverage changes with 4 Officers, allowing for greater patrol coverage throughout the County, including more evenings & weekends, more programming opportunities, and infrastructure protection and transportation support.
- Some of our neighbours also have an Officer dedicated to Planning support. This would include enforcement on the Land Use Bylaw, Unsightly Premises and Development condition follow up.
- With the increase of economic development and industries comes the increase in roads system usage.  
More officers, more consistency in coverage abilities.
- The Community Priorities set out to RCMP include Rural Crime Prevention (we support this with patrol presence), Community safety focus (we support this with community engagement), Presence in rural communities (we support this with hamlet and rural patrol presence), Road Safety (we support this through rural patrols), and partnering with Agencies (we support this when able to).

**FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

The annual budget process is incorporated into existing staff work plans annually. The budget itself provides Administration with the authority to implement plans in alignment with Council's Strategic Plan.

**RECOMMENDED ENGAGEMENT:**

Directive Decision (Information Sharing, One-Way Communication)			
Tools:	Individual Notification	Other:	



## ATTACHMENTS:

- 2025 Budget – Responses to Questions slide deck
- 2025 Budget – Council Questions

## COUNCIL OPTIONS:

1. Receive the report for information.
2. Request that Administration bring additional information to the November 26<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

## RECOMMENDED MOTION:

1. That Council receive the 2025 Budget – Question Responses and Deliberations presentation for information.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

Compile any requested follow-up information from Council and amend the budget as per Council discussions.

## APPROVAL(S):

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved-

