

Town of Saltecoats

Information Packet 2023

This information packet includes the results of the 2023 Public Information Questionnaire and other remarks. Please feel free to take a copy from the Town Office or you can find a copy on our website as of Thursday October 12th, 2023.



Photo of High Street circa 1906.

Questionnaire Summary
Public Information Meeting: October 11th, 2023
Presenter: CAO Cindy Larson

Good evening.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out the questionnaire.

The information provided by you ensures that Council is on track and lets them know what you are satisfied with and what concerns you have.

The three primary concerns regarding the town are paving, taxes and how to attract new businesses.

Your favorite aspects of the town are the friendliness, the citizens, the beauty of the community and the safety of the residents. There are many other comments that include the lake, the progress being made in town and in the park, the skating and curling rinks, knowledgeable and friendly town employees, responsible council and staff, the water quality, community events, the volunteer base, the school, fire department and much more.

Comments on the paving included 62% in favor of paving the entire town at once depending on the amount and 38% were opposed or wanted more information.

87% of you are in favor of the recycling once a month.

For the new RO system most of the concerns are to do with the smell and taste of the water. Many are happy with the water quality and some questions that were asked about it are: Can I pickle and can with the water? Can we get a tour of the new plant?

Volunteers are the heart of any community and Saltcoats responded to the questionnaire with 72% already volunteering or are interested and 28% were not interested or not able to volunteer.

The newsletter is the preferred method of communications by 87% of you followed by mail, posters, e-mail and social media.

Besides the information in the questionnaire you want to hear more information on sidewalks, speed control, how often is the testing done on the RO system, plans for maintenance on town owned facilities, Anderson Lake water quality and aeration system, updates from local services, yard and garden refuse pick up services in the spring and fall, the town emergency plan, information on community groups and how to address the drugs in town.

Council is pleased to answer some of the items from the questionnaire tonight. Each member will present one or two topics tonight.

Communication Committee
Public Information Meeting: October 11th, 2023
Presenter: Councillor Chad Waloschuk

Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight. My name is Chad Waloschuk and I am the Chair of the Communication Committee here in Saltcoats.

I just wanted to thank everyone for coming tonight because as you are all aware Saltcoats has always been a place where neighbors look out for each other, where the bonds of friendship and shared values are strong and where the collective spirit of what it means to be a “small town” still thrives. Tonight, we come together once again not just as individuals but as a community to discuss matters of importance that impact us all. So, everyone on council would like to thank you for taking part in tonight’s activities.

As I mentioned I am currently the Chair of the Communication Committee. This council believes the Communication Committee has a pivotal role of ensuring that every resident of Saltcoats stays informed, engaged and connected with what is going on in the community. We understand that effective communication is the lifeblood of any thriving community. It is through open and transparent dialogue that we can address concerns, celebrate achievements and collectively shape the future we all want for Saltcoats. The town has many ways of communicating with our residents and each of you probably have your own personal preferences in the way you receive that information and we try to cater to each of those the best we can. From your feedback the most popular forms of communication are the monthly newsletter which is great to hear. Digital forms of communication are also very popular, which is why you will see many updates hit Facebook and our new website first.

Over the last couple months our committee has been hard at work organizing this town hall meeting with the sole purpose of facilitating the exchange of ideas, information and perspectives. We recognize the responsibility we bear in delivering crucial updates and fostering a sense of togetherness among our residents. One of the key pieces of information you will hear many of us refer to this evening is the Town Questionnaire. We issued a town wide questionnaire with numerous questions regarding certain topics and areas where you could insert your own topics that were important to you. So, in the next while, we will delve into various topics of significance that affect our town's present and future and hopefully answer some of the more popular questions or concerns that were brought forward in the questionnaire.

So, to officially start things off I will welcome our Mayor, Kirby Buchinski, to bring us up to date on the town’s finances.

Finance

Public Information Meeting: October 11th, 2023

Presenter: Mayor Kirby Buchinski

My first topic for the evening is finance. With this I wanted to give a quick explanation on taxes and the process in which taxes are determined.

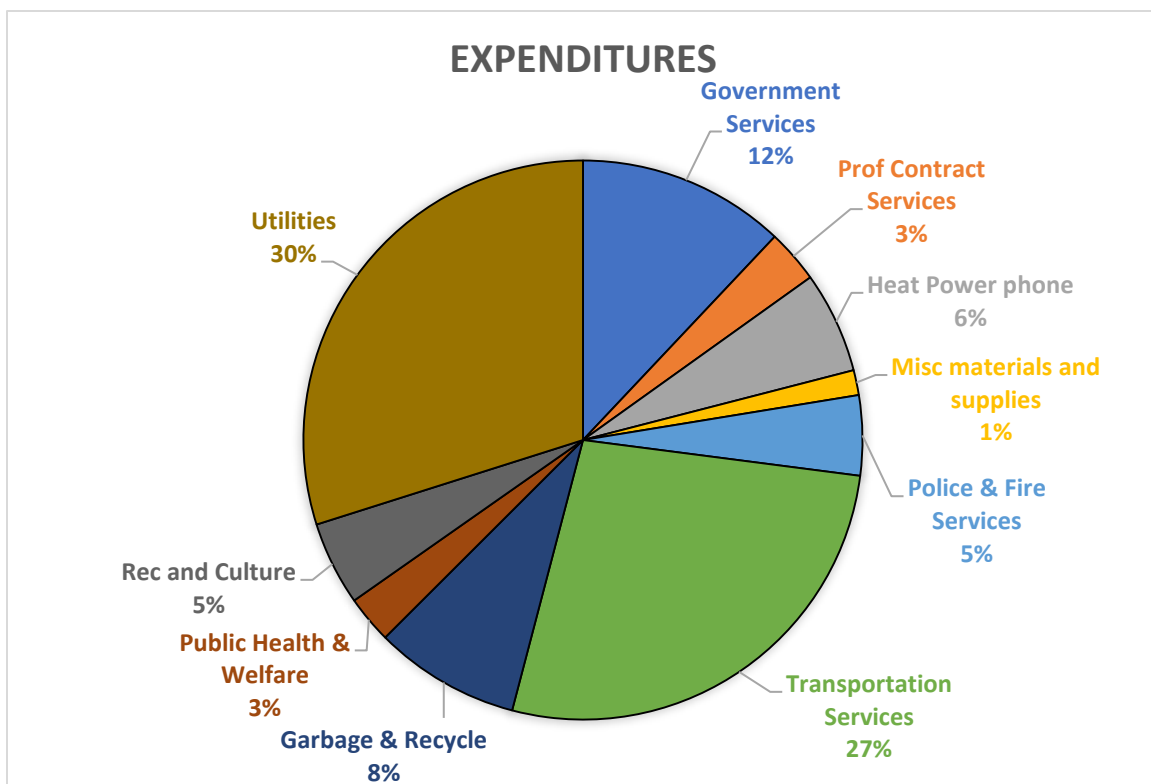
SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) provides each property with an assessed value; the town has no control of this value. As a resident if you don't like your assessed value you are able to appeal to have it reviewed.

The town sets a mill rate and a base tax for each year by developing a bylaw to meet the towns financial needs. Once this bylaw is developed the mill rate is applied to the taxable assessment - this along with the base tax is what creates your municipal taxes.

The school tax works the same as the mill rate, however the town does not set this mill rate. It is provided and once it is applied to the taxable assessed value the school tax is determined.

The second part of my finance discussion is to give everyone a bit of an understanding on what tax dollars go towards and what other income the town has.

In the chart below, it shows the expenses that the town incurs throughout the year. This is based on our balanced 2023 operating budget.



Just to explain a few of these:

Government Services and Professional Contract services include things such as admin wages, CPP, EI, workers compensation, SUMA fees, SAMA fees, insurances, legal fees, tax enforcement and auditor fees.

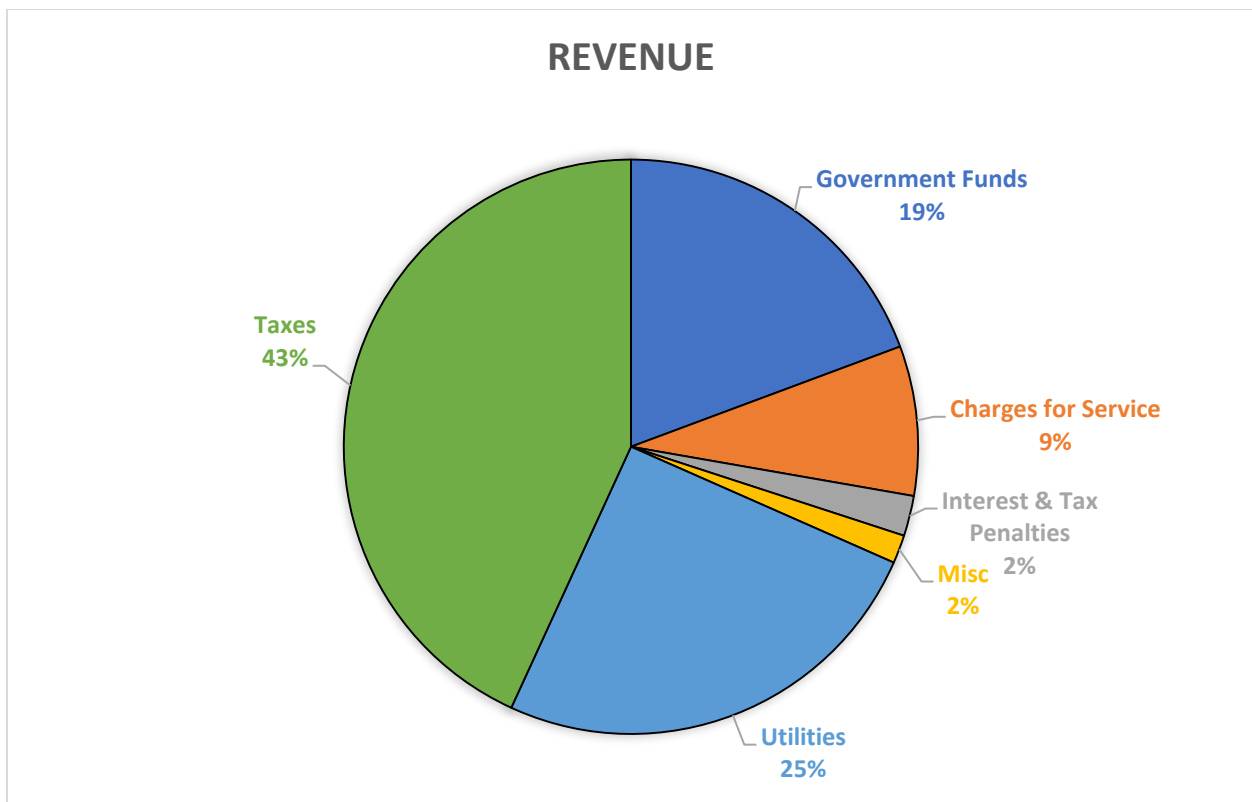
Utilities is the cost to operate our water distribution, treatment and waste water system.

The heat, power and phone are the cost for all of the town owned/operated buildings. This does not include the skating and curling rinks.

Transportation Services includes wages, admin and Public Works, vehicles, fuel repairs, road material, road salt, yearly paving and the shop loan.

Police & Fire Services include everything from the cost to the RCMP to training courses for our volunteer fire department members.

As for revenue, the large majority is from municipal taxes and utility accounts. The chart below shows a bit of a break down on where the towns revenue comes from.



I also want to quickly address everyone's concern about high taxes. With the small sample size that I have been able to research, from 2016 to 2019 the average property tax increased about 32-34% in Saltcoats.

From 2019 to 2023 our average increase is down to 5-9% (some of this may vary based on revised assessments or improvements made to properties). The main reason for the

tax increase in 2023 was to continue with the paving program and to deal with the increased costs of these projects.

Comparing this to a small sample size of data from Yorkton, their increase from 2016 to 2019 was 18-20% and from 2019 to 2023 it was 12-14%.

In a sense, I feel that our ability to keep tax increases over the last 3 years minimal, surrounding communities are catching up and are likely more comparable to our community.

As you can see more than 80% of the revenue is generated from tax payers and only 19% comes in the form of grants, revenue sharing, gas tax and rebates. Also falling into the 19% would be contributions from the RM for building insurance and their contribution to the fire department. There is also a \$10,000 contribution from the RM of Wallace for providing fire services into their area.

One other thing to take note of is the 2%. This is in the form of tax penalties and interest on taxes or utility accounts. Our staff does their best to run this through enforcement, but at times there is no success so sometimes this money is never seen.

Personnel Committee

Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023

Presenter: Councillor Shirley Pearson

Good evening everyone. My name is Shirley Pearson. I along with Councillors Hutchings and Denbrok work together as Council's Personnel Committee. Mayor Buchinski is a member, ex officio and Cindy Larson CAO is also part of this committee.

The task of the personnel committee is to review and advise on personnel policies, bylaws and matters relating to town employees, for example; compensation, benefits, salary grids and any personal issues or concerns that may arise.

We do not supervise the town employees. That is the responsibility of the CAO.

There have been a few changes in town personnel in the past year. Cindy Larson continues as CAO for the town. Dennis Hunt continues as Town Foreman full-time. Hans Bosshard resigned his full-time position as Public Works Assistance. Michael Nabozniak was hired on as full-time Public Works Assistant. Melissa Nabozniak is the Community Caretaker and Cemetery Caretaker. Lisa Maddaford is the Administrator Assistant. We had two summer employees, Katelyn Farquharson and Mathew Datema. We would not have the town that we have without these folks.

When you walk into the Town Office you can be sure you will be greeted with a smile and you will be dealt with in a professional and respectful manner regardless your demeanour. However, Cindy and Lisa, I am sorry to say, are not always afforded this same courtesy. These most upsetting encounters usually come as a result of Cindy and Lisa doing their job by following bylaws, which may have inconvenienced a rate payer because the rate payer did not comply to a particular bylaw. That is when you have rude and demeaning comments made to the staff, such as “You work for me.”, “I will sue you.”, “Just a bunch of crooks.” and “Your office is a ----- joke.”. These types of comments are not acceptable under any circumstance and will not be tolerated.

The comment “you work for me” needs some clarification. Without getting into a debate over this comment I would just like to say the only people in town who work for the citizens is Council. You elected this Council to govern the town. Council is accountable to the people who elected them. It’s not Cindy or Dennis or Lisa or Melissa or Michael, it’s your Council. If you have a problem with decisions made by this Council, please do not take it out on the town employees. They are just doing their respective jobs and following Council’s direction. If you have concerns, talk to your councillors, or if you are not happy with the direction taken by council, elect new ones.

Thankfully, these are not the majority of the comments that the office staff hear. The majority of office encounters are with grateful rate payers who wish “A good weekend to each of you.”, “Thanks for your faithful service to this community demonstrated in so many ways.” and “Its no secret you take a lot of flack from people in town but I hope you know there’s lots that appreciate you and everything you do for the town. Have a great long weekend.” Such positive comments are always graciously accepted.

Then there are those folks who sometimes forget exactly what Cindy and Lisa’s jobs really are and they will call for all sorts of help like “How deep do you dig potatoes?” and “Can you tell Dennis to come check my furnace”. I believe a lot of folks look to Cindy and Lisa (The Office) as being very helpful and a good resource for all sorts of information and direction and Council would encourage that to happen and I believe “The Office” would do their very best to direct folks in the right direction.

The Public Works team is busy every day making sure we have potable water and that the sewer system is working. They make sure the roads are clear and passable. They can be making repairs on systems day or night. They are hard-working and extremely conscientious. They keep the town looking great. They don’t always get the credit they deserve.

The Community Caretaker keeps the Hall, Stirling Room, and the Community Services Building looking very well kept The Cemetery Caretaker keeps the cemetery looking well cared for.

Just as a reminder if you need help or assistance from any employee please contact Cindy at the office and she will direct the appropriate employee to the appropriate task.

As a Council, we are very grateful for all the town employees. They all have a very important role to play in keeping our town/your town operational. Don't forget, as citizens, employees and council we all have important roles in promoting the Town of Saltcoats. We are all members of a great team.

Public Works, Facilities & Equipment
Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023
Presenter: Councillor Braden Issel

Public Works – Council would like to remind citizens that the town operates as a business, and that business is held to policies and procedures put in place by OH&S. Staff must adhere to these policies or risk facing fines that can be given to them personally and to the town as an employer. These policies and procedures are ever changing and most noticeably becoming stricter. Citizens may believe that certain tasks can be completed by one employee - as it may have been in the past - but regulations have changed and may now require for two employees to complete certain tasks safely.

Skating Rink/Curling Rink – The town donates \$5,000 per year to each the skating rink and the curling rink. All other financials of the rinks are self-supported by rentals and fundraising. The skating rink has completed over \$40,000 in repairs in the last 4-5 years and are currently looking into dressing room improvements. Countless volunteer hours have been spent ensuring the ice has been installed and maintained, the kitchen is open, and the facility is maintained. Without volunteers the rinks in our community would not be possible. If you are interested in volunteering for the rinks, please reach out to Minor Sports or the Town office.

Town Hall – The Community Hall Board utilizes fundraised and donated funds for supplies and equipment purchases. Such as the most recent cutlery and sound system upgrades. The town covers the building maintenance and repairs utilizing funds from Hall rentals. Sadly, this means the community hall fund shows an approximate \$5,000 - \$7,000 annual deficit that needs to be covered by the taxpayer dollars. If you or someone you know is looking for a venue to host an event, please suggest the Community Hall to them!

Payloader – The Town Office and Public Works staff have noticed a remaining concern of the purchase of the payloader. Citizens should be aware that the payloader was paid off in 2020 by a MEEP grant valued at nearly \$70,000. The loader is also our highest used piece of equipment, proving to be useful for many of the day-to-day activities completed by Public Works.

Recreation & Culture

Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023

Presenter: Councillor Lenore Denbrok

One of our regular committees of council is the Recreation and Culture Committee. Councillor Miles Hutchings is the chair. It is an umbrella group under which all the of various committees within the community fall under.

The main purpose is to liaise with local community groups to help them enhance local opportunities for programs and events. We are always looking for ways that local groups can grow and put on programs that will boost our community. To find a list of our local committees check out our town website under Recreation and Culture Groups.

The town assists these committees with opportunities for grants and funding that may be helpful to them. We help with advertising their events on our Facebook page and website. We communicate with them to find out ways that we can work together to make things better. These committees are based on enthusiastic volunteers from our community who put in lots of time and energy ensuring that their groups achieve their goals. Without all the local people volunteering these opportunities will simply not happen. We are very fortunate in Saltcoats to have a large number of people committed to serving in this way.

Please be sure if you are part of one of the local committees that you communicate with the Town Office regarding events coming up that we can advertise for you and help you with and that you find out about funding opportunities that you might take advantage of.

Water Treatment Plant, Utility Rates & Water Meters

Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023

Presenter: Councillor Justin Morrison

Water Treatment Plant – The water treatment plant has been fully commissioned and has been operational for a year and a half. There are a few small deficiencies left and are getting cleaned up. Once all are complete there will be a grand opening next year.

The loan for the water treatment plant is taken out over a 25-year term and is at an interest rate of 2.85% for 24 more years.

The RO system did expose roughly thirty water line leaks in 2022. This was caused by the RO system cleaning out old scale which exposed leaks that may have been there for years. So far in 2023 we have had two leaks.

Water Meters & Utility Rates – The water treatment plant and lift station upgrade is in conjunction with the lagoon upgrade that was completed during previous council terms and is being funded by a community infrastructure grant program which requires the town to cover a third of the cost. The loan is taken out over a 25-year term at an interest rate of 2.85% for the entire 25-year term. There is 22 more years remaining on the term.

The new water treatment plant is expected to have a life expectancy of 50+ years. In saying that, with the goal of paying off this system in 25 years, that will leave 25+ years to start saving for another system of different upgrades for the distribution system. This would leave the future of the town in a much better position as opposed to taking out large loans and paying them off after the work has been complete.

When utility rates are set it is required by legislation that they be self-sustaining. This means the income from utility rates needs to pay for all expenses that occur from these operations. Any surplus from the utility rate income needs to be put into a reserve for these operations and cannot be spent on other services around town.

Please ensure that there are no leaks in your water system as no adjustments or reductions can be made to your water bill for excessive consumption which may have resulted from a leak, burst pipe or fixture malfunction.

Utility receipts will no longer be mailed out to residents. If you would like to receive your utility receipts, we will be more than happy to email them to you or you can come to the Town Office and pick them up. If you would like emails, there is a consent form that is required to be filled out.

Suspect a leak? Try these options:

- 1) Check taps, toilets, faucets, pipes, hoses, water softeners, water filters, humidifiers, and sprinkler systems for possible leaks. Any type of malfunction with your water softeners, humidifiers, irrigation system or air conditioning systems could be very costly.
- 2) Put food colouring in your toilet tank and if it seeps in the toilet bowl without flushing there is a leak.
- 3) Check your water filter system, these units can automatically go on "self-clean" mode, consuming thousands of litres of water daily.

Saltcoats District Regional Park
Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023
Presenter: Councillor Shirley Pearson

It is my very great pleasure to talk about the Saltcoats District Regional Park. I thought a brief history might be of interest. The Park Authority was established in 1962 with the RM of Saltcoats, the RM of Wallace, the Town of Bredenbury and the Town of Saltcoats as the participating members. As time passed only the RM of Saltcoats and Town of Saltcoats remain as annual financial supporters of the Saltcoats District Regional Park.

The Park Authority operates under the Regional Parks Regulations (2015).

The SDRP Board Members consist of seven directors - two representatives from the RM of Saltcoats which are Robert Morgan and Karen Hovind and five representatives from the Town of Saltcoats which are Stephen Farquharson, Ken Morrison, Justin Morrison, Shirley Pearson and Dennis Hunt from the towns Public Works. The towns CAO, Cindy Larson, is the parks secretary/treasurer.

This year two contracts were signed with the park:

- 1) Jamie Nabozniak to operate the concession
- 2) Melissa Nabozniak for grounds keeping

Summer Projects:

- 1) The upgrading of the washrooms near the Verne Oliver camp sites were made into barrier free washrooms/showers.
- 2) A floating swim dock was purchased and set up at the beach area.
- 3) Work is also underway to fix the playground areas so you might see "Help Wanted" notices in the spring for painting and fixing.

These projects would not have been able to happen without the financial support from the Regional Parks of Saskatchewan, the Laketown Players, the Saltcoats School Student Fund, the Ball Tournament Committee, SaskLotteries, Legacy Co-op, supporters of the 50/50 fundraiser and individual contributors along with all of the volunteers who worked hard to see these projects to fruition.

Events at the Park this 2023 Season:

- 1) Vintage snow mobile races
- 2) July 1st celebrations - this included many fun activities all of which were meant for everyone to enjoy and have fun. The events were a success because of all the great volunteers and contributors to the different events.
- 3) Regular campers
- 4) Annual memorial slow pitch tournament
- 5) Annual Autumn Summit

- 6) Minor ball games
- 7) Graduation celebrations
- 8) Wedding celebrations
- 9) Memorial service
- 10) Regular visitors to the park for swimming and playground activities
- 11) Regular walkers with and without dogs
- 12) Many farmers markets

Future Capital Projects:

The SDRP has three major considerations for future capital projects:

- 1) Better potable water source
- 2) Upgrading the current electrical sites
- 3) Increasing the aeration system to provide a larger swimming area

All of these projects will take a lot of money. We will be pursuing available grants and will attempt to generate more revenue from the park itself.

A Senior Ball Committee was formed and approached the Park Board with the idea of reestablishing senior ball in our community and to rebuild diamond #1 to be used for senior ball.

The Park Board agreed to this plan in principal and Board Member Ken Morrison will sit on the Senior Ball Committee as a liaison with the Committee and the Park Board.

The vision of the Saltcoats District Regional Park Authority is to have the park full of activity as it once was. We graciously accept help, labor, donations and ideas.

On behalf of the Park Board I want to just say “thank you” to everyone for their time and energy in making the park the beautiful place it is.

We encourage people to make use of the park whenever you can and enjoy it however you can and encourage family and friends to come out as well.

Fire Services

Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023

Presenter: Councillor Braden Issel

Members – Saltcoats Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) currently has 16 members. We have been completing training as members are available and currently have all members trained to the latest North American Standards.

Meetings – The fire department holds their meetings the first Wednesday of every month. Although we are a small department these meetings are still held formally, including the recording of minutes by the Secretary Treasurer. The meeting minutes

include financials, old business discussions and new business discussions ensuring that everyone in attendance is up to speed on what has happened and what is happening. After the formalities are taken care of members complete equipment checks and take the apparatuses for a drive to ensure everything is operational.

Fundraising & Grants – After great success of our Annual Sled Race Fundraiser we were able to raise \$12,000. Highlighting as one of the most successful races to date.

SVFD was also lucky enough to be awarded two grants – Cornerstone Credit Union valued at \$10,000 and Legacy Co-op valued at \$5,000. The SVFD would like to thank everyone in our community for always supporting our fundraising efforts. With this support the fire department is able to purchase new protective gear such as gloves, boots, helmets and fire suits as well as make larger purchases like the SCBA units with less input of the Town/RM funds.

Equipment – SVFD currently has three fire fighting units and one rescue/mobile command unit. The fire fighting units include two pumper trucks and a wild-land truck. The fire department members take care of the general maintenance and repairs of the units and utilizes Saltcoats Farm & Auto for the larger repairs. Currently all equipment is in excellent operating condition and ready to go for the next call.

In 2022, the fire department made a purchase of two SCBA units. One unit was paid for by the Town/RM. The other unit was purchased by the fire department with fundraised money (\$8,000 raised, \$8,000 taxpayers).

For 2023, the fire department purchased four more SCBA units and four new SCBA tanks. Two of each were purchased by the Town/RM and two of each were purchased by the department with grant money (\$12,000 donated, \$12,000 taxpayers).

The department also utilized some of the grant and fundraised money to purchase three new fire suits (\$9,800).

Official Community Plan & Zoning Bylaw
Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023
Presenter: Councillor Miles Hutchings

Official Community Plan – The purpose of an Official Community Plan (OCP) is to provide a comprehensive policy framework providing goals, objectives and policies of the town relating to future growth and development.

It will preserve and protect the natural environment in the town and surrounding region including the quality of the water in Anderson Lake.

It will maintain and enhance relationships with surrounding communities and other organizations in order to pursue opportunities for the benefit of the region.

It will support sustainable growth by implementing policies and regulations that encourage responsible development that minimizes the potential for land use conflicts.

The town will strive to:

- Provide for the growth, diversity and viability of the town through effective land use and development policies and regulations.
- Provide for the effective control of land use and development within the town while encouraging residential, recreational and economic growth.
- Provide a desirable community that builds up amenities for future generations and brings more commerce into the town and region.
- Collaborate with adjacent municipalities and community groups on regional initiatives and to build upon existing regional assets such as the Saltcoats District Regional Park.

It will be the purpose of the Town of Saltcoats to celebrate and enhance the quality of life we experience within the community and to practice open and broad-minded management and sound financial planning.

Zoning Bylaw – The purpose of this bylaw is to regulate development and to control the use of land in the Town of Saltcoats in accordance with the town’s Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw.

The intent of the zoning bylaw is to provide for the amenity of the area within the Town of Saltcoats and for the health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants of the town and area:

- to minimize land use conflicts;
- to establish minimum standards to maintain the amenity of the town;
- to ensure development is consistent with the physical limitations of the land;
- to restrict development that places undue demand on the town for services; and
- to provide for land use and development that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the town.

The zoning bylaw is currently in its 5th draft and is near completion.

Landfill, Garbage & Recycling
Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023
Presenter: Councillor Chad Waloschuk

Another question on the questionnaire that was circulated around was to do with our choice to reduce recycling pickup to every four weeks rather than the previous two weeks. While the majority of feedback we received was either neutral or positive we thought this would be a great place to explain why that decision was made. But first I want to bring you up to speed on the former landfill site.

As I am sure most of you are aware the landfill site just north of town can no longer be used for garbage of any kind and is currently a location where town residents can take tree branches after cleaning your property. A few years ago, the Ministry of Environment of Saskatchewan ordered Saltcoats to begin the process of decommissioning the landfill permanently. Unfortunately, that is not as simple as just closing a gate. Proper decommissioning requires engineered studies and tests on the soil and surrounding areas before a Closure Plan can be developed. Thankfully Saltcoats was awarded a grant of \$192,000 that will cover the development of this plan. Numerous tests have already been completed in the area and the plan is roughly 50% complete at this time. Our deadline to have this portion complete is March 30, 2024. It is expected that we will then have approximately five years to follow through with the proposed plan. Just to give you a rough idea of what that may look like, the engineers have had us drill dozens of holes around the landfill and send soil samples and pictures to them. They will then come up with a recommended thickness for a clay cap to be put over the area and then top soil over that. Ground monitoring in the area is currently ongoing and will continue long after it has been decommissioned to ensure there is no spread of contaminants beyond the site.

So that brings me to our current garbage and recycling program. The biggest change we have seen recently is the reduced recycling pickup. With the recent rising costs of living, unfortunately everything is affected and our garbage service is no exception. In the last three years we have seen a significant increase in the cost to garbage and recycling services and we have had no choice but to increase our fees for this service. In order to lessen this impact on residents we decided to reduce the frequency of the recycling pickup. While we never want to cut or reduce services, from the people we spoke to before the change and the overall feedback after the change was made it was clear that reducing the frequency of the recycling pickup was the right choice to make. With that being said we have increased the service in one area; the large garbage and steel bins on High Street. For the popular yard cleaning months, we have added a second large garbage bin to accommodate for the added grass, leaves and general yard cleanup that takes place in the spring and fall months as we routinely seen these bins

overflow at critical times of the year. Just a reminder however construction materials and tree branches are not allowed in these large bins at any time. The Town of Saltcoats sees thousands of dollars in fines every year because of contaminated recycling or unapproved items being thrown in these large bins. We have posted numerous times about what is allowed and what is not in our newsletter and online to try and educate residents and we have seen these numbers steadily dropping over that time which is great to see.

So, in conclusion, we are continuing to work on a long-term closure plan of our landfill area, which still remains open for any tree branch's you may have to dispose of but absolutely no garbage is allowed on the property anymore. We have reduced the recycling pickup to every four weeks because of rising costs but will continue to have a second large bin on High Street during the yard cleanup months. If you do need help in removing any downed tree branches or bagged yard and garden waste, feel free to give the Town Office a call as the Public Works staff and equipment can be hired at an hourly rate depending on what is required.

Bylaw Enforcement
Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023
Presenter: Councillor Lenore Denbrok

We are all familiar with provincial and federal laws. Bylaws are the process by which a municipality – village, town, city, etc. – makes their own laws regarding particular issues in their area. We do this to provide a safe and welcoming environment in our community. The Town has no authority to enforce provincial or federal laws but we work closely with the RCMP in our community when there are those issues to be dealt with.

Once bylaws are made they need to be enforced to ensure that systems are working the way they should. So, we hired a part time commissionaire to visit the community regularly. She comes to town once a month and meets with our CAO regarding complaints that may have been given to the Town or other issues that need to be dealt with. The cost to us for this service is quite minimal. She is also available to come for extra visits if issues arise that need to be dealt with immediately.

The bylaw officer is authorized to give out fines for bylaw offences. If the fines are not paid, the next step is to move on to the provincial court system to enforce the fines.

I thought it would be useful to give you an idea of what bylaws we have been working on recently to help you understand our process. We are working on a Zoning and Official Community Plan which is a large project that has been underway for a while.

We use bylaws to set the regular rates for utility use and garbage and recycling rates as well as our base tax rate. Those bylaws are reviewed annually and rewritten whenever rates need to be changed.

We write bylaws when we need to borrow money for our big projects like the lagoon and the water treatment plant.

Topics that we have written bylaws on recently are shipping containers, golf carts, the cemetery, the set up of local committees like minor sports and the curling club. Most communities have bylaws regarding noise violations, control of pets, parking, unsightly yards, snow removal and other similar issues. We use our bylaws to ensure that our community is a safe and healthy and attractive place to live.

Paving
Public Information Meeting: October 11, 2023
Presenter: Mayor Kirby Buchinski

My second topic for the evening is paving. As everyone likely knows, councils over the past years have had a paving plan that sees one to two blocks being paved per year each year. Our council does plan to proceed with paving the town however we have been discussing different options. Seeing the costs inflate drastically over the past few years has really opened our eyes to look at other options.

The cost increase is tough to determine exactly since no project has been the same over the past four years however the budget for paving the 400 block of Allan Ave was almost double the cost to pave the portion of Crescent Lake Road last year.

The cost of the paving this year was approximately \$140,000. This was to do one block with extensive base work.

To continue to do the town in segments that would cost in the range of \$140,000. We would be looking at a 13-14 year time frame. Adding a conservative 5% cost increase to each year this total project would come in around 3 million dollars.

We currently have an estimate to complete the remainder of the town for 1.9 million dollars, taxes included. Just to make it clear, we are by no means proceeding with this at this time and we really look forward to hearing everyone's thoughts, concerns or excitement. To put this in perspective, 4-5 years ago the estimate was around 1.3-1.4 million dollars.

Currently we have a \$250 portion of the base tax allotted to paving. With the current budget spent on paving we would be looking at an approximate increase of \$133. The remaining funds would come from the general operating budget. This would create a

paving portion of \$383 or \$1.05 per day. But keep in mind this is every day for the next 15 years (which would be the loan term). We do know that this is a lot of money considering the current cost of taxes. We know that nobody wants a tax increase, on the other hand as mentioned earlier the cost increases over the past few years have been minimal.

Some benefits of paving the entire town would be the reduced maintenance costs and it would provide a surface for roller blading, skateboarding, ease of walking, and other recreational activities. We have also been told that the “sellability” of houses would increase. In my opinion that would mean getting fair market value for properties that may otherwise be reduced to be able to sell them.

And of course, the major downfall is the cost. This is obviously another major project for the town and at a time when we just finished the water treatment plant and lagoon expansion, this makes the decision even more difficult.

Please keep in mind these numbers are all based on budget estimates and interest rates at this time. The estimate also includes a certain amount of extensive base work which we believe may be a generous estimate.