

**Town of Bowden - Regular Council Meeting**  
**AGENDA**

A Regular Council Meeting of the Town of Bowden  
to be held in Council Chambers, at 2101 – 20 Avenue, Bowden,  
on **Monday 27 January 2025**, at 7:00pm.

- |  | Pages   |
|--|---------|
| <b>1. CALL TO ORDER</b>  |         |
| <b>2. ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA &amp; ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA</b>   |         |
| <b>3. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES</b>   |         |
| <b>3.a</b> January 13, 2025, Regular Council Meeting   | 2 - 6   |
| <b>4. PUBLIC HEARING</b>   |         |
| None scheduled.  |         |
| <b>5. DELEGATION</b>   |         |
| None scheduled.  |         |
| <b>6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</b>   |         |
| <b>6.a</b> Council Resolutions Follow Up Action Summary  | 7 - 9   |
| <b>6.b</b> Key Dates.  | 10      |
| <b>7. BYLAWS &amp; POLICIES</b>  |         |
| No agenda item   |         |
| <b>8. NEW BUSINESS</b>   |         |
| <b>8.a</b> Emergency Management  | 11 - 12 |
| <b>9. FINANCIAL</b>  |         |
| <b>9.a</b> Capital Budget (Walking Trail Phase 3)  | 13 – 15 |
| <b>9.b</b> Future Tasks (Finance)  | 16      |
| <b>10. CORRESPONDENCE</b>  |         |
| No agenda item   |         |
| <b>11. REPORTS</b>   |         |
| <b>11.a</b> CAO's Report   | 18 - 20 |
| <b>11.b</b> Council Committee Reports.   | 23 - 24 |
| <b>11.c</b> Society & Other Reports.   | 25 - 34 |
| <b>12. CLOSED SESSION OF COUNCIL (“in camera”)</b>   | 35      |
| <b>12.a</b> Reports  |         |
| <b>12.b</b> Property Matters (Confidential).   |         |
| This closed meeting of Council is permitted by section 197 of the MGA.   |         |
| An exception to disclose under Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA2000, Chapter F-25 (as amended over time) therefore applies on the basis of: Section 27 “deemed to be privileged information”. |         |
| <b>13. MEETING ADJOURNMENT</b>   |         |

# BOWDEN

Town of Bowden – Regular Council Meeting  
held on Monday January 13, 2025  
at Town of Bowden Council Chambers.

## MINUTES (unapproved)

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Robb Stuart called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

#### PRESENT

Mayor	Robb Stuart
Councillor	Paul Webb
Councillor	Deb Coombes
Councillor	Randy Brown
Councillor	Wayne Milaney
Councillor	Sandy Gamble
Councillor	Marie Flowers

#### ADMINISTRATION

CAO	Arno Glover
CFO	Jacqui Molyneux

### 2. ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA & ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

#### Motion 2.a

Moved by Councillor Paul Webb that Council adopts the agenda as amended.

*Note: (amended as follows):*

*Agenda Item 8.e Recognition*

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 3. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

#### Motion 3.a.

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council adopts the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of December 9, 2024, as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### 4. PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing.

### 5. DELEGATION

There was no delegation.

### 6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

#### Agenda item 6.a Bowden Hotel

There was no update.

Mayor Robb Stuart requested that this item be removed from future agenda packs as a business arising agenda item.

CAO, Arno Glover stated that all future updates would form part of the CAO's Report.

#### Motion 6.a

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council accepts Business Arising agenda item 6.a as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Agenda item 6.b Council Resolutions Requiring Follow Up Action**

Administration provided Council with a summary of Council resolutions that remain as work in progress / ongoing.

**Motion 6.b**

Moved by Councillor Deb Coombes that Council accepts the document as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Agenda item 6.c Key Dates**

Administration provided Council with forthcoming key dates.

A date was set for a review of the Town of Bowden Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 this being Monday February 3, 2025 at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.

**Motion 6.c**

Moved by Councillor Marie Flowers that Council accepts Business Arising agenda item 6.c as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**7. BYLAWS & POLICIES**

There was no agenda item for Bylaws & Policies

**8. NEW BUSINESS****Agenda item 8.a Fire Department Statistics 2024**

CAO Arno Glover provided Council with a summary of the fire department statistics for Station 7 (Bowden) provided by Mike Feduniw, Battalion Chief, Red Deer County Protective Services.

Mayor Robb Stuart requested that formal recognition be made during the next Fire Prevention Week scheduled for October 2025.

Mayor Robb Stuart requested that Administration send a letter of gratitude to the Fire Department.

**Motion 8.a**

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council accepts the 2024 Fire Department Statistics as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Agenda item 8.b Municipal Elections 2025**

CAO Arno Glover provided Council with information pertaining to the 2025 Municipal Elections.

Council was requested to appoint a Returning Officer and Substitute Returning Officer.

**Motion 8.b.(i)**

Moved by Councillor Paul Webb that Council nominates Arno Glover as the Returning Officer for the 2025 Municipal General Election and Jacqui Molyneux as Substitute Returning Officer for the 2025 Municipal General Election.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

CAO Arno Glover stated that Candidate Information Packs are available for pick up, in person, from either the Returning Officer or Substitute Returning Officer.

Nomination Day is 12 noon on Monday September 22, 2025. This is the latest date on which candidate nominations can be received by the Returning Officer.

Council was advised not to submit nomination documents on or near to the Nomination Day deadline as any discrepancies may not be resolved by the deadline for closure of nominations.

There is a new requirement to maintain a Register of Candidates. A Notice of Intent Form must be completed in order to provide the necessary legislated candidate information.

These forms will be distributed with the Candidate Information Pack.

**Motion 8.b.(ii)**

Moved by Councillor Sandy Gamble that Council accepts agenda item 8.b as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Agenda item 8.c Alberta Municipalities 2024 Year in Review**

CAO Arno Glover provided Council with a 2024 year in summary report provided by Tyler Gandam, President of ABMUNIS.

**Motion 8.c**

Moved by Councillor Marie Flowers that Council accepts agenda item 8.c as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Agenda item 8.d Library Board Training Dates**

CAO Arno Glover provided Council with an email from the Parkland Library Board regarding training dates in January for library board members.

Councillors Webb, Coombes and Brown confirmed their intention to attend one of the training sessions on one of the alternate the dates offered.

Councillors are requested to contact the Officer Administrator (at Parkland Library Board) to confirm attendance.

**Motion 8.d**

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council accepts agenda item 8.d as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Agenda item 8.e Recognition (additional agenda item)**

Mayor Robb Stuart requested that recognition is given to the current and past owners of the Bowden Reddi-Mart.

CAO Arno Glover requested that recognition is given to firefighter Jason Sahli who was recently named as Fire Fighter of the Year 2024 (Western Battalion).

The recipients will be asked to receive their recognition award at a future Regular Council Meeting.

**Motion 8.e**

Moved by Councillor Marie Flowers that the Town provides a recognition plaque and gift to the current and past owners of the Bowden Reddi-Mart and to Jason Sahli.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 9. FINANCIAL

### Agenda item 9.a Operating Budget 2025

Administration submitted to Council a third draft of the 2025 Operating Budget for review and deliberation.

CAO Arno Glover and CFO Jacqui Molyneux provided an overview of the budget and the amendments made by Administration in the preparation of the third draft.

The third draft of the budget provided a balanced budget.

Councillor Paul Webb requested that the \$ amount allocated for Councillor Conference / Workshops / Event Costs receives further discussion and review due to the fact that there was no change in the 2025 budgeted amount over the amount provided in the 2024 budget.

CAO Arno Glover stated that this was an oversight and suggested that this could be remedied by moving previously budgeted costs from the museum (allocated for LED replacement lights) to Council expenditures.

Council accepted this suggestion. Administration will amend the budget accordingly.

A proposal regarding the museum lighting will be submitted to Council at a later date.

#### Motion 9.a

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council adopts the 2025 Operating Budget as presented with the one amendment required namely the transfer of \$5,000.00 from Museum Repairs & Maintenance to Councillor Conference / Workshops / Event Costs.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 10. CORRESPONDENCE

### Agenda item 10.a Red Deer County Protective Services

### Agenda item 10.b STARS Letter of Gratitude

### Agenda item 10.c Mountain View Regional Water Services Commission

#### Motion 10.a

Moved by Councillor Deb Coombes that Council accepts the submitted item of correspondence as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## 11. REPORTS

### Agenda item 11.a CAO's Report

CAO Arno Glover provided Council with an overview of the items included within the CAO's report.

A request was made by the CAO that a date be set for a meeting of the Town of Bowden Emergency Advisory Committee in order to review actions required following the visit by a representative of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency.

A date was set for Monday Tuesday January 21, 2025 at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

#### Motion 11.a

Moved by Councillor Sandy Gamble that Council accepts the submitted CAO report as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

### Agenda item 11.b Council Committee Reports

No reports submitted.

**Agenda item 11.c Society & Other Reports**

- i. Mountain View Regional Water Services Commission (December 11, 2024)
- ii. South Red Deer Regional Wastewater Commission (email January 3, 2025)
- iii. Water v Wastewater Comparatives (2020 to 2024)
- iv. The Expanding Horizons Society Report was reviewed by Council under closed session. An exception to disclose under Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA2000, Chapter F-25 applies on the basis of: Section 27 "deemed to be privileged information".

**Motion 11.b**

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council accepts agenda items 11.c (i) to (iii) as information.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Mayor Robb Stuart called for a brief recess at 8:41 p.m.  
Mayor Robb Stuart called the meeting back to order at 8:45 p.m.**

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**12. CLOSED SESSION OF COUNCIL ("in camera")****Agenda items 11.c.iv / 12.a / 12.b & 12.c**

*Section 197(4) of the MGA applies: Exception to disclose under Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA2000, Chapter F-25 (as amended over time) on the basis of: Section 27 "is deemed to be privileged information".*

**Motion 12.a**

Moved by Councillor Paul Webb at 8:45 p.m. that Council moves to an "in-camera" session as per section 27 of the FOIP Act.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Motion 12.b**

Moved by Councillor Deb Coombes at 9:49 p.m. that Council return to an "open meeting" of Council.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no motion made with regard to Agenda Items 11.c.iv / 12.a. / 12.b / 12.c

**13. MEETING ADJOURNMENT****Motion 13.a**

Moved by Councillor Deb Coombes at 9:49 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Meeting Adjourned**

**Minutes signed by:**

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**Mayor  
Robb Stuart**

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**CAO  
Arno Glover**

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025.	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 6.a
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart
<b>Report Type:</b> Information	<b>Attachment(s):</b> 1 Council Resolutions Follow Up

Matters arising from past minutes.

### **6.a Council Resolutions Requiring Follow Up Action**

A summary of past Council resolutions that require follow up action is attached.

Administration submits the revised document for Council to review.

The item dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024 will be removed from the next summary.



**Town of Bowden**  
**COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS REQUIRING FOLLOW UP ACTION**  
 (updated 23 January 2025)

Meeting Date	Resolution	Action By Whom	Date back to Council
24 Apr 23	<b>Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework</b> Motion 8.a ICF to be delayed for 2 years pending Provincial Government guidelines	Council / CAO	ongoing
26 Jun 23	<b>Water &amp; Wastewater Connections</b> Matter to be b/fwd in future discussions on capital asset planning	CAO	ongoing
14 Aug 23	<b>Annexation of Lands</b> Motion 6.a Administration to formally advance the development proposal Final version of Negotiation Report to submit to Council for review at RCM 23 Sept 2024 <b>Update provided in Closed Session</b>	CAO	ongoing
25 Jun 24	<b>Additional Streetlights</b> Motion 6.a Admin to proceed with the installation of 4 additional streetlights on 21 <sup>st</sup> Street Quotation received from Fortis October 3, 2024 <b>Written Approval to Proceed signed 10 December 2024</b>	CAO	In progress
25 Jun 24	<b>Bylaw Enforcement</b> Motion 6.c Administration to explore further options regarding bylaw enforcement <b>Target date for new agreement Quarter 2, 2025</b>	CAO	ongoing
12 Aug 24	<b>ATCO Gas Franchise Agreement</b> Motion 8.a Distribution Fee to remain at 22% for 2025 <b>Alberta Utilities Commission approval received 14 January 2025.</b>	CAO	Complete
26 Aug 24	<b>Firehall Flag Poles</b> Motion 8.c Administration to liaise with RDC Protective Services	CAO	ongoing
13 Jan 25	<b>Recognition</b> Motion 8.e Recognition awards for Reddi Mart & Jason Sahli <b>Plaques ordered – to be presented RCM 10 February 2025</b>	Council / CAO	ongoing



**Agenda item 6.a Council Resolutions (continued)**

**Recommended Motion:**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council accept agenda item 6.a as information.

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025.	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 6.b
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart
<b>Report Type:</b> Information	<b>Attachment(s):</b>

**Content:**

**6.b Key Dates** *(for information)*

Date tbc	RCMP Open House
February 3	Review of Town of Bowden Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 (6:30pm Council Chambers)
February 10	Regular Council Meeting (7:00pm Council Chambers)
April 14	Delegation to Council BDO Canada (Auditors)
April 15	Emergency Advisory Committee (7:00pm Council Chambers)

**Alberta Municipalities**

March 5, 2025	President’s Summit on Civility (Westin Hotel, Edmonton)
March 6 & 7, 2025	Spring Municipal Leaders Caucus (Westin Hotel, Edmonton)
May 1 & 2, 2025	Public Risk Conference (Location TBD)
June 11, 12, 25 & 26, 2025	Summer Municipal Leaders Caucuses (Various locations)
November 12 to 14, 2025	Alberta Municipalities Convention and Trade Show (Calgary TELUS Convention Centre)

**Recommended Motion:**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council accepts agenda item 6.b as information.

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025.	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 8.a
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart
<b>Report Type:</b> Information	<b>Attachment(s):</b>

**Content:****8.a Emergency Management**

The Town of Bowden Emergency Advisory Committee met on Tuesday January 21, 2025.

**8.a.i****Position of Director of Emergency Management**

The Director of Emergency Management (DEM) is responsible for the direction and control of a municipal emergency response.

The DEM will direct, control, and coordinate all emergency services and other resources used in an emergency or disaster.

Following a visit by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency it was recommended that the position of Director of Emergency Management be filled by a person that has completed all of the requisite training, namely Basic Emergency Management, Incident Command System 100 / 200 / 300.

During the meeting of January 21, 2025, the Emergency Advisory Committee requested that Council consider and approve a recommendation that the person appointed to the position of Director Emergency be Jason Sahli.

**Recommended Motion**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council appoint Jason Sahli to the position of the Town of Bowden, Director of Emergency Management with immediate effect.

**8.a.ii****Municipal Emergency Management Bylaw.**

Schedule A1 of the Town of Bowden, Municipal Emergency Management Bylaw 03/2023 states that the Director of Emergency Management is the CAO.

During the meeting of January 21, 2025, the Emergency Advisory Committee requested that Council consider and approve a recommendation that the Municipal Emergency Management Bylaw be amended to state that the position of Director of Emergency Management is made by Council resolution and that the bylaw receives further reviewed to incorporate any other amendments as required.

**Recommended Motion**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Administration submit to Council a revised Municipal Emergency Management Bylaw as soon as reasonably possible.

**Financial**

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 9.a / 9.b
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart
<b>Report Type:</b> RFD	<b>Attachment(s):</b> 1 Business Case Form - Walking Trail Phase 3

**9.a Capital Project – Walking Trail Phase 3**

**9.a.i Background**

The second phase of the walking trail was completed in 2024.

This project was initially submitted to Council as a capital project in 2022.

To complete this project the final phase is expected to be completed in 2025 subject to Council approval.

Attached is a Business Case Form outlining the justification and cost of this project.

**9.a.ii Request for Decision**

Administration submits this project for Council approval (in advance of the Capital Budget) in order that the project work can continue without incurring any delays.

**Progress to date**

- i. a project site survey has been completed,
- ii. ongoing liaison with Telus is required to relocate 2 data pedestals,
- iii. the formal contractual appointment of the contractor is required.

An optional extension of the walking trail is proposed that would provide a paved spur from the trail into 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Close (highlighted in red on the attached diagram).

**Alternative Motions**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council approves Phase 3 of the Walking Trail (as outlined in the Business Case Form to include the additional spur) funded by MSI / LGFF as a 2025 Capital Project.

or

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council approves Phase 3 of the Walking Trail (as outlined in the Business Case Form to **NOT** include the additional spur) funded by MSI / LGFF as a 2025 Capital Project.

## BUSINESS CASE FORM (Capital Budget 2025)

Phase 3 is the continuation of the project from the work completed in 2023 and 2024.

This phase extends the walking trail north from the junction of 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue & 22<sup>nd</sup> Street up to 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Border Paving have previously been appointed as the approved contractor for this project having been selected through a competitive tendering process (project managed by ISL engineering).

**Overview:**

<b>Project Type:</b>	2025 Capital Project
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Walking Trail (Phase 3)</b>
<b>Finance Source:</b>	MSI / LGFF
<b>Alignment with Strategic Plan:</b>	Infrastructure and Asset Management This project is part of the long-term objective for the implementation of a “pathway paving plan”.
<b>Business Driver:</b>	This project is a continuation of the 2022 Capital Project plan submitted to Council and the initial work completed in 2023. The walking trail project was broken down into 3 phases due to initial cost factors.

**Operational / Community Need:**

<b>Opportunity Statement:</b>	This investment delivers an important community amenity to the Town’s residents. Phase 2 of the project has been well received by residents.
<b>Project Outcome:</b>	Completion of this phase completes the project.
<b>Requirements:</b>	Project Site Survey ( <b>completed</b> ) “One Call” utility locates ( <b>Telus required to relocate pedestals</b> ) Utility Crossing Agreement ( <b>completed</b> ) Mobilization, excavation, and grading. Supply of gravel base & asphalt (& topsoil for borders).
<b>Assumptions:</b>	All land owned by Town.
<b>Constraints:</b>	Funding limits / approval from MSI / LGFF. Project costing is dependent on the findings of a project site survey. Width and depth of path are subject to site survey.
<b>Dependencies:</b>	n/a
<b>Risk:</b>	Minimal risk to operational service levels.

**Proposal:**

<b>Recommendation:</b>	To contract with Border Paving for continuation of the implementation of a walking trail.  There is an additional option to extend the walking trail as with a spur to provide a link through the existing alleyway to 23 Avenue Close (refer to diagram)
<b>Deciding Factor:</b>	1 Contractor has previously submitted cost estimates with guaranteed pricing for all stages of the project. 2 Competitive Procurement Process completed in 2022.
<b>Cost:</b>	Cost \$99929.50. (net of GST) Optional Cost \$14812.25. (net of GST).  ISL Project Management \$ 7000.00. (estimate)  There is less requirement in this phase for signposting.
<b>Contracting &amp; Procurement:</b>	Performance Bond required. Certificate of third-party insurance required. Payment to be made in 3 stages: Progress Payment 1 / Progress Payment 2 / Holdback 10%
<b>Other relevant factors:</b>	Traffic Management not required. Public Works assistance for: (i) resource as required. (ii) removal of sub grade material and topsoil (as required) Contractor is deemed to be prime contractor for OHS responsibilities and for OHS risk assessments.

**Project Implementation:**

<b>Project Manager(s):</b>	ISL Engineering / Arno Glover.
<b>Project Start &amp; End Date:</b>	Spring / Summer 2025. (date tbc) (subject to contractor scheduling and availability and ground conditions)
<b>Risk:</b>	Minimal
<b>Project Review Strategy:</b>	ISL as Project Manager to liaise and report on progress made / unforeseen delays / issues directly with CAO.
<b>Project Performance Measurement:</b>	Success of project will be based on resident feedback / utilization of amenity.
<b>Change Management:</b>	Public Works responsible for future maintenance of the pathway (to include snow removal, sweeping, emptying of bins etc). Equipment was purchased in 2024 for trail maintenance.

**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED HIGHWAY
- PROPOSED ROAD
- EXISTING HIGHWAY
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING SIDEWALK
- EXISTING DRIVEWAY
- EXISTING UTILITY LINE
- EXISTING WATER LINE
- EXISTING SEWER LINE
- EXISTING GAS LINE
- EXISTING TELEPHONE LINE
- EXISTING CABLE TV LINE
- EXISTING FENCE
- EXISTING TREE
- EXISTING POLE

**NOTES**

- ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.
- ALL UTILITIES ARE TO BE DEEPENED AND REINSTALLED TO THE PROPOSED GRADE.
- EXISTING UTILITIES ARE TO BE DEEPENED AND REINSTALLED TO THE PROPOSED GRADE.
- EXISTING UTILITIES ARE TO BE DEEPENED AND REINSTALLED TO THE PROPOSED GRADE.

**ALBERTA ONE**

**NAD 83**

**ISL**

**BOWDEN**

**TOWN OF BOWDEN**

**PROPOSED PATHWAY**

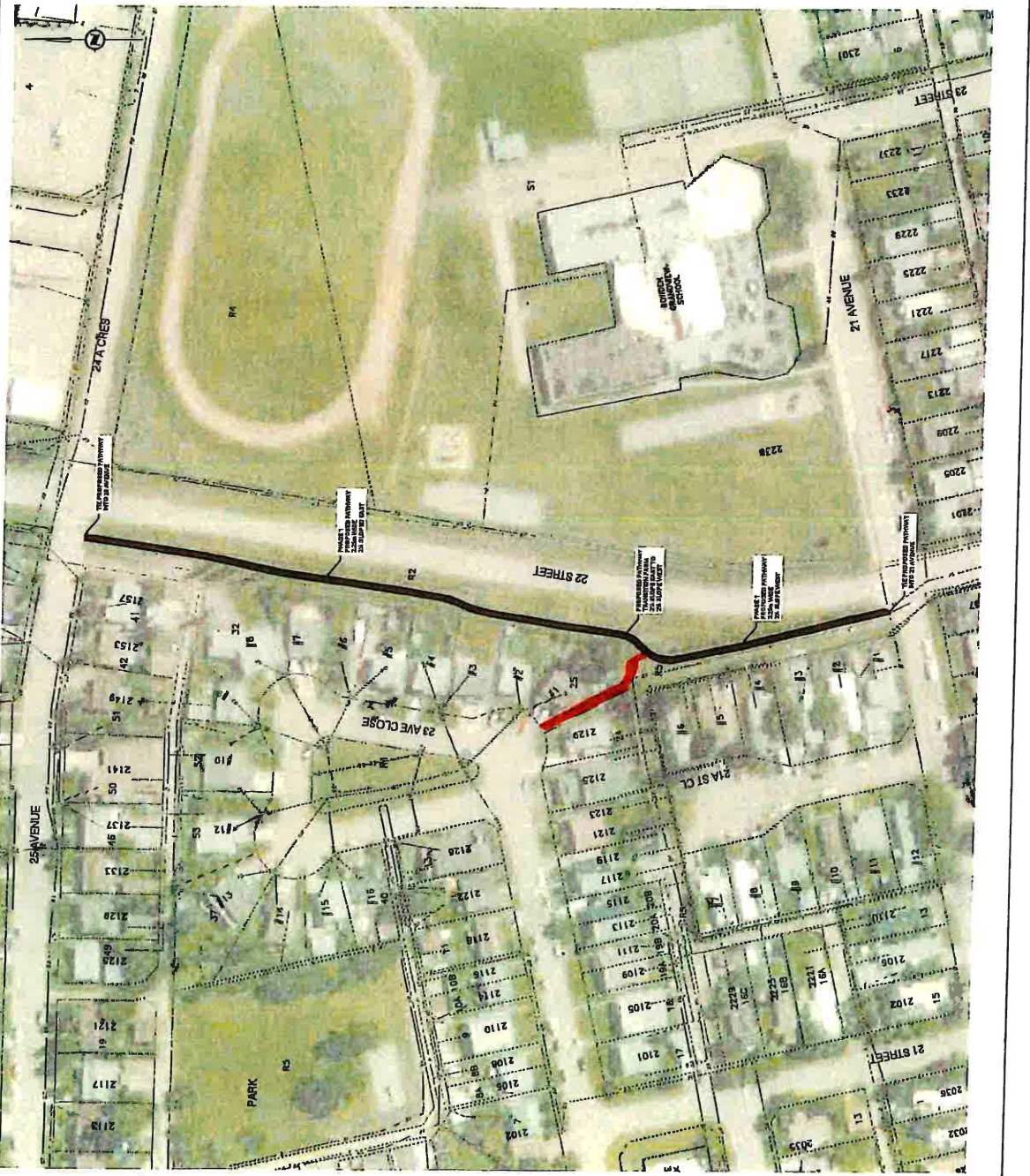
**PHASE 1 PLAN**

**PROJECT NO.** 28104\_Pathway/Planning

**DATE** 15/03/2015

**PROJECT NO.** P01

**PROJECT NAME** 1



**9.b Future Tasks (Finance)**

The following tasks require future attention:

- i. Administration to submit to Council the 2025 Capital Budget (by end March)
- ii. project cost reconciliation for the 2024 capital projects (Asset Management Plan)
- iii. reconciliation and completion of the financial asset schedules (audit requirement by 11 March).
- iv. in accordance with the requirements of section 283(1) of the MGA, Administration is required to prepare a 3-year Financial Plan and a 5-year Capital Plan in respect to anticipated financial operations for the years, 2026, 2027 and 2028

**Recommended**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council accepts agenda item 9.b as information.



**Reports (1)**

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025.	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 11.a
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart
<b>Report Type:</b> Information	<b>Attachment(s)</b> 1 CAO's Report

**Content:****Agenda item 11.a (CAO's Report)**

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 11.a
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> n/a
<b>Report Type:</b> Information	<b>Attachment(s):</b>

## CAO's Report

### 1 Alberta Utilities Commission

The AUC has issued its approval of the existing gas distribution franchise agreement, as required by the Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (new legislation implemented by the Government of Alberta in 2024).

This approval was received on January 14, 2025.

This approval reapproves the existing franchise agreement in its current state and confirms that the agreement is compliant with the Utilities Affordability Statutes Amendment Act, 2024. This reapproval does not change anything in the contract nor does it extend the term expiry date.

The term of the gas distribution franchise agreement with ATCO Gas is set to expire in January 2027.

ATCO Gas will communicate with the Town ahead of this time regarding renewal discussions.

### 2 SRDRWC Safety Meeting

Kole Molyneux and I attended the SRDRWC Safety Meeting in Innisfail on 14<sup>th</sup> January.

There are currently no operational or health & safety matters that require attention in the Town of Bowden.

Kole Molyneux is confirmed as being fully proficient in the operators' duties and responsibilities and does not require operator refamiliarization training.

The Town will soon be issued with new personal safety monitors and gas detection equipment for Hydrogen Sulfide ((H<sup>2</sup>S). Very low concentrations of the gas (100ppm) is deemed to be Immediately Dangerous to Life & Health (IDLH).

The South Lift Station is defined as a restricted space under OHS regulations.

The next safety meeting will be hosted by the Town of Bowden on February 11, 2025.

### 3 Arena

#### 3.1

Toromont CIMCO conducted their mid-season inspection of the equipment within the ice plant equipment room in the arena. This is a routine inspection and forms part of a planned maintenance agreement.

There is currently a requirement to replace both fan bearings on each of the condenser units.

The Town will continue with the policy of rectifying any recommendations made by CIMCO

A quotation was requested from CIMCO. This was approved and returned to CIMCO. This work will be completed after the shutdown of the ice making equipment in the spring.

### 3.2

An audit will be conducted by the Alberta Boiler Safety Association (ABSA) next week to ensure that the Town satisfies the requirement of AB-538.

Under the Safety Codes Act, owners of pressure equipment must have an effective Integrity Management System.

The Town has responsibility to ensure:

- i. that there are an adequate number of competent persons to operate and check the equipment,
- ii. that there is a suitable maintenance program throughout the full service life of the equipment including operation, effective management, alterations, assessments and decommissioning,
- iii. there is an effective periodic inspection program that includes having their equipment inspected periodically by an ABSA Safety Codes Officer.

AB-538 provides the requirements of the Integrity Management System.

These requirements were last formally reviewed by the Occupational Health & Safety Representative (A Glover) in April 2024. A further brief review was conducted on 23 January in advance of the audit.

Note: The 9 pressure relief valves within the chiller equipment plant room were replaced in May 2024. This will form part of the audit.

### 3.3

The Olympia ice resurfacing machine was reported by Arena staff as having operating problems.

The unit was sent for repair (a replacement (loan) machine was delivered).

## 4 Bowden App (internet application)

Administration has signed an agreement with Aivia a software engineering company based in Edmonton for the trial of their community engagement software product (Communikit).

Work has commenced in order to complete the developer contractual requirements required by both Apple & Google software.

## 5 Variable Frequency Drives (VFD's) Pumphouse

Two new VFD's were installed in the pumphouse on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January.

These provide AC power to the water pumps in response to inputs from the SCADA system to operate the pumps in accordance with the preprogrammed logic.

The Town now has 4 relatively new VFD controllers. It is hoped that this will return a high degree of stability and consistency back into the pumphouse operations – current indications are good.

Additional electrical work was carried out to:

- re wire the block heater for the Ford Marine engine,
- install a safety test function on the surge protector within the Motor Control Centre panel,
- provide the SCADA system with a reservoir sensor input (from the MWRWSC system),
- test the alternator output from the Ford Marine engine.

I have requested two quotations for further work.

- i. to provide a documented set of drawings for the pumphouse electrical equipment,
- ii. to replace the 35-year-old Ford Marine engine with a modern back up generator.

A Planned Service Agreement has been signed with Johnson Controls for the three-year period 2025 to 2027.

### **6 Firehall**

Administration has received notification from the Loss Adjuster that:

- the cost of the investigative and remedial work will be covered by the insurers,
- a decision will be made soon regarding coverage for the claim.

### **7 Water Main Break (21<sup>st</sup> Street)**

Administration responded to a water main break on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January at 8:00am

A plan of action was put in place. This included:

- the appointment of excavating contractor,
- the appointment of a hydrovac operator,
- a request for one call locates,
- arrangements made for the purchase / delivery of gravel / sand supplies.

Alberta Environment were immediately informed as required by regulatory code.

MWRWSC were informed as we currently operate under a water operator licence agreement.

This cause of the break was a fracture in a 4-inch cast iron pipe, most likely due to frost heave action.

A full written report was submitted to Alberta Environment on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January as per Code of Practice requirements.

### **8 Municipal Election 2025**

Candidate information packs are available for pick up in person from the Returning Officer (Arno Glover) or the Substitute Returning Officer (Jacqui Molyneux).

A search on the Alberta Government website on 23<sup>rd</sup> January revealed that the Local Authorities Election Forms Regulation remains current as of July 2021.

It is proposed that the 2021 Nomination Forms be used (in line with the procedures adopted by many other Towns).

These forms will be added to the Candidate Information packs (effective February 1, 2025).

A notification in the February Town Newsletter will be made regarding nominations.

The CAO is registered to attend a webinar on February 5<sup>th</sup> regarding the Permanent Electors Register and how the changes made to the election legislation is to be communicated between Municipalities and the electorate.

**9 Staff Meeting**

The first staff meeting of the year was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. All staff attended.

This meeting covered many topics including:

- the 2025 Operating Budget (including purchasing policy),
- Employee Engagement Program (priorities for 2025),
- changes to operating procedures,
- Departmental reports (activities, projects and concerns),
- Occupational Health & Safety.

**Recommended Motion:**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council accepts the CAO's report as information.

**Reports (2)**

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 27, 2025.	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 11.b / 11.c
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart
<b>Report Type:</b> Information	<b>Attachment(s):</b> As per content

**Content:**

**11.b**

**Council Committee Reports**

- i. Emergency Advisory Committee Minutes (January 21, 2025)  
*(report submitted by Mayor Robb Stuart)*

**11.c**

**Society & Other Reports**

- i. Mountain View Regional Water Services Commission (January 15, 2025)  
*(report submitted by Mayor Robb Stuart)*
- ii. FCSS Community Navigator Report (month January, 2025)  
*(report submitted by CAO, Arno Glover)*
- iii. The Outlook for Rural Businesses Fourth Quarter 2024 (Statistics Canada)  
*(report submitted by CAO, Arno Glover)*

**The following reports are provided under separate cover (confidential)**

An exception to disclose under Division 2 of Part 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA2000, Chapter F-25 applies on the basis of: Section 27 “deemed to be privileged information”.

- iv. CAEP Transportation & Logistics Committee (January 20, 2025)  
*(report submitted by Councillor Paul Webb)*
- v. Bowden Ag Society Report (Meeting November 13, 2024)  
*(report submitted by Councillor Paul Webb)*
- vi. Expanding Horizons Society (Meeting January 20, 2025)  
*(report submitted by Councillor Marie Flowers)*

**Note:**

All meeting minutes submitted should be assumed to be “unapproved”.



**Town of Bowden  
Emergency Advisory Committee meeting  
held on Tuesday January 21, 2025  
at the Town of Bowden Council Chambers.**

**MINUTES (unapproved)**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Robb Stuart called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**PRESENT**

Mayor	Robb Stuart	(Chair)
Councillor	Deb Coombes	
Councillor	Sandy Gamble	
Councillor	Paul Webb	
Councillor	Marie Flowers	
Councillor	Randy Brown	
Councillor	Wayne Milaney	
Arno Glover	Director of Emergency Management	

**2. ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA & ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion 2.a**

Moved by Councillor Marie Flowers that the Emergency Advisory Committee adopts the agenda as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were no minutes submitted from a previous meeting for adoption.

**4. BUSINESS ARISING**

**4.a Review of Emergency Management resources & equipment.**

The Director of Emergency Management stated that there was an outstanding requirement to review the equipment and resources in both the Emergency Coordination Centre and the Emergency Reception Centre.

An initial assessment made in January 2025 revealed many shortcomings.

There were funds allocated in the 2025 Operating Budget specifically for upgrading equipment and supplies.

This task should commence as a matter of priority. The Director of Emergency Management will assume responsibility for this task.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**Agenda item 5.a Review of Emergency Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.**

The Director of Emergency Management provided the Committee with an overview of the purpose and responsibilities of the Committee.

An extract from Council Committee Bylaw 06 / 2023 provided this information.

**Agenda item 5.b Recent Developments and Future Plans.**

The Director of Emergency Management recommended to members of the Committee that two recommendations be made to Council.

The Committee reviewed the proposals and made the following motions:

**Motion 5.a**

Moved by Councillor Randy Brown that Council considers the reappointment of the Director of Emergency Management.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Motion 5.b**

Moved by Councillor Paul Webb that Administration reviews the Council Committee Bylaw to revise the statement made regarding the appointment of the CAO as the Director of Emergency Management

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Note:**

This requirement should have read "to revise the wording contained within the Municipal Emergency Management Bylaw".

The agenda as submitted to the Committee contained inaccurate information (in error) with reference to the specific bylaw that requires amendment.

The Director of Emergency Management provided the Emergency Advisory Committee with other background information pertaining to:

- emergency management legislation,
- intermunicipal agreements,
- immediate requirements, considerations and action plan.

**Agenda item 5.c Parkland Refinery Request**

The Director of Emergency Management submitted a copy of an email request received from Parkland Refinery requesting if a shared use could be considered in respect of the use of the Bowden Event Centre as an Emergency Reception Centre.

Councillor Marie Flowers agreed to contact all relevant parties to arrange a meeting to further discuss this proposal.

**Agenda item 5.d Any Other Business.**

The date of the next Emergency Advisory Committee meeting was set for Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7:00pm in Council Chambers.

**6. MEETING ADJOURNMENT****Motion 6.a**

Moved by Councillor Marie Flowers at 8:17pm to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Minutes signed by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mayor  
 Robb Stuart**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Director of Emergency Management  
 Arno Glover**



MOUNTAIN VIEW REGIONAL WATER SERVICES COMMISSSION  
 January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Zoom meeting

All members in attendance except Chairman.  
 Vice-chairman, CAO, Operations Director, Technical Manager reports presented, discussed and accepted for information.  
 Introductory meeting with auditor. Board met in closed session  
 Due to the mail strike some invoices were late arriving. Finance is processing and expect no issues.  
 Some delay in receiving Low Lift pump VFD.  
 Maintenance on ultraviolet treatment reactor.  
 Administration presented draft of proposed Member Community Water Connection Policy. This is only applicable for connection to a secondary water reservoir. Draft was sent to members administration for review and feedback.  
 Annual review of Commission Board Bylaw. No changes.  
 Review of Bylaw addressing operation and provision of services of the MVWRSC.

Comparative Income Statement Attached

Mountain View Regional Water Services Commission  
 Comparative Income Statement  
 As at December 31, 2024

	Actual December 1 to December 31, 2024	Year to Date	% YTD to YTD Budget	YTD Budget	Budget Jan 1, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2024
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Water Sales - Town of Innisfail	\$ 159,106.65	\$ 1,942,511.62	1.06	1,840,611.32	\$ 1,840,611.32
Water Sales - Bowden Institution	16,662.40	217,079.50	1.03	210,223.09	210,223.09
Water Sales - Town of Bowden	16,961.70	195,164.29	0.84	233,389.72	233,389.72
Water Sales - Town of Olds	164,912.25	2,212,366.27	0.89	2,473,318.49	2,473,318.49
Water Sales - Town of Didsbury	79,749.10	1,043,092.09	0.97	1,080,894.67	1,080,894.67
Water Sales - Town of Carstairs	67,715.60	875,858.61	1.09	806,579.75	806,579.75
Water Sales - Town of Crossfield	78,404.30	985,708.43	1.02	967,459.16	967,459.16

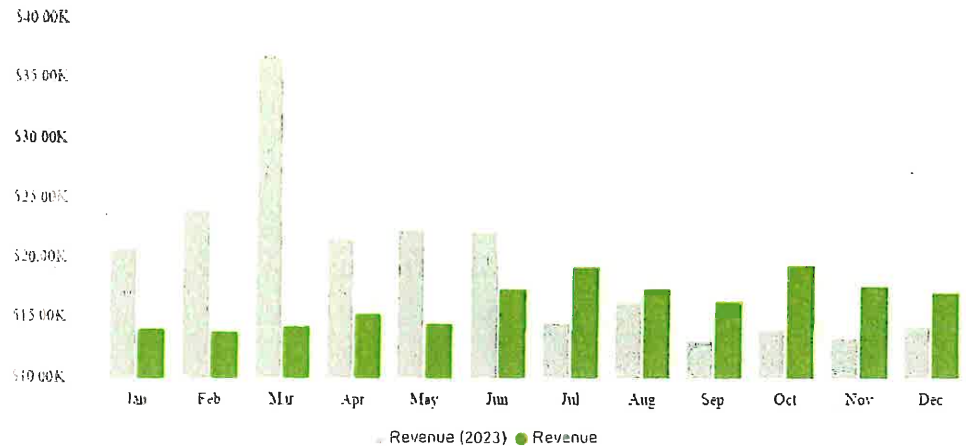
### Mountain View Regional Water Services Commission

TOWN OF BOWDEN

Last year

**\$195,764.29**

Total revenue



Includes \$600 Revenue for Certified Operator Assistance Report Reviews

Filtered by

1 customers: Town of Bowden

Time period	Revenue (2023)	Revenue
Jan	\$20,861.76	\$14,002.76
Feb	\$23,930.76	\$13,750.60
Mar	\$36,790.80	\$14,191.88
Apr	\$21,597.11	\$15,258.15
May	\$22,398.90	\$14,446.35
Jun	\$22,190.08	\$17,334.80
Jul	\$14,530.72	\$19,191.65
Aug	\$16,220.98	\$17,326.15
Sep	\$13,033.52	\$16,303.20
Oct	\$13,983.06	\$19,322.85
Nov	\$13,246.28	\$17,574.20
Dec	\$14,288.41	\$17,061.70

## FCSS Community Navigator Report January 2025

### **Lions Holiday Hampers (Dec. 2024)**

- The total number of hampers/applications was 49 households, representing 122 people served.
- Bowden Lions & FCSS are already planning toward the 2025 hamper program and how to increase donations, both monetary and food items.

### **Dry Pantry & Good Food Box Program(s) (ongoing)**

- The Dry Pantry access continues to increase. On average, we estimate that a minimum of 20 people per week use the pantry including groups that use the Olde Library after regular business hours.
- Support from the Bowden Community Church, Olds Coop, Wawa's Quilts, private donations have kept the shelves stocked with items. Bowden Lions have also stated that they would like to contribute to the program.
- Good Food Box is delivered once per month to the Olde Library and is a partnership with Mountain View County Good Food Box. Fresh produce is sourced from Olds coop and local growers and purchased at almost 50% reduction of the cost in store. On average, we have about 10 participants, with 2-3 donation boxes for individuals and families that are struggling. We anticipate this number will increase with the Reddi Mart closing.

### **Seniors Programs at the Olde Library:**

- Henday Association for Lifelong Learning & FCSS are offering "Tech Time" once per month until June 2025. Tech help for older adults and seniors for phones, tablets & laptops.
- Golden Circle Seniors Centre will be in twice per month with "Golden Circle Outreach". Partnering with FCSS, older adults and seniors are welcome to drop in with their questions or request for referral to Senior services in Bowden & Area.

### **Youth Programs:**

- Y.E.S. (Youth Empowerment Supports) at BGS & FCSS offer after school programs for grades 3-8 rotating. Programs are offered at BGS, we are scheduled through to April with activities including Paint class, crafts, and more!
- Keystone/Youth HQ use the Olde Library every Monday evening for 13-17yrs programs in this space.

### **AHS Mental Health Group at the Olde Library:**

- Support and programming for the group. FCSS often assists with group activities. Meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday monthly.

### **Red Deer Polytechnic**

- A Social Work student will be working with FCSS Tuesdays and Thursdays from Jan 7 to mid-April to complete the 240 hours needed for practicum studies. The student and I will work closely for all FCSS programs and will take on a few projects on their own as well. "M.J. David" is the student currently with me.

### **Olde Library Users (Current Regular users):**

- Bowden AA (Sunday Night)
- Bowden Keystone/Youth HQ
- Lions Club
- AHS Mental Health Group
- Homeschool group
- Bowden Ag Society

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## Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin

# The outlook of rural businesses, fourth quarter of 2024



by Jacqueline Ha

Release date: January 13, 2025



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Canada

# The outlook of rural businesses, fourth quarter of 2024

by Jacqueline Ha

In October 2024, the Consumer Price Index rose by 2.0% year over year.<sup>1</sup> Prices of Canadian manufactured products increased by 1.1% from the previous year, while the cost of raw materials purchased decreased by 2.8% during the same period.<sup>2</sup> Average hourly wages saw a notable increase of 4.9% year over year,<sup>3</sup> indicating upward pressure on labour costs.

In rural and small town (RST)<sup>4</sup> areas, employment—unadjusted for seasonality—rose by 14,500 (+0.5%) in October 2024 compared to the previous month, while the unemployment rate remained stable at 4.2%.<sup>5</sup>

Against this backdrop, businesses in RST and functional urban areas faced a range of economic challenges in the fourth quarter of 2024, including rising input costs, labour shortages, and increasing debt burdens. These pressures created a complex economic environment shaping business outlooks, in particular regarding labour- and cost-related obstacles.

This analysis, based on [Canadian Survey on Business Conditions](#) results, shows businesses<sup>6</sup> current operating conditions and their future expectations. Focusing on RST businesses, the findings are drawn from the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, fourth quarter of 2024, conducted from October 1 to November 4, 2024.

## Key highlights

- RST businesses identify cost-related challenges such as inflation, rising cost of inputs, insurance costs, and interest rates and debt costs as key obstacles to their operations.
- Over the past year, many RST businesses have reported medium or high impacts from interest rates, especially on their existing debt and borrowing plans. Uncertainty in projected sales and unfavourable interest rates are cited as reasons to not take on more debt.
- RST businesses anticipate difficulties in recruiting skilled employees, addressing labour shortages and retaining staff over the short term. Wage adjustments are expected over the next year, with increases driven by inflation and the need to retain talent.
- Despite various challenges, the majority of RST businesses maintain a positive outlook about their prospects over the next 12 months.

## Cost-related obstacles present challenges for rural and small town businesses

In the fourth quarter of 2024, cost-related obstacles<sup>7</sup> prevailed as the most anticipated challenge faced by businesses in RST areas (66.7%) and functional urban areas (65.4%), with inflation and rising cost of inputs expected to exert pressure on operations. In particular, inflation was the most frequently reported short-term<sup>8</sup> obstacle by RST businesses (44.3%), followed by the rising cost of inputs (e.g., labour, capital, energy and raw materials) (39.8%), the cost of insurance (36.4%), and interest rates and debt costs (30.9%).

Urban businesses also identified inflation (45.0%) and rising cost of inputs (37.1%) as their leading concerns over the next three months. However, for these businesses, the rising cost in real estate, leasing or property taxes (28.0%), interest rates and debt costs (28.0%) and recruitment of skilled employees (28.0%) were also weighed heavily as challenges over the short term.

1. Statistics Canada. (2024). [The Daily — Consumer Price Index, October 2024](#).

2. Statistics Canada. (2024). [The Daily — Industrial product and raw materials price indexes, October 2024](#).

3. Statistics Canada. (2024). [The Daily — Labour Force Survey, October 2024](#).

4. Based on Statistics Canada's Standard Geographical Classification 2021, businesses located in either census metropolitan areas or census agglomerations are classified as part of functional urban areas, while all others are categorized as rural and small town areas. See [Standard Geographical Classification \(SGC\) 2021 - Volume I, The Classification](#).

5. Statistics Canada. (2024). [Employment and unemployment rate, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality](#).

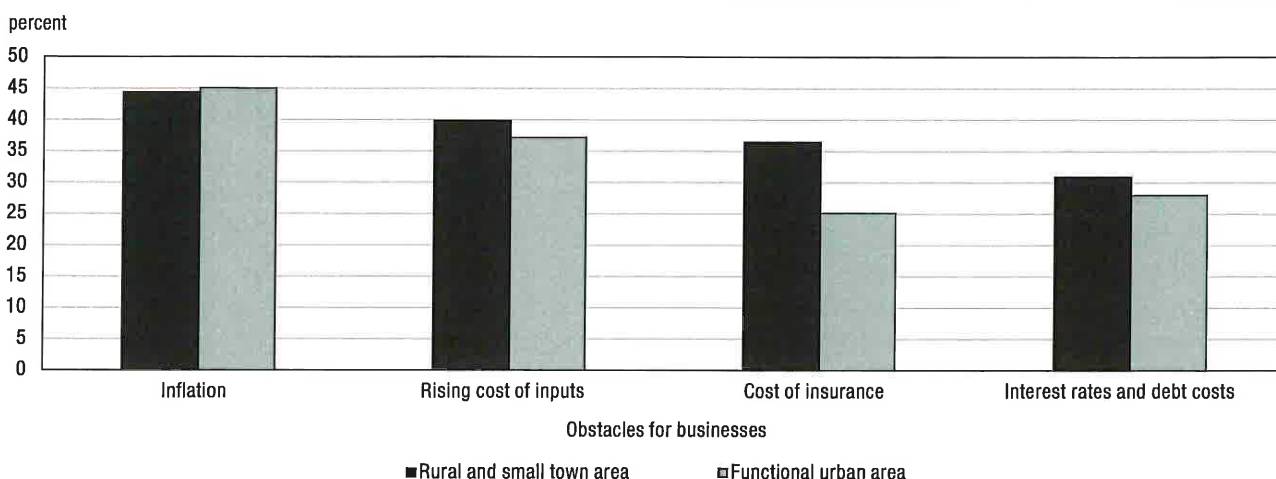
6. The target population for the [Canadian Survey on Business Conditions](#) is all active business establishments on the Business Register, which have an address in Canada, and have employees.

7. Cost-related obstacles include inflation, the cost of inputs, interest rates and debt costs, the cost of insurance, costs in real estate, leasing or property taxes, and transportation costs.

8. When respondents were asked questions about their expectations over the next three months (referred to in the text as "short term"), that three-month period could range from October 1, 2024, to February 4, 2025, depending on when the business responded. For questions about expectations over the next 12 months, that period could range from October 1, 2024 to November 4, 2025.

Chart 1

## Top four obstacles for businesses over the next three months, by rural and small town area and functional urban area



**Note:** Figures for businesses in functional urban areas are provided for comparison only. These businesses do not have the same top obstacles as those in rural and small town areas. The top obstacles for urban businesses included inflation (45.0%), rising cost of inputs (37.1%), interest rates and debt costs (28.0%), rising costs in real estate leasing or property taxes (28.0%) and recruiting skilled employees (28.0%).

**Source:** Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, fourth quarter of 2024.

In the fourth quarter of 2024, RST and urban businesses anticipated notable changes in prices, profitability, and expenses, driven by increasing costs and operational challenges. Nearly one in five (19.9%) RST businesses expected to raise the prices of their goods and services over the next three months, and a similar proportion of urban businesses (19.2%) expected to do the same.

Just over one-fifth (21.8%) of RST businesses expected their operating income to decrease, with 33.7% projecting rising operational expenses. This financial pressure was also reflected in the expectations of over one-quarter (27.4%) of RST businesses, who forecasted reduced profitability, along with declining cash reserves (27.8%). Urban businesses reported comparable pressures, with 22.6% anticipating a drop in operating income and 36.8% expecting operating expenses to rise. One-third (33.0%) of urban businesses also predicted shrinking profit margins, highlighting shared financial challenges across regions.

Rising costs in inputs, such as labour and raw materials, were anticipated to be the top concerns for RST and urban businesses in the fourth quarter of 2024. Among RST businesses, 57.7% identified rising labour costs as a major obstacle, compared with 65.3% of urban businesses. Conversely, RST businesses reported greater challenges with the rising cost of raw materials, with nearly half (48.9%) of these businesses citing it as a primary concern compared with 39.5% of urban businesses.

In the fourth quarter of 2024, 11.7% of RST and 12.4% of urban businesses expected supply chain obstacles<sup>9</sup> over the next three months. Among these businesses, the majority of RST (66.5%) and urban (64.2%) businesses expected supply chain challenges to remain about the same over this period, while more than one-quarter of RST (25.6%) and urban (28.3%) businesses expected them to worsen in the short term. For RST businesses struggling to maintain inventory levels, 25.9% of these businesses anticipated supply chain issues to persist over the next 12 months or more. Of the RST businesses involved in exporting or importing goods and services, 27.8% anticipated trade disruptions caused by international events over the next 12 months. Urban businesses reported similar concerns, with nearly one-quarter (23.5%) anticipating trade disruptions attributable to global events.

9. Businesses that expect supply chain-related obstacles include businesses that expect at least one of the following: difficulty acquiring inputs, products or supplies from within Canada, difficulty acquiring inputs, products or supplies from abroad, or maintaining inventory levels.

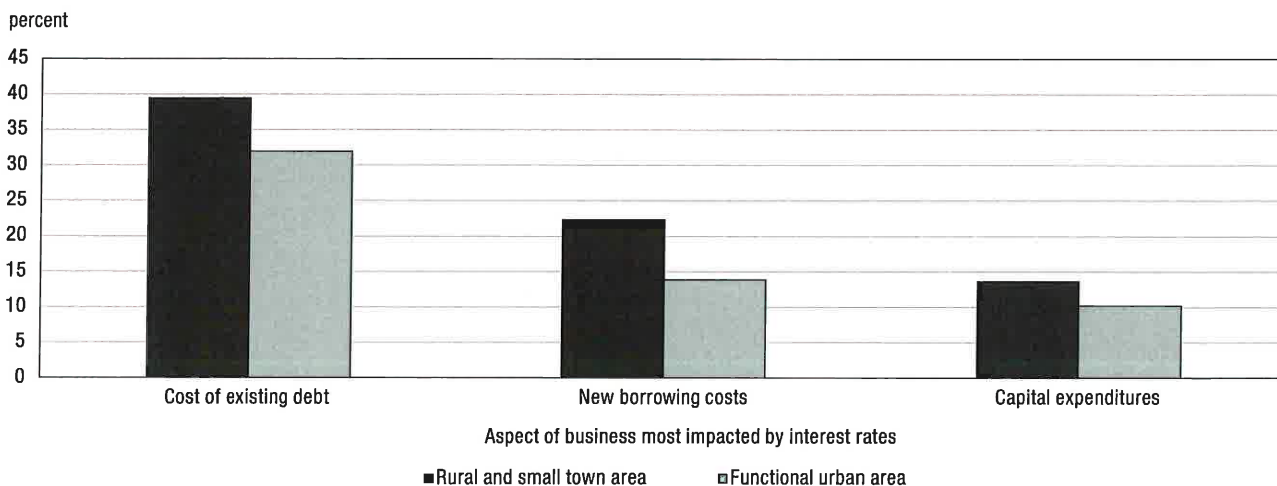
## Impacts of interest rate felt by rural and small town businesses

While most RST businesses (73.9%) reported having sufficient cash or liquid assets to maintain operations in the short term, 47.6% stated that interest rates have had a medium or high impact on their firms over the past year, especially those in the wholesale trade (68.0%), finance and insurance (67.0%), and retail trade (64.2%) industries. Nearly half (48.2%) of urban businesses reported interest rates to have had a medium or high level of impact, with those in the real estate and rental and leasing (60.2%) and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (56.9%) industries being most affected.

Among RST businesses affected by interest rates, nearly two-fifths (39.4%) identified the cost of existing debt and, to a lesser extent, new borrowing costs (22.3%) as the most affected aspects of their operations. In functional urban areas, the cost of existing debt (31.9%) and sales of products and services (19.6%) were the key business components most influenced by interest rates.

**Chart 2**

**Aspect of business most impacted by interest rates, by rural and small town area and functional urban area**



**Note:** Figures for businesses in functional urban areas are provided for comparison only. These businesses do not share the same operational elements most affected by interest rates as those in rural and small town areas. The key business factors influenced by interest rates for urban businesses included the cost of existing debt (31.9%), sales of products and services offered by the business (19.6%) and new borrowing costs (13.8%).

**Source:** Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, fourth quarter of 2024.

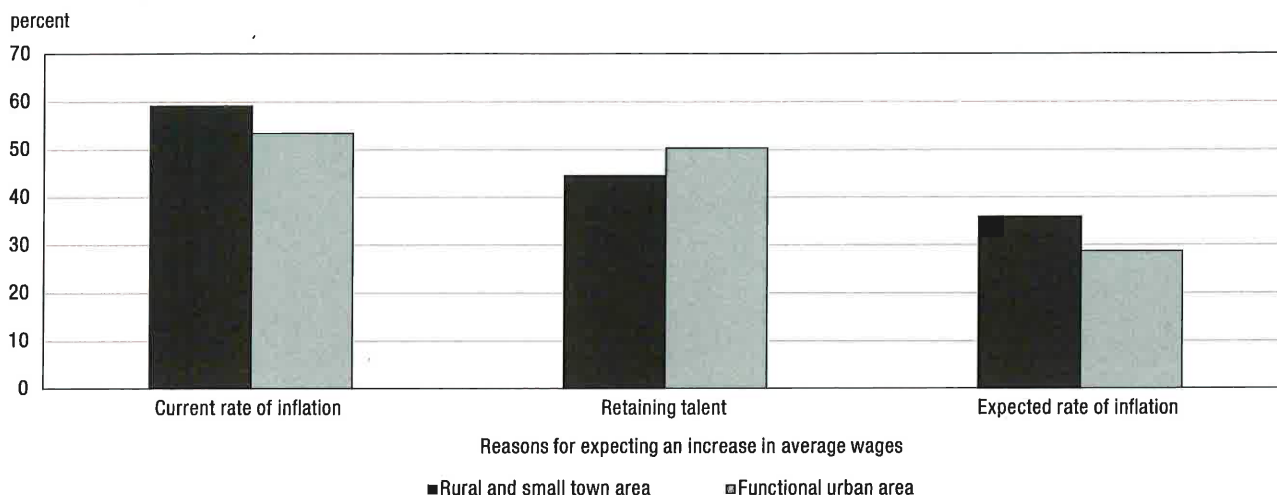
Debt management further highlights the shared challenges of RST and urban businesses. The majority of RST (73.5%) and urban (72.5%) businesses did not plan to take on additional debt in the short term. Among those businesses that did not plan to borrow, 22.4% of RST businesses and 23.7% of urban businesses did not have the ability to take on more debt. RST and urban businesses cited a lack of confidence or uncertainty in future sales (51.1% and 44.2%, respectively) and unfavourable interest rates (41.3% and 39.6%, respectively) as key barriers.

## Labour-related obstacles pose challenges for rural and small town businesses

In the fourth quarter of 2024, labour-related obstacles<sup>10</sup> were expected to be a key concern for RST and urban businesses in the short term. While the majority of both groups anticipated stable employee numbers and vacancies, over two-fifths (42.0%) of RST businesses and more than one-third (36.3%) of urban businesses projected labour-related difficulties over the next three months. Among RST businesses, 29.8% expected challenges in recruitment, 24.2% cited labour shortages, and 20.3% highlighted employee retention as a concern. Similarly, 28.0% of urban businesses anticipated recruitment challenges, 18.0% forecasted labour shortages and 19.1% identified employee retention as an obstacle.

10. Labour-related obstacles consist of challenges pertaining to recruiting and retaining skilled employees and shortage of labour force.

**Chart 3**  
**Top three reasons for expecting an increase in average wages over the next 12 months, by rural and small town area and functional urban area**



**Note:** Figures for businesses in functional urban areas are provided for comparison only.  
**Source:** Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, fourth quarter of 2024.

Plans for wage adjustments also reveal parallels in RST and functional urban areas. A similar proportion of RST (42.5%) and urban (42.6%) businesses anticipated an increase in average wages over the next year, of which the majority of RST (59.7%) and urban businesses (57.1%) expected wage increases to match last year's rate. For RST businesses that expected to increase average wages over the next 12 months, the current rate of inflation (59.1%) and the need to retain talent (44.5%) were the primary driver for these anticipated wage increases. Urban businesses reported greater pressures to retain talent (50.3%) as a reason for average wage increases compared with RST businesses, although most urban businesses identified the current rate of inflation (53.4%) as the primary factor influencing these adjustments.

## Rural and small town businesses show optimism about their future outlook

Overall, 75.3% of RST businesses are somewhat or very optimistic about their outlook over the next 12 months. RST businesses in the professional, scientific and technical services (92.2%) were among the most optimistic, while those in retail trade (27.4%) and construction (22.3%) were the least likely to share this outlook.

Similarly, 70.8% of urban businesses express optimism about their future. Urban businesses in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (84.0%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (82.4%) had the highest levels of optimism, while businesses in transportation and warehousing (27.8%) and retail trade (25.8%) were the least optimistic about their 12-month prospects.

## Bilingual employment needs in rural and small town Canada

Across Canada, the requirements for bilingualism in English and French varied between RST and urban businesses in the fourth quarter of 2024. On average, 7.4% of RST businesses required employees to be bilingual, with 4.6% requiring that all employees meet this standard. RST businesses in Quebec and New Brunswick had the highest percentages, at 12.3% and 12.1% respectively, where all employees were required to be bilingual in English and French.

Among urban businesses, an average of 8.7% across Canada reported a requirement for bilingual employees, with 5.3% indicating that all employees must be bilingual. In Quebec, 20.9% of urban businesses require full bilingualism, followed by 11.8% of urban businesses in New Brunswick.



## Methodology

The Canadian Survey on Business Conditions uses a stratified random sample of business establishments with employees classified by geography, industry sector and size. Proportions are estimated using survey weights ensuring that the survey results are representative of all employer businesses in Canada. Businesses were classified based on their geographic location. Businesses located within census metropolitan areas or census agglomerations were classified as part of functional urban areas. All businesses in other locations were categorized as part of RST areas. The most recent iteration of this survey was conducted from October 1 to November 4, 2024. The total sample size for this iteration of the survey is 20,955 and results are based on responses from a total of 9,420 businesses or organizations.

## References

Statistics Canada. (2024, November 25). [Canadian Survey on Business Conditions](#).

## Related products

[Business Conditions in Rural and Small Town Canada: Interactive Dashboard](#)

[Rural Canada Statistics Portal](#)

**11.b / 11.c (continued)**

**Recommended Motion:**

Motion by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ that Council accepts the submitted Council Committee and Society & Other reports as information.

<b>Regular Council Meeting:</b> January 13, 2025.	<b>Agenda Items:</b> 12.a
<b>Prepared by:</b> Arno Glover	<b>Approved by:</b> Mayor Robb Stuart

**Agenda item 12.a**  
**CLOSED SESSION OF COUNCIL (“in camera”)**

**Motion 12.a**  
 Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_pm that Council moves to an “in-camera” session.

**Motion 12.b**  
 Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_pm that Council return to an “open meeting” of Council.

**Motion 12.c**  
**Resolution (if required)**  
 Moved by Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_pm that Council \_\_\_\_\_

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**Agenda item 13**  
**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion 13a** Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_pm to adjourn the meeting.