



TOWN HALL MEETING

AUGUST 21, 2025

7:00 PM

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

Q: Why was the cost of the post office message board so high?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn:

While \$30k appears to everyone, including council, to be a high price for a message board, 100% of that cost was funded via a grant, so none of the money came out of the town for that board. And the money had to be used for the purpose that it was requested because it was a grant. Failure to use the money would have required returning the money.

Councillor Millante:

I recall the cost of the sign was also high because of the pilings and drilling into the cement.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe:

Community Services chose the company Behrends Bronze. The board was not put out to tender, which was an error on the part of the town.

No Town or Council member has a personal connection to that company.

Q: Are RTM's (ready to move – modular homes) allowed on lots in Gibbons? Is there a requirement to notify the adjacent landowners?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn:

Due to Land Use Bylaws – housing is zoned to specific areas, and I assume that the area of the RTM home was permitted.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe:

I can confirm that the house in question was a Single-Family Dwelling which is permitted in an R1C District, so no adjacent landowner notification required.

Q: Why is local hockey (CNN & Broncos) being pushed out?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn:

Council has to be careful with the answer, specifically because negotiations are ongoing. Council cannot interfere with operations within the town. Please allow the ongoing negotiations to continue before making a final judgement.

The majority of Council has the opinion that they want the Broncos to remain in town, and that an agreement between the Town and the Broncos can be reached.

FCCS Manager Laura Schmidt:

We value and support the arena and its users, including the local groups. They need to find that balance in fairness for local groups. Local groups definition is those groups with 51% or more players from Gibbons or Sturgeon County; they receive preferred local rates over non-local teams. Priority is supposed to always be given to local teams first.

Councillor Millante:

This is a discussion that Council is having with Administration including the CNN Spur's discussion, again, knowing that we are restricted in what we can discuss.

- a. Asked to address CNN as well.
- b. Unfortunately, Council wasn't prepared to discuss the CNN situation during the meeting – so we need an answer relating to CNN specifically.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Administration is working with the local hockey teams on current concerns.

Q: How involved is council in the arena? (displeasure with those running the arena)

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn:

We are obviously now aware of this concern. Personally, I have only known about it for about a month, and while it has been briefly discussed, Council has to be careful on how they discuss this. Council has the ability and right to discuss their 'opinion on this', they cannot interfere with the decision directly.

Councillor Harris

I feel that there have been issues with ice time booking with the Broncos, and the allotment of the dressing room. I feel that this is not an operations issue, but more of a community issue. While ice allotment being 100% an operational issue, I feel that many of the issues related to this issue, such as the building of the dressing room, permission of the team coming in that asked for the dressing room use, all of this was originally brought to Council. Either way, I suggest that while first contact should be with Administration, copy Council so that we are aware of the communications.

Councillor Sandahl:

Sturgeon County pays nearly \$250k into recreation in the town, and if the community feels that should be more, please reach out to Sturgeon County.

Q: What is the recourse if the public has a concern about specific individuals or situations?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn:

I suggest that all concerns start with the town office (in person or phone, or email) – ask to speak with the individual responsible for the area of your concern. If necessary, in an email copy Council on that issue so that we are aware of what is occurring, but not for the purpose of getting a Council opinion or decision yet. Please ensure you START the process with town office first. But if escalation is necessary, please do.

Councillor Millante:

If you see any of Council anywhere, please stop us and talk to us if you have a concern.

Q: Due to the dire straits that the town is in, and looking back, knowing that there were bells and whistles and alarms going off for 2 years, what would you have done better, and would you vote the exact same way to put us in the situation we are in.

Councillor Sandahl:

I have tried to be as financially responsible as possible and did vote against the trees that were presented by a private individual and paid for by the town.

Councillor Millante:

There was a strong push to get a grocery store, Tim Hortons, etc. But decisions were made to work with Administration, and I wish more due diligence was done and to ensure that Administration is held accountable as well. The benefits of more commercial for the tax base, that came at a cost. We have to move forward, with the new council dealing with that hindsight. I wouldn't say that it put us in the position I was expecting to be, but now that we are, I would use it as a learning experience.

Councillor Kozak:

I believe it would be a 50/50 on how I would vote on it. Knowing what we have now with the Grocery store and others, with the extra tax base we now have, the only regret I have is not researching far enough with what the outcome, but knowing where we are now, I would vote yes.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn:

I believe that everyone on the board has some fault in the situation we are in. My biggest fault is that I had too much trust in our Administration. Trust with Administration is needed, but I put too much into that. I needed to research more, I needed to be better prepared. I can't say I'd vote No on everything because of the tax revenue we now have because of the development there. The Town was able to keep the Tax rate to only a 1% increase because of the new development which also increased the assessment on the homes in town. There are things that hindsight tells me I would now vote against but I would still vote yes for a majority of the decisions as we did.

Councillor Harris:

Most of you know I've been on Council for 12 years and I have objected to much of what has been going on and I assure you that I have all the information, all the documentation, all the legislation that we are governed by, has been shared with Council and Administration. So, I have no fault in what has gone on. I have been screaming from the rooftops. I have voted against anything,

everything financial wise that would put the Town in financial peril. So, to answer if I would vote the same way again, she would. Sorry if that means we don't get the grocery store as quickly as we did, but we'd do it the right way, and the town is financially stable. So, we wait another couple years, big deal. But I would vote every single time, the exact same way.

Councillor Berry

There have been more than 1 opportunity to vote for the Heartland station, and to do it again, I would vote yes. There are other areas, in hindsight I may not have voted yes. Our former CAO was a very thoughtful and creative man, but having said that, his visions were very grandiose, put the cart before the horse, and as a result, spent money we don't have, which is why we are where we are. Having said that, we have to move forward. We can't go back and change his actions; we have to move forward. And I think we are doing a really good job moving forward. I thank the Interim CAO and staff for the hard work they are doing to get our house in order. With regards to the Heartland station, I would vote yes, probably no to some of the other votes that were taken.

Q: If people were aware of what was going on with what the former CAO was doing but they had jobs to protect, is that acceptable – as well if Council believes that we have a fiduciary care to the citizens of Gibbons.

Councillor Harris

Municipal Governance works in the hierarchy of Admin/Council. Picture an hourglass. Council is at the top of the hourglass, the CAO is at the center of the hourglass, and Administration is at the bottom. It is not customary for an employee to go over the CAO's head to go directly to Council. However, as per your question, which is why I brought forward for the Whistle Blower policy, because of that hourglass, normally, staff would not go directly to Council. But there were enough red flags brought up by me that staff would feel comfortable coming forward to her sooner.

Q: Bylaw ALT 1-25 Short term borrowing bylaw. Against the MGA, Minister did not approve it, it is above our debt limit. At this point it is an illegal bylaw. Council who voted for it are responsible for that 2.5 Million. Are Council willing to go to arbitration to pay back that 2.5 Million dollars?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Municipal Government is well aware of the debt and the fact that we are over our debt limit. I don't disagree that Council is responsible for that debt. There is a plan to pay it down, although I don't recall the 'termination date' of the loan. We are getting regular reports on that debt. The Town has paid off over \$1 million in overall debt for the town this year alone.

Q: If we find a problem with infrastructure in this town, what is a reasonable timeframe for things to be dealt with. Sidewalks, drains, roads, etc. What is a reasonable timeframe to hear back or get things taken care of?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I can't give you a specific answer on repair. But reach out directly to Public Works to let them know what is happening, and in my experience, they have responded in a reasonable time frame (2-4 hours) to evaluate the situation. The repair, if needed can't be given a timeframe due to scope, timeline, cost, etc. for the repair. If there is a danger, some immediate response needs to happen, but it may just be a fence as opposed to a full fix? But timing is also dependent on contractor availability.

Q: No cameras installed to protect, no citizens on patrol, or law enforcement. If the town is going to make investments in these things, they need to protect it.

Councillor Millante

I have had situations that people have come up to me to bring things to my attention, and I have notified the CAO who has contacted Public Works. CAO is responsible for ensuring minimum standards are met.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Public Works has a 24-7 emergency number that can be called. The issues in Memorial Park – I apologize for the delay in putting up the fencing.

Q: Extra \$25 on water bill for sewer repair and such. Should that not be part of the property tax?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I believe it was a requirement for the purpose of setting aside funds for repairs.

Councillor Harris

It was in the Master Rates Bylaw

Councillor Sandahl

Arrow Utilities has added the charge to Gibbons (and other municipalities) for the purpose of getting funds for various repairs.

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

The infrastructure charge is specifically for sewer and water services and that those charges are specifically for replacing/repairing infrastructure only. It COULD have been put in as an operations line item in the budget, but it was felt that this was more transparent to specify where those monies were going to.

Q: Follow up question – Why was there no heads up to this change – more communication?

Councillor Harris

This was discussed and first presented by the former CAO and it had been discussed a few times and that I disagree with some of the information that has been presented.

Q: Final follow up question – is this a ‘forever’ charge?

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

There is no planned end date for these charges.

Q: Traffic safety – lives in Williams Park – but have noticed issues with traffic issues on her dash cam – No speed limits in the whole neighborhood, although there are speed limits in other areas. There are no ‘exit’ signs in

Williams Park area, etc. Asking for more line marks, speed limits, speed bumps, etc. Just something to get people to slow down on the road by the ball diamonds.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

If you have any videos, pictures, etc., please forward them to admin/council.

Councillor Millante

We have conversations with Bylaw and Peace Officers so that we can make them aware of that.

Q: Concerns with speeds in various areas. There are speeds showing a speed limit in places with a 30k speed zone. (Appears that main concern is with speeders)

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Highway signs have been approved by Provincial Government to get changed, but they have not made the change, and we are not permitted to change them. Town issues will need to be looked into and discussed with Bylaw/RCMP.

Councillor Harris

Because Council does not know everything, everywhere, we live in one place but don't always make it into other places, if you have a concern and your reach out to Administration of the town, if you do not get the answer you'd expect, please reach out to Council with that information as well.

Councillor Millante

Concerns I received were the design of the placement of the signs where in one area it goes from 40km to 30km but then it doesn't go back up to 40 km causing not only speeders pushing other drivers but confusion on where 30km starts and ends.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Public Works will be ordering "Playground Ends" signs and installing once received.

Q: When is the town going to pave the road behind the post office? Large potholes, bad water collection.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I can't give an exact date on this because there are priorities.

Councillor Millante

Council has put forward a motion asking for an inventory of sidewalks/roadways for areas needing repair so we can be aware of all those items. Administration is working on this inventory for this.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

There is a program to update a number of back lanes per year, but due to an increase in main road issues this year, such as potholes, the back lane funds were redirected to roads for this year. But that will be looked at again next budget year.

Q: When we look at the financial situation we are in, the audits were late, the CFO is costing the taxpayers in \$80k in late fees. Why is this individual getting a \$19/hr. raise when the rest of us are just getting higher bills?

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

This is a 'touchy' subject because we must be cautious about the fact this is a contracted employee, and I need to review what I can speak about here prior to answering.

Finance Officer – Mitchel Opryshko

This year the audit was delivered on time for all deadlines. It does not affect the previous years that were late.

Q: Finances – can we provide a written or verbal account of the Town's current financial health, including summary of debts, liabilities, cash flow position and how this reflects on prior and future planning efforts? Often, we get financial reports, but what we'd like to see is just a narrative summation of the information.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

There is financial information in the package, but it may be beyond what is needed. There is a submission from someone that included an example from the Town of Boyle that seemed very simple to understand. Any examples that would make sense to you that the Town could benefit from seeing, please submit those.

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

The Town's current financial health reflects a strategic and forward-looking approach to growth, infrastructure investment, and long-term fiscal planning. Over the past year, the Town has taken bold steps to support new development by maximizing its borrowing capacity to fund critical infrastructure. While this has temporarily tightened the Town's cash position, it has also laid the groundwork for future prosperity — evidenced by over \$10 million in development permits issued so far this year. This level of investment signals growing interest in the community and a steadily expanding tax base, positioning the Town for increased revenues in the near future.

Despite the initial strain on liquidity, the Town's overall financial health has improved since the last fiscal year-end. We are seeing a stronger ability to meet debt obligations and a significant increase in cash on hand. As of August 2025, the Town's cash balance stands at approximately \$878,000 — a substantial improvement from \$77,600 at December 2024. This improvement supports operations and provides a more stable buffer for unexpected expenditures.

*From a financial ratio perspective, we've seen continued strengthening. The **Debt Ratio**, which measures total liabilities compared to total assets (with a lower number indicating stronger financial standing), has improved slightly from 0.342 in December 2024 to 0.331 in August 2025. This reflects a careful balance of investing in infrastructure while maintaining financial stability.*

*The **Debt Servicing Coverage Ratio**, which shows the Town's ability to cover its debt payments with available revenues (with a*

ratio above 1.0 considered strong), remains healthy. While it has adjusted slightly from 5.8 to 5.1 over the same period, this still indicates that the Town is generating more than five times the revenues needed to meet its debt obligations — a clear sign of strength.

Most notably, the **Quick Ratio**, which measures the Town's ability to cover short-term liabilities with its most liquid assets (with a ratio above 1.0 considered strong), has improved dramatically — from 1.12 in December 2024 to 6.8 in August 2025. This indicates a strong short-term financial position, giving the Town flexibility to respond to immediate needs without financial strain. As of August 2025, the Town's total liabilities are approximately \$16.7 million, up from \$16.02 million at the end of 2024. Of this, long-term loans and debentures make up \$13.1 million, up from \$11.7 million in December. This increase reflects the Town's planned and strategic investments in infrastructure to support growth — investments that are already starting to yield returns in the form of development activity and a growing revenue base.

To ensure these decisions are sustainable, the Town has prepared detailed operational and capital budgets, along with comprehensive cash flow forecasts. These tools guide our spending and investment decisions, ensuring that every dollar spent is aligned with long-term priorities and fiscal responsibility.

In summary, while the Town has faced tight cash conditions as a result of its growth-oriented strategy, we are now seeing measurable improvements in liquidity, debt management, and financial capacity. Administration remains confident in the Town's financial direction and is committed to maintaining this positive momentum through careful planning and continued fiscal discipline.

Councillor Millante

There is currently a Compliance Review by the Province of our records and there are processes being updated and awaiting the completion of the review.

Councillor Harris

I believe that we should return to previous years on how the budgeting process was being done where Council would sit down with department heads and go line by line as necessary where Council can ask questions. Currently we don't know the answers because we are not involved in the process like we used to be.

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

That the budgeting process has started already and that Council will be included as it has been in the past.

Q: What's being done to promote transparency and open communication with the residents of Gibbons?

Councillor Sandahl

I am willing to talk to anyone whenever they'd like, will discuss anything I am permitted to discuss and attend as many town functions as I possibly can and tries to keep everyone informed.

Councillor Millante

I support measures for residents' information to council decisions through recording and live streaming. Some things are not permitted to be discussed due to privacy. I am involved in many community events. I also listen to people, and I talk and meet as many people as possible.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Early in my term, I saw emails not being responded to. I was part of that lack of response because I understood that the Mayor is Council's spokesperson, so I believed the Mayor would/should answer. Since becoming Acting Mayor, I have made sure all emails that I am on have been answered, either by me or someone else (such as Administration). I have attended residents' houses to meet, and am more than willing to discuss things with people. Can our communication with the residents improve, absolutely, but we're going to try.

Councillor Harris

If there's anything I can do to be more transparent, please let me know. We are neighbors so just talk to us. Can't stress enough that Council is here for your benefit. Do not be afraid to email, phone, stop us at the post office, etc.

Councillor Berry

I am more than willing to talk to anyone. Again, just be aware that there are limitations on what we can talk about. The Mayor is the spokesperson, and Council should be one voice. I would prefer to share what the town is doing for the residents' benefit.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

This year, the budget will be reviewed line by line by Council because Council should be aware of all spending. We still have limitations on privacy on what we can discuss. I also notify all of Council on various 'emergencies'. Staff meet weekly for the purpose of moving forward and to move towards their goals.

Q: Question about the Vac truck.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Where we are today with the Vac truck may not be where we are in a month or two. We have been briefed that there are potential options coming forward with the truck. How long may we be paying for the truck, we can't yet answer that. We have to use the truck until we get the proper infrastructure to the Heartland Station. The plan to get the infrastructure there is in the works. If we can't purchase the truck, we must continue to either lease the truck, hire someone to service it for us, or we have to shut down Heartland Station.

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

Administration is going to bring to council in the near future for the option of purchasing the Vac Truck – we can't yet identify how long the Vac Truck will be needed though? For the infrastructure, we are continuing to look for grants, and it is unclear when the infrastructure will be in place.

Q: Why can't Councillor Harris attend closed door meetings or is being ostracized by Council?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

While I understand the concern due to the narrative that is out there, to my knowledge, there has never been a meeting that Councillor Harris has not been invited to, or that I at least believed she had been invited to. I have never called a meeting or been called to a meeting that she has not been invited to. Some of us know each other outside of Council, so have we discussed things, of course, but they do not constitute a meeting of Council. (called out question about the Meeting with MLA Dale Nally). I will answer that. I located the meeting invite that included Councillor Harris's name on it. I cannot obviously guarantee that she received it, but I can definitely state, she was on the invite that I received. I sent that to Councillor Harris.

Q: The walkway along the river cannot be walked on easily.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

I have not heard that concern before, so I will get Public Works to review ASAP.

Update from Interim CAO

The current pea gravel will slowly be replaced with suitable material.

Councillor Millante

When I was on the trails committee in 2013/2014 – I brought up a question relating to stairs there for accessibility. I understand the concern and Council will work with Administration to try to address.

Q: Any pre-discussion about the Provincial Police Force?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

While Council has not really had one directly, I have had very brief discussions with MLA Nally, I've spoken with other municipalities at provincial events, but once we hear anything more concrete, we would have to ensure we discuss this.

Councillor Harris

Every year Council attends various conferences. Everything in the Provincial discussions occurring, it is expected that this would be addressed there.

Councillor Millante

The Sheriff's are a police force as well although it is more of a hybrid. There has been an opinion voiced through AB Municipalities to the Provincial Government.

Q: Yes or no, do you feel responsible for the CNN Spurs never getting any ice time and locals being pushed to the back burner with hockey.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Personally, I have to say no, because, until the issue with the dressing room, I had no idea there was a concern at all.

Councillor Millante

I was made aware of the situation by residents. I voiced the opinion, but that is outside of Council decision making. I did fight for it, and do feel responsible, but I needed to stay in my lane.

Acting CAO Eric Lowe

I had nothing to do with those issues when they were happening because I was in Public Works at the time, so I don't have the history.

Q: Follow up question– Should local teams get priority in this town?

FCCS Manager Laura Schmidt

As stated earlier local groups get preferred rates and priority on bookings.

The speaker identified that while they do get the preferred rates, history does not show in favor of the local teams getting preferred ice time for the past several years. But identified doesn't believe that anyone in attendance during the meeting is responsible. The speaker feels the individual responsible for the arena is the one responsible for the issues and wanted to ensure we all were aware of this. So now maybe we can move forward in that direction.

Councillor Harris

While the scheduling of the ice time is an administration role, I also feel that Council can support in identifying if the town is running the arena to make money or if we're renting out the arena to support the community. I feel that if we are supporting locally, that losing money there is money well spent. We should ensure that Council does advise Administration of our preferences here.

Q: In the past, I have asked for bids and tenders that have been put out. Other Municipalities have used web site posts for transparency for tenders that are available, to see if they could bid on them, ensure that transparency is there. Is there a possibility that maybe we could be posting those?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

It sounds like a valid request, but we may need to investigate the logistics of this.

Q: Comments related to 'that was the former CAO, or the former Administration'. That power was given away by Council. What are you going to do to change this back?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

In approximately May/April, when we met with Minister McIver. At the meeting, he suggested we do not yet move forward with the Municipal Audit but move forward with a Legislative Compliance Review. If Municipal Affairs finds enough issues during that review, they will instigate an Audit themselves. But during the review that they have already started, as they find things that are lacking or missing in our bylaws, policies, etc., they have let us know about urgent issues. But when we get the results of the review, and hear about issues that they have found, we will respond to those appropriately. But they have also suggested that when we were going

to make a change to one of our bylaws, to not do so yet, because they were still in the review process and would likely have suggestions that we should follow then.

Councillor Harris

It is unfortunate, in my opinion, that the rest of Council did not take my experience into account with regards to the former CAO.

Q: An investigation was done on Councillor Harris that cost the town \$40k + that we've never seen. How do you pick and choose what is investigated and what we spend money on, and why are we not permitted to see it?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

It was a Council decision to do the investigation outside of Council.

Q: Follow up question, if we paid for that report, why can't we see it?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

As per Bill 50, the sanctions and the investigation are no longer a part of the town record. They no longer exist.

Q: Vac Truck – It is currently costing the town approximately \$12k a month, and we are receiving back approximately \$700 a month. What is being done for any negotiations in the future to protect us from this? Are the benefits the town is seeing in increased assessments and taxes received, is this actually offsetting compared to the amount of interest we are incurring?

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

The short answer is yes. The amount of non-residential taxation we are receiving now does offset that. But I do not mean to imply that this is an opportune arrangement that we are paying for that vehicle. The tax base does cover this, but this was an oversight from the past that we are still dealing with today.

Q: Follow up – In one of the meetings, it was stated that the vac-truck was 'sick'. We had to pay a couple of grand. But if we are leasing a vehicle that was so called 'under warranty', why are we paying for the repairs and then having to pay someone else to empty the holding tank?

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

There was warranty at times, but I have to look into the timing of that repair to determine why the town paid for it and if it should have been under warranty or not.

UPDATE

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

The assumed broken starter from the Vac Truck was taken to a shop where it was inspected and passed. A wiring issue was repaired at Western Star under warranty.

Q: In a past council meeting, Louise Bauder mentioned that she was retiring, and this position was not posted. Also, there is not one for the current CAO role.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

The Interim CAO has sent a posting to Council for review, and then for posting the position around the end of September, so that the new Council can review the postings, do interviews and such mid-November, then hiring and a start date end of January to February 2026. The posting will be on the town website as well as other locations.

Q: Follow up – Louise Bauder’s position - asking was the part time position that was added to an existing employee, having been merged into Louise’s roles. Was that employee adding more hours to their work week to accomplish this, were they already a full-time employee, and is a \$50k increase for this really appropriate?

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

I will need to investigate this as I do not recall anyone getting a \$50k increase?

UPDATE

This is inaccurate information; no employee received a \$50k increase.

Q: Mitchell stated that \$16.7 Million – where did that money go? And then he mentioned an additional \$10 Million for future – where is that going to go?

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

The 16.7 Million was the total liabilities as of December 2024, and the \$10 Million figure was the amount of development permits the town has received thus far in 2025. The two numbers aren’t comparable.

Q: Follow up question– Are we sure this council hasn’t been taken? We have seen no accountability.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Have we made mistakes, absolutely. And accepting those mistakes as ours isn’t considered accountability?

Q: Follow up question – How does this affect my taxes next year?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

The \$10 Million in development permits will assist in increasing the tax revenue for the town which will assist in keeping your tax bill as low as we can.

Q: Follow Up question – You spoke about using town assets. Is my house a town asset? What are my taxes going to be next year?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I can't remotely tell you that right now. We don't know exactly what the budget will be.

Q: Follow Up – You don't know your budget?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

This year we do. You've already received your tax bill for this year. I have no clue what your next year's taxes will be until we have an opportunity to see next year's budget.

Q: Is there any expenditure that can be re-evaluated, postponed to ease the financial strain. Such as staff lunches, awards, bonuses, and get rid of half of those Visa's. Is there any postponement on spending?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

While I can't give you details off the top of my head, some expenditures have been removed (post meeting thought, such as FCM conference for council). But I can say this, Staff has done an amazing job keeping this town afloat and quite frankly, putting us in a significantly better financial position than we were 8 months ago.

Q: Follow Up question – I look at all monthly accounts payable. I would like to see a full AP report which includes vendors and contractors that are submitted and are issued payment. I cannot see anything that would jog something that would help us identify that something is wrong. Can all invoices submitted be public put into your report?

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

We do supply the AP listing in the council meeting agenda. Council can ask any question on the invoice. The invoices are all included in the budget that Council has already approved. To include each and every invoice if we can do that? I don't know if any privacy laws could prevent us from doing that, but maybe not?

Q: Follow up question – But for each cheque, an invoice is issued?

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

Yes, we do, but I don't know if we can? I know that the MGA doesn't require us to even list the AP, but we do so to make sure we are as transparent as possible. We also now include balance sheet and variance reports to show we are consistent in following our capital budget.

Q: Follow Up question – when we see an invoice for \$10k, and the description is 'hours worked', it should be detailed. I don't know what that \$10k was for?

Councillor Harris

Approximately a year ago, I put forward 4 different motions asking for a monthly statement about the 2 lines of credit, and for a detailed listing of all vendors, consultants and contractors. All of this has been defeated.

Q: Residential development that the town has taken on appears to have completely flopped. What is this Council's and new Admins goal and plan for future development around Residential, Commercial in letting the community know and being involved? In the past, while we were asked, we were ignored. Nobody listened.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

For sure, one of the lessons learned, as well as Administration, the Town is not a developer, nor should we ever be again. As far as future development, I don't really know the rules around what community involvement is required or permitted around land that is owned by developers.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

For developments, we follow the MGA, and then for any new developments, there will be open houses that are advertised. The developers will present what they are doing, the public has a chance for input, and then we carry forward. But we are following the MGA to ensure we are doing this properly, including open houses.

Councilor Berry

Some of the questions may be answered by the new Land Use Bylaw. Also, our Council has not developed a strategic plan to guide the development we would like for the town. The new Council has an onus to do the work needed for a new strategic plan to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Just wanted to clarify that we do not yet have a new Land Use Bylaw. It has only gone through 1 reading thus far. There are additional changes already and likely won't be official until the new Council.

Q: Are all the extra 'taxes' that the town collects through other third parties (Municipal fees from Fortis, Atco Gas, etc.) used for infrastructure, utility costs, included in General Revenue, used to keep our taxes lower? They are hidden taxes that many people don't know about.

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

It is reported as part of our General Operating revenue and is spent trying to keep your taxes lower and continue to operate. They are not necessarily used specifically for any infrastructure.

Q: \$2.5 million loan – was deemed as a project. It was disingenuously written made in Closed Session and according to the MGA, you can't do that.

Recording Secretary Chris Pinault

That is incorrect. Council can have discussions in Closed session, but cannot make a decision in closed session, so they come out of closed to make the motion.

Q: Follow up question – but as far as calling it a project, is that not incorrectly named?

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

I would agree with you that it probably should not have been called a project. We did take that loan against the Arena as collateral and the loan was for bridge financing for operations for the town.

Q: Follow up question– so if you had gone to the bank and asked for bridge financing, would it have been given?

Finance Manager Terra Pattison

I don't know that. We did take the loan through the bank as a mortgage, which is why the Collateral against the Arena.

Q: Using Grants as loans and giving residents loans through Grant money – Williams Park – in some of the spreadsheets that it appears that when loans were taken out, and Grants are being shown as revenue.

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

As part of the Legislative review, this came up and there are no more loans given as part of Grant money. As far as Grant money comes in, it is revenue, but loans should not be shown as revenue.

Q: Follow up question – Are you still giving out loans using Grant money.

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

No, we are not.

Q: Follow Up question – are you recalling the loans that you have given?

Finance Officer Mitchell Opryshko

I am recalling that your question was, going forward, will we be giving loans through grant money. Absolutely not.

Q: Tell us why we should vote for you again and how are you gonna fix the chaos?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

We struggle with the answer only because it isn't a Candidate Forum. Out of respect to those that are not up here but are out in the audience or online that are running, we won't be answering that at this time. Please come to the Candidate Forum if/when we do have one and please ask the questions.

RESPONSES TO EMAILS (Please note, duplicate questions are not answered)

Q: My question is, when will we have maintenance done in our town roads? I have taken a tour of our town, and observed several deteriorating streets. 47 St has several holes which are becoming a hazard to anyone riding a bike and could cause damage to tires of vehicles. 51St. has increasingly more cracks, which have never been filled and are causing many more rough patches of road. The rough spots on 51st just south of Lunnon, have not been addressed for at least one year. There is also a Sewer in the crescent off Landing Trail (50th St.) which seems rather high above the pavement. Is this not a hazard for winter snow removal? I feel as though the scraping

blade could catch and cause damage to the blade or to the sewer. As well it must cause spring time melting issues. Are there plans to fix these issues? I also observed that something is happening behind the houses on 51St between Lunnon and Landing Trail. There appears to be to be rotting wood laid out like a path. I am sorry that I am not good at explaining many of the issues although I did take several pictures. The rubber asphalt covering the playground at the end of Lunnon has chewed up holes in it. I am sad to say that the appearance of the town is beginning to look run down and neglected. Please tell me why money is not available to maintain these basic infrastructure items, yet we have the money to please a single resident with trees and moving a path (emergency exit), so as to grant him better privacy. I am not typically a person to complain, but I do feel there is special treatment being given to this resident. Thank you for considering my concerns.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Road repair, along with sidewalk repair has been brought up a few times recently (budget open house, and now Town Hall questions). This is more of a Public Works question, but with regards to Council, one of the things we are responsible for is determining if the funding we provide to these repairs is sufficient. My current understanding is that we do not yet fund enough to complete all the repairs needed in both roadway and sidewalk repair, but Council has requested a summary report from Public Works for the purpose of understanding the scope of repairs needed compared to the budget provided. While this might not help us this year as the work has already been scheduled (due to start very soon if hit hasn't already started by the time this answer is available), this will help Council with preparing the budget for next year.

But, as I'm sure most people can imagine, there still may not be enough funds available for all repairs in all areas. This is something that Council and Public Works will have to identify a balance of necessary with funds available, and those that can hold off for a year.

Q: As a parent with 2 children in Gibbons local minor hockey team, as a parent who is on the board of said hockey team, therefore I know 1st hand how things are being handled in regards to HOME ADVANTAGE ICE. Why are we not getting this? Where are MY tax dollars going? I sure pay enough of them. Certainly not to snow removal, sidewalk maintenance, etc. haven't seen much water & sewer upgrades to begin yes. Please advise us tax payers where is OUR money going ? Certainly not towards upgrades or maintenance towards the town itself or it's establishments for us locals.. we need and deserve answers please. Enough is enough.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

As was mentioned in the Town Hall meeting, the Arena was at least near the top of the issues identified. I hope that Council has made it clear that local groups are a priority for Council, and that Council has made that priority clear to Administration. It is too soon to see the results of that yet, but Council, for the remainder of this term will keep this front and center for us, and with the upcoming Council, will be determined once we know who is on that Council. I am confident that any of the current Council that may be fortunate enough to be re-elected will continue to advocate for the local groups.

Q: What specific measures are currently in place to address the town's past fiscal mismanagement, and how does the administration plan to prevent similar issues in the future?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Firstly, learning from our mistakes in the past. As mentioned earlier, one thing missing from previous years was open and transparent communication between Administration and Council. I believe that currently, that is no longer the case. Do I think we have it perfect right now, no. I believe we are still identifying what information is needed, how it is presented, and is it truly understood. That is still a work in progress, but I do believe it is improving.

Q: What strategies are being implemented to improve financial oversight and accountability, particularly regarding budget allocations and expenditures?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I believe this is an administration answer, in conjunction with the answer to question one of this submission.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Administration is providing more detailed financial information to Council on a regular basis. The Budget process will include more detailed meetings with Council.

Q: How does the town plan to balance necessary services and infrastructure improvements with the need to achieve fiscal sustainability and reduce long-term liabilities?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I think the plan for Council to have more and better involvement in the budget process will assist with this. Seeing Finances priority on paying down some of the debt already has been promising as well, but obviously, we need to start planning 3-5 years ahead as well. One of the things that I think will assist with this is a proper strategic planning session, giving Administration a guide to the direction Council wants the Town to move towards.

Q: What are the short-term and long-term financial goals for the town, and what specific actions will be taken to return the town to a fiscally solvent position within the next 3-5 years?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

First and most obvious is to drop our level of debt while still finding a balance of allowing the operations of this town to continue at expected levels. There is currently no desire by me to even consider taking on more debt until the current debt is truly under control. Not that there is no debt as there is benefit to utilizing available debt for specific purposes (although I definitely consider the debt Council has approved in the past couple of years may have gone beyond that).

Q: During the last four years, or less, as a Councillor, what have you done personally to promote transparency and open communication with the residents of Gibbons?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

For me, I'm realizing quickly, not enough. I recall hearing this question during the candidate forum I participated in, and in hindsight, I did not fully understand the question like I thought I did. While I'm still considering what I can do personally, along with what Council can do as a whole, a balance needs to be found between:

- *Open and honest dialogue with the residents, providing them the information they should have access to*
- *Opportunities for the residents to communicate questions/issues to Council, to provide input in various areas related to them, etc.*

There is an ongoing concern with Council of ensuring that the communication is as full as possible, and with the residents believing that Council is 'hiding things'. In my opinion, the cause of this is Council's inability to answer some direct questions due to Privacy Legislation and Closed Session items. While some may see this as an excuse to not be transparent, it is a legal requirement that Council must take seriously.

Q: Considering the Town's current debt load, what strategies is Council implementing immediately to reduce this debt?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

First and foremost, take on no more debt at this time. Some will say, well that's obvious since the Town is currently over their debt limit, and I agree, but I would take that farther. As I mentioned at the Town Hall, personally, I have no intention of voting in favor of any debt in the foreseeable future. The time will come that debt is going to be incurred again as it is a tool that can be used to actually save the residents dollars. As an example, I read a report relating to a large arena/community center in a nearby municipality where the municipality took on debt to build. But had they waited 4 years later to try and not take on the debt (or less debt), the cost of the build would have increased by upwards of 30%. That's significant and is actually a cost savings for the residents by taking on the debt. But, that has to be truly investigated at the time of the individual request. That may not always be the case.

Q: The Town could not get a loan to purchase a vac truck. It was stated at the last Council meeting that the Heartland Station will cost nine million dollars to connect to the main sewer system. How do you reconcile this, and what is the plan moving forward, considering our current debt?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I don't have an answer to this yet. As mentioned at the Town Hall, there are some potential options that will be brought to Council for the purchase of the vac truck coming relatively soon. I don't know what that yet looks like but it will be evaluated when it happens. As far as a plan moving forward to deal with the holding tank at the Heartland Station, again, this was mentioned in the Town Hall that currently, multiple grants are being investigated, but that currently and obviously, has no end date yet and no firm solution yet. I do believe that a proper strategic plan will assist with this, but as of yet, the Town does not have this.

Q: What is the status of the proposed new school by Sturgeon Public schools? The location seems to be changing. Our last CAO was discussing the addition of a Recreation Centre.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

This is not a Town project and there are no plans in place for a new Recreation Centre.

Q: Current rumour is the addition of a multiplex hockey facility. If true, what is the proposal and where?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

At this point, this is strictly a rumor. Not saying there isn't some thoughts about this, but nothing that has been communicated to Council. At this point, there is no proposal or plan in the works. In saying that, the Town could definitely benefit from an updated arena, but again, no action has occurred to Council's knowledge, and definitely no communication with Council about this.

Q: The Town borrowed 2.5 million against the arena, passing a by-law spawned in an in-camera meeting and then taken into a public meeting without details. The funds were to be used for a project, which was never explained to the citizens. Seems that this money is being used for operating purposes. Please explain.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Was it a mistake to call it a 'project', quite possibly yes. But yes, the town needed this bridge financing for the purpose of using it for operating costs. Neither Council nor Administration has ever hidden from this fact. The town was absolutely in a position where this was a temporary need. Thankfully, our great Administrative staff have gotten us on a good footing to move forward where we can start paying off some of this debt. If you recall from the Town Hall, at the end of 2024, the town was in debt in the amount of \$16.2 Million dollars. As of the Town Hall, the town was in debt in the amount of \$167 Million dollars. Considering a loan/mortgage in the amount of \$2.5 million was taken in I believe it was January, having our current liabilities at approximately \$500k higher than it was at the beginning of the year shows the Town's dedication to paying down the high debt. Are we in great shape right now, definitely not, but we are getting there. When will we be there, I don't have that answer either, but I do believe our great Administrative staff are doing everything they can to get us there.

Q: Last election, several Councillors expressed a strong view on community safety and security. If that was you, what have you accomplished over the last four years?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

As a town, we have been in constant communication with both the RCMP and Morinville Bylaw who we have a contract with. We have received increased patrol time in town, we are getting regular reporting updates from both groups, including Council quarterly reporting in meetings, as well as ad hoc communications from the RCMP notifying us of high impact/important events that occurred in our town. While things may not occur in the timing that the residents would always like, The RCMP and bylaw have all been briefed and have been acting on the 'hot topic' issues around town this past 12 months that Council has been made aware of (most notably the screws on the roadway to Williams Park and the Off Highway Vehicles riding through town). They have acted to the best of their ability to address both of these issues.

Q: Could we implement an accounting of revenue & expenses for the various areas of service to help maximize the impact of our efforts?

a. Examples include (in alphabetical order):

i. Gibbons Arena

- ii. Gibbons Cultural Centre
 - iii. Gibbons Curling Rink
 - iv. Gibbons Family Resource Centre
 - v. Gibbons Fire Hall
 - vi. Momentum Fitness Club
 - vii. Water, sewer & garbage
- b. Attached is an example of a similar document from the Village of Boyle (population = 825).
- c. Note: In some instances (E.G., where there is no revenue), a better method of determining impact might be to recognize how many residents are helped?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Relating to point a above, we'll require Administration information here. With regards to point b, thank you for this. Other points from people that the reporting currently provided is too 'complex' or difficult to understand, I think personally that this is a great view of information that identifies the revenue/expense situation clearly. It should be noted, if I am reading those reports/charts correctly, this is actually a 'planned budget' type report, but I think it could be adjusted to also report on going throughout the year? For point c above, I agree. I'm not sure 'no revenue' is the threshold point I'd personally want to see here. I'm thinking a report on any public use facility operated by the municipality, seeing a regular report on the actual use. As an example, I have seen yearly reports on the use of the Family Resource Center, but maybe monthly and quarterly reports would be good? Every meeting, our Fire department numbers are reported, but again, maybe instead of every meeting, we start seeing monthly and quarterly reports could be beneficial to really advertise to people, what are we doing and more specifically, what is available that maybe residents don't know are available? Something to consider for the future for sure.

Q: How will these fiscal challenges affect staffing, public services, or community programs?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Our goal at this time has been to maintain existing staff and services to the community with no cuts. While we are in a position that is not favorable with regards to finances, progress is being made as has been mentioned in answer to questions above. There have been cuts in places not directly affecting the residents, such as cancellation of some consulting services, council agreeing to not attend FCM as well as some other invited functions, etc.

Q: How will leadership ensure transparency and regular updates as the situation evolves?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Ongoing reporting was suggested by Administration and welcomed by Council. Council has had a couple of requests for some of this reporting, and I believe adjustments will continue to be made on that reporting. As mentioned above in previous answers, we don't have it perfect, but it is a start and an ever-changing goal that we will continue to work on.

Q: What lessons have been learned from past financial missteps, and how are they being applied now?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

As mentioned in the Town Hall, personally, my biggest lesson I learned was that I had too much trust in the CAO. Trust MUST exist for this whole process to work effectively and efficiently, but a healthy measure only. Better investigation, questions and review are somethings I need to do better.

Q: Is there a contingency plan if the current recovery strategy doesn't work as expected?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

If the actions that are currently being taken stop working, an evaluation of why, and where we currently are will have to be done then before jumping to solutions now, in my opinion. Jumping to potential solutions now could be reckless and do more harm than good.

Q: What systems are in place to detect and prevent conflicts of interest among decision-makers?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

That's a difficult one in a municipality the size of Gibbons. The reason I say this is because in a Municipality of this size, the likelihood of a Councillor having a connection of sorts to many things being discussed at a meeting. The MGA does make it fairly clear, along with now mandatory training (for the new Council term that is), that speaks to pecuniary interest. In simplified terms, a Councillor who has a direct relation to the matter at hand, in terms of :

- *A financial interest in this matter,*
- *An interest where a direct family member (or spouses parents) have a direct interest financially,*
- *A business where the Councillor has employment or ownership in,*
- *Any situation where a matter could lead to an appreciable financial gain or loss for the Councillor*
- *Recent changes to the MGA may have expanded the rules to beyond pecuniary interests alone, but this is not yet clear.*

In any situation where this occurs, the Councillor has the responsibility to recuse themselves from attendance in that part of the meeting (must excuse themselves) so that they have no participation, may not hear (at the time of discussion) any of the discussion and may not vote (this is the only reason a Councillor can excuse themselves from a vote). The results of failure recuse themselves from a pecuniary interest could result in actions up to and including disqualification and vacating of their Council seat. Due to the significance of this outcome, that extreme result would likely require a Court to make the final decision.

Q: How do you respond to concerns that information shared with the public may have been incomplete or misleading?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I completely agree that some information shared with the public is incomplete. But that is by design because of privacy legislation. As I've mentioned above, some people think that we use that as an excuse to hide and unfortunately, I don't know how to convince them otherwise. There will always be things that are discussed among council that the public cannot know about for various

reasons. There are protections that people are entitled to, even those that do wrong, whether we like it or not. They are there for a reason, and our dislike or disagreement of those reasons do not change the ability to make them public. As far as misleading, I would disagree with the thought that we have intentionally been misleading. Have we made errors (such as calling the borrowing bylaw a project), most likely, yes. But we have come out repeatedly when asked about this and stated that it was bridge financing used to support our operations at the time.

Q: What specific factors led to our current fiscal challenges, and how are they being addressed?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

This has been addressed multiple times in previous answers, including this individual's questions. Again, too much trust, allowing the CAO powers that they should not have, etc. These are being addressed.

Q: What steps are being taken to increase revenue without overburdening residents/employees?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Firstly, the \$10 Million dollars in development permits will assist with that for sure. Unfortunately, beyond tax revenue and Local Improvement Tax revenue, there is little that the town has direct control over that gives us meaningful revenue that can have a major impact on the finances of the town. The obvious exception here is grant funding which has been given a priority this year (I can't necessarily comment on previous years) to apply for various grants. We obviously get some grants every year from the Provincial and Federal Governments which occur every year based on standard metrics, but there are others which we are applying for and will continue to do so. The burden put on residents in the form of taxes and fees is something that Council does not like to do, but is a necessary burden, which as residents of the town as well, all of Council and most staff also feel, being residents of the town. During this year, we are also in the process of selling off land that the Town does not need as we are no longer in the development business. So this year, we have put up for sale:

- Putnam Building – this was sold and funds have been received
- Cottage lands – this land remains unsold at this time
- Vacant lots (behind Coaches Corner) – this was sold recently and funds are expected to be received soon.

Q: Will there be opportunities for public input before major financial decisions are finalized?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

This is difficult to answer as it is a very broad question. But I do think that there are things that need to happen, which would include public input in the following areas.

- A strategic plan with Council providing Administration with a direction for the 4 year term (with possible adjustments throughout the term) that I believe the public should be able to have input into.
- The budget process with the standard Public Hearings, but in my opinion, the public hearing should occur prior to the last discussions of the budget. Not the initial discussions mind you, but probably near the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark where Council and Administration are feeling comfortable with what is occurring and proposed, and then the residents can have both input and answers to the questions they may have. This would include Capital Projects. Once the budget has been

approved, I'm not sure what public involvement would occur for those as they'd already been discussed and approved.

- *At the Town Hall Acting CAO also mentioned that any large development plans by a developer would also have a public meeting to provide the residents with the appropriate information and opportunity to voice concerns.*

I do have a couple of other thoughts, but they are not really 'formulated' yet, and would need some further discussion with Administration and Council first.

Q: Are there new funding sources or partnerships being explored to stabilize our finances?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

In my opinion, we are actually decently stable. More so now than we were back in January for sure. Does that mean we are safe? No, I'm not implying that in any way. In a visual, I think we are near a cliff, but I don't think we're near enough to worry about slipping off at this point. But we do need to make sure we don't get closer to that edge.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Administration is continually working with Provincial and Federal governments to source out grant opportunities.

Q: How are we preparing for long-term financial resilience beyond this immediate crisis?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

There has to be a fine balance here. But I think the first thing that has to occur with the new Council is that strategic plan. That will help guide the direction of priorities, which would include the ability to start what I've heard called a 'sinking fund' which basically is the process of saving money into an area for a very specific purpose, and then when the time is right, action that purpose using the money that has been saved. Please know, that does not mean no more borrowing, but it is definitely a smarter way of knowing what borrowing may need to occur prior to borrowing it and being able to properly plan for that, unlike what we did for the past couple of years.

Q: What safeguards exist to ensure public funds are not misused or misallocated?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Every year, we have a third-party Auditor come in and review the finances of the town. From experience in another business, I've seen these audits catch errors. I can also state that the town has unfortunately experienced misuse of funds and those were caught through our existing checks and measures. As was brought up during the Town Hall, there were other practices that have been now identified, both internally and by the Legal Compliance Check with the Municipal Government, that we have taken steps to prevent from occurring again.

Q: Are there any investigations currently underway into financial irregularities or ethical breaches?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Yes. But this is a confidential matter and will need to remain that way at least for the foreseeable future.

Q: How do you plan to rebuild trust with the community after recent revelations?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

That is an incredibly difficult question to answer only because I can have all the plans in the world, but they may not speak to some that no longer have trust in me. The only thing I can really say is, I will continue to:

- *Answer questions to fullest capability that can, in a timely manner.*
- *Continue to be open and honest in all things, both professionally and personally, showing who I am in my words and actions*

As I stated in the Town Hall, there are people in this town that do not trust me and do not believe me, and that's something that I have little control over in the long run, but I will, without question, continue to be me and one day, maybe I can change their minds. I do know, there are a select few individuals that I have been able to do that. Rather than trusting what is said on social media, people have asked me directly and I was able to explain the situation fully, in a way they didn't understand prior to our discussion. I guess the best solution is that if you have a concern with me, please tell me. We may not always agree, but hopefully we can get to a point where we can respect each other's position.

Q: Will leadership commit to releasing all relevant documents and communications related to the sudden resignation of former CAO and why you gave severance?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

In short, the answer is No. Simply because some of the discussion here was in a closed session. And the separation with any employee, in any company, must be communicated in a carefully deliberate manner and will likely never be publicly communicated in full. What I can say here what has been said in the past, having been vetted by our Legal Council to ensure the risk to the Town is minimal. The separation with the former CAO has occurred, and prior to providing the severance, all of Council's options were presented to our Legal Council to ensure we knew what our options were, and that was the direction that Council chose to go. Again, I understand that this may not be a popular answer to the question, but unless we get advice from our Legal Council to the contrary, this is the answer that will be given every time it is asked.

Q: If wrongdoing is discovered, what consequences will be enforced-and who decides?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Unfortunately, this question is a bit too broad to answer in a way that I can be sure I'm answering the question. In trying to consider all the possibilities of this question, I come to:

- *Termination of employment*
- *Disqualification of a Council seat*
- *Criminal Charges*

All of these are at an extreme end. There are several options leading up to those extremes though. As for who decides, once again, that is too vague to truly answer.

Q: Are whistleblowers being protected and encouraged to come forward? (There have been current and ex-employees that expressed their concerns about losing their job if they spoke up or reported any possible wrongdoing within the town office. Non-disclosure agreements are typically used for well-known companies 'you' are doing work for and are not to be publicly discussed, not to muzzle the employees).

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Personally, I find it sad that an employee (anywhere, not just Gibbons) feels so unsafe to report a problem that they stifle that report. Unfortunately, I don't believe Gibbons had a policy prior to the events of 2024 and early 2025. But, we do now. And even if we didn't have the policy, there are criminal and civil ramifications to an employer who takes action against a whistleblower, even if they don't have a policy. Legally, employers cannot take negative action against a whistleblower, unless they can prove malicious intent behind this (e.g. Repeated reports with no proof). As far as 'non-disclosure' agreements, my experience with these, while limited, is that the non-disclosure does not prevent anyone from reporting criminal activity. They are normally in place for the purpose of protecting the company's proprietary information and client/customer information. Since having the policy in place, I do not know of it being used thus far.

Q: What role does the ethics committee (or equivalent body) play in reviewing recent decisions?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I have to assume at this point, that the 'ethics committee' being asked about here is related to Council Code of Conduct violations (whenever the Provincial Government enacts those again?). My understanding is that 100% of complaints against a member of Council would go to this commission for investigation. No more direct reporting to the Mayor, but that is still to be determined with the Provincial Government not having truly completed this process yet. If this isn't what the question meant, then I'll need a follow up with better explanation.

Q: Will we have FULL AP for all to see and review? This includes all detailed invoices submitted for payment, from all vendors and Contractors.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

This task would be incredibly onerous on the staff, and in my opinion, not necessary to occur on a regular basis. In my opinion, this is a question that is being asked as a result of lack of trust. I'll need Administration to address the process of dealing with invoicing, but once the cheque has been cut, Council and the CAO are asked to sign the cheques. When I go in, to sign (I can't speak to all who have done this), I look at all invoices (which accompany the cheques – note this did not always happen – this is new since February) and identify what occurred that the invoice was provided and confirm the amounts (which can take some time as some cheques have several invoices related). I have the ability to get clarification on what was occurring needing that invoice. To have that provided to all of Council (and the public) every meeting would be extreme and unnecessary. As mentioned above, if we can truly deal with the lack of trust with the town and Council, I don't see this being needed regularly.

Q: Will FULL AR be available for the taxpayers to review? Including all payments in, showing where these dollars are coming from (contractor, taxes, property sales, etc.)

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I'll reference my answer to the previous question. This would be onerous and likely unnecessary in the long run.

Q: How can residents better track how public funds are being spent?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

One thing I do think would be beneficial is that in the cheque list that is provided for every meeting, the description column is quite small and not always helpful. I would definitely consider a motion to expand this in some way for better clarity with good descriptions.

Q: Why does the Finance department have seven employees under Corporate Services? With the economy that we are in will there be at least 4-5 layoffs coming? We keep the CPA we have now as we should have a person with designation of a CPA. With the apparent fiscal crisis this town is in there must be cuts, less spending, fiscal responsibility, no bonuses, no lunches (lunch meeting bring a brown bag).

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I'll allow Administration to answer this question as the only employee Council has is the CAO and I do not foresee removing him from this position until the new Council hires a permanent CAO to replace the Acting CAO.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Each employee in the Town has specific roles and responsibilities to ensure we meet all requirements of our growing municipality.

Q: Are any of the seven financial assistants' part of MEMJ Contracting employees? If so, why are we paying them?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I'll allow Administration to answer this question, but to my knowledge, the only employee from MEMJ Consulting working for the Town of Gibbons is Ms. Jeffries.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

No.

Q: The CAO contract gives way too much power to one individual, would you plan to rewrite the new CAO contract? If not, why?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

The Acting CAO actually does not have a contract related to his position at this time. He is continuing to work under his old contract. While I personally see this as a concern, because we are beginning the process to getting a new CAO hired, dealing with this now would be futile. Also, to mention, the powers that I believe are being referenced here for the CAO are not powers in their contract, they are in the town's Bylaws. And yes, these are being reviewed through the Legal Compliance Review and will be adjusted as suggested by the Municipal Government once the report from them is delivered.

Q: With the Cottages having been cancelled, how will the town recoup the cost of an ill-fated project?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I'll need Administration to address this, but I believe that it is intended that the costs incurred by the town will be recovered through the minimum approved value that Council associated to the sale. This would be the amount that the land can be sold without having to come back to Council for approval. If a value under that is offered, the offer is not immediately rejected, it is simply brought to Council for discussion and approval or denial.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

The land is currently listed at a price that includes any costs incurred during the planning of this project.

Q: Are there other projects that have been cancelled we are unaware of?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I'll need Administration to answer this as I'm not sure what prior to this was an actual project's that were cancelled vs just ideas that were not continued?

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

There have been no projects cancelled without Council's knowledge.

Q: Are there projects in the works we are not aware of?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

While I can't state for fact anything specific, my honest thought here would be, of course there is. There are constant on goings in the town where things are being discussed with Municipal Planning, the CAO, etc. that are incredibly introductory and is not business yet being discussed publicly, and quite frankly, not even with Council yet. We have 'heard' of potential development on the west side of town, but the developer hasn't completed drawings yet, haven't gotten any approvals to proceed with anything yet. There are stages of these projects and Council is not in the first step. And the public is after council. Until Council determines it is worth being considered as a potential reality, it won't get brought to the public.

Q: Why did the former CAO and others agree for the town to cover the cost of infrastructure for the developers? Will we be recouping this cost? If so, put it in the receivables, showing where it came from and which contractor/developer, what project, etc. The Town is only responsible for putting the infrastructure to a property line, the rest is up to the contractor/developer. Again, this falls under the previous CAO and Administration.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I'll need Administration to answer this to some degree. But firstly, none of us can answer why the former CAO did anything he did. He is not here and we can't read his mind. BUT, in saying that, anything the town finds that was done incorrectly, they are trying to fix that. That does not mean the town can fix ALL things here. Where there are signed agreements, those are very difficult to go back on. My understanding is that any costs to the town during any development were or are being recouped, but again, I would

need Administration to validate that. But it is 100% agreed that the town is responsible for the infrastructure costs up to the property line and no farther. The developer is responsible for costs associated with tying into the town's infrastructure at the edge of the property.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

As stated we cannot speak for someone who is no longer with the Town.

Q: Will you now have an open mike monthly? Based on the amount of attendees' daytime vs evenings meetings, evening open mike would make the most sense.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Firstly, I want to say, I am pleased with the turnout and outcome of the Town Hall. But, the issue unfortunately now is timing. There is an incredibly low likelihood that the current Council will impose a decision of that nature on the upcoming Council. Similar to the decision of hiring a new CAO, that shouldn't be our current Council's decision being this close to the election. This should be a decision for the new Council. Now, in saying that, if I am fortunate enough to be re-elected to Council, I definitely want to engage with the community more. Open mike is a consideration, but not the only consideration that I am thinking through. There are pros and cons to every option, and each of those options need to be weighed. And then, each of those options need to be discussed across Council, because even if I were to state outright that I want x or y, I am not permitted (nor should I be) to make that decision on my own.

Q: Does the Town of Gibbons have a process for ensuring that construction jobs undertaken by contractors are completed both correctly and in accordance with established safety standards. Specifically, I am referring to the recent utility work in Memorial Park intended to facilitate the proposed spray park. During this project, a significant safety concern arose when an excavated area - approximately four feet deep and located just meters from playground equipment - filled with water due to rainfall. This site remained unfenced, despite the contractor being responsible for securing it. It was only after a resident reported the issue that the Town took action and had the contractor address it.

Q: Does the Town have a formal oversight or inspection process in place to monitor active construction sites, particularly those in public or high-traffic areas like parks?

Q: Are contractors regularly evaluated to ensure they are meeting all safety and project requirements? What steps are taken by the Town when contractors fail to meet obligations, particularly when public safety is at risk?

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Public Works makes every effort to ensure that construction sites are safe and meet for regular updates from the contractors, however, we can't man every site all the time. In this instance, at Memorial Park, we certainly appreciate the notification from the resident(s) who reported it. We also utilize an engineering firm who vet potential contractors through a tendering process.

Q: Why doesn't the Town of Gibbons actively investigate unsightly or dangerous properties within the town. Over the years there has been more and more properties with excessive garbage, abandoned vehicles, tires, household

appliances, construction material, and just plain junk. The Town of Gibbons wants residents to submit a formal complaint and it can not be anonymous, as per the Town of Gibbons Residents Concerns Form. Why can't bylaw or officials of the town initiate a complaint and follow-up with an investigation. Also included in this is the parking of trailers, motorhomes and boat within the front yards of premises, which can also be consider unsightly.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I believe this was briefly touched on during the Town Hall in a general regard but may not specifically to properties. But if any resident has any concern related to a property, depending on the issue, Bylaw, Police, Public Works or the Town Office may all be options, but if you're not sure the severity here (Police may not be the best option initially??), then contact the town office and let us know what's going on. As you mention in the question, there is a form and no, it can't be anonymous due to potential future legal action that could be taken against the resident. But I do know that Bylaw has acted on things like this in past at the request of the Town (we prefer to offer warnings first.)

Q: I believe the open forum meeting last night was very successful, thank you. Is this something that can be considered on an ongoing basis, perhaps quarterly or every 4 months to give the residents and tax payers of Gibbons an opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and receive responses? The road to recovery starts with more transparency.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Firstly, thank you for the comment. I agree, it was a good night. In a question just a little above this, I've given my thoughts on this in more detail, but in summary, community engagement is definitely something I'm wanting to pursue (in what form I'm not sure of yet). But also remember that the decision to hold these does not lie with 1 person. It must be a majority of Council to decide on things like this.

Q: The CNN Spurs most years have 13 teams. They require 35 ice slots per week, that's 140 a month. That's over 1000 ice slots per year. Split between Bon Accord and Gibbons that's 500 per arena. At \$140 a slot, \$70,000 per year just from CNN that is no longer. CNN had 8 out of a possible 500 ice slots in Gibbons last year. Thank god for Bon Accord as these kids would have no where to play hockey. Why not bring local minor hockey back and fill the gap with organizations such as the Silverbacks? Don't forget the revenue from the Broncos. 100 slots at \$190 is an extra \$19,000, plus the \$5000 that the broncos offered for the locker room. Hockey is the heart of small town Alberta and it has been ripped out of Gibbons. Joel is the reason for this. What will the town do to bring back hometown hockey and have the spurs play at home?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

As has been mentioned earlier, this has been a very popular concern. As mentioned in the Town Hall, I apologize for not being as aware about the CNN Spurs issue as I was about the Broncos issue. But I assure you, I am much more versed in this issue after some communication I've had since the Town Hall. I have had informal conversations and will be speaking with Council members about some options that we have, but again, as Council, we really have to be careful about where we step in as we can't interfere with operational items in the town. But that does not mean we can't do anything, and that is what I am speaking to Council about.

Q: Does the town have to follow procurement policies that three contractors need to be invited for project or maintenance work? And is there a threshold that dictates a public procurement is required? I was surprised to hear that the post office sign board was a mistake and a sole source was used instead. How does sole sourcing accidentally happen?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I agree, to hear that the mistake was made with the board at the post office was concerning. But I will let Administration answer as they will know their processes and requirements better than I currently do.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

There is a policy in place to ensure that this mistake is not repeated.

Q: Has the town considered putting in a sewage pond for a temporary measure instead of pumping sewage three times a week for Heartland Meadows? This would be expensive but possibly more cost effective.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I can't say I've thought of that, but it is an interesting idea. I'm not sure if Administration will have more to say on this, but at least, thank you for the creative idea. Something to consider at the very least.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

Unfortunately, this is not a viable option in this situation.

Q: With all this nonsense budget going on I was wondering if there was a way to install an off leash dog park somewhere other than using the school yards and other places where we don't have to worry about them getting hit by ATV which are illegal in town limits which are constantly speeding up and down roads back allies and damaging the farmers field by landing trail school. If I was that farmer I'd be (expletive), don't believe me go take a walk and have a look. As this said how can you stop the ATV's in town from ripping up and down the roads.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Your question has a couple of parts. I love the idea as a dog owner myself of having an off-leash park area available. Obviously, something we'd have to investigate around location, size, any other impacts that I don't have off the top of my head, but I like the thought, considering the number of dogs I see being walked around town every day. As far as the ATV issue, I'm not sure if you happened to watch our latest Council Meeting on August 27th. Bylaw was there presenting their quarterly report to Council. And as expected ATV's were brought up. They have identified and charged some individuals, spoke with others, ticketed their parents, etc. But there are times where their hands are tied. They have received calls that consist of 'they're riding down my back lane again' and that's all. Unfortunately, there's next to nothing that can be done with that. But if you have a concern that you see, please contact Bylaw asap (they may have someone in town or nearby) with as much information as absolutely possible (pictures or videos are

very helpful). Descriptions of the individuals/bikes, where you saw them, direction of travel, time, speed, etc. Anything you can do to help these Officers do their jobs is very appreciated by them, and gives them the ability to deal with things.

The Town is also in the process of dealing with the Mater Rates Bylaw so that the Bylaw officers have that to refer back to as well. I believe it will be coming forward in our September evening meeting (I think that's what we agreed to at the meeting).

Q: Why won't the town allow childrens. Edmonton has Urban Hens Program bylaw with a population of 1.5 million. Bon accord has Urban Beekeeping and the keeping of Laying Hens bylaw.. I'm told it's due to noise, diseases etc. so why does the town say no. When it works for Edmonton. Bon accord.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I am assuming you mean 'chickens', and not children (although thank you for the giggle). The simple answer is because Council very early on in my term (which was a year into this current council's term), voted against it. But, if this is something you feel strongly about, please contact one or all of the council members with your thoughts and reasoning behind it. I would request your reasons go beyond what you mention above. I understand others have it and we don't, but why do you believe it would benefit the town. If a Councillor who sees this wishes to make a notice of motion to discuss this again, we can. You also have the upcoming election to have one of the candidates bring it up should they get elected if the current council doesn't. For transparency, since Council voted against this back in 2022 or early 2023, I haven't heard a thing about it, so I didn't realize it was still something some residents wanted. Thank you for bringing it up though.

Q: You mentioned that the definition of a local team is 51% of the players are from Gibbons or Sturgeon County. What is it that qualifies a person to be from Gibbons or Sturgeon County? Just a mailing address? A physical land address? You must be a tax payer? What about a player from Regina, Saskatchewan for example but is "billeting" with someone in town. Are they considered local? They're not from here but are staying with someone local just for the hockey. How do you determine if a team is 51% from Gibbons or Sturgeon County? Assume? Ask them? Do they submit proof? The Gibbons Broncos have NEVER been asked where their players are from.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

Very valid questions that I'll need Administration to explain.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

All user groups are required complete a form providing the physical addresses of their participants. This information is used to determine if the team is local or non-local as per our Recreation Agreement with Sturgeon County.

Q: My question is for Eric Lowe. As CAO and "the boss", you heard at the town hall meeting that both council and the community alike feel 100% that locals should come first and be prioritized in regard to ice time and dressing rooms. You agreed to this. Administration likes to claim that this is happening. but it's not. If it was happening, this wouldn't be such a hot topic in town. Yes locals get preferred rates, but not ice times or as you very well know dressing rooms. You also heard that council and the community feel that the arena is not for making money. If the CAO before you mandated community services to run the arena like a money making business venture, that ended when that CAO left. In the words of council, "It is taxpayer money well spent to support a local group.

especially ones that give back to our community as much as the Broncos do." That dressing room is not about REVENUE, as administration has stated behind closed doors. So as you agreed to do at the meeting, now that everyone is being made aware of what is going on with local hockey in our community, will you actually do something about it? There is more to come. Are you going to change your contract offer for the dressing room to the Broncos in favor of what council and the community have blatantly stated they want? This is your chance to do the right thing. You've been a community member for many years. Will you listen to YOUR community? Will you step up?

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

As you requested, this is for Mr. Lowe to answer, but I will also point out that Council's opinion on this, if it wasn't clear in the Town Hall, is shown above. Thank you for the points made though.

Interim CAO Eric Lowe

We are addressing the concerns expressed by the user groups.

Q: As a 30 year plus resident of Gibbons and person who actually drives across Canada with open eyes sees the benefits of Gibbons as opposed to the third world conditions in Northern Ontario I would like to know why "chronic complainers" are not directed to the nearest real estate office? There are young people who have moved to Gibbons and the "cult" like display by a certain faction in this town is a disgrace. Finishing with a statement I love Gibbons for the unreal river valley that is at my doorstep. Skateboard Park is great. Outdoor Arena is great. But then again "chronic" complainers would know nothing about this as they just blather on the keyboard in the childlike fashion. Encourage them to move ASAP. I do.

Acting Mayor Yushchyshyn

I agree with the Gibbons portion of your comments. I too love Gibbons. I do want to say though, although I may not always appreciate the method of letting Council know of issues, the issues themselves are potentially valid and should be communicated. I would just prefer they were communicated to Council directly as opposed through social media. I encourage anyone with a concern to reach out to any or all members of Council directly. Thank you for your comments and support to Gibbons as a whole.