



Rural Municipality of Val Marie No. 17
112 Railway Ave E, PO Box 59, Val Marie, Saskatchewan
Meeting Minutes
Special Meeting February 25, 2025 - 01:00 PM

PRESENT:

Reeve: Larry Grant
Division 2 Councillor: Timothy Christianson
Division 3 Councillor: Steven Gunter
Division 4 Councillor and Deputy Reeve: Shadrick Peno

ABSENT:

Division 1 Councillor: Tyler Jensen
Division 5 Councillor: Greg Kornfeld

STAFF ATTENDANCE: Cathy Legault, Administrator
Logan Resch, Assistant Administrator

This Special Meeting was called by Reeve Grant in order to consider the following:

1. Discuss concerns regarding camping and accessing areas near the Huff and Newton Lake Dams with the Ministry of Agriculture – Lands Branch, Water Security Agency, RCMP, Sask Environment Conservation Officers, Val Marie Grazing, West Flat Irrigation Corporation, and Lower Frenchman River Water Users Corporation.

1 Call to Order

A quorum being present, Reeve Grant called the meeting to order at 12:55 p.m.

2 Receive Delegates and Discuss Concerns with Camping and Accessing Areas Near the Huff and Newton Lake Dams

The following delegates were received by Council:

- Water Security Agency (WSA):
 - Amanda Stevenson, Lands Administration Officer
 - Jarrod Heinrichs, O&M Southwest
 - Michelle Maurer, Director, Lands & Indigenous Affairs
 - Rory Windrum, Director, O&M Southern Region
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Lands Branch
 - Mark O'Connor, Land Management Specialist
 - Jessica Smith, Land Management Specialist, Team Lead
 - Ministry of Environment Conservation Officer's
 - Austin Leis, Conservation Officer
 - Michael Banks, Acting Conservation Officer Supervisor
 - RCMP
 - Sgt. Marco Johnson
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- Val Marie Grazing Corporation
 - Trevor Plat, Pasture Manager
 - Shirley Christianson, Administrator
- West Flat Irrigation Corporation
 - Jason Legault
- Lower Frenchman River Water Users Corporation
 - Jody Larson
 - Dwight Olson

The delegates and council reviewed the pictures of large groups of people gathering with vehicles that had been driven off the road to areas near the Frenchman River around Huff and Newton Lake Dams. Council and delegates discussed the complications and concerns with people accessing and camping near the Huff and Newton Lake Dams. It was noted that there was concern for fires, littering, trespassing, spreading of dangerous weeds, damage of property/mischief, harm to animals, driving off the road into grass/brush, and liability if there is an injury.

There was discussion about the right to access the water/shoreline for fishing. Delegates and council noted that the signage in the area could be improved or clarified to notify the public as what activities are permitted near WSA structures (dams/spillways/outflow valves).

Ministry of Agriculture representatives noted that lessees of Agriculture Crown land have authority to control access to the leased land.

WSA committed to reviewing any areas around the dams that could be permitted for occupation to either an irrigation group or a grazing corporation so that use of the land is clarified. WSA also committed to reviewing signage in this area to improve the public understanding of acceptable actions/activities around these areas.

There was open discussion on: liability, driving and parking in these areas, fire fighting procedures and costs, trespass legislation, response time of law enforcement, differences of enforcement abilities between RCMP and Conservations Officers, and bylaw enforcement - especially pertaining to prohibiting fires.

Councillor Peno left the meeting, time 2:13 p.m.; quorum was lost and Council stood adjourned.
