

**MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026, 1:00 P.M.
CARSTAIRS MUNICIPAL OFFICE**

IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor Allan, Councilors Ball, Fricke, Selanders, Tolley, Roberts & Wilcox; Director of Legislative & Corporate Services Shannon Allison; CCGC General Manager Josh Lockert; Director of Emergency Services Rob McKay; Fire Chief Jordan Shaffer; Director of Planning & Development Kirk Williscroft; CAO Rick Blair; & Executive Assistant Kayleigh Van Es

ABSENT: Nil

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Allan called the Policies & Priorities Committee meeting of Tuesday, March 17, 2026, to order at 1:00 p.m.

ADDED ITEMS: **1. Reserves & Accumulated Surplus Policy to Bylaws & Policies 7.e**

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Motion by Councilor Wilcox to adopt the Policies & Priorities Committee meeting agenda of March 17, 2026, as amended.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES: Motion by Councilor Fricke to adopt the Policies & Priorities minutes of February 17, 2026, as amended.

CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: **1. Mill Rate 2026 Discussion**

S. Allison spoke to the assessment values and options of the mill rate.

The Committee discussed options for the 2026 mill rate. With increased assessments, maintaining the current mill rate of 5.2 would result in a projected surplus of \$1.7 million.

The Committee asked when the 2026 mill rate must be set. S. Allison advised that the deadline is May 11, 2026, after all assessment appeals have been filed. To date, 11 assessment adjustments have been made.

Non-residential mill rates have remained the same; however, the Committee discussed the possibility of a reduction. Councilors Fricke and Selanders both supported lowering the non-residential mill rate to achieve a loaded rate under 8 mills.

Councilor Fricke expressed concern about whether a 4.2 mill rate would be sustainable in the coming years. CAO R. Blair indicated that, based on current growth, it would provide a reasonable buffer. However, he cautioned that there are too many variables to guarantee long-term sustainability. He also advised against reducing rates too aggressively, as it can be difficult to increase them later, especially with several significant expenditures anticipated in the future. While the Town has made strong progress in reducing costs, those upcoming expenses must be considered.

Councilor Ball expressed thanks for the presentation. While Councilor Selanders clarified that reserves would be presented as line items rather than included in the surplus.

Motion by Councilor Selanders to accept the Mill Rate 2026 Discussion as information.

CARRIED

DELEGATIONS: Nil

BYLAW & POLICIES:

1. Bylaw No. 1058 Noise Bylaw-Amended

K. Williscroft spoke to the changes made to the Bylaw, including clarification of definitions and the addition of a Noise Management Plan.

Councilor Fricke asked how playground noise, snow removal, paving, and Town utilities would be addressed in the document, as well as how sound levels would be monitored. K. Williscroft outlined the relevant sections and advised that a third party would conduct sound monitoring.

Councilor Ball suggested ensuring consistent language throughout the document, particularly regarding the use of “CAO or designate.”

Councilor Roberts asked whether the Bylaw aligns with County regulations. K. Williscroft responded that it is more closely aligned with the City of Calgary.

Motion by Councilor Tolley to accept Bylaw No. 1058 Noise Bylaw, as amended, and forward it to the next Council meeting for ratification.

CARRIED

2. Policy No. 11-031-26 Council Technology & Device Policy

CAO R. Blair presented the first draft of the Policy.

Councilor Fricke inquired whether notification of international travel is necessary and if different VPNs would be required when working abroad. S. Allison advised that, as there is no direct connection to the server, different VPNs are not required.

Councilor Tolley asked whether Council would consider AppleCare in the future. CAO R. Blair responded that, if Council wishes, quotes can be obtained for further discussion during budget deliberations.

Motion by Councilor Fricke to accept Policy No. 11-031-26 Council Technology & Device Policy as presented and forward it to the next Council meeting for ratification.

CARRIED

3. Policy No. 72-04-002-26 Carstairs Community Golf Club Membership Policy-Amended

J. Lockert spoke to the changes made to the Policy, including clarification of definitions.

Councilor Fricke asked whether there are member obligations such as cancellation fees or deposits. J. Lockert advised that these are not required, and collecting credit card information could create additional administrative challenges. Councilor Fricke also suggested adding “CCGC” as a defined term for the Carstairs Community Golf Club and asked whether the minimum age of 18 for cart rentals is industry standard.

Councilor Wilcox inquired about the split between members and public tee times. J. Lockert advised that tee times are booked approximately 60% to members and 40% to the public, with one tee time per hour reserved for public booking.

Councilor Roberts asked about the change in restricted member access from 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. J. Lockert explained that the adjustment allows for additional time to accommodate leagues, if needed.

Councilor Tolley asked whether the high school uses the course. J. Lockert confirmed that the school uses the course for try-outs and practice and noted that there is interest in providing further support to the team.

Motion by Councilor Wilcox to accept Policy No. 72-04-002-26 Carstairs Community Golf Club Membership Policy, as amended, and forward it to the next Council meeting for ratification.

CARRIED

4. Policy No. 72-04-006-26 E-bikes, E-scooter & Personal Golf Cart Use

J. Lockert spoke to the new Policy, noting it is intended to address potential issues should they arise.

Mayor Allan asked whether there are many requests for the use of personal golf carts. J. Lockert responded that there are occasional requests, primarily for tournaments.

Councilor Fricke asked for clarification on when personal golf carts are permitted. J. Lockert advised that they are only allowed during special events, and that golf course staff would inspect all carts to ensure they are in safe working condition.

Councilor Ball suggested a grammatical revision to the Policy.

Councilor Selanders asked whether the Policy should address remote-control push carts. J. Lockert indicated that this is not currently a concern.

Motion by Councilor Roberts to accept Policy No. 72-04-006-26 E-bikes, E-scooter & Personal Golf Cart Use as presented and forward it to the next Council meeting for ratification.

CARRIED

5. Reserves & Accumulated Surplus Policy

S. Allison presented the new Policy and requested Council's input. It was also noted that a Town Investment Policy is currently in development.

Councilor Ball asked what the optimal balance should be for each reserve and noted the importance of documenting those targets. CAO R. Blair explained that setting fixed caps can create challenges, suggesting it is more effective to review balances annually through budget deliberations, capital replacement planning, and asset management processes.

Councilor Fricke referred to section 6.b., noting that Council Strategic Planning meetings do not occur every year. CAO R. Blair recommended revising the wording to reference budget deliberations instead, as they occur annually.

Motion by Councilor Selanders to accept the Reserves & Accumulated Surplus Policy for information and bring it back to the next Policies & Priorities Committee meeting for further review.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Electronic Sign Discussion

S. Allison provided an update on the electronic sign donated in 2009, noting that it requires significant maintenance or replacement. Repairs would involve rebuilding the motherboard at an estimated cost of \$5,000. The original cost of the sign was \$17,000; however, the technology is now obsolete. There are also connectivity issues between the sign and the Operations Services building. Replacement of the sign is estimated at a minimum cost of \$25,000. Council was asked to provide directions on whether to proceed with repairs, replacement, or removal.

Councilor Tolley asked whether school signage could be used for communication purposes. CAO R. Blair confirmed that the schools have offered their signs for Town messaging as needed.

Councilor Tolley suggested notifying the donor family about the need for replacement or removal. S. Allison confirmed that the family will be informed.

Councilor Roberts noted that electronic signs are not a modern communication strategy.

Councilor Wilcox expressed concern that the current sign is not an effective or safe communication method and suggested considering a different location if replacement is pursued.

Councilor Fricke asked about potential electrical remediation requirements. CAO R. Blair advised that this has not yet been investigated and that direction from Council is needed first.

S. Allison suggested limiting the sign's function to displaying the date, time, and temperature until a long-term solution is determined.

Motion by Councilor Roberts to accept Electronic Sign Discussion as information.
CARRIED

REPORTS:

1. Development Reports

The Committee reviewed the Development Reports. To date, 35 permits have been issued, including 10 new home buildings and 7 compliance certificates.

- a. Permit listing
- b. Compliance listing

Motion by Councilor Wilcox to accept all Development Reports as information.
CARRIED

2. City-Wide Monthly Reports

The Committee reviewed the following City-Wide Monthly reports.

a. Fire Reports

J. Schaffer advised that Alberta Health Services (AHS) has revised its medical call response model, shifting to a 60/40 structure and altering response plans. This includes an increase in the classification of high-acuity calls. It is unclear at this time how these changes will impact overall call volumes.

J. Schaffer presented a replacement proposal for Unit 120, originally planned under a 25-year replacement schedule. Due to extended supplier timelines, delivery now takes approximately 50 months compared to 12–16 months prior to COVID-19. Options under consideration include Rocky Mountain Phoenix (RMP) and Commercial Emergency Equipment (CEE). The new truck specifications include a 1,200-gallon capacity, Arctic climate package, enhanced fire suppression, and pump performance upgrades. The current unit is appraised at \$180,000. The projected cost for a replacement is \$1.595 million, with a 10% deposit and delivery expected in 2030. RMP projects a three-year delivery plan, while CEE projects delivery in 2030 at \$1.616 million.

Councilor Fricke asked whether RMP and CEE provide service for the trucks and whether leasing options are available. CAO R. Blair noted that through a loan offers substantial savings.

Councilor Tolley asked why trucks that remain viable for 25 years would be purchased by others. J. Schaffer explained that the trucks are still certified, and smaller municipalities and Hutterite colonies often purchase them. Managing the fleet and recovering value before the truck reaches the end of its service life are key considerations. Councilor Tolley also asked whether secondhand trucks were explored. CAO R. Blair commented that J. Schaffer is exceptionally skilled at sourcing good deals on trucks.

Councilor Selanders asked whether this truck is heavily used. J. Schaffer explained that it is primarily used for structure fires, and usage is expected to increase as the town grows.

Councilor Fricke asked whether a 10% down payment locks in the price. J. Schaffer confirmed that it does and noted that delaying the order could result in an annual price increase of approximately \$75,000. Councilor Fricke also asked about presenting the proposal to the County, with J. Schaffer indicating this would occur by the end of next week.

Councilor Ball asked whether any issues are anticipated with the current truck before 2030. J. Schaffer stated the truck is in good condition and no critical issues are expected.

Councilor Tolley asked whether deployment of the current truck should be limited. CAO R. Blair advised that it will not be used for wildland deployments. He also noted that the truck is not at the end of its lifecycle but emphasized the importance of long-term planning due to extended procurement timelines.

Motion by Councilor Tolley to accept Fire Reports and Unit 120 Replacement Proposal as information.

CARRIED

b. Bylaw Reports

Motion by Councilor Ball to accept City-Wide Monthly Reports as information.

CARRIED

3. Emergency Services

The Committee reviewed the following Emergency Services reports.

a. Emergency Services Report

Councilor Selanders asked how many sites are inspected for fire safety annually. R. McKay responded that approximately 240 sites are inspected each year.

Councilor Fricke asked why OH&S had visited the arena and whether it was related to an incident. R. McKay clarified that it was not incident-related; the visit was part of the province's routine due diligence.

b. Carstairs Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) Report

Motion by Councilor Wilcox to accept Emergency Services Reports as information.

CARRIED

CLOSED MEETING:

1. Disclosure Harmful to Business Interests of a Third Party-Section 19

Section 197 of the Municipal Government Act requires that Council and Council Committees conduct their meetings in public unless the matter to be discussed falls under one of the exceptions to disclosure outlined in Division 2 of Part 1 of the

Access to Information Act (ATIA), including, but not limited to, matters related to business interests, personal privacy, individual or public safety, confidential evaluations, or law enforcement. (Sections 19 to 34).

Motion by Councilor Tolley that Council close the meeting to the public to discuss Disclosure Harmful to Business Interests of a Third Party, as per Section 19, of the ATIA, at 2:53 p.m.

CARRIED

Motion by Councilor Ball to come out of the closed meeting session at 3:05 p.m.

CARRIED

GENERAL DISCUSSION: Nil

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Councilor Selanders to adjourn the Policies & Priorities Committee meeting of Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 3:06 p.m.

CARRIED

Dean Allan, Mayor

Rick Blair, CAO