



**Village of Rycroft  
Request for Decision**

**Council Meeting Date: August 2, 2023**

**TOPIC:** Pesticide Applicator License Spraying by Employees versus Contractor

**CAO RECOMMENDATION:** That Council direct administration to continue with the past practice of paying a contractor to complete the required annual task of spraying the Village properties for weeds as required.

**BACKGROUND:** At the July 5, 2023 Regular Meeting of Council, Council approved a motion directing administration to get a member of our staff to acquire a Pesticide Applicator license - which I have incorrectly referred to as a 'Herbicide license' in previous reports. Currently, the cost for materials, equipment, staffing, and liability falls on the contractor when they are hired by the Village. Currently, no member of the staff has a Pesticide Applicator spraying license, and we do not require it in their job description. In considering this direction, we have noted:

Pros to having someone with a Pesticide Applicator license on staff:

- We could spray for weed control whenever we wanted or needed to
- After the initial start-up cost projected at ~\$13,000 for equipment and training, it could be a lower annual operating cost

Cons to having an employee with a Pesticide Applicator license on staff:

- Start-up cost is high with the purchase of equipment (Quad \$10,000; Sprayer rebuild or new \$1,000) and initial training (\$3,000)
- Training is 3 months long (home schooling) plus any in school tutorial courses needed through Lakeland College
- Certification renewal: To recertify, an applicator must obtain 15 continuing education credits within their 5-year certification period. One credit normally equals 1 hour of attending/participating in an information session, demonstration, or course. The courses and credits must be approved by the Alberta government.
- The personal liability falls on ticket holder.
- More equipment to store and maintain
- The biggest drawback is that if the trained person leaves the organization a new person will need trained. If a new hire had the current certification, we would expect to pay them a higher wage due to more qualifications.

It is noteworthy to point out that Council's job is Governance and Policy. This means that it is Council's job to establish level of service. For example, the current policy and practice is to monitor, and control weed issues and maintain pleasing aesthetics on all municipally owned properties and manage all noxious weeds in the Village. It is not Council's job to tell administration how to do it, or who to do it. It would be in Council's authority to request a report on options to evaluate efficiencies of the operation, which is what has been completed here.

### IMPLICATION OF DECISION

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** The Village has paid ~\$2,500/year for the last three season for a contract Pesticide Applicator. We usually spray one or two times/year for roughly <10 hours/year.

**POLICY AND/OR LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

- Training and certification are required in Alberta for anyone applying pesticides, other than commercial agriculturalists (farmers).
- It is a bad practice to create conditions of employment after an initial employment contract has been made, so an employee would have to volunteer to get the training – which we would support, however knowing the training stays with the employee when they leave the organization.
- Council should be providing service to residents in the most economical and efficient manner as possible.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

- Council could give direction to incorporate a Pesticide Applicator license requirement into future employee hires as a requirement or suggestion

**ATTACHMENTS:** None

Peter Thomas

Chief Administrative Officer

July 28, 2023

Date