CAO

From: taraelwood@albertabeach.com
Sent: Friday, October 9, 2026 1:14 AM
To: Alberta Beach Village of; Alix Village of; Bawlf Village of; Berwyn Village of; Big Valley Village of; Bittern Lake Village of; Breton Village of; Clive Village of; Delburn Village of; Donalda Village of; Donnelly Village of; Edberg Village of; Elnora Village of; Girouxville Village of; Hay Lakes Village of; Hines Creek Village of; Nampa Village of; rosalindvillage@xplornet.com; CAO; Spring Lake Village of; Warburg Village of
Cc: Scott Lundy
Subject: Villages West Update: Funding, Public Safety and Municipal Advocacy

Dear Villages West Mayors, Councillors and CAOs,

I'm pleased to share the following update on Alberta Municipalities' advocacy priorities and initiatives. For our villages, rising costs, limited tax bases and the demands of maintaining essential services make sustainable municipal funding especially important. Your experiences help ensure our advocacy reflects the realities of smaller communities.

2027 provincial budget priorities

Alberta Municipalities is calling on the province to strengthen its partnership with municipalities through:

- Predictable, flexible and long-term infrastructure funding.
- Protection of off-site levies and investment in infrastructure that supports housing.
- Phased increases in Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) funding.
- A collaborative review of Alberta's fiscal framework, including service responsibilities and municipal revenue tools.

The infrastructure funding request includes increased support through the Local Government Fiscal Framework and complementary water, wastewater and transportation programs. Alberta Municipalities is also advocating for allocation-based programs that reduce grant administration and give communities flexibility to address local needs.

Property taxes and financial sustainability

The *Property Taxes Reimagined* initiative examines how inflation, infrastructure needs, provincial requisitions, reduced funding and additional responsibilities place pressure on municipal property taxes.

The next phase focuses on potential solutions, including municipal responsibilities, revenue tools and opportunities to lower costs. Municipal leaders need a meaningful role in determining which order of government delivers services and how those services are funded.

Member resources include property assessment and taxation guidance, education property tax materials, and information about policing costs for municipalities under 5,000 population. These can help councils explain the pressures behind residents' tax bills.

Police funding and local accountability

The September update reports that some municipalities received initial estimates showing policing costs increasing by 120% to 320% over five years under the new police funding model. These estimates vary by municipality.

AB munis is collecting invoices and estimates to better assess the impacts. Please send your municipalities information to **Kelly Santarossa, Senior Policy Analyst, at kelly@abmunis.ca**.

Advocacy priorities include an equitable model that reflects service demand and ability to pay, stronger accountability, and reinvestment of funds into front-line policing and public safety. Municipalities contributing financially must also have meaningful input into local policing priorities—"say with pay."

Alberta Municipalities has not adopted a formal position on replacing the RCMP with the Alberta Sheriffs Police Service. It supports municipal choice and is seeking clarity on service levels, costs and the new service's funding model.

FCSS and community prevention

Alberta Municipalities is seeking a phased increase in provincial FCSS funding toward approximately **$162 million**, with annual indexing once funding reaches an appropriate level. This remains a shared provincial-municipal investment through the 80/20 partnership.

Locally delivered prevention programs help seniors, youth, families and newcomers while reducing pressure on health care, policing and emergency services. Many municipalities already contribute beyond their required share to sustain these programs.

The updated FCSS Advocacy Toolkit includes support for developing local stories. Please use these examples in conversations with your MLA and share the impacts of funding shortfalls.

Housing, infrastructure and development

Alberta Municipalities is advocating for federal infrastructure funding that respects local priorities and works for Alberta communities. Water, wastewater, roads and other essential assets must be in place to support housing development.

Work is also underway on an off-site levy framework, including practical guidance and an Excel template to help municipalities develop clear, defensible levy models. The September update identifies November 2026 as the anticipated availability of the tool.

Alberta Municipalities is participating in the Minister's Council on Infrastructure Financing to examine additional financing options, including municipal borrowing limits, bonds and tools that reduce infrastructure development risk. These discussions are intended to expand available tools while retaining off-site levies.

Health care, affordable housing and homelessness

Advocacy also includes access to rural health care, affordable housing and community prevention. Alberta Municipalities has participated in rural health discussions and supported member learning on housing needs assessments and the municipal role in housing.

Nurse practitioner advocacy demonstrates the value of sustained municipal action. Beginning with a resolution from the Village of Wabamun, successive advocacy efforts helped support expanded primary care options, including service in rural communities such as Wembley.

Please share local challenges involving access to primary care, seniors' housing, affordable housing or homelessness so the experiences of villages are reflected.

Fire services and emergency preparedness

Alberta Municipalities is raising concerns about the growing cost of fire apparatus and the increasing complexity of emergency response.

Its advocacy seeks renewed federal investment in equipment, training, interoperability and emergency planning; recognition of municipal fire departments as critical emergency management infrastructure; and Canadian fire service standards that provide practical guidance for municipalities.

These issues have direct implications for villages managing limited budgets and local or regional service arrangements.

ICFs and municipal governance

Alberta Municipalities, RMA and Municipal Affairs are working on an updated ICF Workbook to support intermunicipal collaboration.

Alberta Municipalities also submitted feedback on the proposed Councillor Accountability Framework in August. At the time of the September update, timelines for the framework and further Bill 28 regulations had not been provided.

Members who have been contacted by the Alberta Insurance Council about holding an insurance license while serving on municipal council are encouraged to contact **advocacy@abmunis.ca**.

Advocacy results relevant to villages

Several examples demonstrate how member-driven advocacy benefits our communities:

- **Municipal borrowing:** Reversal of the provincial interest-rate surcharge reduces the cost of provincial loans. Estimated savings range from $50,000 to $77,000 per $1 million borrowed over a 20-year term.
- **Grants in Place of Taxes:** Funding was restored to 100% of eligible property taxes on provincial properties in 2026, benefiting municipalities with qualifying provincial buildings.
- **Golf cart pilot:** Municipal advocacy helped establish a five-year pilot allowing approved municipalities to authorize golf carts on designated roads, subject to provincial approval and local bylaws.

- **Animal protection:** Member advocacy contributed to a provincial review and proposed amendments intended to strengthen enforcement and animal protection.

Alberta Municipalities is also advocating for bail and sentencing reforms alongside investment in courts, prosecution and timely access to justice.

Learning opportunities and practical resources

The September update identifies learning opportunities on grant searches, ICF dispute resolution, and resilience for municipal administrators and elected officials. The Elected Officials Education Program also offers practical governance training. Please check *The Weekly* and eoep.ca for registration information and current schedules.

Resources available to support councils and administration include:

- The council-CAO-administration relationships toolkit.
- Privacy legislation guides for elected officials and administrators.
- The municipal social media toolkit.
- Property assessment and taxation guidance.
- The Municipal Water Conservation Guide.

An updated municipal Asset Management Handbook is also being developed with Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta.

Member services and energy initiatives

Alberta Municipalities offers insurance through MUNIX, employee benefits, energy procurement, retirement and savings plans, and a high-interest savings account. Municipalities can contact their regional representative for an annual review of services; local non-profits may also benefit from these offerings.

The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre supports energy savings and climate resilience through technical assistance, funding and capacity building. Alberta Municipalities is advocating for predictable long-term support for this work.

The Clean Energy Improvement Program offers property-based financing for eligible energy upgrades in participating municipalities. Councils interested in these services should confirm current program availability, funding and administrative requirements directly with Alberta Municipalities.

Please share your village's priorities

I encourage you to raise these priorities with your MLA and reply with examples of the pressures facing your community, particularly:

- Infrastructure projects delayed by funding gaps.
- Policing costs and concerns about service levels.

- FCSS needs and the value of local prevention programs.
- Housing and health care barriers.
- Fire service costs and intermunicipal challenges.

Local examples make our advocacy stronger. Please also share the successes that other villages could learn from.

On a personal note,

Thank you for your continued service to your communities and for your ongoing support of me as your Director of Villages West. I appreciate your trust and the opportunity to represent you. I remain committed to listening to your concerns, staying connected and bringing our villages' priorities to the Alberta Municipalities table.

I also want to thank my fellow candidate for stepping forward. It takes courage to stand in front of our peers and colleagues, share our ideas and put our names forward to serve. I appreciate your willingness to do so and your continued commitment to our municipal communities.

Warm regards,



Tara Elwood
Mayor, Village of Alberta Beach
Director, Villages West, Alberta Municipalities
Phone: 587-879-9606
Email: taraelwood@albertabeach.com
Web: www.albertabeach.com
Box 278 Alberta Beach, AB T0E 0A0