

From: Rocky View Forward <info@rockyviewforward.com>
Sent: November 28, 2018 11:25 AM
To: Rocky View Forward
Subject: Troubling news about the County's new CAO

Greetings:

We wanted to let everyone know that we have unearthed troubling information about the County's prospective CAO, Al Hoggan. To get some background on him, we did a google search for information on Kneehill County, where Al Hoggan is currently the CAO. To our surprise, it opened a Pandora's box of disturbing material.

We first found an August 2018 article in the Drumheller newspaper indicating that serious discontent in Kneehill County had spurred local residents to petition the Province to investigate what they see as highly questionable decisions made by the County over the last couple of years.

As many of you know, it takes a lot of built-up frustration to engage enough residents to overcome the legislative hurdles and file a valid petition with the Province. It is not easy to collect witnessed, in-person signatures from ratepayers representing at least 10% of the municipality's population within sixty days of submitting the petition. Kneehill residents far exceeded those requirements – their petition had over 1,200 signatures, from a population of just over 5,000 in a widely dispersed rural municipality. A clear testament to their intense frustrations.

Two of those asking hard questions about County decisions were a County volunteer fire chief and volunteer deputy fire chief. One of the troubling aspects is when they and other residents started asking questions, Kneehill's response was to "fire the messengers". Both volunteer firefighters were demoted. This decision has to have been approved by Al Hoggan as the County's CAO. It may have been imprudent for those individuals to take such an active role; but, the punishment seems more than a bit excessive. Is this the style of leadership Rocky View can expect from our prospective CAO?

Alberta Municipal Affairs has confirmed that they are now undertaking the preliminary review that is required prior to a formal investigation. The results of the preliminary review will be released early in the new year.

There are important questions that need to be answered.

Did Rocky View Council know about this swirling controversy when it interviewed and hired Kneehill County's current CAO? If they didn't, who dropped the ball? Anyone doing a proper background check on potential candidates would have uncovered the brewing discontent. It was in the local Kneehill and Drumheller newspapers before Rocky View's interview process began. If all those Kneehill residents are unjustified in their concerns, hiring their CAO in the midst of the controversy may not have been inappropriate. But, we certainly hope that our Councillors determined this before making their decision.

Did Al Hoggan disclose the potential skeletons in his closet when he was being interviewed? If he didn't, what does that say about his transparency, honesty, and basic judgment skills? It certainly looks like the proverbial rat abandoning the sinking ship.

If our Council was not aware of this controversy, they have made a choice without having critical relevant information. If this is the case, we can only hope they will now have the decency to reconsider their options. We will remain deeply troubled until credible evidence emerges to dispel our concerns for what may lie in Rocky View's future.

If you are as disturbed by this news as we are, we encourage you to let our councillors know. Given that the County has announced that Al Hoggan is starting as our CAO on Dec 17th, we assume that Council must be planning to confirm his appointment at its December 11th meeting since it is the only Council meeting between now and then.

All the best (we guess!),
Janet Ballantyne for
Rocky View Forward

From: Rocky View Forward <info@rockyviewforward.com>
Sent: November 29, 2018 2:09 PM
To: Rocky View Forward
Subject: Follow-up info on "Troubling news about County's new CAO"

Greetings:

We've had requests for more detail on our last email. Specifically, people asked for more information on the actual controversy in Kneehill County and how it affects us here in Rocky View County.

We had not included details about Kneehill residents' actual concerns because the issues are very local. If you're interested, we are including links to a document put out by Kneehill residents and their County's response at the end of this email. We're also including links to newspaper articles discussing the issues.

From our perspective, the fact that more than 20% of Kneehill's population was concerned enough to request a provincial inspection of their County's decision-making indicates that the issues are very serious within Kneehill County.

Their concerns all arose while Al Hoggan was Kneehill's CAO. This raises questions about the quality of guidance he provided to Kneehill's Council. Maybe its councillors ignored advice from him that might have avoided the controversy. But, if not, he is implicated in the now controversial decisions. We hope that RV's councillors asked and received appropriate answers before hiring Al Hoggan.

We do know that Kneehill's initial response when its residents asked hard questions was to punish two of the leaders of the resident group. That does not bode well for the leadership style RVC may have bought into.

In terms of implications for Rocky View, the skills and leadership style of the CAO are critical to how our County operates. The advice our Councillors receive, the day-to-day functioning of our Administration, the interactions between our Councillors and our Administration – all of these depend on the CAO chosen by our Councillors. If Al Hoggan didn't disclose this controversy during the interview process, do we want a CAO for RV who is willing to push something that significant under the carpet?

This Kneehill-based controversy raises two major concerns for Rocky View residents:

- Is the track record of the County's newly hired CAO one that will serve our County and its residents well? The fact that he was in charge when such a major controversy blew up in Kneehill raises alarm bells that should be addressed.
- Did the councillors who were elected to represent our interests ensure that they had all relevant information before making such an important decision? If they can't assure Rocky View residents that their hiring decision was made with appropriate due diligence, it puts into doubt the quality of the decision making our own elected representatives are undertaking on our behalf.

It is our understanding that RV councillors did not know about this controversy before making their decision. If that is correct, then they should acknowledge as much and taking a second look at their hiring decision. Mistakes happen; but it takes an honourable person to admit as much and take action to address the mistakes.

Answers to the fundamental question of what our councillors knew about this controversy when they made the hiring decision is what we are asking for and what residents are owed by their elected representatives. Please ask our councillors for an answer.

If you have other questions, please be sure to ask.

All the best,
Rocky View Forward

Here are links for more detail on the controversy in Kneehill County:

- Resident's document –
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2t7pxzowdZiZWtuOU9ScWEzNFJ2VXZFNUxQY1Z2a2VTRlZj/view?fbclid=IwAR2_HkotgOTHgLPpUuQd6BtdzAcjflx2BOcCvRwqjAGwJpqZnSqm074DcNs
- Kneehill's official response – <http://www.kneehillcounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/3160/Kneehill-County-Council-Responds-to-Residents-Concerns?bidId=>
- Newspaper articles
 - <https://www.drumhellermail.com/news/31122-kneehill-county-responds-to-rumours>
 - <https://ecareview.com/residents-request-transparency/>
 - <https://ecareview.com/kneehill-county-undergoing-preliminary-review/>

From: Rocky View Forward <info@rockyviewforward.com>
Sent: December 11, 2018 5:17 PM
To: Rocky View Forward
Subject: County appoints new CAO in 5 - 4 vote

Greetings:

A clearly divided Council has formally approved Al Hoggan as the County's new CAO. The debate opened with Councillor Hanson requesting that the decision be tabled. His tabling motion expressed a desire to allow Council time to exercise due diligence and assess the implications of information Council only became aware of after they had made the preliminary CAO hiring decision. The tabling motion failed on a 5 – 4 vote providing early evidence of the serious disagreement on Council.

Councillors Hanson, Gautreau, Wright, and Kissel spoke eloquently in opposition to the immediate appointment of Al Hoggan as the County's permanent CAO. Among the points raised:

- Council followed the hiring procedures recommended by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs when it hired the interim CAO, these recommended procedures were not followed in making the decision to hire the permanent CAO – instead the process was hijacked by the Reeve and rushed through over a single weekend.
- Councillors need to have full trust in their CAO – with potential relevant and damaging information coming to light late in the process, haven't had an opportunity to evaluate the impact of this information with due diligence.
- The failure to follow proper process led to serious gaps of knowledge and, because of this, potentially damaging information came out too late to be assessed. Council will have failed in its commitments to transparency if it goes ahead without pausing long enough to evaluate the new information.
- Concerns were also raised about the lack of consistency between the County insisting that its residents follow the rules while its Councillors are willing to not follow the rules.

In response to a question from Councillor Henn, the interim CAO, Rick McDonald, confirmed that Council had not followed procedure in making its hiring decision. Henn appears to have not understood the response since he then commented that the only thing they did was to not drag their feet. Councillor Wright pointed out that not dragging their feet had been one of the problems in failing to follow proper process since they only did one interview.

Councillor Kamachi insisted that councillors had done due diligence in making its decision. Councillor Schule expressed his support for Boehke's approach. Councillor McKylor did not contribute to the conversation, but voted with the majority.

Reeve Boehlke expressed his disappointment in the councillors who spoke against the decision. From our perspective, if the Reeve had followed proper process, there would be no cause for him to be disappointed.

We will provide a more detailed report once the audio is available.

all the best,
Rocky View Forward

From: Rocky View Forward <info@rockyviewforward.com>
Sent: December 18, 2018 10:50 PM
To: Rocky View Forward
Subject: Update on CAO appointment

Greetings:

When we sent out our Dec. 11th email with news of the divided Council's narrow approval of the appointment of Al Hoggan as the County's new CAO, we promised to send out a more detailed report once the audio was available.

Having reviewed the audio recording, there isn't a lot to add. The basic facts remain the same:

- The recruitment process initially followed Municipal Affairs's recommended guidelines for the recruitment and hiring of a Chief Administrative Officer. These procedures had been followed in hiring the interim CAO.
- Partway through the process, Reeve Boehlke took control and, over a weekend in October, signed an offer of employment and an employment contract with Mr. Al Hoggan.
 - Mr. Hoggan provided these documents to Reeve Boehlke.
 - They were not reviewed by any other RVC councillor, RVC's lawyer or the recruitment agency before being signed.
 - They did not include provisions making the offer of employment or the employment contract conditional on council's approval.
- The offer of employment and employment contract were signed by Reeve Boehlke after only one interview with the short-listed candidates. This was done even though many councillors had requested the opportunity to conduct second interviews.
- The appointment of Mr. Hoggan as Rocky View's new CAO was publicly announced on October 17th, even though his appointment was not confirmed by Council (a necessary step under the MGA) until December 11th.
- Shortly after the October 17th announcement, it became known within Rocky View that Kneehill County, where Hoggan had been CAO for the past five years, was under investigation by Municipal Affairs as the result of a petition from over 20% of Kneehill residents.
- Four of the County's nine councillors (Hanson, Gautreau, Wright, & Kissel) attempted unsuccessfully to delay the appointment of the CAO until after the investigation in Kneehill was complete.

Despite the assertions from the majority on Council that proper process had been followed, it is clear that this assertion, at best, glosses over a number of critical oversights in the hiring process.

In our minds, it also raises questions about the guidance that will be provided to RVC Council by the newly appointed CAO. A key element of a CAO's responsibilities is to guide council to ensure that they are following proper policy and procedures in their decision-

making. From our perspective, it seems troubling that, in his first opportunity to provide such guidance, Mr. Hoggan appears to have willingly participated with Reeve Boehlke in ignoring critical aspects of any normal hiring process.

Reeve Boehlke certainly appears to be largely (if not solely) responsible for concluding the hiring process and convincing a bare majority on council to support his decision.

We have posted a transcript of the debate on the appointment of the CAO from the Council meeting on the Rocky View Forward website. You can find it here:

<https://www.rockyviewforward.com/what-s-new>

All the best,
Rocky View Forward