CROWSNEST PASS TAXPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Responses to Media Questions

QUESTION 1

What is the Association's reaction to Mr. Thomas' departure?

The Crowsnest Pass Taxpayers' Association acknowledges the departure of Patrick Thomas as Chief Administrative Officer and the appointment of Kristin Colucci as Interim CAO.

We recognize that personnel decisions fall within the responsibility of Council. We do not intend to speculate about the circumstances surrounding Mr. Thomas' departure, nor would it be appropriate to comment on confidential employment matters without having all the relevant facts.

It is important, however, to distinguish between the previous Council and the newly elected Council.

We have observed a renewed effort by the current Council to approach municipal governance with greater attention to legislative requirements, legal obligations, and the responsibilities established under the Municipal Government Act.

Many of the concerns previously raised by the Association relate to decisions and actions taken during the term of the former Council.

We recognize that a newly elected Council inherits decisions, agreements, contractual commitments, and outstanding obligations from its predecessors. Those matters do not simply disappear following an election.

Our expectation is that the current Council will continue to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and responsible decision-making while

addressing the outstanding matters inherited from the previous administration.

Our primary concern is that municipal operations continue effectively, important projects and responsibilities are not disrupted, and the financial interests of taxpayers remain protected.

We also believe this is an appropriate opportunity to reinforce the importance of strong administrative leadership, sound governance, transparency, and public confidence in municipal decision-making.

QUESTION 2

Has the municipality told ratepayers whether there was a severance or settlement, and what it would cost taxpayers? Does the Association believe that information should be made public?

At this point, the Association has not received confirmation of whether a severance package, settlement, or other termination-related compensation was paid, agreed upon, or otherwise provided in connection with Mr. Thomas' departure.

We recognize that the current Council inherited this situation and is now responsible for managing any resulting obligations. We appreciate that these matters must be handled in accordance with applicable legislation, contractual requirements, and privacy protections.

However, taxpayers have a legitimate interest in understanding the financial implications of senior municipal employment decisions, particularly when public funds are involved.

We recognize that employment agreements and certain personal information may be protected by privacy legislation. That does not necessarily prevent the municipality from providing meaningful financial disclosure to the public.

In our view, and to the extent legally permissible, taxpayers should be informed whether a financial settlement or termination payment was made,

the total financial cost to the municipality, and whether that figure includes severance, accrued benefits, legal expenses, or other compensation.

We are not suggesting that confidential personal employment information should be disclosed. We are asking for appropriate financial transparency and accountability concerning the use of public funds.

The Association believes that transparency is fundamental to public trust in municipal government.

When public money is involved, taxpayers have a legitimate right to understand the financial commitments being made on their behalf.

QUESTION 3

In December 2024, Mr. Thomas signed, on the municipality's behalf, the agreement selling a municipal reserve lot in Blairmore to Tanrock Homes for $20,000. That agreement includes a clause in which the municipality promises that if a court voids the sale, it will buy the land back and cover the buyer's development and legal costs. It was signed while the Patrol Base court challenge to the municipality's reserve land sales was already underway. In September 2026, the Court of King's Bench quashed the sale (Patrol Base v. Crowsnest Pass, 2026 ABKB 653). Does the Association know whether the previous Council was aware of, or approved, those buy-back and cost guarantees before they were signed?

This is a matter that raises significant questions for the Association and, more importantly, for the taxpayers of Crowsnest Pass.

Our concern extends beyond the original $20,000 land sale. It includes the additional financial commitments contained in the December 2024 purchase agreement with Tanrock Homes.

As we understand the agreement, clause 18.2 addressed the fact that the land sale and associated rezoning were subject to ongoing court proceedings. Despite the existence of that litigation, the agreement included provisions requiring the municipality, under specified circumstances, to repurchase the property and reimburse certain development and legal costs.

In September 2026, the Alberta Court of King's Bench issued its decision in *Patrol Base v. Crowsnest Pass*, 2026 ABKB 653, quashing the relevant municipal resolution and bylaws.

This raises several important questions that taxpayers deserve to have answered:

- Who authorized the inclusion of these financial commitments in the agreement?
- Was the previous Council made aware of the proposed guarantees before the agreement was executed?
- Did Council specifically approve these provisions, or were they authorized through another process?
- Was independent legal advice obtained regarding the potential consequences of entering into this agreement while litigation was underway?
- Were the potential financial risks and liabilities clearly explained to Council before the agreement was signed?

The Association has not been provided with sufficient information to establish what the previous Council knew or what specific approvals were obtained. We therefore believe these questions should be answered through appropriate documentation and disclosure.

We are not making assumptions about the intentions of those involved or reaching conclusions about legal responsibility. Our concern is whether appropriate authorization, due diligence, legal review, and financial risk assessment were undertaken before the municipality accepted these obligations.

These are potentially significant financial commitments involving public assets and taxpayer dollars. The public deserves to understand how and why they were entered into.

The current Council has inherited this situation. We recognize that it must now address the consequences while protecting the municipality's legal and financial interests.

We look to the current Council to provide as much transparency as the law permits and to ensure that the municipality takes appropriate steps to understand and manage any resulting financial exposure.

Ultimately, taxpayers deserve to know who authorized these commitments, what risks were understood at the time, and what financial consequences may now fall upon the municipality.

QUESTION 4

Is there anything else that taxpayers should know?

With a newly elected Council comes an opportunity for a renewed approach to municipal governance.

The Association recognizes the importance of Council making decisions within the law, complying with the Municipal Government Act, exercising appropriate oversight, and remaining accountable to the residents it represents.

We also recognize that the current Council has inherited some difficult issues, decisions, and contractual obligations from the past. These matters cannot simply be set aside, and they must be addressed responsibly.

The Association's role is not to make governing more difficult or to oppose Council for the sake of opposition. Our role is to ask reasonable questions, encourage good governance, and ensure that the interests of taxpayers are properly represented.

We want to see a municipality where residents have confidence in their elected representatives, where decisions are made transparently, where public input is respected, and where public funds are managed responsibly.

There is one message we believe is particularly important for taxpayers to understand:

Municipal accountability does not end with an election, a change in Council, or the departure of a senior administrator.

Taxpayers deserve to know how decisions are made, how public money is spent, and what financial commitments are entered into on their behalf.

The Crowsnest Pass Taxpayers' Association was established to give residents a voice and to encourage responsible, accountable municipal government.

We recognize that governing a municipality involves difficult decisions and competing priorities. However, those decisions must be made responsibly, transparently, and in the best interests of the community.

We want to see a municipality that listens to its residents, respects public input, follows the law, manages its finances prudently, and protects the long-term interests of the community.

Ultimately, residents should not have to struggle to obtain reasonable information about decisions affecting their municipality and their tax dollars.

Our message is simple: transparency, accountability, and responsible governance are not optional. They are fundamental obligations to the people who fund municipal government.

The Association will continue to ask questions, seek answers, and advocate for the interests of Crowsnest Pass taxpayers in a constructive and responsible manner.