

Viability Review Report

Village of Bawlf



Municipal Affairs, Government of Alberta

Village of Bawlf Viability Review Report

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Executive Summary

The viability review for the Village of Bawlf was initiated by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in response to a sufficient petition received from the electors of the village.

The viability review report was prepared by the provincial government, with input from the Village of Bawlf and Camrose County, and presents a summary of the findings about the viability of the Village of Bawlf, including how municipal services are delivered to village residents and the potential changes that Bawlf residents may expect in the future.

Two options for the future of Bawlf are presented:

- 1) the Village of Bawlf remains an incorporated municipality and council implements the recommended actions in this report according to directives that would be given by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, or
- 2) dissolve the municipal corporation of Bawlf and become part of Camrose County, while maintaining a name and community spirit as a hamlet. Camrose County would be the governing body for the purpose of municipal operations and services.

The viability review report highlights some of the major similarities and differences under these two options, based on the information available at the time of writing.

Village of Bawlf electors will have the opportunity to vote on these two options. In addition to this report, residents are encouraged to visit the websites of the Village of Bawlf and Camrose County for further information regarding the governance and operations within the municipalities.

Remaining a Village

If Bawlf remains a village, residents would continue to elect five councillors to govern the municipality. Village council will continue to be responsible for the employment of a chief administrative officer (CAO), who along with other village staff, would implement the decisions of council and oversee the administration and operation of the village.

Residents should anticipate that current services levels will be maintained, with a continued focus on cost recovery. This means there is a likelihood that village property taxes and user fees will increase over time, as costs and inflation increase and infrastructure ages.

Village council and administration will continue to plan for infrastructure upgrades and maintenance and will apply for applicable grants to fund these projects.

If Bawlf remains a village, ministerial directives would be issued to help achieve long-term viability. The 21 recommendations within this report would provide the basis for these directives.

Becoming a Hamlet within Camrose County

If Bawlf becomes a hamlet in Camrose County, residents would participate in the election of a councillor to Division 3 of Camrose County to represent them. The village office would be closed and administrative functions would be provided by the Camrose County office, located in Camrose. The county also provides several services online, such as on-line bill payment for taxes and utilities.

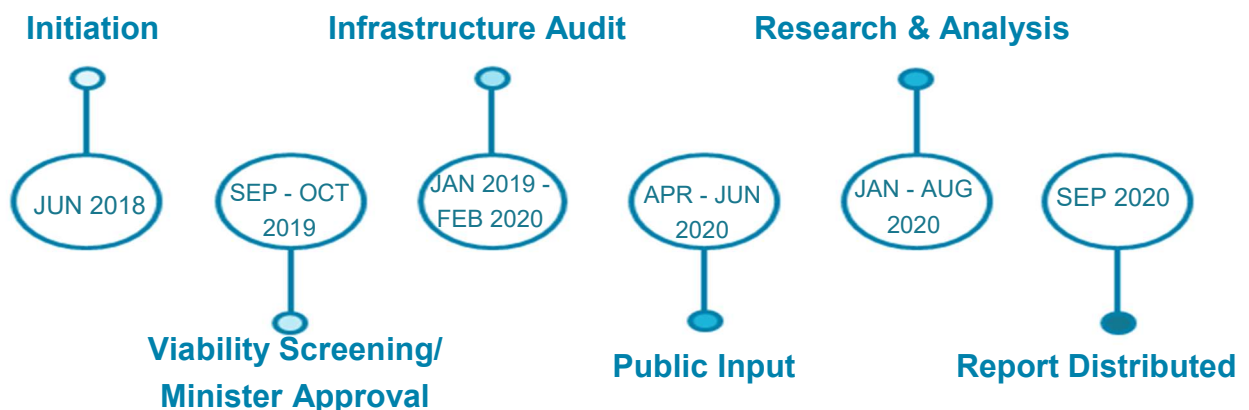
Property values in Bawlf would be expected to have little to no change, as property assessment is based on the same methods and information across all municipalities in the province. The county has indicated it would plan to levy municipal property taxes in Bawlf at the same rates as will be applied in the rest of the county. Residents and property owners can expect a lower residential tax rate and higher non-residential tax rate as a hamlet in the county. The 2020 residential tax rate is lower in Camrose County than in Bawlf, currently 6.05 mills compared to 11.54 mills within the village. The non-residential tax rate is higher in Camrose County, currently 18.36 mills compared to 12.43 mills within the village. Special levies for local improvements would be used, if required, to fund infrastructure improvements not funded by grants.

Bawlf residents can expect that water, wastewater and roadway maintenance services would continue at similar levels and residents could expect to pay for utilities on a cost recovery basis.

Camrose County would support community groups within Bawlf as it does within other hamlets. This includes the library within Bawlf and the county would explore how library operations can be continued, should the village dissolve.

Viability Review Timeline

The following timeline shows the steps that have been taken so far in the viability review. Municipal Affairs has worked with village and county officials to gather information needed to produce this viability review report. The report has been distributed to all residents and property owners of the Village of Bawlf.



Next Steps

Vote of Residents

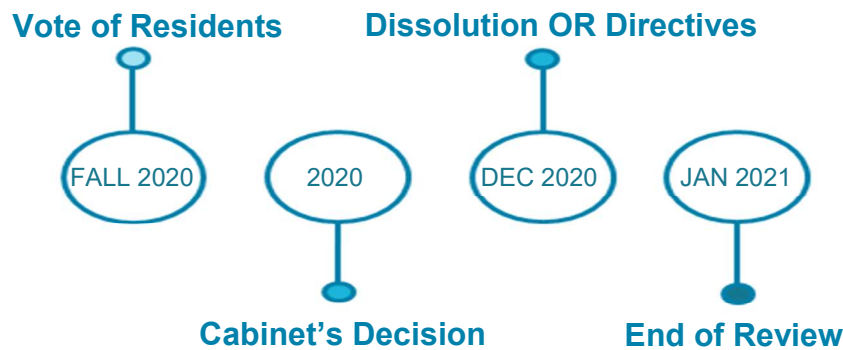
In order for a municipality to dissolve the Minister of Minister Affairs must proceed with a vote of electors regarding the future of the municipality.

The two options on which electors will vote on are:

- 1) the Village of Bawlf remains a village and implements changes to achieve viability.
or
- 2) dissolve the Village of Bawlf and Bawlf becomes a hamlet in Camrose County.

If the majority vote is to dissolve and become part of a neighboring municipality, the Minister is required to recommend dissolution to Cabinet. However, it is ultimately Cabinet's decision whether to dissolve the municipality or not. Historically, Cabinet has decided the future of a municipality based on the outcome of the vote.

If the majority vote is to remain a municipality, the Minister will issue directives to support the viability of the village and require progress reports from village administration for five years. This report contains recommended actions to be implemented by council and administration to promote future viability.



Review & Findings



Municipal Background

The Village of Bawlf was incorporated October 12, 1906. The village is located approximately 30 km south east of the City of Camrose on Highway 13 within the boundaries of Camrose County. The last census for the village was conducted in 2017; the population is shown as 422, which is a slight increase from the previous four years, which was 403. Bawlf School serves a regional population of 343 students from early childhood education through grade twelve.

Camrose County has a population of 8,660. Currently six urban municipalities are within the boundaries of Camrose County: the Town of Bashaw, and the villages of Bawlf, Bittern Lake, Edberg, Hay Lakes, and Rosalind. The county also has nine hamlets: Armena, Duhamel, Ferintosh, Kelsey, Kingman, Meeting Creek, New Norway, Ohaton, and Round Hill. The hamlets vary in size and the services they receive. Ferintosh most recently became a part of Camrose County, when the Village of Ferintosh dissolved on January 1, 2020.

Viability Review Process

The viability review process is intended to assist residents of Bawlf in evaluating the best form of municipal government to meet the community's current and future needs.

Regardless of which form of municipal government is chosen through this process, the people, businesses, and community spirit will continue to be what defines the community.

Initiation of Review

On January 31, 2018, in accordance with Section 130 of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, electors petitioned the Minister of Municipal Affairs to undertake a viability review of the Village of Bawlf. The *MGA* requires such petitions to be signed by electors of the municipality numbering at least 30 per cent of the population of the municipality. At the time the petition was received, the population of the village was 422; therefore, 126 signatures were required for the petition to be sufficient. The petition submitted on January 31, 2018, contained 103 signatures, falling short of the minimum requirement of 126 signatures; therefore, the petition was declared insufficient. Village council and the petitioners' representative were informed of these results by a letter from the Minister dated March 19, 2018.

On June 6, 2018 a second petition was received by Municipal Affairs, petitioning the Minister to undertake a viability review of the Village of Bawlf. Municipal Affairs verified the petition, as required under Section 220 of the *MGA*. The petition contained 150 signatures of 422 total residents, with seven petitioners' signatures found to not meet petition criteria, as outlined in Section 225 (3) of the *MGA*. 143 petitioner signatures could be verified, representing 17 petitioner signatures above the 126 signatures required to be sufficient. The petition was deemed to be sufficient, representing 34 per cent of the population.

A viability screening was performed, consisting of voluntary interviews with municipal council, the CAO of the village, and the petitioners' representative, as well as a review of financial reporting information the provincial government receives annually. Based on the sufficient petition and the findings of the screening, the Minister of Municipal Affairs approved the viability review for the Village of Bawlf in October 2018.

It is also worth acknowledging the village experienced significant turnover in the position of the CAO in 2018 and 2019, which impacted the progress of the viability review.

Infrastructure Study

The provision of municipal public works such as roads, water and wastewater lines, and emergency response require significant physical infrastructure. Understanding the condition of the infrastructure and the future financial investments that will be needed to provide these services is key to municipal viability. For this reason, an infrastructure study was funded by Municipal Affairs through the Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) grant that was approved in January 2019. The Village of Bawlf contracted with an engineering company, ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd, to conduct the infrastructure study in August 2019.

The study was completed in February 2020, as part of the viability review. Results are included in the comparison of options in an upcoming section and in Appendix C.

Viability Review Report

This report assesses the municipality's viability by considering seven broad areas:

- **Sustainable governance** - addresses council practices and procedures, compliance with legislation, citizen engagement, and strategic planning.
- **Administration and Operations** - addresses the capacity of the municipality to operate on a daily basis and implement council decisions.
- **Finances, Assessment & Taxation** - addresses the municipality's capacity to generate and manage revenues (including property tax assessment and collection of taxes) sufficient to provide for necessary infrastructure and services now and in the future.
- **Infrastructure** - addresses the municipality's capacity to effectively and efficiently manage its infrastructure.
- **Services** - addresses the capacity of the municipality to provide essential services that meet public expectations and applicable regulated standards.
- **Regional cooperation** - addresses the municipality's approach to collaboration with neighbours for the benefit of the community and the region.
- **Community well-being** - addresses characteristics that contribute to the vitality of the community and the long-term viability of the municipality.

For each of the seven areas, the remainder of the report provides: 1) a general introduction to the topic, 2) a description of the current state of the Village of Bawlf in that area, 3) recommended actions for council and administration to promote viability, and 4) an idea of what may change or stay the same if Bawlf became part of Camrose County. Ultimately, any actual changes would require a decision of Camrose County council should Bawlf become part of Camrose County.

The report is developed by Municipal Affairs with information from the Village of Bawlf and Camrose County. Representatives from Alberta's municipal associations, including the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Local Government Administration Association, the Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and Alberta Rural Municipal Administrators Association, along with the Village of Bawlf and Camrose County, were invited to review the report to provide additional insight, options for viability and possible recommendations.



Sustainable Governance

Sustainable Governance

Municipal governments consist of a council as the governing body of the municipal corporation and the custodian of its legislative powers under the authority of the *MGA*. Council sets the overall direction of the municipality, exercising the powers of the municipality through decisions at council meetings to create and review policies and programs.



Council is comprised of councillors that represent the electorate in the municipality. The chief elected official (CEO), also known as the mayor or reeve, may be elected at large by the electorate or chosen by the councillors at the first organizational meeting following the election.

Council defines the policies and direction that municipal administration will put into action. To do so, council passes bylaws, adopts policies, and establishes budgets; raises revenue through property and business taxes, borrowing, and setting fines and fees for services; adopts plans for the use and development of land; and provides services required or desired by residents. In addition, council is responsible for anticipating challenges and recognizing the opportunities that the municipality may face through the development and implementation of long-range plans.

Current State & Progress to Date

The Village of Bawlf is governed by a municipal council consisting of a mayor and four councillors. All council positions are elected at-large by the electors of the village and the mayor is chosen from amongst the councillors at the annual organizational meeting in October.

In the last municipal election in 2017, there were seven candidates for five positions. In that election there were three incumbents and two were elected.

Since the viability review began in October 2018, there have been five different vacancies on Bawlf Council. As of October 2019 Bawlf has retained a full council of five members. Additionally, Bawlf has had a history of difficulty filling council positions in recent years prior to the 2017-21 council term. In 2013 the village had insufficient nominations for the municipal election which led to a subsequent by-election. The village also requested an extension on another by-election in 2015.

Within the past ten years the Village of Bawlf had additional ministerial intervention by way of a municipal inspection in 2011, in which directives were issued to the village by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Did you know?

The legal framework and authority for local government in Alberta are the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Local Authorities Election Act*.



Sustainable Governance

The Village of Bawlf produces a monthly newsletter for residents. Information is also available on the website at www.villageofbawlf.com. Additional information of note can be found on the community sign by entrance to the village.

Some bylaws for the village are available on the village’s website; however, many are deemed to be no longer needed, or require review. The village is making progress of a review of its bylaws. The village has also acknowledged that in the past bylaws have not been broadly and consistently enforced within the village. The CAO has now taken on the responsibility of bylaw enforcement and has contracted Camrose County bylaw officers for the task of traffic related issues and more serious infractions. The village has begun enforcing bylaws broadly and consistently. The village wants to take a proactive approach to help citizens achieve compliance with bylaws before resorting to enforcement mechanisms.

The Village of Bawlf has shared that the entire council has taken part in various provincial government information sessions and other training opportunities.

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

Council Structure and Representation	Council Structure and Representation
<p>Residents will continue to be represented by the current council structure of five members, with the mayor selection at the organizational meeting in October.</p> <p>Bawlf Council holds regular council meetings the third Wednesday of each month.</p>	<p>Camrose County Council would provide governance to the hamlet of Bawlf and have the responsibility to provide services to residents and the authority to pass bylaws and collect property taxes or other revenues to support those services.</p> <p>Camrose County has seven divisions; the hamlet of Bawlf would become part of Camrose County Division 3 and be represented by the Division 3 councillor. Bawlf residents would be eligible for nomination and election to Camrose County Council.</p> <p>Residents of Camrose County are represented by seven councillors elected from seven electoral divisions, based on geographic location and population. The Reeve is appointed annually at their organizational meeting.</p> <p>Council meetings are held during the day on the second and fourth Tuesdays on the month at their administration office in Camrose, except during the summer when only one meeting is held per month.</p>



Sustainable Governance

<p>Council Training and Education Council is committed to taking available opportunities to learn and to better assist them in making informed decisions for the village.</p>	
<p>Council Committees and Boards The Village of Bawlf is a member of the Camrose County Intermunicipal Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Camrose Regional Assessment Review Board, Bawlf Council has representation on the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission, Camrose County Fire Services Committee and Go East Regional Tourism Organization. Additionally, one member of council acts as the Regional Emergency Management Services Liaison.</p>	<p>Council Committees and Boards Camrose County participates in many of the same regional boards and committees as the Village of Bawlf. Residents of Bawlf would be represented through county council's participation on the boards and committees.</p>
<p>Strategic Planning The village does not currently have a strategic plan.</p>	<p>Strategic Planning The Village of Bawlf would be incorporated into the current Camrose County Strategic Plan.</p>
<p>Bylaws The Village of Bawlf is in the process of reviewing and updating bylaws that are out of date. Bylaw 585/13 addresses council conduct, as required by the <i>MGA</i>. The village will focus on applying practical and defensible bylaws going forward.</p>	<p>Bylaws Existing village bylaws would remain in force in Bawlf until Camrose County amends, repeals, or replaces them. The county would assume the assets, liabilities, rights, duties, functions, and obligations of the Village of Bawlf upon dissolution.</p>
<p>Public Engagement Council meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the Village of Bawlf website at villageofbawlf.com. Residents are encouraged to bring their concerns and/or input to council through written submissions or by way of a delegation at council meetings.</p>	<p>Public Engagement County residents are encouraged to bring their concerns and/or input to council through written submissions, contacting their local Councillor or Administration or by way of a delegation at council meetings.</p>

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- The village should complete a strategic plan that integrates the recommendations resulting from the viability review.



Sustainable Governance

- Prior to the next municipal election, administration should develop a nomination package for prospective councillors, and host information session(s) on what it means to be an elected official, describe the opportunities and challenges facing the village, how these align with the responsibilities of being a councillor, and encourage residents to consider running for council in the next municipal election.
- Support and enable councillors and administration to take advantage of training opportunities provided by the province, municipal associations and neighbouring municipalities.
- Council should specifically access resources and training around CAO evaluation guidelines.
- The village council should continue with a formal a bylaw review to ensure that existing bylaws are compliant with current and proposed provincial legislation and that the bylaws are meeting the needs of the residents. It is further recommended that the Village of Bawlf receive support for this from the provincial government through the Municipal Accountability Program (MAP). All municipalities with populations of less than 2,500 receive a MAP review within each election cycle to ensure legislative compliance. A MAP review should occur within one to two years of the completion of the viability review.
- Village council should establish a schedule to review and update all policies for relevance and compliance with legislation and other regulations and to ensure that the policies meet the needs of the village.
- Council should continue to contribute to the village newsletter, as a method to increase awareness and transparency between council and residents.



Administration & Operations

Administrative Capacity

Local government administration requires properly trained and knowledgeable personnel. Attracting and retaining capable staff requires fair and adequate compensation and benefits.

Municipal administration implements the policy and directions of council. Councillors, including the mayor or reeve, are not permitted to undertake administrative functions. All municipalities in Alberta must appoint a CAO who has overall responsibility for the operations of the municipal corporation.



The CAO advises and informs the council on the operations and affairs of the municipality and implements, or directs staff to implement, policies and programs. Many administrative functions require specialized training, skills, or certification. Investing in professional development and training of the CAO and staff is central to effective municipal operations and service delivery.

Diverse functions for the administration of a municipality include: general administration (implementing policies and procedures), governance processes (supporting council), property assessment and taxation, budgeting and accounting, payables and receivables, audit and legal functions, risk management, occupational health & safety, public relations, election processes, and public works (such as maintaining water and wastewater systems).

Current State & Progress to Date

Bawlf has experienced administrative turn over since the beginning of the viability review. In January 2019 the long-term CAO went on leave and was subsequently terminated with cause in March 2019. An interim CAO was selected, with a permanent CAO hired from May 2019 to December 2019. The current CAO was the previous interim CAO. In addition to the CAO, the village currently has a full time office assistant and a full time public works staff person. This is a reduction of one full time position from 2017.

Did you know?

Council members are obligated not to undertake any municipal function that has been delegated to the CAO and administration by the *Municipal Government Act*.

The sudden changes in staffing and transition to new CAOs highlighted concerns with the village's continuity and succession planning. Lack of effective records management has also affected the village's operations, particularly during staff transitions.

The village office is located at 203 Hanson Street and is open Monday through Thursday, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Administration strives to treat residents with respect and encouraging positive interactions between staff and residents to ensure resident concerns are addressed.



Administration & Operations

The village contracts services for assessment, property tax collection, by-law enforcement, land use planning, garbage and recycling services. In 2019 salaries, wages and benefits totaled \$237,654 and contracted and general services totaled \$266,990.

The village provides the following administrative services:

- Council support
- Secretarial
- Development
- Assessment/taxes
- Budgeting
- Investments
- Communication to citizens
- Municipal Elections
- Filing systems
- Liaison with the library
- Payroll
- Financial reporting
- Insurance
- Municipal census
- Information technology
- Accounts payable and receivable
- Utility billings
- Annual audit
- Human resources

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

<p>Administration Capacity</p> <p>The village's CAO will continue to be responsible for the management and day-to-day operations of the village. Additional municipal staff and contractors will handle the provision of municipal services, as the municipal budget will allow.</p> <p>As part of the annual budget process, the village will continue to determine if staffing is at an appropriate level for the services and programs required.</p>	<p>Administration Capacity</p> <p>The Camrose County office is located in Camrose and is open to the public five days a week. The county would not operate a satellite office in Bawlf.</p> <p>The county currently administers and provides services in nine hamlets, as well the rest of the county.</p> <p>The Camrose County CAO is responsible for the management of the county, which would include the hamlet of Bawlf. Municipal services would be provided by county staff and contractors.</p> <p>Camrose County has 67 full time municipal positions staffed by professionals with diverse backgrounds, expertise and areas of specialization that support the municipality. Community peace officers would continue to enforce provincial statutes, motor vehicle statues and municipal bylaws.</p> <p>Personnel records and liabilities related to village employees would be transferred and retained by the county.</p>
<p>Service Provision</p> <p>Tax payments can be made in-person at the village office via cash or cheque, through online payments at four different banks/credit unions, pre-authorized cheques, mailed to the</p>	<p>Service Provision</p> <p>Residents could access services and information at the county office in-person, via email, by telephone, and through its website.</p>



Administration & Operations

village office or by using the after hours drop box at the village office.	All bills including utilities and taxes can be paid online.
Municipal Buildings The village would continue to own and maintain municipal facilities as it currently does.	Municipal Buildings The county may consider the use of the public works shop and village office building.

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- Village council should continue to support learning opportunities for staff, including formal training and informal training, such as CAO mentoring, by completing a long-term staffing plan, developing a staff succession plan, and including funding for staff training in the annual budget.
- The village's ability to attract and retain qualified staff is a factor in the long-term viability of the village. The village should periodically review staff compensation to ensure it is comparable to similar municipalities and fairly reflects requirements and responsibilities of the roles.
- The village should develop an employment policy and procedural manual and provide appropriate training for staff.
- Develop and implement a records management and retention policy to ensure that village records are properly maintained and stored.



Finances, Assessment & Taxation

Finances, Assessment & Taxation

The municipal fiscal year is from January 1 until December 31. Annual financial statements must be audited by an independent auditor appointed by council and are publicly available in May of the following year. Municipalities must prepare three-year operating and five-year capital plans. Municipalities must also adopt annual operating and capital budgets that shows their expected expenditures and revenues. Municipal revenues must be sufficient to cover expenditures for that year.



Municipal Expenditures. Overhead municipal costs include per diems and salaries of council and administration, as well as a number of general costs such as postage, telecommunications, advertising, memberships, audit, legal, consulting, insurance, property assessment, office maintenance and utilities, and bank charges. These baseline costs are required for effective local governance. However, even with prudent cost management, baseline costs can consume a significant proportion of revenues, particularly in smaller municipalities where the costs cannot be spread out among a larger base of residences and businesses.

Core services such as utilities and roads are a significant expense due to the cost of required infrastructure. Significant one-time costs to replace failing infrastructure for core utility services may affect the ability to fund other municipal services such as fire suppression, snow removal, parks and recreation, and community events.

Municipal Revenues. Each year, municipal council determines the desired level of services and the revenues required for municipal services and operations. Revenue sources may include non-tax sources such as user fees (including utility fees), franchise fees paid by utilities providers to access municipal land, and federal and provincial grants. Unexpended grants are reported as deferred revenue and must be expended for the purpose they were received. After non-tax revenues are deducted, the remainder is the revenue required through property taxes.

Property assessment is the process of assigning a dollar amount to property, based on the market value of the property, and is used to determine the proportion of taxes to be paid on each property. The tax rate is set annually and generally expressed as the amount of taxes per \$1,000 of assessed value of the property (or mills). Municipalities are also required to collect education property taxes and policing costs on behalf of the province. Unpaid property taxes are a concern as municipalities rely on these revenues to finance municipal operations, programs and services. Municipalities can also choose to impose special taxes and local improvement taxes on property in any area of a municipality to fund a service or project that will benefit that specific area. In addition to non-tax revenues, property and special taxes, municipalities may also borrow up to their debt limit, which is set at two times the amount of municipal revenue.



Finances, Assessment & Taxation

Current State & Progress to Date

Alberta Municipal Affairs has established a set of indicators intended to measure specific aspects of municipal governance, finance and community. Examples include tax collection rate, audit outcome and on-time financial reporting. All municipal performance indicators are outlined in Appendix B.

In order to pay for on-going costs, municipalities must be able to collect property taxes on a timely basis. Tax collection rate is the percentage of the current year's property taxes that are collected by year-end. Bawlf has consecutively achieved a tax collection rate below the targeted result of 90 per cent. In 2018, the village reported a tax collection rate of 88 per cent.

Did you know?

Municipal utility rates (for water, wastewater, and garbage removal) should include some savings for future repair and replacement of utility infrastructure.

At the end of each fiscal year, municipalities must prepare financial statements, which must be audited by an independent auditor appointed by council. These financial statements are considered public information and must be available in May of the following year, as well as be submitted to Municipal Affairs. For 2018 fiscal year, Bawlf did not meet the May 1, 2019 deadline for submitting financial information to Municipal Affairs, submitting their information to the ministry on June 20, 2019.

For the 2019 fiscal year, the deadline for reporting financial information for all municipalities was extended from May 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020 due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Therefore, although Bawlf indicated they again had challenges in completing the audit on time for the regular reporting deadline, their financial information for 2019 is not late and was submitted in June. Excluding the most recent year, the Village of Bawlf's audited financial statements since 2012 can be found on the village's website.

In 2019, the village reported a surplus of \$38,354. Municipalities may allow yearly surplus amounts to accumulate. This is known as accumulated surplus (or a reserve), which is designated as either unrestricted (no specified use) or restricted (must be used for specific purposes). In 2019, the village reported an unrestricted accumulated surplus of \$569,105 and restricted accumulated surplus totaling \$210,983, with three different reserves for the fire department, water utility, and for general purposes. The village's equity in tangible capital assets (e.g. infrastructure, buildings, etc.) in 2019 is \$4,225,728.

The *MGA* requires that municipal debt and debt servicing limits be established by regulation. Debt limits are calculated at 1.5 times the revenue of a municipality and the debt-servicing limit at 0.25 times the revenue. Based on 2019 revenue Bawlf is able to borrow approximately \$1,121,361 for projects in the community, with \$186,894 allowable for debt servicing costs. However, the village has used none of its available borrowing room, and currently has no long-term debt.



Finances, Assessment & Taxation

The village does not have a three year operating budget or five year capital budget, as is required by the MGA.

From 2015-18 grants from other levels of government accounted for approximately 21 per cent of the village's revenue. This is significantly lower than comparable municipalities within Alberta. From 2017-19 Bawlf received a total of \$946,994 from other levels of government.

Property taxation enables municipalities to bring in sufficient revenues to cover expenses not covered by the other sources of revenue, such as grants and user fees. There are many factors that may impact a municipality's tax rates, including type and level of services provided, market costs, debt load, among others. The following table shows the tax rates that the Village of Bawlf property owners have paid in 2020, and compares it to the tax rates that apply in Camrose County in 2020.

Comparison of Property Taxes for Village of Bawlf and Camrose County

	Village of Bawlf (2020)		Camrose County 2020	
	Residential	Non-residential	Residential	Non-Residential
2020 Municipal Tax Rate (Mill Rate)	8.92	8.92	2.8758	13.93
Alberta School Foundation Fund Tax Rate	2.62	3.512	2.5594	3.8183
Recreation	N/A	N/A	0.5095	0.5095
Police Funding Model	N/A	N/A	0.1055	0.1055
Total Property Tax Rate	11.54	12.432	6.0502	18.3633
Assessed Property Value Example	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total Taxes	\$1,154.00	\$1,243.20	\$605.02	\$1,836.33

Taxation, including rates and forms of taxes (such as special taxes, business taxes, and local improvement levies in addition to general municipal property taxes), are determined annually by all municipal councils.

Comparison with Similar Villages

Using financial information submitted by all municipalities to the province, the following analysis shows how the Village of Bawlf compares with other Alberta municipalities of similar populations in three key areas: property value, property taxation, and staffing costs.

Assessment and Taxation

Equalized assessment is a process to audit and adjust municipal assessment data that reported to the provincial government. The MGA requires that properties be assessed at market value. All properties are assessed locally at 100 per cent market value; however, to compare property assessments across the province, and account for some regional differences in value, a formula



Finances, Assessment & Taxation

is used to equalize and adjust the total assessment for each municipality for the purposes of requisitions and grant allocations.

The Village of Bawlf has a lower equalized tax rate than comparator municipalities for both residential and non-residential rates. The residential equalized tax rate is not as low as the non-residential rate, although both fall below median of a comparator group and towards the low end of the range. Bawlf is in the middle range of comparable municipalities for the equalized assessment per capita.

Staffing Costs

Village of residents have expressed particular interest in the costs village staffing as part of the viability review. Staffing costs, including salaries, wages and benefits, are typically one of the largest operating costs for municipalities.

The Village of Bawlf falls below the median of this major expenditure for comparable municipalities, and in the lower range. The village also falls below the median and in the low range of major expenditures for materials, goods, supplies and utilities, which represent another area of operational spending for municipalities.

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

<p>Property Taxes</p> <p>Council will continue to ensure tax rates reflect the costs to provide municipal services.</p> <p>The minimum property tax for properties in the Village of Bawlf is \$400.</p>	<p>Property Taxes</p> <p>Camrose County applies property tax rates uniformly across the municipality in order to fund the approved operating and capital budgets. The county does not impose a minimum tax.</p> <p>Camrose County will receive the village's rights to revenues on the date of dissolution including, village property taxes and utility fees. Property taxes previously levied and owed to the village would continue to be owed to Camrose County.</p> <p>Assessed values of property would not change significantly, as property assessment is based on the same methods and information throughout the province.</p> <p>Future county tax rate bylaws and the county's tax due dates and tax penalty schedule would apply to properties in Bawlf.</p>
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Finances, Assessment & Taxation

<p>Tax Collection</p> <p>The Village of Bawlf has indicated they will be exploring opportunities to expand tax payment options.</p> <p>Additionally, the village has recently employed the services of a company to ensure that all outstanding taxes are dealt with effectively. The village levies a 10% penalty on unpaid taxes on August 31 and another 18% on unpaid taxes on January 1.</p> <p>A minimum tax bylaw was implemented in 2019 and has been effective. The minimum tax for the village is \$400.00.</p>	
<p>Utility Fees</p> <p>The current cost-recovery utility rate model would continue to apply.</p>	<p>Utility Fees</p> <p>Camrose County levies uniform utility rates across the county, and annually reviews utility rates to ensure ongoing full cost recovery across all of the utility systems and services.</p>
<p>Grants</p> <p>The village has indicated it will ensure it applies for and uses all grants that are available to the municipality.</p>	<p>Grants</p> <p>ACP grants from the province are available to assist the receiving municipality with restructuring costs associated with administration, governance, and legislation; and to assist in funding capital projects identified in the infrastructure study. These grants are subject to the availability and conditions of the grant.</p> <p>Under current provincial grant program guidelines (the ACP Program), the receiving municipality of a dissolution is eligible for funding to support transitional and infrastructure costs. If Bawlf dissolves, Camrose County could apply for this funding, which is anticipated to have an eligible amount of approximately \$1.2 million - \$1.4 million.</p> <p>Grants previously allocated to Bawlf will transfer to Camrose County. According to the current MSI Capital program guidelines, the village funding allocations would continue to be available to Camrose County for five years, or the end of the program, following dissolution, if available. The MSI program is scheduled to end in 2023.</p>



Finances, Assessment & Taxation

<p>Future Fee Structure The village would implement new fees and charges in the future if necessary.</p>	<p>Future Fee Structure Camrose County would provide municipal services to hamlet residents at the same level as provided to all other hamlets in the county.</p> <p>Property taxes may not be the only financial cost that would change. Utility rates are annually established by Council and a uniform rate is applied to all utility systems with the county. These factors could effect on the cost of living in the village.</p>
<p>Special Levies The Village of Bawlf may use special levies for capital projects, if required; however, it has not been a tool used in the past by the village.</p>	<p>Special Levies The county's practice upon dissolution has been, if required, the application of a local improvement levy on benefitting properties in a hamlet to fund annual payments on required infrastructure improvements, not covered by grants. Such projects could include water distribution and wastewater collection systems, roads, etc. These levies would be in addition to the county tax rates levied on all properties in the county.</p>
<p>Assets and Liabilities Bawlf's assets and liabilities would continue to be managed by the village.</p>	<p>Assets and Liabilities All village assets and liabilities would be transferred to Camrose County. Assets include: cash, investments, reserves, buildings, infrastructure, vehicles, machinery and equipment.</p>

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- The village must complete three year operating budget and five-year capital budget, as per the *MGA*.
- The village council must ensure that audited financial statements and financial information returns are submitted to Municipal Affairs each year by May 1, pursuant to Section 276(3) of the *MGA*.
- Review the property tax due dates and penalty schedules to be comparable with urban municipalities within the region.



Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Municipal infrastructure includes the water system, wastewater system, roads and sidewalks, storm sewer drainage, parks, campgrounds and recreation facilities, and municipal buildings such as the municipal office or fire station. A municipality's ability to fund infrastructure costs for core services expected by residents is a crucial aspect of whether a municipality is financially viable.



Ideally, infrastructure is maintained and gradually replaced over time. Historically, many municipalities across Canada have not invested in this asset management and are now facing high replacement costs for aging infrastructure. Replacing infrastructure can be funded from municipal reserves if the municipality has saved for these costs as part of the budget. If not, the municipality may choose to fund infrastructure with its debt limit and pay financing costs in the future, rather than using reserves saved in the past. Funding infrastructure through debt usually requires that the municipality have a sufficient tax base that can absorb additional costs of debt financing. Municipalities may also apply for provincial or federal grants to help cover costs of replacing infrastructure.

Current State & Progress to Date

As part of the viability review process municipalities undergoing a review are eligible to receive an ACP grant to complete a comprehensive infrastructure study. In January 2019, the Village of Bawlf received a grant of \$120,000 to complete a comprehensive infrastructure study. In August 2019, the Village of Bawlf selected the consulting company ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. to complete the infrastructure study. The study was completed in February 2020 and received by the Village of Bawlf.

Residents are served with a water supply from two deep wells and samples are sent weekly for testing. The village also manages the water distribution system, wastewater collection system, and storm water drainage.

The village currently owns and maintains approximately 6.2 km of local collector roads, which consists of asphalt, oil mix and gravel, as well as approximately 2.8 km of graveled lanes. Of these roadways approximately 1.44 km of the roads are paved, this represents about 16 per cent of the roadways in the village. There are limited sidewalks; however, the majority of streets in Bawlf have curbs and gutters, with an additional two blocks being completed in September 2020.

Did you know?

According to a 2016 report¹ by Canada Infrastructure, municipalities own 60% of Canada's core public infrastructure, and one-third of that is in fair, poor, or very poor condition. A decline in spending on public infrastructure through the 1970s and 80s means that municipalities now face higher costs to replace infrastructure.¹

¹Canada Infrastructure. (2016). *Informing the Future: Canadian Infrastructure Report Card*. Retrieved from: http://canadainfrastructure.ca/downloads/canadian_infrastructure_report_2016.pdf



Infrastructure

The village owns and maintains several facilities within the community, including:

- the fire department/public works building, which houses the volunteer fire department, as well as provides storage for public works equipment. It was constructed in 1985 and had a complete renovation and upgrade in 2017;
- the village office, primarily used for administration staff, seniors' centre and library. It was built in 1985 and had renovations in 2008;
- the community centre was built in 2009 and is a primary gathering space within the community. It contains a kitchen, main hall, and meeting room;
- skating rink/change room;
- picnic shelters/washrooms;
- bleachers and shelters; and
- the historical fire hall.

Currently the Village of Bawlf prioritizes infrastructure projects by what it has identified or what village residents recommend, and funds projects through the annual budgeting process. There is no formalized multi-year infrastructure plan; however, there are several infrastructure projects currently underway or being planned. These include a submission for grant funding (\$426,000) for a major upgrade to the water treatment plant and upgrades to controls, well house and lift station. These projects are ready to be started. Additionally, \$100,000 was received from the Federal Gas Tax fund for curbing on two additional streets.

The village currently uses provincial and federal government grants and tax revenue to fund infrastructure projects.

The state of Bawlf's infrastructure was identified in the community feedback as a key concern and maintaining local infrastructure was also identified as a key priority for the future. Understanding the future financial investments that will be necessary to maintain a municipality's key infrastructure, and available revenue sources, are important factors to assess municipal long-term viability.

Summary of Infrastructure Study

The infrastructure study assessed the current state of municipal infrastructure and contains a 10-year capital plan of infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs in order to maintain current levels of services. The study report was accepted as information by the Village of Bawlf council and can be obtained by contacting the village office.

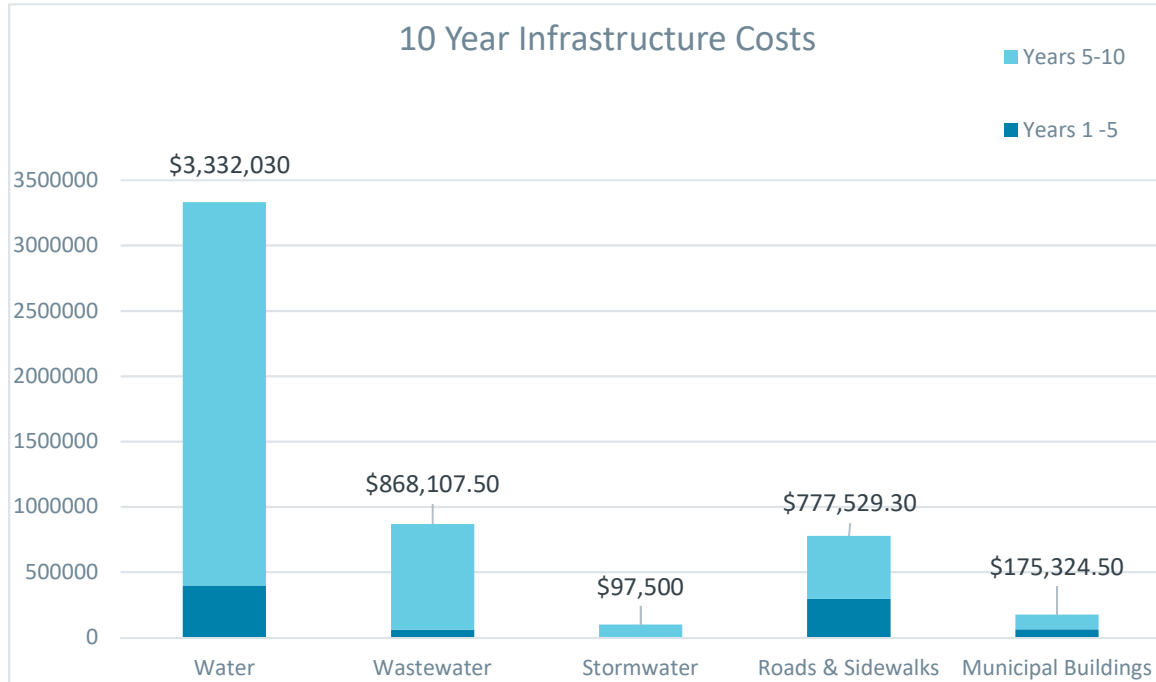
ISL has recommended a 10-year capital plan for infrastructure within Bawlf, breaking the projects into higher priority projects that should be completed within one to five years, and medium priority projects with less associated risk, which should be completed within five to 10 years.

The costs in the plan are initial estimates that can vary by 20 to 30 per cent from detailed costs once a company is hired to do the actual work. ISL Engineering has contemplated these contingency costs at 30 per cent of the project costs so this contingency costs are reflected within the estimated projects costs, although the actual costs may be less.



Infrastructure

Including a 30 per cent contingency cost, the estimated total for high priority projects are \$757,900. For medium priority projects, the total is \$4,341,091. Over the ten-year timeframe, a total of \$5,098,991 has been estimated for future infrastructure costs.



The Village of Bawlf does not have its own engineering design standards, so the engineering company used the City of Camrose design standards for the project as a guide. Many of the surrounding communities within Camrose County also use these standards.

Projects within the infrastructure study were assessed on a likelihood rating of, how probable an event which results in a consequence, is to occur, In addition, a consequence/impact rating was assessed, which considers health and safety, regulations, public impact and financial factors.

The Village of Bawlf has reported it has already begun to address the most critical deficiencies noted within the infrastructure study by ISL Engineering. Eight of the projects identified in the 10-year capital plan have already been completed by the village. An additional 11 identified projects in the plan have had grant applications submitted to complete them at this time.

Key findings from the infrastructure study include:

Water Treatment and Distribution System. The Village of Bawlf currently relies on groundwater to meet ground supply needs; however, the village does have options to connect with regional water systems if they wish to explore this option in the future to see if it may better serve the community than the existing water treatment plant. The possibility of connecting to two regional water supplies was explored within the full infrastructure report.



Infrastructure

The water distribution system and pumping station were assessed based on age of infrastructure, visual assessment, available technical information and input from operators.

Water Distribution System:

- The asbestos cement (AC) piping is nearing the end of its service life (approximately 2026). To minimize risk of interruptions and pipe breaks, recommend that AC pipes be replaced via a phased approach based on break history and frequency.
- The current water distribution system does not meet the minimum pipe diameter for industrial/commercial use.
- Additional hydrants are recommended to meet hydrant spacing requirements.
- Current system can provide average day and peak hour demand for 10 and 20 year scenarios but upgrades will be required for Bawlf school and commercial area to meet required fire flows.
- The system is incapable of delivering the required fire flow requirements by City of Camrose standards; a combination of pump and distribution system upgrades to meet fire flow requirements are recommended.

Water Treatment Plant and Pump Station:

- The water treatment plant is more than 30 years old. The facility received some partial upgrades in 2016.
- Recommend replacing corroded Greensand filter, original piping and valves and upgrade treatment process controls.

Wastewater System. The system was assessed based on age of infrastructure, supplemented with information from operators and CCTV. Key findings include:

- The wastewater collection system was found to be in generally good condition and the piping and pipe lining do not need to be replaced.
- Approximately half of the wastewater pipes do not meet the minimum velocity required for self cleaning due to flat slopes and may require increased flushing frequency.
- Some of the piping fails to meet the minimum 3 meter depth of cover and may require monitoring in extreme cold weather conditions.
- There is no capacity concern for the overall system based on the 10 and 20-year scenarios.

Stormwater Collection System. The stormwater drainage system was evaluated to address existing issues, as well as potential projects for future development.

- Regrade areas with poor drainage to allow proper overland flow on Molstad Avenue and Hanson Street.

Roads & Sidewalks. A condition assessment was performed in the village and overall the roads were found to be in fair or good condition.

- Recommend reconstruction of Niblock Street as a gravel road.



Infrastructure

- Recommend reconstruction of MacRae Street.

Municipal Buildings and Facilities. The village owns several facilities that were evaluated as part of the infrastructure study.

- *Fire Department/Public Works Garage:* good condition, with no observable structural issues. The slab-on-grade in the public works garage experienced a significant amount of cracking, but no settlement issues observed.
- *Village Office:* No observable structural issues, main entrance sidewalk has cracks.
- *Community Centre:* Building is in very good condition, with no observable issues. Main sidewalk has cracks. Recommend installing a fire alarm system in the community centre and construct new foundation for skating room change rooms.
- *Skating Rink/Change Room:* Ground surrounding the building slopes towards the structure causing pooling of water against the exterior walls. Recommend new foundation for change rooms.
- *Picnic Shelters/Washrooms:* Superstructure of building in good condition, but slab-on-grade has significant cracking.
- *Bleachers and Shelters:* Good condition overall and performing well, although protective paint surface has peeled in areas, exposing the wood to elements.
- *Historical Fire Hall:* Main structural elements are in fair condition.

Funding Infrastructure Projects

The initial breakdown of the 10-year infrastructure costs as indicated by the infrastructure study were divided into high risk or more immediate need (up to five years) and medium risk (from five to 10 year projects). The total for all projects within the 10-year plan is approximately \$5,098,991. The short-term (1-5 years) project costs are \$757,900 and medium term (5-10 years) project costs are \$4,341,091.

The village would use tax dollars and provincial and federal grants to pay for infrastructure projects. The village has recently applied for Municipal Sustainability Initiative and Federal Gas Fund funding for current infrastructure projects.

Camrose County is eligible for an ACP grant under the infrastructure/debt servicing stream, if Bawlf were to dissolve and become a hamlet. This grant supports upgrades to existing, municipally-owned infrastructure assets and may be applied for once needs are assessed and prioritized. The amount available is based on a current year's program guidelines, and is expected to be approximately \$1 million in 2020/21.



Infrastructure

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

<p>Future Infrastructure Planning Due to the information made available through the infrastructure study the village will be reassessing their infrastructure planning.</p>	<p>Future Infrastructure Planning Camrose County would review the Bawlf infrastructure requirements as outlined in the ISL infrastructure study and available funding.</p> <p>All county projects are ranked and funded in accordance with established council priorities. It will be the responsibility of the county council to determine which projects will be completed and how they will be funded.</p> <p>County council and administration would determine priority of the projects in the capital plan based on the urgency of capital replacement and funding availability.</p> <p>County practice has been, if required, to levy local improvement property taxes on properties that benefit from an infrastructure upgrade/project to partially cover costs.</p>
<p>Infrastructure Funding The village currently funds infrastructure projects through tax dollars and grants.</p> <p>If vital upgrades are required, the village will borrow and increase taxes to pay for the infrastructure.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Funding The county would apply any grants for the Village of Bawlf to the hamlet of Bawlf for five years following dissolution.</p> <p>In addition, any ACP grant funding, as a result of the dissolution, would be applied to the outstanding infrastructure issues as outlined in the ISL infrastructure study.</p>

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- Village council should develop and approve a 10-year capital plan and address the recommendations found within the 2020 infrastructure study. The capital plan will identify the necessary projects, the timing of initiating and completing each project and the required funding for each project.
- Village council should consider taking on debt with an appropriate repayment plan, if required, to work towards completing the approved 10-year capital plan.



Services

Services

Under the *MGA*, each municipality determines what services, such as water or paved roads, they will provide. Council may consult residents in making decisions about what constitutes necessary or desirable services. Council must also consider the costs, including infrastructure and replacement costs, and the available revenue sources (e.g. utility fees and taxes) to finance those services.

Municipalities are not required to provide any specific services, but often provide services such as water and wastewater management, roads, fire protection, and waste management. Services such as water or waste management are provided more often in urban than in rural municipalities. Municipalities may also join with one or more municipalities to create a regional services commission that jointly provides water, wastewater, waste, emergency, or other services to its municipal members.

The effective delivery of services and the setting of utility rates (fees for service) based on a full-cost recovery model are crucial to the operations of a municipality. In addition to utility services, the municipality may also provide such services as emergency and fire, bylaw enforcement, and snow removal. These costs are often accounted for in the general municipal property tax rate rather than an associated fee-for-service.



Current State & Progress to Date

Water to the village is supplied through two wells and is tested daily, with weekly samples sent to the laboratory for testing. Reports are provided to Alberta Environment. Staff also maintain sewer or wastewater services.

The village provides snow clearing and removal services, as well as sanding. Snow clearing on roads occurs on a priority schedule. Snow removal is provided on municipal sidewalks normally used by the public, whereas sidewalks infrequently used are not cleared.

Bawlf has a contract with Camrose County for residents to haul waste to the Kelsey Transfer Station. Residential and commercial garbage is removed once per week by a contracted company. Recycling is also handled by a contract company, and door-to-door pick up is provided twice monthly. The contractor provides a list of acceptable and unacceptable items for recycling.

The Village of Bawlf Fire Department currently consists of 14 volunteer firefighters. The Fire Department operates out of the fire hall and serves the village, as well as the surrounding area on behalf of Camrose County. A funding agreement outlines the cost sharing between the village and Camrose County.

Did you know?

Each municipality determines the types and levels of services they will provide. Water/wastewater systems, road maintenance, garbage collection and fire services are common and costly core services.



Services

Bawlf contracts with a third-party company, County Environ Pickup to provide garbage and recycling services on a weekly basis.

The Village of Bawlf contracts with Camrose County to enforce village bylaws. Residents with bylaw complaints are encouraged to fill out a form at the village office, which is then sent by administration to Camrose County bylaw enforcement.

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

<p>Utilities</p> <p>The 2020 Utility Services Bylaw indicates that water is provided to residents at a flat rate of \$35.00 per month.</p> <p>Bulk water sales for agricultural or residential use is \$4.40 per cubic meter and \$8.80 per cubic meter for commercial use.</p> <p>A monthly flat rate of \$32.00 is charged for sewer services for residential users.</p>	<p>Utilities</p> <p>Services will continue to be provided to residents of Bawlf.</p> <p>Utility facilities and responsibility for utility services would transfer to Camrose County.</p> <p>The costs for utility services would be allocated to Bawlf residents through the municipal-fee-for-services bylaw.</p> <p>Utility rates are set annually and apply universally to all applicable areas of the county, and are set to achieve full cost recovery.</p>
<p>Cemetery</p> <p>The village currently operates the inter-denominational cemetery.</p>	<p>Cemetery</p> <p>The county would assume responsibility of the operations of the inter-denominational cemetery.</p>
<p>Road Maintenance</p> <p>Services for road maintenance, including snow removal, will continue at the level it is currently provided.</p> <p>As is common with many municipalities Bawlf residents are required to clear snow from the sidewalk in front of their home, as necessary.</p>	<p>Road Maintenance</p> <p>The county has and would maintain a road maintenance grader and operator in the hamlet. Camrose County dedicates trucks to plow and sand hamlets and paved county roads.</p>
<p>Garbage Collection and Recycling</p> <p>The village has a three-year contract with County Enviro Pickup that includes recycling, garbage and yard waste on a weekly basis.</p>	<p>Garbage Collection and Recycling</p> <p>Garbage collection and recycling services will continue at cost to all village residents.</p>



Services

<p>Policing and Bylaws The Village of Bawlf will continue to contract with Camrose County for bylaw enforcement.</p>	<p>Policing and Bylaws Policing would continue to be conducted by the RCMP detachment out of Camrose and Camrose County protective officers.</p> <p>Camrose County would provide bylaw enforcement.</p>
<p>Fire and Emergency Services Fire services will continue to be operated as they currently are within the village.</p>	<p>Fire and Emergency Services Fire and emergency services would be managed by the county. The Bawlf Fire Department would be resourced at the same level as other hamlet fire departments. Honorariums are provided for training and attendance at fires.</p> <p>Camrose County has an agreement with the Village of Bawlf for provision of services. The fire hall would remain operational.</p>

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- The village council should continue to review utility rates annually, on a full-cost recovery model that could also include expenses associated with maintenance and capital infrastructure projects.



Regional Cooperation

Regional Cooperation

Municipalities may work in partnership to provide efficient and effective services through formal agreements, including intermunicipal service or mutual aid agreements. For example, two municipalities may share the cost of a bylaw enforcement officer that provides part-time enforcement in each municipality. Residents may benefit from these partnerships by having lowered costs, increased efficiency, and/or increased capacity of their local government.



Municipalities are required to develop Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) that list services provided by each municipality, shared intermunicipal services, and services provided by third parties. Similarly, municipalities are required to create Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) with neighbouring municipalities to identify mutually acceptable land –use practices along shared boundaries.

Current State & Progress to Date

Bawlf has worked cooperatively with its neighbours and has a history of intermunicipal collaboration, including providing shared services. There is a positive relationship with Camrose County and the two municipalities have several shared services. The ICF and IDF between Bawlf and Camrose County have both been completed, with both municipalities passing these bylaws in 2018.

The Village of Bawlf is a member of the Shirley McLellan Water Services Commission and was initially contemplated for future tie-in to the regional water line; however, the village does not currently receive potable water from this source. The village expanded the infrastructure report by ISL Engineering to include the viability of continuing to be part of the service commission. The village is a contributing member to the commission, but the village council has expressed no foreseeable benefit of remaining, as there is no current plan in place for the line to be extended to Bawlf.

Fire services are provided on a regional, shared service basis. The funding is provided by shared municipal contributions and user fees. A Fire Services Coordinator is provided by Camrose County to Bawlf and other municipal partners within the county. Expert technical, educational and administrative support is provided to fire departments.

Did you know?

Alberta municipalities are interdependent, and often work with one another through a variety of partnership agreements, sharing of services, and formal collaboration activities.



Regional Cooperation

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

<p>ICF/IDP and Shared Services Both of these agreements have been completed and can be adjusted in the future as necessary.</p> <p>Bawlf has entered into a Regional Emergency Services Agreement with Camrose County.</p> <p>The local fire department serves Bawlf, as well as the surrounding area on behalf of Camrose County.</p>	<p>ICF/IDP and Shared Services Camrose County has ICF/IDPs with its urban and rural neighbours.</p>
<p>Regional Representation Bawlf would continue participation in regional groups and commissions.</p>	<p>Regional Representation Participation on commissions, authorities and in regional service agreements would transfer from the village to the county.</p> <p>Bawlf would be represented by Camrose County in its relationships with other municipalities in the region.</p>

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- Continue to assess involvement in regional committees to ensure a positive impact for village residents.
- The village council should continue to pursue opportunities to enhance regional partnerships to provide programs and services to village residents in the most effective and efficient manner.



Community Well-Being

Community Well-Being

Community well-being addresses local community characteristics that contribute to the vitality of the community and the long-term viability of the municipality. Vibrant and strong communities may be fostered through the programs and services offered public participation in community events and activities, and connections between residents.



Municipalities may provide a range of community assets such libraries, seniors or youth centres, early childhood programs and seniors and/or affordable housing facilities. Additionally, recreation is often a sought-after amenity by residents. Recreation infrastructure may include recreation facilities, parks, programs, and activities and may involve partnerships with local volunteer organizations and community groups.

Municipalities may also provide funding to community groups and organizations to enhance community well-being through events that provide opportunities for connection. Social supports may be provided through *Family and Community Support Services* by the municipality, or in partnership with other municipalities in the region.

Current State & Progress to Date

The David Knipe Memorial Library, located in Bawlf, is a member of the Parkland Regional Library system. The library serves residents of Bawlf, Village of Rosalind and surrounding Camrose County. Library memberships are recognized at any library with the Parkland Regional Library System area. The library is open Monday through Thursday. It is housed at the village office complex. Village Council appoints members to the Library Board and the village provides an annual operating grant to the Library Board.

Bawlf has several community groups operating within the village.

These include the Bawlf and District Recreation Association, who organize local sports programs and facilities, including the skating rink, ball grounds and support for the local school.

Jubilee Park has camping, ball diamonds, playground and trout pond for catch and release. The concession building at the park is maintained by the village and operated by user groups booking tournaments or events.

The Bawlf Community Centre is an identified community gathering place. The Lions' Club secured provincial funding and led the project to construct the hall. The village maintains the hall and the Lions' Club operates it.

Did you know?

Family and Community Social Services is a unique 80/20 funding agreement between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities to provide early intervention and prevention social services.



Community Well-Being

The village partners with Camrose and District Support Services (CDSS) and contributes funds to this agency, for Family and Community Support Services supports, which is a funding partnership between the province and municipalities. Programs and services available to Bawlf residents include: home support, family resource centre, volunteer centre, services for seniors.

Within the community feedback received, residents shared what was important to them about the village, and common themes included safe, great place for families, small town feel, and recreation facilities.

Options Comparison



Option 1: Remain a Municipality



Option 2: Become a Hamlet

<p>Economic Development</p> <p>The village intends to install digital signage that is visible from Highway 13, which will be used to promote economic growth.</p> <p>The village intends to offer tax incentives for new/start-up businesses that are looking to do business in Bawlf.</p> <p>In the last three reported years, the village has issued three new building permits and 13 development permits.</p>	<p>Economic Development</p> <p>Camrose County would continue to focus economic development activities for the county as a whole.</p> <p>Camrose County has a Business Incentive Grant program available for new commercial businesses wishing to start up in the county.</p>
<p>Community and Service Groups</p> <p>The Bawlf Recreation Association works within the community to organize sports programs and facilities within the region. The Board consists of two village residents and eight county residents.</p> <p>The village works closely with the Bawlf Recreation Association to ensure resident recreation needs are met.</p> <p>Additional recreation opportunities are provided by the Bawlf Seniors Association, Camrose and District Support Services and by the Bawlf Lions Club.</p> <p>The village works closely with local service groups to provide them with whatever support may be required.</p>	<p>Community and Service Groups</p> <p>Community groups will be eligible for the Camrose County Legacies Grant program.</p> <p>Camrose County provides support to community groups in all of the hamlets within the county. Camrose County would continue to support community and recreation groups and activities within Bawlf.</p>



Community Well-Being

<p>Recreation</p> <p>Parks and facilities are maintained and managed by both the village staff and the Bawlf Recreation Association.</p> <p>Parks and facilities are maintained and managed by both village staff and the Bawlf Recreation Association.</p>	<p>Recreation</p> <p>Camrose County Parks and Recreation staff would assume responsibility for maintenance of public areas and the campground.</p> <p>Camrose County provides an annual grant to the Bawlf Recreation Association for facilities and programming, which would continue.</p> <p>Camrose County’s recreation department currently oversees two campgrounds, and would assume responsibility for the operation of the campground.</p>
<p>David Knipe Library</p> <p>The library receives a yearly donation from the village as well as unlimited advertising opportunities.</p>	<p>David Knipe Library</p> <p>Camrose County currently provides an annual grant to the library in Bawlf, and is supportive of continuing library service in Bawlf. Should Bawlf dissolve, the county would explore service options.</p> <p>Camrose County is a member of the Parkland Regional Library System.</p>
<p>CDSS Services</p> <p>Bawlf will continue to provide funding to the Camrose and District Support Services and residents can access CDSS programs and services.</p>	<p>CDSS Services</p> <p>Camrose County would increase its per capita contribution to CDSS in relation to the number of residents in the village. Hamlet residents would continue to have the same access to CDSS services whether they remain a village or become a hamlet in the county.</p>

Recommended Actions for Option 1

- Village administration should continue to evaluate and budget financial support for community groups on an annual basis.
- Village will continue participation in regional Family and Community Support Services program.

Appendix A: Recommendations for Viability

Sustainable Governance

- The village should complete a strategic plan that integrates the recommendations resulting from the viability review.
- Prior to the next municipal election, administration should develop a nomination package for prospective councillors, and host information session(s) on what it means to be an elected official, describe the opportunities and challenges facing the village, how these align with the responsibilities of being a councillor, and encourage residents to consider running for council in the next municipal election.
- Support and enable councillors and administration to take advantage of training opportunities provided by the province, municipal associations and neighbouring municipalities.
- Council should specifically access resources and training around CAO evaluation guidelines.
- The village council should continue with a formal a bylaw review to ensure that existing bylaws are compliant with current and proposed provincial legislation and that the bylaws are meeting the needs of the residents. It is further recommended that the Village of Bawlf receive support for this from the provincial government through the MAP. All municipalities with populations of less than 2,500 receive a MAP review within each election cycle to ensure legislative compliance. A MAP review should occur within one to two years of the completion of the viability review.
- Village council should establish a schedule to review and update all policies for relevance and compliance with legislation and other regulations and to ensure that the policies meet the needs of the village.
- Council should continue to contribute to the village newsletter, as a method to increase awareness and transparency between council and residents.

Administration and Operations

- Village council should continue to support learning opportunities for staff, including formal training and informal training, such as CAO mentoring, by completing a long-term staffing plan, developing a staff succession plan, and including funding for staff training in the annual budget.
- The village's ability to attract and retain qualified staff is a factor in the long-term viability of the village. The village should periodically review staff compensation to ensure it is comparable to similar municipalities and fairly reflects requirements and responsibilities of the roles.

- The village should develop an employment policy and procedural manual and provide appropriate training for staff.
- Develop and implement a records management and retention policy to ensure that village records are properly maintained and stored.

Finances, Assessment and Taxation

- The village must complete three year operating budget and five-year capital budget, as per the *MGA*.
- The village council must ensure that audited financial statements and financial information returns are submitted to Municipal Affairs each year by May 1, pursuant to Section 276(3) of the *MGA*.
- Review the property tax due dates and penalty schedules to be comparable with urban municipalities within the region.

Infrastructure

- Village council should develop and approve a 10-year capital plan and address the recommendations found within the 2020 infrastructure study. The capital plan will identify the necessary projects, the timing of initiating and completing each project and the required funding for each project.
- Village council should consider taking on debt with an appropriate repayment plan, if required, to work towards completing the approved 10-year capital plan.

Services

- The village council should continue to review utility rates annually, on a full-cost recovery model that could also include expenses associated with maintenance and capital infrastructure projects.

Regional Cooperation

- Continue to assess involvement in regional committees to ensure a positive impact for village residents.
- The village council should continue to pursue opportunities to enhance regional partnerships to provide programs and services to village residents in the most effective and efficient manner.

Community Well-being

- Village administration should continue to evaluate and budget financial support for community groups on an annual basis.
- Village will continue participation in regional Family and Community Support Services program.

Appendix B: Performance Indicators

In mid-2018, Alberta Municipal Affairs established a new set of indicators intended to measure specific aspects of municipal governance, finance and community. Each indicator has a defined benchmark. The benchmarks are rules of thumb that set a general level of acceptable risk. However, each municipality may have unique circumstances or alternative strategies that justify a different result.

If a municipality does not meet the criteria for being “not at risk”, it does not necessarily mean there is any cause for concern; however, the municipality is encouraged to review the circumstances giving rise to the indicator results to ensure it is not exposed to potential or emerging risks. An exception to an indicator benchmark does not indicate fault or mismanagement on the part of the municipality; an indicator may be triggered by events that are beyond the control of council and administration, or may result from circumstances that are being effectively managed by the municipality.

An individual municipality is deemed to be not-at-risk if it does not trigger at least one of the two critical indicators (CI) and/or three or more of the eleven non-critical (NC) indicators. In 2018 Bawlf triggered three indicators, which resulted in Municipal Affairs following up with the village for comment.

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Bawlf Actual Result - 2018
Audit Outcome	Audit report in the municipality’s audited annual financial statements.	The audit report does not identify a going concern risk or denial of opinion.	Indicator met The municipal auditor has been able to complete the audit and express an opinion, and has not identified a specific concern about the ability of the municipality to meet its financial obligations.
Legislation-Backed Ministry Interventions	Interventions authorized by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in accordance with the <i>MGA</i> , such as a viability review, or where directives have been	The municipality has not been the subject of a Municipal Affairs intervention.	EXCEPTION – Indicator not met

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Bawlf Actual Result - 2018
	issued pursuant to an inspection.		Viability review in process, initiated by a petition of electors.
Tax Base Ratio	Tax base ratio is the proportion of the total municipal tax revenue generated by residential and farmland tax base, regardless of whether it is municipal property taxes, special taxes, or local improvement taxes.	The municipality's residential and farmland tax revenue accounts for no more than 95 per cent of its total tax revenue.	Indicator met
Tax Collection Rate	The ability of the municipality to collect own-source revenues, including property taxes, special taxes, local improvement taxes, well drilling equipment taxes, and grants-in-place-of-taxes.	The municipality collects at least 90 per cent of the municipal taxes (e.g. property taxes, special taxes) levied in any year.	Indicator not met The municipality collected 88 per cent of the municipal taxes at the end of 2018. The village has stated that they are trying to address this by advising residents of easier ways to make payments, etc.
Population Change	The change in population of the municipality over the past ten years based on the Municipal Affairs Population List.	The population has not declined by more than 20 per cent over a ten-year period.	Indicator met
Current Ratio	The ratio of current assets (cash, temporary investments, accounts receivable) to current liabilities (accounts	The ratio of current assets to current liabilities is greater than one.	Indicator met In 2019 the ratio of current assets to current liabilities is 1.66 to 1.

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Bawlf Actual Result - 2018
	payable, temporary borrowings, current repayment obligations on long-term borrowings).		The municipality is able to pay for its current financial obligations using cash or near-cash assets.
Accumulated Surplus	The total assets of the municipality net of total debt, excluding tangible capital property and debts related to tangible capital property.	The municipality has a positive (above zero) surplus.	Indicator met The municipality had an accumulated surplus of \$4,967,462 in 2018 (\$5,005,816 in 2019).
On-time financial reporting	Whether the municipality has completed submission its annual financial statements and financial information returns to Municipal Affairs by the legislated due date.	The municipality's financial statements and financial information returns for the preceding calendar year are received by Municipal Affairs no later than May 1. Financial reporting is an important aspect of municipal accountability to its residents and businesses.	Indicator not met The village's financial statements and financial information returns were not submitted on time in 2018. The village stated that CAO staff turnover and problems with the auditor have affected the municipality being able to meet the timeline. The village has indicated that they will be engaging new auditors going forward.
Debt to Revenue Percentage	The total amount of municipal borrowings, including long term capital leases, as a percentage of total municipal revenues.	The municipality's total borrowings represent less than 120 per cent (160 per cent for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit) of its total revenue.	Indicator met The village has no borrowings.
Debt Service to Revenue Percentage	The total cost of making scheduled repayments (including interest) on borrowings as a	The municipality's total costs for borrowing repayments do not exceed 20 per cent (28 per cent	Indicator met The village has no debt repayments.

Indicator	Description	Expected Result and What It Means	Bawlf Actual Result - 2018
	percentage of total municipal revenues.	for municipalities with a higher regulated debt limit) of its total revenue.	
Infrastructure investment – asset sustainability ratio	The total cost of current year additions (through purchases or construction) to tangible capital assets (vehicles, equipment, buildings, roads, utility infrastructure, land) relative to the current year's amortization (depreciation) on all tangible capital assets.	The municipality's capital additions over five years exceeds the past five years' amortization (depreciation). This measure does not account for the effects of inflation; typically, replacement costs for new assets exceed the historic cost of existing assets.	Indicator met The municipality is replacing its existing tangible capital assets and investing in new assets and infrastructure at a rate of 1.7 to 1 in relation to the estimated wear or obsolescence of its existing assets.
Infrastructure age - net book value of tangible capital assets	The net book value of tangible capital assets as a percentage of the total original costs. Net book value is the original purchase cost less amortization (depreciation).	The net book value of the municipality's tangible capital assets is greater than 40 per cent of the original cost. If the municipality is adding new services or expanded facilities and infrastructure, it would be expected that the ratio would be higher than 40 per cent.	Indicator met
Interest in Municipal Office	The number of candidates running in the most recent municipal election relative to the total number of councillor positions up for election.	The number of candidates exceeded the number of councillor positions. The ratio of candidates to total council positions measures the willingness of electors to run for municipal office.	Indicator met In the 2017 municipal elections there were seven candidates for five positions on council. Since the 2017 general election, five councillors have resigned and there have been two by-elections.

Appendix C: Financial Information

Source: Village of Bawlf 2019 Audited Financial Statements.

Financial Position

Financial Assets (cash, receivables, land for resale)	\$1,960,659
Liabilities (bank indebtedness, payables, deferred revenue)	\$1,180,571
Net Financial Assets	\$780,088
Non-financial Assets (prepaid expenses, capital assets)	\$4,225,728
Accumulated Surplus	\$5,005,816

Revenue and Expenses

Revenue	
Property Taxes	\$138,397
User fees and sale of goods	\$104,748
Penalties on taxes	\$ 6,856
Licenses, permits, and fines issued	\$1,559
Franchise & concession contacts	\$1,624
Returns on investment	\$ 61
Rental revenue	\$4,470
Insurance proceeds	\$25,000
Land sales	\$1,869
Government transfers (operating)	\$113,553
Government transfers (capital)	<u>\$47,322</u>
Other	<u>\$5,508</u>
Total Revenue	<u>\$794,896</u>
EXPENSES	
Legislative	\$7,452
Administration	\$256,596
Protective services	\$55,592
Transportation	\$102,059
Water supply and distribution	\$77,407
Wastewater treatment and disposal	\$42,251
Waste management	\$33,611
Public health and welfare	\$3,214
Planning and development	\$1,507
Recreation	\$15,167
Culture	\$7,952
Amortization	\$153,734
Total Expenses	\$756,542
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$38,354
Accumulated surplus, beginning of the year	\$ 4,967,462
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$5,005,816

Appendix D: Summary of Public Input

Typically public input for viability reviews is gathered at public meetings, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public meetings were not possible in spring 2020. Therefore, a community comment form was mailed to all residents and property owners with the following instructions.

Village of Bawlf Viability Review Community Comment Form

The Government of Alberta initiated a viability review of the Village of Bawlf in 2018. A report is being developed that will examine the village's governance, administration, services, and finances, and will outline options for how the community can best move forward. The report will include information collected from the village, Camrose County, provincial reporting, and input from the community. Once complete, a viability review report will be distributed to residents and property owners and available to the general public.

Should you wish to provide input into the viability review, please complete this comment form and mail it to Alberta Municipal Affairs at the following address by May 25, 2020:

Alberta Municipal Affairs
Attn: Municipal Viability
17th Floor Commerce Place, 10155-102 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 4L4

You can also scan a completed written copy to viabilityreview@gov.ab.ca. Alternatively, an electronic version of the form can be requested by emailing the same email address.

Due to a low response rate by the original deadline, an additional notice was shared through utility bills sent at the end of May.

In total 26 individuals responded through mail or email. Of the respondents, 23 indicated that they live in the Village of Bawlf, two live in Camrose County and one in an 'other' location. 26 of the respondents indicated that they own property in Bawlf. One respondent indicated that they were a business owner in the Village of Bawlf, while 25 indicated that they did not own a business in Bawlf. Of the three respondents who indicated not living in Bawlf, all three indicated that they owned property within Bawlf.

A summary of the written feedback is included below. Comments are themed where possible and may have been edited for brevity.

1. What does a viable community mean to you?

- Maintain and sustain itself long term (6)
- Strong community, great place to raise a family (4)
- Well kept / well maintained / clean (4)
- Grow and prosper (3)
- Can provide necessary services and infrastructure at a reasonable cost (3)
- Able to renew infrastructure as required (3)
- Safe (2)
- Sewers, water supply, roads and sidewalks are maintained (2)
- Good roads
- One just like Bawlf, with a great fire department, village council and a community that cares.
- Once defined by the hard work and initiative that our predecessors undertook over the last 100 years
- School for all grades
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Reasonable property taxes and services
- Improving its infrastructure, commerce and growth without detriment to residents or exorbitant taxes, fees and penalties
- Strong spirit
- Friendly
- Maintain an adequate number of employees with the taxes collected each year.
- Should be able to apply and qualify for grants to upgrade its infrastructure
- In the past the provincial government provided meaningful grants and operational funding assistance but it is not sufficient to do much at this time. The number of rate payers can not fund all that is required.
- Means that we have leaders in council that are honest and knowledgeable and have good management skills. Need transparency for ratepayers.

2. What is important to you about the Village of Bawlf?

- Small town atmosphere/feeling (6)
- Well maintained infrastructure (4)
- Quiet community and a nice place to call home (4)
- Safe (3)
- Great place to raise a family with a k-12 school (3)
- Neighbours look out for each other / good neighbours (3)
- Parks and recreation facilities (3)
- Businesses that include store, gas station, bank, post office and natural gas company, post office, library and fire department (2)
- Maintenance of roads (2)
- Close-knit community, away from city life, enjoy a slower pace of life (2)
- The residents' businesses. That people have jobs because the village exist. (2)
- Local caring(2)

- Location is very good, short commute to bigger centers (2)
- Most residents take pride in their properties
- Well-kept recreation areas with active Lion's Club and recreation board that actively maintain those amenities
- Continued success of the village under proper management
- Community spirit
- Important because it has been our home for many years. Was a happy little village for a long time, not so anymore.

3. What are your concerns (if any) about the current state of the village?

- Maintenance of infrastructure / upgrades to old infrastructure (8)
- Concerns with roads, snow removal and potholes, grading in summer, snow removal (5)
- Retaining and inconsistency with qualified staff (4)
- High taxes (4)
- Bylaws are not enforced (2)
- Village has not provided the culverts, curbs and sidewalks (2)
- No concerns (3)
- Staffing cost (2)
- Lack understanding about role for local government (2)
- Concerns with public works and water quality
- Concern about money not being spent correctly
- Don't want to see the village become part of Camrose County. County is too large, would only do what is necessary where the village takes pride in the community.
- Wish the streets were paved/dust control
- Incomplete development areas started years ago
- Poor drainage
- Need to make the village appealing to visitors
- Just getting by with legislative requirements and required infrastructure improvements and maintenance
- Lack of communication with citizens
- Financial concerns
- Believe they are doing their best but at a high price for ratepayers
- Continued change of office and maintenance staff
- If a major liability occurs our tax base is too small. Things like sewer upgrades, village drainage improvements.
- Village office's administration does not abide by the Village of Bawlf policies (contravention of bylaws).
- Too much money spent by previous councils on projects not up to standards
- Previous councils did not take full advantage of government assistance to upgrade the infrastructure.

a. Do you have any suggestions for solutions to the concerns you have identified?

- Become part of Camrose County (5)
- Paved roads/dust control (2)

- Stay within the yearly budget
- Use taxes to keep promises
- Taxes on new built houses are high compared to other locations
- Complete previously started projects
- Keep staff in place by treating staff fairly
- Grade more frequently, bring in more gravel – only three roads are paved
- Have everyone clean up their properties to be more appealing to everyone
- Plant trees and flowers
- Provincial government return to direct funding of small municipal villages
- Replace council and administration with people more knowledgeable
- Honesty has to play a future role without having to call the Alberta Ombudsman
- Greater control and review of projects
- Grant money is required from the provincial government or assistance from the county to make proper upgrades
- Would like the village structure to continue but the tax burden is too great for the assessment of the homes and businesses here.
- Costly to fund administration, purchase and maintain infrastructure and other necessary services, the tax base is too small.
- Need more information and transparency from council about financial issues.

4. As a resident of Bawlf, do you feel you receive good value with respect to the services that are provided? Why or why not?

- Staff do not have expertise in all areas (2)
- Town maintenance man does a great job (2)
- No, some areas have higher taxes (2)
- Poor roads with no curbs, pavement and sidewalks (2)
- Yes (2)
- Administration costs are high
- Maintenance of road conditions is a concern
- Lack of infrastructure planning
- Taxes are too high
- Village management is paid too high
- Services received are of excellent value.
- Everything is taken care of in a timely manner.
- Yes, easy to contact staff and council, especially the mayor
- People here care
- Yes, however street repair is lacking
- Nice to have a compost area
- Yes, as a community Bawlf has done its best but can no longer afford to maintain our villages, essentially alone. Times has changes and funding sources reduced.
- No, majority of taxes used to fund administration
- At current liabilities we are fine
- No, we have no gas station, grocery outlets for competitive pricing, restraints to choose from or 'extracurricular' activities for entertainment, shopping or sharing with visitors and are forced to go to Camrose anyway, so why 'linger or visit' Bawlf?
- Water and sewer are adequate, remaining services are subpar

- Yes, taxes are average, village is well looked after
- As the time yes, previous councils/CAO no. Have good staff now but that changes often.
- Value does not seem to be good in comparison
- For taxes I pay, do not believe village spends its money wisely and do not have funds to make required upgrades
- Lack of direction for staff
- Yes, the village has and does give us good value for what we pay but infrastructure is going to require major upgrades which the provincial government will mandate. These requirements are more than our tax base will support. Provincial government may provide some assistance but not nearly enough to get the job done.
- Really like garbage and recycling pick up but pay almost double the amount from nearby village for same service.

5. What advantages or disadvantages do you see about the community becoming the Hamlet of Bawlf within the Camrose County?

Advantages:

- Planning and ability to upgrading infrastructure and infrastructure management (4)
- Taxes will go down / lower taxes (2)
- Better governance (2)
- Probably/possibly lower taxes (2)
- Roads maintained and fixed (2)
- Economies of scale/costs can be shared (2)
- More professional look at conditions of the village
- Snowplowing
- Drainage issues
- By-law enforcement
- Grass cutting and weed spraying
- Water and wastewater operations
- Think it will be more cost effective to become part a hamlet
- To bring better services to the village that Camrose County can offer
- Qualified and professional staff providing services
- Continuity of services
- Continuity of staff
- Can't afford to provide the machinery and expertise and upgrades necessary

Disadvantages:

- Become swallowed up into a large pot. Loss of control about what needs to be looked after. (2)
- Not a good track record with other villages that have gone to the county (2)
- Happy with the status quo
- Unsure
- No advantage to remaining a village and self-governing

Other:

- No advantages (3)

- Unsure
- Not sure what the County's commitment is
- Don't know enough about the pros and cons of becoming a hamlet are
- Petition shows we wanted to go to the county
- Don't see much changing if Bawlf were to become a hamlet.

6. Looking ahead, what do you see as the top priorities for Bawlf in the future?

- Maintain / upgrade infrastructure (8)
- Maintain/improve roadways, including roads, curbs, ditches and alleys (5)
- Drinking water/water lines/water treatment (4)
- Pave streets (2)
- Improve the roads, there should be dust control (2)
- Fix sewers (2)
- Become a hamlet within Camrose County is top priority (2)
- No water meters
- To remain viable
- Growth
- Don't develop more lots when you are unable to complete existing ones
- More serviced lots available for sale so the village can maintain its tax base
- Lower property taxes
- Maintaining services
- Make the village look attractive
- Increase safety and protection
- Support school and business needs
- Support the surrounding community
- Should be able to expect reasonable improvements for the taxes we pay

7. What other viability issues should be considered for the final Viability Review Report?

- Concern about space being used as a snow dump
- No sure there are viability issues
- Administration costs within reasonable guidelines
- Main goal of the village should be to provide suitable infrastructure for residents
- Declining economy
- Ability for the community to sustain itself without over raising taxes
- Business viability.
- Previous land development
- Does not appear to be a lot of interest from the residents to govern itself. No one wants to be on council, all got in by acclamation.
- Drainage issues
- Could look at centralizing services for the area, fire, health, garbage, recreation, administration. Would be large enough for equipment, staff training, housing and maintaining equipment, and funding for administrative staff to keep current with (provincial) government requirements.

8. Additional comments or questions?

- Poor judgement and wastefulness with development project not completed (2)

- Transparency and trust issues with local government (3)
- Lack of planning by the village
- Bawlf is great
- Own property in the village, but looking at selling because it is not economical now. Limited zoning options for building on an empty lot has impacted decision to sell.
- Reduce the number of town management.
- Disappointed the viability review process has taken so long. Understand that a town hall meeting was not possible with the pandemic but would have allowed new residents as well as longer term residents an opportunity to receive information for them to make informed comments and in turn an informed vote on dissolution.
- Fail to see the benefit of the province providing such an exorbitant amount of funding for an engineer's report listing infrastructure assets and deficits within the village. A simple report from the village records would provide year/age of infrastructure to show maintenance issues, if any.
- From what I see the new council and CAO are doing a great job, don't see any issues
- Bawlf keeps doing the same thing expecting different results, need to stop.
- If you don't have an attractive, well-maintained village it does not promote people wanting to be there, visit or start a business. Would be so much better if these priorities would be addresses and create a caring, welcoming community.
- There appears to be little community spirit, quickly becoming a bedroom community
- Wish the form could have been filled out on the internet
- Village employees and council have done a great job under the village government but when upper governments set safe (necessary?) requirements we can't afford the administration, maintenance and replacement on our own.
- Graders, backhoes and their operators can work in the hamlets in the area.
- Petition was accepted months ago saying we want to be part of the county. Do not need a vote. Some residents have moved, tired of high taxes and poor management. New residents have no knowledge about what has taken place in our village.
- Wish form could have been filled out on the internet

Appendix E: Vote on a Question

A community information meeting will be held on October 6, from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., at the Bawlf Community Centre, 212 Hanson Street, to review this viability review report. Residents, businesses, property owners, and other interested stakeholders are invited to ask any questions about the report. The presentation will also provide an overview of the vote of electors.

A vote of the electors of the Village of Bawlf on the question of dissolution will be held on October 20 from 4-8 p.m., and on October 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Bawlf Community Centre, 212 Hanson Street.

The vote will be conducted at the direction of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The vote will be conducted in accordance with the *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)* under which all municipal elections are conducted.

Special ballots (mail-in) are available for electors who have a physical disability preventing them from being able to attend the voting station or will be away from the village during the days of the vote. An elector may apply for a special ballot from the Returning Officer by one of the following methods.

By mail: Attention: Returning Officer – Village of Bawlf Viability Vote

17th Floor, 10155 102 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 4L4

By phone: Toll-free at 310-0000, 780-427-2225

By email: viabilityreview@gov.ab.ca

Special ballots must be returned by mail to the address above by 4:00 p.m. October 19, 2020. Special ballots received after this date will not be included in the vote results.

The Question:

Electors of the Village of Bawlf will be asked this question:

Based on the findings of the Village of Bawlf Viability Review, which one of the two options below do you support for the future of Bawlf? (Select one only)

Option 1. The Village of Bawlf remains a village and implements changes to achieve viability.

Option 2. Dissolve the Village of Bawlf and Bawlf becomes a hamlet in Camrose County.

Voter Eligibility and Identification

The *LAEA* clearly stipulates that to be eligible to vote, a person must be:

- a Canadian citizen;
- over the age of 18 years; and
- a resident of Alberta and the municipality on the day of the vote.

Voter identification must be presented that clearly identifies the person with an address within the Village of Bawlf.

Scrutineers

The Returning Officer, if requested in writing by two or more electors, shall appoint, in writing, those persons named in the request as scrutineers to attend at the voting station on behalf of the persons interested in promoting the voting for either response. One scrutineer for each side of the question will be permitted within the polling station at any one time, including during the vote count.

Public Health Measures During COVID-19 Pandemic

Ensuring the safety of the public and election administrators is the highest priority. A variety of measures will be taken to comply with public health guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Attendees should expect enforcement of the maximum number of people for indoor gatherings, physical distancing, availability of face masks and hand sanitizer, regular cleaning/disinfecting of high touch surfaces and writing tools for forms and ballots.

For those unable to attend the public information session, the information presented will also be available electronically upon request.

The Outcome

If a majority of voters choose to dissolve (50 per cent plus one of valid ballots cast), the Minister must recommend to Cabinet that the village be dissolved at a suitable time to allow for a smooth transition of services. Until such time, the village will continue to operate.

If a majority of voters choose to remain a village (50 per cent plus one of valid ballots cast), the Minister will provide specific directives to ensure the future viability of the municipality.

Contact Information

Municipal Sustainability Unit

Alberta Municipal Affairs

viabilityreview@gov.ab.ca

Toll free: [310-0000](tel:310-0000) then [780-427-2225](tel:780-427-2225)