

2025 1st QUARTER COMMUNITY UPDATE

QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Village of Fraser Lake will be bringing back the newsletter in a quarterly update and providing these resources in print form at the:

Fraser Lake Public Library located, at 228 Endako Avenue; and

Autumn Services, located at 111 Chowsunket Avenue.

Finally, the virtual edition will be announced on the Village of Fraser Lake Facebook page and a copy will be readily available on the municipal website at www.fraserlake.ca. All of these newsletters will be prepared for the first day of each quarter of the year.

PROJECT UPDATES

Community Hall Phase 2 – One of the frequent public inquiries received by the Village over the past year has been the progress of the Community Hall Phase 2 project. This includes the addition of an outdoor patio area, an industrial kitchen, new change rooms, updated washrooms, and a redesigned, accessible entrance to both the arena and curling rink. The contract for the Community Hall Phase 2 project was awarded at \$2,970,893.00—approximately \$700,000 under the original project budget. In addition, the Village has recently completed the Heat Reclaim Project, which has been underway for the past few years. This is designed to capture the heat generated when freezing the arena and curling rink, to heat water for the facility and maintain a comfortable air temperature in the curling rink. The project is expected to reduce operational costs and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

<i>Project Total Cost:</i>	\$3,600,000.00
<i>Community Forest:</i>	\$2,600,000.00
<i>REDIP</i>	\$1,000,000.00

Water Tower Replacement – At the May 8th, 2024, Council Meeting, Council awarded the 250-699-6257 | fraserlake.ca | PO Box 430 – 210 Carrier Crescent, Fraser Lake, British Columbia V0J 1S0

Water Reservoir Project to Civil North. The project includes the installation of a designated water line from the base to the top of Mouse Mountain, the establishment of a stable line, and the demolition and replacement of the existing water reservoir with a new, higher-capacity structure. The project has experienced delays related to the procurement of the new water reservoir, which has pushed back the anticipated completion date to the end of September.

<i>Project Total Cost:</i>	\$3,600,000.00
<i>Infrastructure Canada</i>	\$2,182,484.00
<i>Community Forest</i>	\$1,364,516.00
<i>Nechako Kitimat Development Fund</i>	\$50,000.00

Designated Water Line – This is a large-scale infrastructure project focused on replacing water, sewer, and road infrastructure, while also introducing new stormwater lines, including multiple catch basins and a stormwater outfall. The project includes a full infrastructure replacement along Tunasa Drive, Carrier Crescent and Tunasa Crescent. A designated water line will route all treated water to the new

reservoir, balancing chlorine levels in every home and business. For the storm system, the goal is to improve the management of rainwater to prevent it from accumulating beneath roadways or entering the Wastewater Treatment Facility, which would otherwise reduce the facility's overall capacity. The total estimated cost of the project is approximately \$9.7 million. Notably, none of the funding for this project is being drawn from general taxation. The Village successfully secured approximately \$6.0 million in grant funding, with the remaining balance funded through Community Forest revenues and the Resource Benefits Alliance.

<i>Project Total Cost:</i>	<i>\$10,300,583.00</i>
<i>UBCM Strategic Priorities Fund</i>	<i>\$6,000,000.00</i>
<i>Resource Benefits Alliance</i>	<i>\$1,577,718.00</i>

Community Forest | *\$2,722,865.00*

Aeration & Blower Replacement - Residents living near the Wastewater Treatment Facility may have noticed increased traffic to the lagoons over the past year. This activity is part of the Village's efforts to restore capacity and improve aeration within the lagoon system. Additionally, work has begun on replacing the aging aerators and blowers to enhance the overall efficiency and performance of the treatment process.

<i>Desludging Cost</i>	<i>\$480,000.00</i>
<i>Community Forest:</i>	<i>\$480,000.00</i>
<i>Aerator & Blower Replacement</i>	<i>\$822,000.00</i>
<i>NDIT Northern Healthy Communities</i>	<i>\$500,000.00</i>
<i>UBCM Community Works Fund</i>	<i>\$322,000.00</i>

BYLAW UPDATES

Throughout 2024 and into the first quarter of 2025, the Village of Fraser Lake introduced and implemented several significant bylaws aimed at supporting the community, including:

- **Bylaw No. 847, 2024 5 Year Financial Plan;**
- **Bylaw No. 848, 2024 Tax Rates;**
- **Bylaw No. 849, 2024 Building Bylaw Amendment;**
- **Bylaw No. 850, 2024 Code of Conduct;**
- **Bylaw No. 851, 2024 Small Scale Multi Unit Housing Zoning Bylaw Amendment;**
- **Bylaw No. 852, 2024 Tree Bylaw;**
- **Bylaw No. 853, 2024 Public Notice Bylaw Amendment;**
- **Bylaw No. 854, 2024 Permissive Tax Exemption;**
- **Bylaw No. 855, 2024 Sign Bylaw;**
- **Bylaw No. 856, 2024 Bylaw Enforcement**
- **Bylaw;**
- **Bylaw No. 857, 2024 Northwest Funding Reserve;**
- **Bylaw No. 858, 2024 Winter Parking Amendment;**
- **Bylaw No. 859, 2024 Tree Bylaw Enforcement Amendment;**
- **Bylaw No. 860, 2024 Sign Bylaw Enforcement Amendment;**
- **Bylaw No. 861, 2024 Borrowing Anticipation;**
- **Bylaw No. 862, 2024 Fire Services;**
- **Bylaw No. 863, 2025 Land Acquisition Reserve; and**
- **Bylaw No. 864, 2025 Trucked Liquid Waste Amendment.**

All of these bylaws have received final reading and are now in full force and effect. Bylaws listed in bold can include provisions for financial penalties in cases of non-compliance.

For more information on any of these bylaws, please visit the municipal website, stop by the Village Office, or contact:

- Ethan Fredeen, Chief Administrative Officer – efredeen@fraserlake.ca
- Jesse Gervais, Economic Development Officer / Deputy Corporate Officer – edo@fraserlake.ca

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS RECRUITEMENT

The Village is once again reaching out to community members who may be interested in joining the Volunteer Fire Department. A recommended minimum commitment of two hours per week is required for training sessions, which are held on Monday evenings. Once training is complete, volunteers will be certified and able to respond to calls as needed.

It's important to note that certification for firefighting does not occur overnight—it requires time, dedication, and consistent participation in training. Our Fire Chief, Joe

Pacheco, is fully certified to deliver training in external structural firefighting and is prepared to support all interested residents through the process.

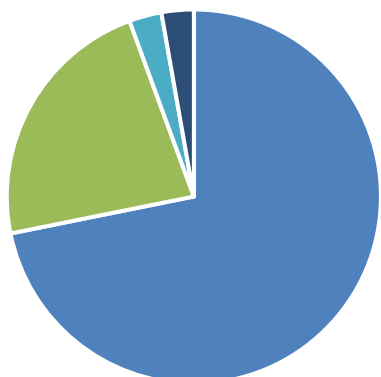
Residents interested in serving and helping protect our community are encouraged to reach out and get involved.

Any of those interested please swing by the Fire Hall to inquire about joining the Volunteer department or reach out to Fire Chief Pacheco at (250) 699-2859 or email him at fire@fraserlake.ca.

2025 BUDGET

The Village of Fraser Lake has finalized its 2025 budget. To respond to community priorities and operational needs, an initial 20% tax rate increase was proposed.

Capital Budgets



- Infrastructure
- Sustainability & Livability
- Beautification
- Organizational Health

Mayor and Council determined that a 20% tax increase would be unacceptable to all members of the community. As a result, staff were directed to revise the budget by identifying opportunities to reduce expenditures or seek alternative funding sources, such as reserves, grants, or external contributions. In response, staff presented a revised budget in which several high-cost projects were reallocated to be funded through existing reserves, including the Community Works Fund, Water Reserve, Northwest Funding Reserve, and Sewer Reserve.

As illustrated in the accompanying graph, Council's priorities for the 2025 budget are clearly focused on supporting the critical infrastructure that sustains core municipal operations. In 2025, the Village will undertake the replacement of approximately 10% of its road, sewer, and water infrastructure. By comparison, many communities target an annual infrastructure renewal rate

of around 2%. This reflects Council's and the community's clear emphasis on addressing infrastructure needs as a primary focus for the year.

With this year's budget being close to completed, the Village has proposed a 10% tax rate increase. For single family homes, this is an estimated \$200 increase. This revenue supports the municipality in ensuring critical reserves are being supported and topped up for larger capital expenditures and to support the contingency of a number of projects during an uncertain time within the global economy.

PUBLIC WORKS UPDATE

Street Sweeping

Public Works will begin street sweeping the week of April 14th, 2025. Please note that the street sweeper is only capable of cleaning the road surface and does not extend to the shoulders. If you would like gravel from your lawn removed, we ask that you sweep it onto the roadway. However, it is important not to pile the gravel, as the equipment is unable to effectively collect large piles. Instead, please ensure the gravel is spread evenly across the road surface to allow for efficient pickup by the sweeper. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and will help ensure a smooth and effective cleanup process.

Project Updates

Staff continue efforts to maintain one of the community's key tourist attractions—the wharf—by restoring its appearance and functionality. This work will continue as weather permits and as staff capacity allows, helping to showcase the beauty of our community to visitors.

The fencing at Kin Park, excluding the areas around the washroom and splash park, will be replaced in the near future as part of regular maintenance. The existing fence is worn and damaged. The new fencing will enhance the appearance of the Village's downtown. Additionally, the decorative artwork and colorful rocks will be preserved and reinstalled after the fence replacement is complete.

Shouldering and partial roadway repairs are also planned for mid-April, pending suitable weather conditions.

MAYOR SARRAH STOREY UPDATE

Frost heaves, ground subsidence (sunken dips), and potholes are generally not addressed until the ground has completely thawed and stabilized. Although potholes and frost heaves are thought to be visible indicators of community well-being, they are part of municipal life and annual maintenance.

The ideal time to tackle these problems is during the spring or summer when conditions are more conducive to effective and durable repairs. Staff will address this by filling in the impacted areas with compaction gravel following the completion of the street sweeping and cooperating weather conditions.

We are aware of these problems, understand they are frustrating, and share your sentiments—we curse them just like you all do.

This community was built for a shorter lifespan, missing important infrastructure like storm drains right from the start.

Now we all must deal with this issue. However, we now have asset management plans, policies and financial reserves for infrastructure.

As you can see later on in this entry about infrastructure, staff and council have a lot to do and are working extremely hard, I assure you, to solve as many problems as we can as fast as we can.

Now to some more positives! We have secured \$13 million for the new water tower, designated water line and sewage lines this will include the reconstruction of Tunasa

Drive and part of Carrier and Tunasa Crescent up to the tower that serves the entire community.

This investment represents a significant portion—10%—of our infrastructure replacement efforts, and it includes sidewalks, storm drains, and catch basins to manage stormwater, something that had not been adequately handled in the past.

We continuously advocate for grants and maximize the use of funding from the Resource Benefit Alliance and Community Forest for

infrastructure projects.

We leverage grants to the fullest extent; for instance, if we charged every resident for the \$13 million water tower project versus finding grants, it would amount to \$13,000 per person in town.

We are doing a lot and advocating at every opportunity. With an extremely small amount of staff who are doing great work.

While we wish we could move more quickly, the reality — given Council's strong understanding of our budget and staff capacity — is that issues like frost heaves are simply a part of life in our community.

If you recall, we addressed many concerns



Figure 1 Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities Visit to Fraser Lake

last year; McMillan was improving, but still needs additional work, and we resurfaced several streets and problem areas.

Our crew discovered a more effective material for pothole repairs, which appears to be holding up better, resulting in fewer potholes this time around. As it doesn't seem to be a pothole problem this year, it seems to just be frost heaves and subsidence issues.

We've been replacing the infrastructure as strategically as possible; this is what asset management is all about. You do not just fix things as they break. You plan for the future to better prepare your community to ensure the continuation of core service delivery.

At the end of summer last year, the roads were probably the best I've seen since I moved here.

The owners of the mall even did some paving. No, we do not own that, so no, we cannot fix it.

Every year, we undertake substantial infrastructure projects and have numerous initiatives planned for this year as well.

It's hard to say you have your priorities wrong if you do not know what the priorities are. But the strategic plan includes four priorities: beautification, infrastructure, sustainability & livability, and organizational health. For full understanding, if you do not understand how that works: you build a strategic plan with professionals and decide on your priorities and have lists within those. This list within each priority essentially directs the grant initiatives and staff on what needs to be accomplished. There is a lot that we would like to see done in each of those priorities.

Hearing that we updated the arena but didn't fix the roads isn't accurately portrayed. I'm sure most know this or have caught this by now. As I mentioned above,

we accomplished multiple projects last year, and this year we must wait until spring/summer comes to fix more.

Funding comes from different areas: the federal and provincial governments, NDI, and NKDF, for example.

We can't wait for all of the roads and water lines to be perfect to start doing other projects, or we would be years behind, and the community would probably fail without looking at beautification, retention, attraction of residents, etc.

If you want people to invest in a community, they need to see positive growth. All of these things that we are working on are vitally important for the community. There are many people out there who know how to build a great community. We learn, we attend conferences, we go to other communities, we listen to the community on their requests, and we know what it takes to make a well-rounded community.

Do you want a 4th ball field with lights? To work on more economic development opportunities? A dog park? Assisted living? A pump track? Subsidized childcare? You have to make things happen; you can't expect that things will happen for you. The first main street that happened in many cities, for example, didn't happen by accident; it was likely planned. Progress takes time.

So, on that note, we have to think of the future, what is coming, and make sure that the next councils don't curse our name because we did not do what had to be done.

For example, if the mine opens or other industry comes to the community, we prefer they don't build a camp; we would rather have people move here and become part of the community, volunteering and supporting the grocery stores and businesses because we have all the amenities, activities, and businesses that

people need. If you remember the saying, "If you build it, they will come"? We don't want to lose the feeling of our community, but at the same time, we want our community to be sustainable with or without industry. I'm sure you may have noticed we don't have the housing for 300 more employees and their families if the mine did open in the next few years. I'm sure you've also noticed we really need a new hotel. With any business that is coming here, we need to ensure we have employees and people that can work, and affordable housing is really attractive for families.

I especially feel that, which is why you've not been hearing much from me lately. We have been so busy with how many directions we are being pulled in. As the Mayor, I'm doing everything I can to move this community forward in a positive light, as is council and staff. That means making sure this region is healthy and this province. I take all my roles very seriously and stay as non-partisan as I can because we work with whoever's in power. So you won't see a lot of political posts. In fact you will rarely see a lot of comments from staff or council if you complain online.

If you have complaints, they are best addressed by calling the Village Office versus debating online. It has not become a safe place, and there is too much uncertainty that it doesn't really feel so healthy to be online anymore.

While I wish the community was already in perfect condition when I ran for council, that was not the case. However, with this progressive council that looks for balance, the amazing front and backyard we call home, and the great people that live here, we know the potential our community has.

It's crucial that everyone understands the strategic priorities a bit better. I will say for clarity's sake that the arena project

accomplished with grants and community forest money is something that was pushed for a very long time.

It can now be used as a cooling center, a clean air facility, and an emergency center if needed.

It will also have a new front foyer that is wheelchair accessible, and a vestibule that keeps the cold out and heat in.

It will boast a brand-new commercial kitchen, which means we will be able to host weddings, events, funerals, town halls, emergencies, etc.

It can be heated as well, so if we have a recreation fair come fall or spring, you won't freeze. The new Recreation Coordinator that we are hiring this year will be able to have movie days there and other activities.

The curlers in the winter will be using it and won't have to deal with major frost heaves and other issues like a dirt floor, as it is now concrete. I know this really helps the volunteers that maintain it.

The majority of our budget is allocated to infrastructure. We also heavily depend on grants to support our various initiatives.

We are addressing everything from rising tariffs that inflate costs, advocating for healthcare, managing industrial decline, ensuring community sustainability regardless of industry, tackling forestry concerns, implementing retention and attraction strategies, waterfront development, recreation, childcare, assisted living, food security, and so much more.

Numerous industrial projects are on the horizon that will impact our community over the next decade, and we are preparing to meet those challenges, working on every front, from housing to future-proofing our community.

We are focused not only on maintaining the

water treatment facility and lagoons but also on replacing and strategically enhancing our infrastructure to foster positive community growth.

For clarity's sake, as I hear rumors thanks to misinformation from an article created, no raw sewage ever went into the lake. For those asking the questions, spring runoff, thanks to lack of storm drains, had the lagoons full every spring as snow melted. This was an issue up until we built the fourth lagoon. The issue was that treated water was supposed to stay in the system longer and was going out too quickly. That issue has been resolved for a few years now. This issue couldn't be resolved until we secured funding, which we did!

One more issue we face is that it would be nice to update and modernize our solid waste permits. Our permit, which is the 192nd permit ever created in BC, is actually extremely outdated.

Our permit is for 30 milligrams per liter for 5-day BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), but modern tolerance is 45 milligrams per liter for 5-day BOD. However, we do not need it to be updated because we will never go

over 30 milligrams per liter. Staff tell me we sit around 20, which means we are in great shape.

Also, our TSS (total suspended solids) permit is at 40 milligrams per liter, and modern permits are at 60.

Municipal expenses are significant, and we strive to keep taxes as low as possible each year. This year will be our toughest year yet but, the most you will likely pay per month is around \$13-\$20 extra depending on your BC Assessment rate.

We can have everything everyone wants and needs while continuing to keep it safe and making it more beautiful each year. It will take some time; however, we honestly have so many amazing things happening and coming—many things I cannot share yet. Some of them are just little things, and others are big.

But each thing will make a difference. And it makes an even bigger difference when there is kindness, and everyone comes together. So I will ask everyone to be kind and I appreciate you reading all of this if you got this far.

I hope this information proves helpful.

Kind Regards,

Sarrah