

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ARLINGTON NO. 79

100TH ANNIVERSARY

1913 TO 2013

The Local Government of the R.M. of Arlington No. 79 has evolved from a Local Improvement District in 1911, to a Rural Municipality in 1913, to its present form. The benefits that we now enjoy from our local government are directly attributable to the first council and each succeeding council. The following excerpts taken from the minutes of the first five years provide a brief glimpse of some of this municipality's early history.

1911

The Local Improvement District No. 79 held its first Council Meeting on Monday, January 3, 1911. The first members of council were: D.H. Pollock who was appointed chairman, Claude Lambert, Mr. St. Hilaire, H. Herrick, William East, and Charles Stearns who was appointed secretary. (Attached is a photocopy of the minutes of that first meeting).

Taxation, then as now, was a tax on land. The Local Improvement Tax charged in 1911 was 1 ¼ cents per acre. Each councillor was appointed as the poundkeeper and weed inspector for his division. A resolution was passed on April 15, 1911, giving the chairman and treasurer authority to borrow \$200.00 from the Union Bank of Canada in Gull Lake, for a term of six months, at a rate of 8% per annum, to enable the district to meet its expenditures until the taxes were collected. Additional amounts of \$300.00 and \$1,000.00 were borrowed in September and November of 1911 to meet the expenditures. The Secretary, Charles Stearns, had to travel the approximately 80 miles to Gull Lake by horse and buggy to conduct the banking for the municipality.

The majority of the resolutions of 1911 dealt with the arranging and rearranging of school districts, herd laws, and dealing with petitions to construct and repair roads.

1912

In 1912, the tax rate was increased to 2 ½ cents per acre. It was moved that each councillor spend an amount allotted to his division to the best advantage of the district. The amounts allotted were as follows: Division 1 - \$499.66, Division 2 - \$495.91, Division 3 - \$325.88, Division 4 - \$602.25, Division 5 - \$412.05 and Division 6 - \$ 406.33. Approval was given to construct a bridge across the South Fork of the Swift Current Creek between Sections 23 and 26 in Township 8, Range 20 providing the cost did not exceed \$400.00.

1913

The Local Improvement District was incorporated on January 1, 1913 and became known as The Rural Municipality of Arlington No. 79. The name having been chosen by the Department of Municipal Affairs after the council submitted three proposed names: HARLINGTON, DOLLARD, and PROSPERITY. William J. Duke was elected the first Reeve and E.L. Durham was the first Secretary Treasurer. Meetings were held at the farm residence of the Secretary who was paid \$3.00 per meeting for the use of his house. The First Council consisted of Dave Johnston, Prosper Roy, J. Stearns, W. Carson, G. Matfield, and Frank McCrae. The Reeve was paid \$4.00 per day and mileage for attending meetings, and the councillors were paid \$3.00 per day and mileage to attend meetings.

Council paid a \$15.00 membership to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and Councillor Dave Johnston was delegated to attend the Convention in Prince Albert on March 5, 6, and 7th, 1913. Mr. Johnston was paid \$43.00 for his expenses and railway fare to attend the convention.

The weed inspectors were instructed to warn all owners of land where Canadian, Russian and Sow Thistles were present, to "pull or plough them down, harrow or clean them up or summerfallow."

Council instructed the Secretary to advertise for an Overseer of Roadwork, to keep time, engage men and horses, and generally supervise the work ordered by council. Mr. D. Johnston was appointed at a salary of \$5.00 a day for as long as council required his services. He was authorized to pay wages as follows: Men and team – not to exceed \$6.00 per day; Men \$3.00 per day.

The taxes were assessed in 1913 at 3 cents per acre. A grader was purchased for \$240.—as well as two "wheelers" at a cost of \$53.00 each from Sawyer Massey Company. This machinery was to be delivered to Gull Lake, where it would be picked up by council.

An advertisement was placed in the Gull Lake Advertiser and the Shaunavon Standard giving notice to all taxpayers in the municipality that proceedings would be taken to recover all unpaid taxes after December 1st.

Grants for road construction were available from the Highway Commission for approved projects.

1914

In 1914, William East of Pine Coulee was appointed as Assessor at a salary of \$250.00 and was ordered to classify land according to five grades. The assessment formula was as follows:

	<u>\$ per acre</u>	<u>\$ per acre 5 mile limit of town</u>	<u>\$ per acre between 5 & 10 miles of town</u>
No. 1 Grade	15	20	17
No. 2 Grade	12	17	14
No. 3 Grade	9	14	11
No. 4 Grade	6	11	8
No. 5 Grade	3	8	5

The mill rate was set at 3 mills on the dollar, which was a change in the method of levying taxes, as in prior years the levy was a fixed amount per acre.

A bylaw was passed imposing a road tax since the collection of taxes was so difficult and the finances of the municipality were in such a condition that no work could be performed that year and paid for out of regular revenue. The tax was levied at \$2.00 on each quarter section of homestead or pre-empted land and fifty cents on each quarter section of land leased from the crown. The ratepayers affected by the road tax were allowed to make payment of the tax by working on the roads and were paid \$2.00 per day for a man, and \$2.00 per day for a team. A day was defined as eight hours beginning at 8:00 a.m.

In May, a ratepayer who communicated with council asking for financial aid to send his wife who was sick to the hospital at Regina was immediately issued a cheque for \$50.00 and the Treasurer was authorized to advance further aid in the amount of \$25.00.

In June, a bailiff was appointed to collect the outstanding taxes of the municipality, and a 5% penalty was imposed on the "Delinquents", to pay for the costs of collection. Funds were scarce in 1914, due to a drought, and a resolution was passed in December which would allow a discount of 10% if the taxes were paid prior to December 31st, and that taxes would be payable at par after that date.

The 1913 arrears and current surtax owing by Mr. Mahe were cancelled against his land since he had gone to war. In December, \$206.19 of Municipal Tax as well as \$96.00 of School Tax were cancelled from various lands located throughout the municipality.

1915

At the January meeting in 1915, the municipality was informed by the Health Department that a written request was required from municipal officials before hospitals could collect the expenses of patients from the municipality.

The bounty for coyotes was raised to \$2.00 per head from the \$1.00 that had been in effect in the past, with council wanting the bounty hunters to produce hides as evidence of the kill. Council did pay one bounty of \$2.00 for a pair of ears, but then made the bounty hunter aware of their policy.

Again in 1915, the ratepayers were allowed to do roadwork to offset their taxes owing. The special road tax was not imposed this year, but \$2.00 per quarter section on all assessable lands in the municipality was apportioned out of the regular municipal taxes for road purposes. Ratepayers could work off up to \$2.00 of this tax per quarter section to help pay their current years taxes. "Pathmasters" were appointed to supervise this roadwork and to keep record of time worked on the various projects. The rates paid for work were the same as in 1914.

The rate of taxation for 1915 was increased to 3 ½ mills. A grant of \$200.00 was made to the Eastend Hospital for which \$150.00 was to apply against fees of those people who were a "charge" on the municipality. Councillor Rebbeck was then appointed as a director on the Hospital Board and was allowed mileage and indemnity for attending the meetings.

In November, council decided to send a cheque quarterly in the amount of \$100.00, for the duration of the war, to the Red Cross. The first cheque was to be sent by January 1, 1916.

Each ratepayer was allowed to obtain from the municipality one (1) ounce of strychnine at cost price for the control of gophers, and could have the amount added to his taxes if he requested this be done.

Council passed a resolution supporting a movement, which requested that the government provide assistance to farmers in the form of a loan of \$4.00 per acre for all the land prepared in 1915 for the 1916 crop. The secretary was instructed to give notice of this action to all municipalities affected by the drought of 1914.

From the above brief history, one can compare the responsibilities of the first councils to the responsibilities of today's councils. Then, as now, the main uses of property tax were for the construction and maintenance of roads, the education of our children, and the construction and maintenance of medical facilities for the benefit of the ratepayers.

Attached is a listing of each council since 1911, which was originally prepared by Mr. Ray Ballentine and updated by me.

I hope that you enjoy our 100th celebration, and that it instills a sense of pride in each of us to have been, at some time, a part of this municipality.

R.E. Goulet
Administrator