



**This letter contains important information related to construction of private property water and wastewater systems within the Hamlet of Beaver Mines and should be read in full.**

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November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

### **Attention: Hamlet of Beaver Mines Property Owner**

The Municipal District of Pincher Creek No. 9 (MD) would like to thank you for your continued patience during the construction of the off-property water distribution and collection systems within the Hamlet of Beaver Mines (Hamlet). The MD understands construction has been disruptive to everyday life and, alongside property owners, is looking forward to the completion of the water and wastewater projects. This year, we were able to see some tangible progress on the projects. Highlights of the year include:

- Starting construction on the wastewater lift station, treatment system, and related pipeline work
- Anticipated completion of 80% of off-property underground work within the Hamlet this year
- Accelerating over 50% of re-surfacing (paving) to Fall 2022

As we approach “Turning on the Taps” the MD, in consultation with our legal team, is proposing the following modifications to the remaining work required on your property:

- 1) **Mandatory connection to water and wastewater systems** for all developed properties in the Hamlet. Connection will be required by January 1, 2027, or 3 years from acceptance of wastewater flow, whichever is later
- 2) **Property Owners are responsible for private property work**, including the connection from household to property edge, and any associated financing and contractor requirements

### **DISCUSSION WITH PROPERTY OWNERS**

We understand this is a change from previous communication and that there will be a significant amount of questions. In consideration of this, the MD is hosting a meeting at the **MD Council Chambers (1037 Herron Avenue, Pincher Creek) December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 6:30PM**. We invite all property owners within the Hamlet to join. Questions can be submitted in advance via:

- **MAIL:** Box 279, 1037 Herron Ave., Pincher Creek, AB T0K 1W0, ATTN: Beaver Mines Private Water Updates
- **E-MAIL:** [adminutilities@mdpincercreek.ab.ca](mailto:adminutilities@mdpincercreek.ab.ca), Title: Beaver Mines Private Water Updates

The remainder of this letter serves as additional background on the proposed changes. We look forward to your continued engagement as we navigate this process together as a community.

Yours truly,

Rick Lemire  
Reeve, MD of Pincher Creek No.9

# PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO PRIVATE PROPERTY WORK

## 1) MANDATORY CONNECTIONS



### **Q1) What is changing?**

The MD is proposing an updated utility bylaw to make connection to the water and wastewater system mandatory. The MD is proposing all developed properties within the Hamlet be connected by January 1, 2027, or 3 years from acceptance of wastewater flow, whichever is later.

### **Q2) Why will connections be mandatory?**

It is in the best interest of the public to make connection to the water system mandatory. The MD has received multiple letters from Alberta Health Services (AHS) regarding serious concerns about the drinking water quality within the Hamlet due to multiple failed private sewage systems. AHS has advised that water be treated to make it safe for human consumption and has indicated their support for installation of potable water and a wastewater system. The MD is required to provide service to a wastewater treatment system for Hamlets connected to new water distribution systems per the *Alberta Potable Water Regulation Section 5(3)*.

The MD has invested a significant amount of capital and resources towards this project and, per typical utility operation, must recover some of the ongoing operational costs through its usage.

### **Q3) Why is connection required by Jan 1, 2027, or 3 years from accepting wastewater flow?**

The MD understands that not all owners will have the immediate funds available to connect to the system as soon as it is online and that some owners may have scheduling conflicts and/or other needs that do not allow them to complete immediate upgrades. The intent is to give owners a reasonable amount of time to complete the upgrades and/or find financing as required.

### **Q4) What if I wish to keep using my well for water and/or septic system for wastewater?**

This is not an option. Owners in the Hamlet must connect to both the water and wastewater systems.

## 2) PRIVATE PROPERTY WORK IS NOW RESPONSIBILITY OF OWNERS



### **Q5) What is changing?**

The MD's proposed utility bylaw will require owners be responsible to arrange construction for private property work to connect to the water and wastewater system. Owners will be responsible to pay contractors directly and ensure connection, permitting, and inspection requirements are met.

### **Q6) What is the reasoning for the change?**

In consultation with legal, we had to modify our plan in order to protect both the MD and property owners from an unacceptable level of risk. Some of the potential risk includes, but is not limited to:

- A lack of precedent on a municipality hiring a contractor to complete utility service connection work on private property, unless enforcement of a bylaw is required
- Section 264 of the *Municipal Government Act* prohibits municipalities from lending money to individuals
- Damaging relationships in the event of disagreements on the quality/scope of construction or use of certain contractors
- No assurance that the MD can secure preferred pricing

### **Q7) Why are property owners being informed now?**

Until recently, the MD was not aware of the legal implications of using a single contractor on private property. In order to support connection to the systems, and the change in service level the MD had to review and propose changes to the utility bylaw. This took time.

Property owners are encouraged to attend or submit written responses to the public hearing, attend the open house, and reach out to Administration or your Councillor on any further questions or concerns.

We will release responses to commonly asked questions after the December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 session.

### **Q8) What support will the MD be providing to ease the burden of this change?**

Utility Service Guidelines are under development to support owners and contractors on clarifying the exact requirements for connection to the water and wastewater systems.

We intend to develop a list of pre-authorized contractors whom have read and understood the guidelines and have the qualifications required to complete work on private property. Owners will be able to hire whom they choose to do the work, with connection dependant on meeting permitting and inspection requirements.

### **Q9) When can property owners connect to the systems?**

As construction progresses in 2023, we will provide updates on the progress of work. **Connection to both water and wastewater systems will be allowed when the treatment system is able to take flows.** Currently, this is anticipated in Autumn 2023. The MD will issue an exact date when it is ready to allow final connection to the systems. **Owners are not able to connect to the systems prior to this date.**

Depending on their existing installation, property owners will be able to arrange with contractors, at their discretion, to have private systems installed excluding final connections to the MD infrastructure prior to the date of connection issuance. Owners and contractors must avoid having any connection points that would allow existing water setups (wells, cisterns, etc.) to backflow to MD infrastructure. This includes, but is not limited to: swivel or changeover devices, removable sections, jumper connections, and bypass arrangements.

The proposed utility bylaw waives the cost of supplying the meter for owners whom connect to the system within 90 days of the MD's allowed connection date.

### **Q10) What are the requirements to connect to the systems?**

The Utility Service Guidelines will provide the full connection requirements. In summary, owners must:

- Meet the requirements of the National Plumbing Code (sizing, type of lines, backflow prevention, etc.)
- Ensure connections are permitted prior to construction and inspected prior to backfill
- Install an MD supplied water meter
- Remove all potential for cross connection; cisterns and wells must be fully disconnected and cross connection control devices must be installed where applicable
- Remove water softeners that exchange hard minerals such as calcium and magnesium for sodium (Ion exchange water softener)
- Have a plan to decommission/plug existing well, and decommission/abandon existing septic tanks and fields

### **Q11) What if I do not have time or cannot afford to manage connection to the system?**

We will be providing a list of pre-authorized contractors for owners. We strongly encourage owners to use these resources. Connection will be mandatory under the proposed utility bylaw.

We will support residents wherever possible to ensure safe water is obtained by all owners within the Hamlet.