



MEETING MINUTES – April 27, 2026

Meeting: Woodlands County Council Chambers

Present: Dave Berry – Councilor - MD of Greenview
 Candyce Jones – Executive Assistant – The Golden Triangle
 Brent Cmoc – President – Swan Hills Snow-Goers
 Don Kelm – Executive Director - Swan Hills Snow Goers Club
 Craig Wilson – Mayor – Town of Swan Hills
 Cindy Brooks – Executive Director – Whitecourt Trailblazers Club
 Bert Roach – Economic Development Officer – Woodlands County
 Sheila Bellwood - President – Fox Creek Northland Sno-Goers Club
 Eric Doran – Councilor – Town of Fox Creek
 Mike Braun – Councilor – Town of Whitecourt
 Jeff Brooks – President – Whitecourt Trailblazers
 Chris Brookes – Executive Director – Alberta Snowmobile Association

Absent: Alan Deane – Councilor - Woodlands County
 Leo Forseille – Councilor – Big Lakes County

Minutes: Candyce Jones – The Golden Triangle Executive Assistant

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION/DECISION
1.Meeting called to order	MAYOR WILSON chaired meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.	
2. Introductions	Greetings and introductions were all made.	
3. Approval of Agenda	BELLWOOD, Sheila made a motion to accept the April 27, 2026 agenda as presented. <u>GT-15-13-26</u> <i>MOTION – BELLWOOD, Sheila moved to accept the April 27, 2026 agenda as presented. All in favour. Carried.</i>	<u>GT-15-13-26</u> <i>MOTION – BELLWOOD, Sheila moved to accept the April 27, 2026 agenda as presented. All in favour. Carried.</i>
4. Approval of Minutes	CMOC, Brent made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 26, 2026 as presented. <u>GT-15-14-26</u> <i>MOTION – CMOC, Brent moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 26, 2026 as presented. All in favour. Carried.</i>	<u>GT-15-14-26</u> <i>MOTION – CMOC, Brent moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 26, 2026 as presented. All in favour. Carried.</i>
6.1 New Business <u>SPECIAL GUEST</u> <u>CHRIS BROOKES –</u> <u>EXCEUTIVE</u> <u>DIRECTOR –</u> <u>ALBERTA</u> <u>SNOWMOBILE</u> <u>ASSOCIATION</u>	<u>6.1 SPECIAL GUEST CHRIS BROOKES – EXCEUTIVE DIRECTOR</u> <u>– ALBERTA SNOWMOBILE ASSOCIATION</u> BROOKES, Chris introduced himself and gave a brief introduction into what the Alberta Snowmobile Association does and what it provides to Alberta snowmobile clubs. The ASA was formed in 1971 beginning as an insurance cooperative for the snowmobile cubs, interestingly at this time the province was the one building the snowmobile systems.	

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BROOKES shared information from the latest ASA magazine on the last economic impact study done on snowmobiling in Alberta; which was an excess of 450 million dollars. Snowmobilers don't just purchase snowmobiles. They're buying trucks, trailers, local gas and food in the local communities. Showing up to invest money in communities. Brookes has come today to support the clubs and answer any questions coming from our group of councilors.

MAYOR WILSON inquires on the status of a provincial funding extension. BROOKES shares that the ASA has just reached the end of their 4th year of funding agreement. Discussions with the Minister continue, not just for funding, but for stable and predictable funding. The minister's department has been running the funding based on grants coming out of the parks budget every year, which isn't a sustainable model as the ASA was promised. There is a proposal on the minister's desk to go to the Treasury Board regarding a line item in the next budget which would bring snowmobile registrations to forestry and parks, down to the recreation division and straight through to the snowmobile industry. Snowmobile registration funds should be coming back to the snowmobile industry, it currently just goes into general revenue in the province which should be changed.

COUNCILOR BERRY asks BROOKES how the ASA deals with low snow years in the snowmobile industry when it comes to ATV's on the trail systems.

BROOKES states that the ASA has worked with Alberta Forestry and Parks to bring in seasonal closures on designated snowmobile trails from December 1st – April 15th – making all the trails snowmobiles only. This seasonal closure can be enforced by law, and anyone can call 310-LAND if they catch non-snowmobiles on the trails during that time frame. Conservation officers will enforce this closure. The ASA also has signs that can be ordered and installed now.

COUNCILOR BERRY inquires on the grant amount that the ASA receives from the Government of Alberta.

BROOKES indicates that it is one million dollars a year for snowmobiling.

KELM, Don asks BROOKES to explain to our municipal partners how the ASA funding is distributed amongst the snowmobile clubs. BROOKES shares that 5 years ago the ASA clubs met and developed a funding formula based upon the club's trail kms and their memberships. More memberships means more ridership and more wear and tear on the trail system. So, the model is weighed more towards memberships (approximately 60%). The ASA did just have their AGM on the weekend and a motion was made to re-open the funding model formula. To give room for discussion and possible changes and updates to it if deemed necessary.

Discussion Held regarding the insanely high numbers on Swan Hills and Fox Creek's trail counters. Just being able to actually see those numbers from the counters that were places very strategically as well.

BELLWOOD adds that she really believes that memberships should also be made mandatory with sled registration. Fox

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Creek has seen a massive decrease in their membership sales. Discussion Held.

Discussion Held regarding the inability to force people to purchase a membership; it is not a mandatory purchase at this time and the inability to block/restrict any OHV access to the trails because it is crown land.

BROOKS, Jeff adds that the clubs are really asking for the government to support them more, it's currently a free for all – OHV's use the club trails, use the club cabins and then it falls on the snowmobile clubs to clean up all the mess without the proper funding. There needs to be an initiative provincially to either help us relocate trails onto ground that will sustain ATV's and OHV's so we can have an accessible trail system for all. Or find ways eliminate or pay for the damages that snowmobile clubs incur annually.

KELM, Don asks BROOKES, Chris to explain the roles and responsibilities of the legislative Trails Act as trail stewards. BROOKES explains that the original intent of the Trails Act was to bring in specific legislation and regulation as to what we do as trail managers with our trail systems. Legislation was brought in and they designated a bunch of trails across the province that they could designate without too much work and cleared dispositions on them. Unfortunately with a change of Deputy Minister, the decision was made to just follow the Public Lands and Parks Act which is not what the ASA wanted. BROOKES continues to work with legislation in a very slow process. BROOKES has 5 trail management plans on their desk and none have been approved yet. He is working towards changing the way new trails are immediately designated trails through the government.

COUNCILOR BERRY raises the question about public lands, users that want to use the public lands and we are wanting to limit the users on it. This can be a very touchy issue. Discussion Held. The ASA and snowmobile clubs are not trying to limit the users on public lands. We are trying to find appropriate use on the appropriate landscape for different activities. A lot of the snowmobile trails are on land that shouldn't be accessed in the summer – frozen marshy land that is easily destroyed in the summertime if used.

BELLWOOD, Sheila adds that ATV's and OHV's using the Fox Creek trails in the summer time isn't the issue; the issue is they have no club, and they have no money coming in towards maintenance on a trail. So when these machines rip/tear and cause ruts on the snowmobile trail; it is then the snowmobile clubs funding and their groomers going out and fixing it annually. There is no ATV and OHV funding trickling down for all the damages that is left for snowmobiles clubs to fix.

Discussion also held on the responsibility in terms of weed control from snowmobilers, atv's and ohvs. And designation of who owns the trails and who's responsibility it is. The province of Alberta can designate a trail as a snowmobile trail, but that designation stays on year-round. That doesn't necessarily mean we have access or ability to maintain that year-round, not with the funding we get right now. The snowmobile cubs should not be responsible to clean up the summertime damages and messes made.

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COUNCILOR BERRY would also like more clarification on the one million dollars that the ASA receives and the funding model for it. BROOKES will gladly share this information.

BELLWOOD, Sheila opened the discussion on the Trails Act, CNT's and DLO's. Regarding companies using a designated snowmobile trail as a road. Discussion Held further on the trails act.

An issue is arising where funding received doesn't even match the volunteer hours that are being put in across the province. Volunteers are aging out and the younger generations are not coming in. Essentially we are looking at a future where clubs are going to morph into local contractors doing the work. The ASA turning into a Provincial Contractor and paying the clubs as sub-contractors. Which is going to require a lot more funding for a sustainable future.

Discussion held on any specific mandate to trails size in the trails act. The landscape dictates your trail; find the center of your trail and we can work within 50 meters of the center. If a trail has been designated; the Alberta Government has cleared all dispositions on it. Any work being done needs approval from the land owner, which is the province, which would trigger a call to the snowmobile club.

EDO ROACH inquires with BROOKES if The Golden Triangle is the only organization of it's kind with a multiple municipality agreement within the province of Alberta. And if there is any particular advocacy that this group should be doing. BROOKES states that this is not the only multi-municipal agreement. As a municipal group, the GT carries a lot more weight than a non-profit group would to a politician. The Iron Horse Trail holds an 8-municipal organization agreement. Discussion Held on the political voice and advocacy the GT is able to carry as a 6-way municipality group who may not always agree. BROOKES recommends we reach out to Mary Ann Janke in Cold Lake; she is part of the Iron Horse Trail. She will be able to answer these questions.

Discussion Held on what more the GT could be doing as a whole. More education and bringing different voices into the GT room. COUNCILOR BERRY suggests a presentation to the RMA and municipalities. EDO ROACH also suggests that perhaps BROOKES, Chris could present at a CAO event this year if it would be beneficial.

MAYOR WILSON agrees that RMA would be the right faction and he encourages that route more. BELLWOOD, Sheila agrees with the RMA route as well.

GT-15-15-26

MOTION – COUNCILOR BERRY moved to accept Chris Brookes' presentation as information. All in favour. Carried.

GT-15-15-26

MOTION – COUNCILOR BERRY moved to accept Chris Brookes' presentation as information. All in favour. Carried.

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5. OLD BUSINESS 5.1 <u>REVENUE/EXPENSE –</u> <u>2025/2026 (Budget,</u> <u>Statement of</u> <u>Operations, Invoice</u> <u>A/P)</u>	5.1 JONES, Candyce presented the updated statement of operations and budget as per the most recent transaction report received as of April. 5.1.2 – JONES, Candyce reviewed all invoices that have been approved, submitted and paid as well as submitted and not yet posted since our last meeting on January 26, 2026. 1. Invoices Approved, Submitted and Payments Posted as per budget approval include. a. Oz Media – Annual Web Hosting - \$252.00 b. C. Jones Contracting Services – Iron Sledder Medals - \$344.99 c. Northland Sno-Goers - \$250 Rally Draw - \$250.00 d. Swan Hills Snow Goers - \$250 Rally Draw - \$250.00 e. Whitecourt Trailblazers - \$250 Rally Draw - \$250.00 f. Swan Hills Snow Goers - \$250 Golden Sledder Draw (Madison Schulte) - \$250.00 g. Iron Sledder Cash Draw Winner – Larry Baillie - \$1,000.00 h. C. Jones Contracting Services – January Digital Advertising - \$365.32 i. C. Jones Contracting Services – January Admin Services - \$942.50 j. C. Jones Contracting Services – February Digital Advertising - \$598.46 k. C. Jones Contracting Services – February Admin Services - \$377.00 l. C. Jones Contracting Services – March Admin Services - \$696.00 m. Pattison Media – Radio Advertising Campaign (Iron Sledder Challenge) - \$1,176.00 (2 invoices) Our expenditures in 2026 so far come to a total of \$5,752.27. JONES also explained the new process of working in and out of reserves as requested. The updated budget shows Expenses, Revenue, Operating Surplus which will be our expenses minus our revenue. Net Transfers will show transfers in and out for our capital reserve and to have a balanced budget. JONES is also keeping any interest earned in a separate reserve as we don't want to show it as revenue on our operating budget. With the new formulas our budget and reserves are all balancing. No club has used the Capital Budget as of yet. JONES indicates that the Town of Swan Hills also has not paid their \$15,000 as of the most recent transaction report that was received. MAYOR WILSON will look into that. <u>GT-15-16-26</u> <i>MOTION – COUNCILOR BRAUN moved to accept the updated Statement of Operations and all A/P invoices presented as information. All in favour. Carried.</i>	<u>GT-15-16-26</u> <i>MOTION – COUNCILOR BRAUN moved to accept the updated Statement of Operations and all A/P invoices presented as information. All in favour. Carried.</i>
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<u>5.2 TRAIL SIGNAGE & MAINTENANCE, GROOMING & CLUB UPDATES – 2025/2026 SEASON</u>	<u>5.2 CLUB UPDATES & SIGNAGE:</u> <u><i>Fox Creek:</i></u> BELLWOOD, Sheila indicated that Fox Creek is no longer planning on using the \$10,000 of Capital Reserve funding that was given to them by Swan Hills for their wild fires a few seasons ago. Fox Creek completed 4 days/6kms of mulching from Eagle Tower Cabin to Harolds Hut which won't be the full \$30,000 budget. BELLWOOD shared Fox Creek's trail counter numbers #1 on the GT after Trappers Cabin – 1,900 counts #2 on the GT Eagle towards Swan Hills – 1,050 counts #3 on the GT West Heavy Sound closer to Fox Creek – 950 counts Counters were installed ¾ through January. Fox Creek was also late to grooming this season so they would have had a lot more riders. Their groomer was broken down, their contractor only has one groomer and it was also broken down. BELLWOOD reported that even though they were late to grooming this season, they still spent \$ 61,000 and could have easily spent another \$10-15,000 more on grooming. Fox Creek also only receives \$25,000 from the ASA; they have 250kms and lower membership numbers; and then the \$21,000 from the GT doesn't even come close to cover a year's worth of grooming. Swan Hills and Whitecourt would have higher grooming expenses as well due to more kms of trail. Fox Creek had a successful rally this year and made some money which is great. They had 225 riders at their rally which is good for their low snow at the time. BELLWOOD indicated that Fox Creek also applied with the MD of Greenview to help cover some of their clubs annual operational expenses like grooming. BELLWOOD started the discussion amongst the clubs regarding the insurance clubs hold on their cabins. Our snowmobile clubs hold insurance and pay for it (Fox Creek pays \$2,500 annually), but when our season is technically only December – April; what is happening the rest of those months when everyone else can access them. KELM, Don was under the understanding that our club cabins were part of the trail system and covered under the ASA insurance. BROOKES, Chris indicated that this is still a grey area. Discussion Held. <u><i>Whitecourt:</i></u> BROOKS, Cindy shared that they finished the season off with 500 hours of grooming. Whitecourt hosted their Guided Fun Ride on January 31st; it was a beautiful day and trails were superb. 55 people attending and amongst them was 4 Government representatives (2 from Whitecourt and 2 from Lac La Biche), Fire Department reps as well as a few RCMP join the ride. Whitecourt received access to the Eagle River Staging Area for this ride as well.	
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Whitecourt's rally brought in 209 riders and then on Sunday for their Golden Triangle ride they had 63 riders. Whitecourt is seeing a huge decline in their rider stats, they used to bring in 4-500 riders at their rallies. They fear that the Westward Community Center and being out of town might be hurting them. They have been invited to come back to town and use the new events center being built and station riders at rotary park. They found the two days to be beneficial. Rallies are where you're bringing in memberships and day passes.

Whitecourt seen it's fair share of troubles this winter; especially with the wind. They cleared the entire trail system 4-5 times and also had to close a section of the GT trail from Carson to the Freeman River three times.

Whitecourt also hired a contractor to clear trees on their entire trail system. There were a number of very large trees down.

BROOKS, Cindy gave an update on the Eagle River Staging Area. They gained access to it on their rally weekend. The agreement between their club and the Government was renewable in September of 2025; Whitecourt has recently declined the draft agreement to look after eagle river staging area in the summer months and group camping. It's just not beneficial to their club. The Whitecourt Trailblazers has requested to continue the use of it as a winter staging area only; the conversations surrounding this still need to be had. If this is not something we are able to utilize in the future, Whitecourt has other options to consider.

BROOKS, Cindy shared that Whitecourt, Fox Creek, Swan Hills and Edson have been having monthly zone meetings which have become very beneficial for communications between the North West Zone.

Unfortunately, Whitecourt was unable to install their trail counters correctly. They have the 3 for the GT and also purchased 3 more, but they continued to have many set-backs and technical issues with installation. So, they have no numbers to share for this season.

BROOKS, Jeff shared with council that Whitecourt completed this season with 3,500 in volunteer hours. If you take approximately \$30/hour including overhead this would be around \$105,000; that is not including any equipment, quads, saws or gas used. With 500 hours of grooming at \$200/hour; that's another \$100,000 with grooming alone. That doesn't include any capital purchases either; Whitecourt completed some capital upgrades this season – around \$25,000. New outhouses at the lookouts ect. Looking at a budget and where funding comes from; their club is looking at around \$250,000 annually to keep the club running without capital.

BROOKS, Jeff reports that this is the first time in at least 15 years that the club has ever had to hire a contractor to clear trail; volunteers are burnt out.

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Swan Hills:

KELM, Don indicated that this year was the winter that never ended. Riding season started extremely early this year, where they were able to get out riding by mid-November. Which in turn meant snowcat work was started earlier than usual, and Golden Triangle funding was used up super early. In past years, grooming doesn't start until January and this year, their funding was completely used up by January. Same as reported by the other clubs, high winds and lots of trees down created volunteer burn out within their club.

KELM, Don reported 230 riders at their rally this year and they received tons of support from local businesses and surrounding community; a very successful rally overall.

KELM, Don shared their trail counter numbers from this past season which were unbelievable to see.

On the GT Trail south of town towards Whitecourt – 1,921 counts

West towards Fox Creek – 2,314 counts

Approximately 2,000 people out riding the triangle trail this season.

GT Trail West of Town before Branch Road area – 9,879 counts. Lots of activity west of Swan Hills to access pipeline trails in the area.

Goose Tower area in the North – 3,258 counts

KELM, Don reports that these numbers are extremely interesting to see, especially being the first year of having these new trail counters installed. They give our municipal partners an idea of the amount of usage the GT trail system is getting and reporting that it is well used.

Again, the \$21,000 doesn't go very far for the clubs; especially during an unusually long season.

Swan Hills closed their triangle trail from the 321 Branch Road cabin east back towards town this spring to complete some cleaning and widening cat work as well as mulching.

EDO ROACH opened the discussion regarding advanced payout amounts that was now voted upon. And if this same logic is being transferred over for the Capital Reserve.

Discussion Held.

MAYOR WILSON concludes that the Capital Reserve \$30,000 will continue to be used on an "as needed" basis. Things and situations change; sometimes other clubs need funding when it isn't their allotted year for the reserve. The capital reserve will not be a pay-out like the maintenance/grooming motion. Clubs submit for reimbursement.

Discussion held about the budget, reserves and clearly showing where all funding is being accounted for.

COUNCILOR BERRY indicated that he is very impressed with the counter number from the trail counters. BERRY would like to see a year-end report summarizing the rally numbers and trail counter numbers in our minutes. It is very important information to capture.

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	Each individual club will forward their seasons rider and trail numbers to Admin; JONES, Candyce will share a summary with all members of the GT board to take back to their council meetings. JONES will also include all these numbers as well as our promotional stats in the GT year end thank-you card to each municipality. EDO ROACH mentions that there could be a future fun marketing that could come from an Iron Horse vs Golden Triangle trail challenge. Knowing now that there is a trail system similar to ours in the province. BROOKES, Chris adds that the people who run the Iron Horse Trail, Riverland Recreation Trail Society, actually contracted a data company to access the data from the cell phone towers along the Iron Horse Trail. They now have the data geofenced of where each phone came from and some basic demographics about each rider. <u>GT-15-17-26</u> <i>MOTION – BROOKS, Cindy moved to accept the club reports including any updates on grooming, maintenance, capital reserve and any other concerns as information. All in favour. Carried.</i> <u>5.3 PROMOTIONS AND ADVERTISING:</u> JONES, Candyce reported that since we had such a long riding season she made the administrative decision to extend the QR check-in contest. It would normally be closed on the last day of March and be winner be drawn the 1st of April. But riders were still out and submitting entries until April 17th. JONES has all entries ready for a winner to be drawn. Decision was made for chair MAYOR WILSON to spin the wheel and choose the winner at this time. JONES included all the analytics from the QR google doc. It worked out fantastic this season and riders were able to leave comments which she included. There was a total of 172 entries between 79 different riders. The QR check-in is definitely not utilized as much as it should; especially when you hear the seasonal numbers of riders going through. <i>Winner of QR Check-in Contest – Dave McLean</i> BROOKS, Cindy requests Admin to please use Whitecourt's Carson Cabin and Gundy Cabin visitor book numbers for the GT season summary since they have no trail counter numbers for the season. <u>5.4 The Golden Triangle Events – GT Club Rallies & Iron Sledder Challenge</u> Discussion held about the process of signing up for the Iron Sledder Challenge. The importance of riders to sign up at Fox Creek (ie the first rally) even if they don't know if they'll make it to another one. JONES reported approximately 25 riders that	<u>GT-15-17-26</u> <i>MOTION – BROOKS, Cindy moved to accept the club reports including any updates on grooming, maintenance, capital reserve and any other concerns as information. All in favour. Carried.</i>
<u>5.3 GOLDEN TRIANGLE PROMOTIONS AND ADVERTISING</u>		
<u>5.4 GOLDEN TRIANGLE EVENTS – 2025/2026 SEASON</u>		

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	stated they attended 2 or 3 of the rallies at the last rally. Accountability needs to be taken with these riders when they're being entered into a contest for \$1,000. Discussion Held – the Golden Triangle trail is still on everyone's bucket list. Especially with the conversations our sled show booth attendants have; everyone wants to ride it in full. Riding the full triangle is a big feat. MAYOR WILSON adds that us as a group should really consider hosting an actual Golden Triangle Run/Rally; 1 or 2 days. Making it something we do every 4 or 5 years. <u>GT-15-18-26</u> <i>MOTION – BELLWOOD, Sheila moved to accept any updates on promotions, advertising and the Iron Sledder Challenge as information. All in favour. Carried.</i>	
<u>6. NEW BUSINESS</u> <u>6.2 ALBERTA POWERSPORTS SHOW</u>	<u>6.2 ALBERTA POWERSPORTS SHOW</u> JONES, Candyce requested the decision of each club regarding their attendance at this years Alberta Powersports show. If one of the clubs does not attend; the GT has been able to take their booth in it's place and pay the \$100 club fee. If all three clubs do attend; then admin can move forward with the booking of the GT booth and pay the \$1,000 booth fee. Discussion Held. KELM, Don added that the flashlights were a great giveaway and are very useful. They would be fantastic to just order again for this years sled show. <u>GT-15-19-26</u> <i>MOTION – COUNCILOR BERRY motions to direct admin to book the 2026 sled show booth if no other club booths are available and for admin to spend upwards of \$3,000 on booth expenses.</i>	<u>GT-15-18-26</u> <i>MOTION – BELLWOOD, Sheila moved to accept any updates on promotions, advertising and the Iron Sledder Challenge as information. All in favour. Carried.</i>
<u>6.3 ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION</u>	<u>6.3 ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION</u> No further discussion held.	<u>GT-15-19-26</u> <i>MOTION – COUNCILOR BERRY motions to direct admin to book the 2026 sled show booth if no other club booths are available and for admin to spend upwards of \$3,000 on booth expenses.</i>
7.NEXT MEETING DATE	<u>GT-15-20-26</u> <i>MOTION – COUNCILOR DORAN motions for the next Golden Triangle meeting to be hosted on September 21, 2026 in Fox Creek.</i>	JONES to send out email RE: next meeting date and forward package information.
8. ADJOURNMENT	<u>GT-15-21-26</u> MOTION – COUNCILOR BRAUN moved to the ADJOURNMENT of the meeting at 12:10 PM	