

LET'S'EMOT REGIONAL RECREATION AND AQUATIC CENTRE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Statement from Mayor Talen

July 30, 2026

Dear Residents,

On behalf of the Village Council, I would like to update you on discussions regarding a potential regional partnership with the District of Kent for the Lets'emot Regional Recreation and Aquatic Centre.

In 2024, the District of Kent gave a presentation to Council on the Ferny Coombe Pool and the Community Recreation and Cultural Centre, as well as their plans and budget for the new Lets'emot Regional Recreation and Aquatic Centre. This presentation also broached the idea of Village formally becoming a regional partner for the Aquatic Centre. The District of Kent's vision for a regional partnership would have the Village contributing to the capital and operating costs of the Aquatic Centre. The District of Kent advised that Aquatic Centre regional partners' residents would have access to, and have user fees, the same as residents of the District of Kent. Village staff worked with the District of Kent exploring the details of what being a regional partner for the Aquatic Centre would look like.

The District of Kent has proposed that for the Village of Harrison Hot Springs to be a regional partner in the Aquatic Centre, the Village would need to enter into a 20-year agreement with the District of Kent that would have the Village:

- Contribute \$1.85 million to the capital costs of the Aquatic Centre (approximately \$2.65 million after interest);
- Contribute \$100,000 per year for operating costs, escalating each year for inflation (approximately \$2.5 million over 20 years); and
- Participate on an Aquatic Centre advisory committee.

To fund the Village's participation in the project, annual contributions would be collected through property taxes and remitted to the District of Kent to cover the Village's designated portion of the debt repayment costs.

With these cost estimates of capital and operating costs provided by the District of Kent, each Harrison Hot Springs taxpayer would see an increase in their municipal taxes of approximately 8% (estimated \$170 per \$1.0 million of assessed property value for homeowner tax class).

This agreement would confirm that Village residents would be treated the same as District of Kent residents when accessing programs at the Aquatic Centre. Village residents would also pay the same user fees as District of Kent residents.

The proposed agreement would commit the Village and its taxpayers to significant long-term financial obligations to another community's asset, extending beyond Council's legal binding authority. A financial commitment of this nature would require elector approval under provincial legislation. The Village can seek this through a formal Alternative Approval Process (AAP), which allows the agreement to move forward unless at least 10% of eligible residents submit formal response forms opposing it. The AAP would ensure that residents have a clear and meaningful voice in any decision on this matter.

Council has considered this and has advised the District of Kent that limits on the Village's administrative capacity this summer, preclude advancing this matter at this time. Additionally, over the last few years, Village staff have contracted consultants to update master plans for our own infrastructure. While regional recreation opportunities provide value to residents, Council must also consider significant upcoming investments in Village-owned infrastructure. These priorities will need to be considered when Council drafts its financial plans for 2027 and beyond, and strategically consider the 8% tax increase to support the Lets'emot Regional Recreation and Aquatic Centre. The Village has advised the District of Kent that if this remains a priority for them after local government elections in October of this year, they are encouraged to approach the Village at that time.

The District of Kent advises that the Aquatic Centre is on track to open later this year, and they look forward to welcoming residents of the Village of Harrison Hot Springs to use and enjoy the Aquatic Centre regardless of whether the Village becomes a regional partner.

We commend the District of Kent for their many years of dedication to bring this project to fruition and wish them success as they prepare to open the doors of the Lets'emot Regional Recreation and Aquatic Centre.



Mayor Fred Talen