



# COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW MUNICIPALITY OF VAL RITA-HARTY



Maclaren Municipal Consulting Inc.  
[bourns@maclarenmc.ca](mailto:bourns@maclarenmc.ca) 613-295-9398  
January 31, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

This Service Delivery and Organizational Review was undertaken in late 2021 and early 2022. It responds to a number of important changes in the municipal organization. While the Council has remained the same since the last election in 2018, the Council has appointed a new CAO and undertaken the development of a Strategic Plan to guide the municipality in the coming years. The municipality has also acquired the former school building in Val Rita and developed the concept of a community hub, using the former school building as the focus of most activities in the municipality. This includes administrative, economic development, and recreational focused activities. A key purpose of this Review is to assist the CAO to establish a strong functioning organization and to that the organization is capable of implementing the key concepts of the Strategic Plan.

### Methodology

The approach undertaken to complete the Service Delivery and Organizational Review is summarized below:

1. Collection and Review of Background Plans and Policies.

Some of the key documents included:

- Financial statements
- 2021 Budget
- The Val Rita-Harty Strategic Plan
- The Zoning By-law
- The Organizational Chart
- Job Descriptions
- Township By-laws and policies
- Previous studies and reports

2. Benchmarking.

Using Statistics Canada information and geographic proximity, 5 municipalities that have some similarity to Val Rita-Harty were identified as comparator municipalities. The Financial Information Returns that each of these municipalities file with the province in a prescribed format were collected, and the revenues and costs of operating the five municipalities were compared with those of Val Rita-Harty. As issues were identified, additional information was sought from the municipalities concerned through direct contact with the municipal staff.

3. Consultation Process.

The project team conducted interviews with members of Council and key staff members and inspected each of the municipal facilities and assets. A survey was circulated to residents (available in both official languages, on-line, and in hard copy) and the results were compiled and assessed.

4. Analysis.

All the information collected was analyzed to identify the key issues facing the Township and the key opportunities available. These results were reviewed with the Steering Committee and further analysis was conducted.

5. Draft Report.

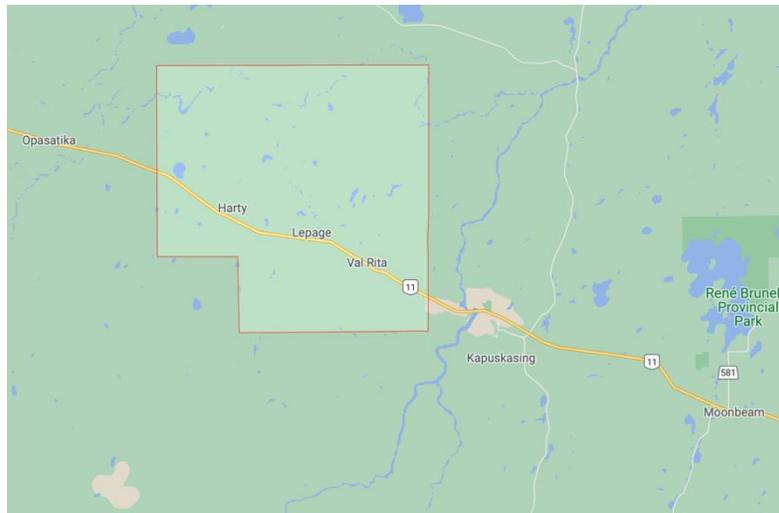
A Draft Report was prepared and reviewed with the Steering Committee.

6. Final Report.

This Final Report was prepared and submitted.

## Municipality of Val Rita-Harty Overview

The municipality has a population of 762 residents and is located adjacent and to the west of Kapuskasing, on both sides of Highway 11, the Trans-Canada Highway with considerable truck traffic. There are two communities which are serviced by water and/or sewer systems. The largest community, and the closest to Kapuskasing is Val Rita, which is also home to the municipal administration. Harty is the other community which also has some municipal recreation facilities. There are residents located along highway 11 and on the concession roads throughout the municipality.



The population has declined in recent years, largely due to a decreasing average household size as youth left the community. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, this seems to have reversed, with new residents seeking the larger homes and properties available in small communities. Housing prices have risen and virtually all homes are now occupied. Housing prices may be approaching the cost of constructing new homes.

*Figure 1- From Google Maps*

The municipality is not responsible for the maintenance of Highway 11, but is responsible for 31 kms (62 lane kms) of local roads, including the concession roads which are generally gravel roads. The two communities of Val Rita and Harty do have paved roads with some curbs and gutters in place.

The municipality acquired the former school building in Val Rita in 2017 and has developed plans to renovate and adapt it to extensive use as a “community hub”, with the municipal offices, and the recreation and social facilities to serve the community. The renovations are currently underway and the development of this Community Centre will be a major focus of the municipality in the coming years.

There is a five member Council that governs the Municipality. Council members were consulted in conducting this Review.

The Municipality is currently concluding a process to prepare a Strategic Plan. The current version of the plan identifies the municipal mission as:

“Our mission is to improve and ensure quality of life for our residents in order to maximize possibilities and mobilize resources to drive economic and social development and optimize infrastructure to support a sustainable community.”

The Strategic Plan identifies four priorities for action, which will be explored further in this report. The priorities are:

- Communication and transparency,
- Economic development,
- Activities and community participation,
- Municipal services and infrastructure.

## Financial Overview

The following table summarizes the recent financial performance for the municipality.

Table 1      **Recent Financial Performance**

	2021 Budget	2020 Actual	2019 Actual
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Taxation	1,342,289	1,342,168	1,270,642
User charges	225,063	225,592	234,168
Government transfers - operations	798,481	756,342	591,823
Other revenues	120,321	141,386	154,683
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>2,486,154</b>	<b>2,465,488</b>	<b>2,251,316</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
General government services	568,546	443,574	466,485
Protection services	88,956	251,298	239,629
Transportation services	764,024	859,757	768,624
Environmental services	194,445	561,592	541,976
Health, social and family services	503,175	199,681	205,520
Recreation and cultural services	232,208	188,636	280,889
Planning and development services	133,600	116,767	69,874
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,484,954</b>	<b>2,621,305</b>	<b>2,572,997</b>
<b>Net Surplus/Deficit</b>	1,200	(155,817)	(321,681)

Property taxes represent about 54% of revenues. It should be noted that the municipality also raises over \$500,000 for school board operations and to support the Health Unit and Social Services Administration Board. The municipality does not have any authority over the amounts raised for these purposes. Provincial transfers were about 31% of revenues, up from 24% in 2019. User charges are about 10% of revenues. The charges for the water and sewer systems are the main contributors to the user charges, with a contribution as well from users of the landfill site.

The municipality has \$533,000 in long term debt, at interest rates that vary from 2.58% per year to 4.29% per year. An Asset Management Plan was completed in 2013. At the time the

estimated replacement cost of municipal assets was about \$75M, with roads representing \$56M of the total. The depreciated value of the assets was only \$5.8M as shown in the table below.

Table 2 **Tangible Capital Assets**

	2020 at Cost	Depreciation	Balance Dec 31, 2020
Land	382,720		382,720
Land improvements	84,431	34,628	49,803
Buildings	3,124,516	1,500,259	1,624,257
Vehicles, machinery and equipment	2,881,243	1,883,622	997,621
Furniture and fixtures	239,869	216,082	23,787
Computers	136,954	122,210	14,744
Roads	3,434,034	2,295,153	1,138,881
Water and sewer systems	3,940,510	2,370,091	1,570,419
Assets under construction	39,961		39,961
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,264,238</b>	<b>8,422,045</b>	<b>5,842,193</b>

The current needs for maintenance and/or replacement assets was about \$13.2M over the next ten years, or about \$1.3M per year. In 2020 the municipality spent only \$54,907 on its capital program, down from \$329,000 in 2019. The Asset Management Plan found the water and wastewater infrastructure in good condition, the paved roads generally in good condition, with some investments required in the fleet and buildings used by the municipality. The advent of the school building and community centre concept has changed this considerably. Similarly, some of the fleet is always old enough to require replacement by industry standards, but it is still operational, so this is not a major concern.

The table below provides the balance of various reserve funds.

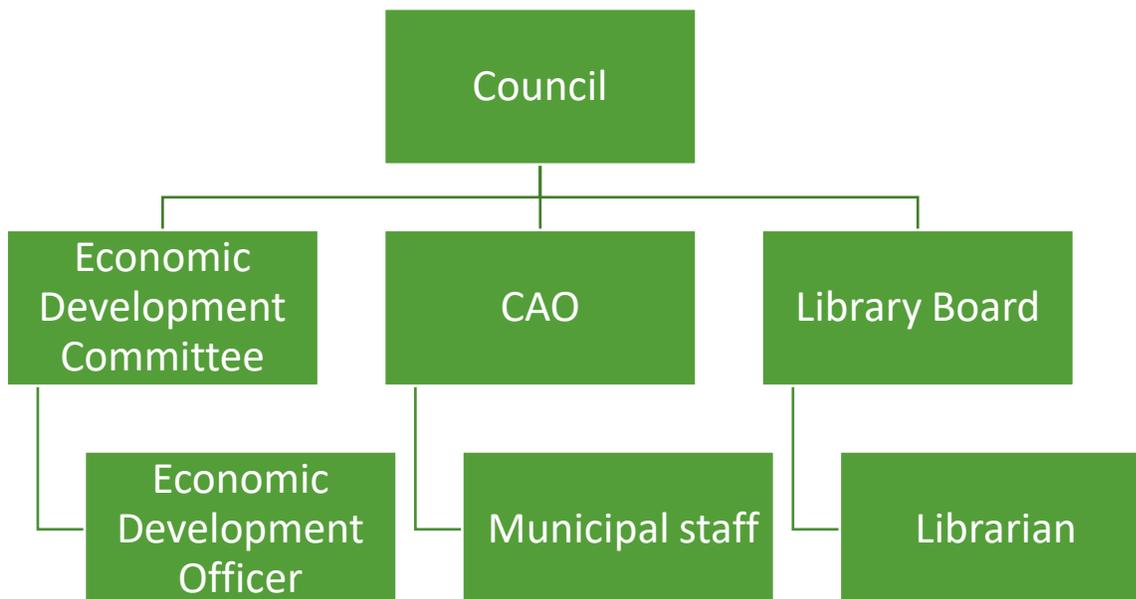
Table 3 Reserve Fund Balances

Reserve Account Balances	2020	2019
Recreation Activities	10,532	12,250
Water/Sewer Val Rita	145,021	100,108
Sewer Harty	17,619	15,755
Landfill Site	58,639	58,565
Columbarium	16,173	14,496
Centre St-Rita	66,561	66,476
Kids Christmas Party	15,694	16,386
Microfits projects	4,259	4,253
Capital funding`	299,442	279,409
Gas Tax and Perpetual	56,830	
<b>Total</b>	<b>690,770</b>	<b>579,803</b>

### Organizational and Staffing Level

The chart that follows, outlines the organization and staffing of the Municipality as it was in 2020.

Table 4 2020 Organizational Design



Most municipal staff report to the CAO, who, in turn, reports to the Mayor and Council. There are two key exceptions, the Library staff and the Economic Development Officer.

Ontario legislation provides for the appointment of a Library Board and gives the Library Board a certain degree of autonomy. The members are appointed by Council for the term. The Library Board must receive funding from the municipality each year, and is subject to any provisions the municipality may put in place, but it does have the authority to operate the library as it sees fit. This will become more important as the municipality develops the community hub concept, with most municipal operations in the former school, where the library is currently located. Recently a Trillium grant of \$150,000 was received and this is being utilized to upgrade the Library and purchase such items as iPads, to replace aging computers. An RFP is planned for February 2022 to develop a design for the library. There does not appear to be any conflict in direction or intentions, so at the moment this does not appear to be an issue.

The Economic Development Committee has a mandate provided by Council to oversee the economic development program. The intention appears to have been to gain the skill and commitment of business leaders within the community by including them on the committee. However, the committee has not met for over a year and the former Economic Development Officer found the arrangement difficult, potentially having conflicting priorities or directions from the committee and from the CAO – representing Council. It was also difficult to get substantive direction from the committee when it did not meet regularly.

The concept of engaging business leaders in the economic development program has substantial merit, but it may be more useful to restructure it as an advisory committee, with the new Economic Development Officer reporting to the CAO.

The table below identifies the municipalities that are used for comparison purposes throughout this report. It identifies the population and the number of households in each municipality, and the total staff in each municipality, as reported in the 2020 Financial Information Returns (FIRs) filed with the province. In order to provide a more useful comparison between municipalities, the staffing is compared based on the number of households per staff and the number of persons in the population per staff member.

Table 5 **Number of Full-time Equivalent Staff per Household and Per Capita**

2020 FIR	Households	Population	Total FTE	HH per FTE	Pop Per FTE
Smooth Rock Falls T	693	1330	13	53	102
Moonbeam Tp	768	1231	11	70	112
Val Rita-Harty Tp	330	762	6.5	51	117
Ear Falls Tp	490	995	22.5	22	44
St-Charles M	997	1120	15	66	75
Larder Lake Tp	466	730	7.5	62	97

- Hhlds/Staff is calculated as Households divided by full-time staff equivalents, with part-time staff assumed to be .5 FTE.
- Excludes volunteer firefighters and seasonal staff.

As the table above indicates, staffing in Val Rita-Harty was lower than in the comparator municipalities in 2020; however the municipality has since increased its staffing by one and a half full-time equivalents (FTEs) with another position planned. Adding the positions already in place would reduce the population per FTE from 117 to 95, still in the range of comparator municipalities, but no longer the lowest staffed municipality.

Table 6 Staff by Function (2020 FIRs)

	Smooth Rock		Moonbeam		Val Rita-Harty		Ear Falls		St. Charles		Larder Lake	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
<b>Administration</b>	6		3	1	2	1	6	2	6		3	1
<b>Public Works</b>	5	1	3	1	3	1	6	3	4		4	
<b>Other Social Services</b>							4	7	1			
<b>Parks and Rec</b>										2		
<b>Libraries</b>	1	1	2									
<b>Planning</b>							1					
<b>Other.</b>			2			1		1	1	3		
<b>Total</b>	12	2	10	2	5	3	17	13	12	5	7	1

- Excludes firefighters and seasonal staff for all municipalities.

In 2020, when this data was gathered, there were 2 full-time administrative staff in Val Rita - Harty which would make it the lowest staffed municipality across our group of comparators. The part-time position was the economic development officer which was shared with Opatatika. With the addition of a Municipal Clerk and conversion of the economic development position to full-time, the administrative staff in 2021 was higher than Larder Lake and Moonbeam, but remains lower than the others. The Public Works staffing in Val Rita-Harty is comparable to Moonbeam but much less than the other comparators. In addition, one of the full-time Public Works staff is just returning to work. So, for a year the Public Works Department of Val Rita-Harty was operating with less staff than normal and normal is on the low end of our comparators.

One factor of note is the staffing of economic development roles in communities neighbouring Val Rita-Harty. There does not seem to be a dependence on a regional or district level body in the lead economic development role as is often the case in other areas. This differs from other areas such as the Kirkland Lake area and Southern Ontario areas where a County or District association often takes the lead role. In many cases the CAO would be the local or lead staff person and the heavy lifting is done by the district/County. We even find this in communities with populations of 10,000 or more in Southern Ontario. However, in Val Rita-Harty there is a clear intention to encourage growth within the municipality, and growth in adjacent rural communities or in Kapuskasing would not be valued.

Bylaw enforcement is a purchased service from Kapuskasing. The arrangement for planning/Chief Building Official and building inspection is less formalized but purchased

through Kapuskasing. The comparators also contract for these services, whether with shared service organizations, other municipalities, or private companies.

Because library services are provided by a separate board, the tracking of staff in the FIRs is somewhat mixed and the data is often included in the other services category if not in the library FIR specifically. For instance, Larder Lake has a full-time librarian that reports to their Library Board.

Cochrane District Social Services Administrative Board provides Child Care and Social Services. It recently went through a process of adjustments for the community allocation of costs. Many smaller communities saw reduced allocations of costs which shifted the costs to the larger communities.

## TAX RATE COMPARISON

The table below shows how tax rates compare by the more significant property classes. A rate of .01 essentially means that each property is taxed at 1% of its assessed market value each year. So residential properties in Val Rita-Harty are assessed at 2.24% of their assessed value, slightly higher than most of the municipalities. The tax rate for commercial uses is very similar to the rate for residential uses, which makes it relatively low compared to other municipalities.

Table 7 Tax Rates by Class - 2020

	RT	CT	PT
	Residential	Commercial	Pipeline
Smooth Rock Falls T	0.01933943	0.03554166	0.02283637
Moonbeam Tp	0.01755662	0.02139274	0.01207018
Val Rita-Harty Tp	0.02237811	0.0231703	0.01566468
Ear Falls Tp	0.0217477	0.04306044	0.04830927
St-Charles M	0.0123492	0.01975067	0.06224113
Larder Lake Tp	0.02113445	0.04184621	

The tax rate for pipelines is relatively low in Val Rita-Harty; however, as the table below shows, the revenue from pipeline taxation is quite high, higher in fact than total revenue from residential taxes.

Table 8 Tax Revenue by Property Class - 2020

	Residential	Commercial	Pipeline	Other
Smooth Rock Falls T	38%	29%	30%	3%
Moonbeam Tp	82%	2%	14%	1%
Val Rita-Harty Tp	45%	3%	49%	2%
Ear Falls Tp	60%	10%	7%	23%
St-Charles M	89%	6%	2%	2%
Larder Lake Tp	91%	5%	0%	4%

Val Rita-Harty collects relatively little from commercial, industrial or other properties. What is particularly interesting is the dollar value derived from pipelines in Val Rita Harty compared to other communities, as well as the percentage that pipeline revenue is to the overall taxes in Val Rita Harty. Communities such as Moonbeam, St. Charles and Larder Lake all rely heavily on residential taxes with very little from other sources. Smooth Rock Falls has a balance of one third residential, commercial and pipelines.

As we look closer at the pipeline tax rates we see that Smooth Rock Falls derives slightly more revenue with a much higher tax rate. A look at the assessed value of the pipelines in Smooth Rock Falls shows a current value assessment of \$29.5m versus \$42m in Val Rita-Harty. While some of the other comparators have rates that are substantially higher, such as Ear Falls and St. Charles, this would indicate that Val Rita-Harty may want to review the tax rate for pipelines as it seems that the rate of taxation may be lower than other communities which could be a source of future additional revenue.

One item that is apparent in the tax class comparison is that the lowest commercial tax dollars (\$45,310) of any community is in Val Rita-Harty. This does provide evidence that efforts to attract new commercial activity may be warranted in order to generate additional tax revenue and to reduce the risk of relying on one tax class too significantly.

The residential tax rate is the highest of the comparator communities. Neighbouring Kapuskasing does have a slightly lower residential tax rate. This does suggest increases in the residential tax rate may harm efforts to attract more residential development to Val Rita-Harty.

## Key Municipal Facilities

### Community Centre

The Community Centre is the former school in Val Rita which was acquired by the municipality. There are currently a series of renovation projects underway, primarily funded by grants. At the conclusion of this process, the major Community Centre components will be:

- Municipal Offices – accommodating all staff (including the EDO) except for public works staff. There will be a reception wicket to grant the public access to municipal staff for such activities as payment taxes and utility bills, obtaining permits and licenses, registering for activities, etc. The Council Chambers will also be in the Municipal Office component.
- Library – The former school library has become the public library, operated by the Library Board.
- Gymnasium and Kitchen – suitable for use for many recreational activities and for special events such as community dinners, weddings and other “private” gatherings, etc.
- A Community Hall – A space intended as a place to “hang out” with entertainment options, to accommodate drop in or organized groups.

### Public Works Garage

The Town Garage is located on Municipal Street, near the outdoor rink. It is approximately 6,200 square feet and consists of two large bays used for storage and minor repair of various municipal vehicles.

The building was originally placed in service in 1973. It also houses a crew of three full-time staff members, along with additional part-time staff as required. A small office room and a washroom are also located in the Garage. Typical operating hours are Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Most town equipment is kept at the Garage, and maintained there when required. This includes a front end loader, grader and a combo truck (plow and sander). The site also includes a structure to store sand used for roads, and a storage facility used for various equipment, primarily equipment required seasonally.

### Outdoor Rink

The outdoor rink in Val Rita is a full hockey rink, with boards, nets and benches. There is a changeroom beside the rink, complete with a TV and vending machine, intended to serve as an area to spend some time rather than simply a change area to use the rink. Beside the change room is a garage for an ice clearance machine that is used as required to maintain an excellent ice surface.

### Fire Stations

There are fire stations in both Val Rita and Harty which cost about \$10,000 per year to maintain, although an additional \$22,000 was spent in 2021 to upgrade the stations. The Harty location houses a 2010 pumper as the water system is not adequate to supply hydrants. Val Rita has a

2001 conventional fire truck. Both are in good shape and are generally maintained by the Public Works staff, although the 2001 truck is nearing the end of its useful life. The fire trucks cost about \$10,000 per year to insure and maintain.

### **Municipal Building**

The municipal administration and Council meeting room is currently located in a town municipal building. The building costs \$30,000 a year to maintain, but \$90,000 was set aside in 2021 for renovations. The building is also home to the Caisse Populaire and the post office, which pay about \$10,300 annually in rent.

### **MicroFIT**

The municipality invested in the development of a series of solar panels which sell power into the electrical grid, called the MicroFit projects. They currently earn about \$40,000 per year but cost \$17,200 per year, plus principal payments of about \$54,000 per year.

## **Survey**

As part of the Service Review process a survey of residents was conducted. The survey was offered in English and French, and could be completed either on-line or on a paper copy. 37 responses to the survey were received. The majority (27) was female, but there was a wide range of adult ages among respondents. There were good response levels from 25 years old to 75 years old, with those respondents using paper surveys generally older than those that responded used the electronic version. Half of respondents work outside the community, and only one works inside Val Rita-Harty, other than the 7 who work from home. Four work in a remote location outside the community.

The table below outlines the various services offered by the municipality, indicates which services the respondents indicate they use, and which services they would like to see expanded even if that would increase costs, and which they would like to see reduced in scale in order to reduce costs.

Table 9 Survey Responses

	Use Service	Want Service Expanded	Want Service Reduced
Economic Development	17	8	2
Roads (Drive)	32	5	0
Roads (Walk)	27	2	3
Winter Road Maintenance	32	4	0
Garbage Collection and Disposal	21	18	0
Recycling	12	19	2
Garbage - Landfill	30	2	1
Water and Sewer	22	7	3
Community Hub - Kid's Programs	11	11	3
Community Hub - Adult Programs	11	12	4
Community Hub - Social Events	11	13	2
Fire Department	26	2	1
Enforcement of Property Standards	22	9	2
Enforcement of Animal Control	17	11	2
Library	25	5	1
Outdoor Rink	25	3	2

As is evident from the responses, all residents use the roads, and most use the garbage collection and landfill. Two thirds of the respondents use the water and sewer systems, which means they live in the town sites of Val Rita and Harty. Both the library and the outdoor rink have very high levels of usage.

The strongest interest in expanded services was garbage collection and recycling. Many respondents indicated a desire to see weekly garbage collection either year round, or, at least for an extended season – capturing all the warm weather. Many residents also indicated a desire to see collection of recyclables as is done in Kapuskasing. Those who drop off at the bins reported they are often full.

There was a strong interest in expanding the use of the Community Centre in all categories, children's program, adult programs, and special events. There was also a strong interest in more enforcement of property standards and animal control bylaws. Dog barking was reported as a problem in the communities, and some properties outside the communities were reported as having a particular property standards problem, generally too much junk stored on the properties.

There were some comments about the desire to improve the water treatment facilities so that individual homes would not be required to have water softeners.

The municipality sends information to residents in a variety of ways. Residents were also asked

how they receive information now – and how they would prefer the municipality communicates with them.

Table 10 **Communications with Residents**

–	Currently See This Medium	Would Prefer This Medium
<b>Paper Newsletter</b>	20	30
<b>With Tax Bill</b>	2	8
<b>Web Site</b>	2	11
<b>Email</b>	8	4
<b>Facebook</b>	3	14
<b>I call when I want information</b>	4	9

Most residents see the paper newsletter now – and virtually all would prefer to receive their communications in the form of a paper newsletter. Facebook and the web site were also recognized by many as a potentially strong means of communications – but far fewer use these approaches today, even though both are in place.

Several responses indicated they loved living in Val Rita-Harty and that they thought the municipal services were appropriate and well delivered.

## Municipal Services

### Public Works Services

The Public Works group, with a working Supervisor and two Operators, carries out and/or supervises many of the activities within Val Rita-Harty, with a total budget of \$738,145. This is made up as follows:

Table 11 **Public Works Budget**

	<b>2021 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>
<b>Salaries and Benefits</b>	257,450	314,196
<b>Loan Payments</b>	55,550	55,597
<b>Town Yard/Workshop</b>	41,850	38,500
<b>Bridges and Culverts</b>	25,000	10,406
<b>Ditching</b>	48,250	45,750
<b>Dust Control</b>	22,000	20,454
<b>Gravelling</b>	65,000	62,692
<b>Sanding/Snow Removal</b>	10,000	3,517
<b>Railway Crossing &amp; Safety Devices</b>	8,500	11,399
<b>Vehicles and Equipment</b>	116,345	142,078
<b>Street and Sentinel Lights</b>	16,800	9,572
<b>Garbage Collection</b>	59,700	56,100
<b>Landfill Maintenance</b>	11,700	17,843
<b>Total</b>	<b>738,145</b>	<b>788,104</b>

Salaries were lower in 2021 due to the worker who was off for most of the year. This will increase again in 2022, however the year was very stressful on the remaining two employees and no reduction in staffing recommended. Nevertheless, there is every indication that the Public Works group performs very well. Their staffing is less than or equal to other comparable municipalities. They perform activities such as the roads, bridges and culverts, conducting the snow plowing and sanding as required, supervising the garbage collection and maintaining the landfill site, supervising the water and sewer systems, and having enough familiarity with the systems to troubleshoot as required, maintaining the outdoor rink including clearing and watering the ice, and conducting almost all maintenance on the fleet of vehicles (including fire trucks). It is unusual for a small town to have a Public Works group that is that diverse.

It also appears to be effective. All the fleet vehicles look good and appear to be well maintained. Some of the items are quite old, such as the 23 year old grader. The plow/sander is 14 years old, beyond the point where replacement is usually recommended.

### Equipment List

- 1998 Champion Grader ( RFP planned for 2022)
- 2004 Kubota
- 2007 Mack 700 Truck/S.P./Sander
- 2014 John Deere Backhoe/Loader
- 2018 Chevrolet Silverado 1 Ton
- 2019 CAT Dozer
- Zamboni (not owned)
- Ford Pick-up Rental



Comparing Public Works and winter control costs to other municipalities is challenging as they do not all include the same items in Public Works. The table below compares based on 2020 FIR data.

Table 12 **Cost of Winter Control and Public Works per Person**

	Winter Control	Public Works
Smooth Rock Falls T	\$76	\$922
Moonbeam Tp	\$15	\$799
Val Rita-Harty Tp	\$59	\$907
Ear Falls Tp	\$98	\$269
St-Charles M	\$64	\$648
Larder Lake Tp	\$165	\$541

Winter control costs are lower than those in most other municipalities, but other Public Works costs are the second highest among the comparison municipalities. This is likely at least in part because in Val Rita-Harty Public Works includes the costs of operating the outdoor rink, and the cost of paying loans which are not included by all municipalities. The Val Rita-Harty costs also include the salaries and equipment used to support water and sewer distribution and collection systems, which should be allocated to those budgets instead.

### Environmental Services

Water and sewer rates have increased 1.5% per year in 2020 and 2021. This follows three years of 0% increases which, in turn, followed a very substantial rate increase of 20% in 2015. The large increase showed the importance of making at least cost of living increases every year to ensure rates do not fall behind the costs. The annual rates for residential users, and the annual costs and revenues are shown in the table below.

Table 13      **2021 Financial Performance – Water and Sewer Systems**

	Val Rita Water	Val Rita Sewer	Harty Sewer
Annual Rate to Consumers	\$923	\$244	\$229
Total Revenues	175,269	45,902	7,786
Total Expenditures	150,450	22,525	6,925
Contribution to Capital Reserve	24,819	23,377	\$861

The Val Rita water system serves 374 residents at 145 services. The water system is maintained by the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) at an annual cost of \$112,000 in 2021, with \$42,000 in materials. The Val Rita Drinking Water Financial Plan provides for regular small increases to water rates which should help to cover operating and urgent repair costs and avoid the need for large rate increases in the near future. The system cost \$3,225,000 to build and half that cost has been amortized. It should be noted that annual amortization costs for the environmental services totalled \$280,455 according to the accountant, more than total revenue from the three systems, indicating that revenues are clearly insufficient to replace or repair the systems.

The treatment capacity of the Val Rita water system is lower than expectation, both because of the inadequacy of manganese and iron removal and the subsequent hardness of water. There is also concern with the level of corrosion in the current water treatment plant. There is also concern water conditions could deteriorate with continued use and potential infiltration of ground water. Improvements to the system will be required in the future, to improve the water treatment and to deal with deteriorating equipment. An upgrade to the system was studied in 2019 and can be expected to cost \$3 million or more. This far exceeds the available capital funding (\$145,000 is in the capital reserve account, a \$25,000 contribution annually). It will therefore be necessary to prepare full plans and costing of the anticipated improvements so they can be included in funding applications as and when those opportunities arise. This will have to become one of the priorities of the Economic Development Officer; and further growth of Val Rita would be substantially enhanced if the water system could be upgraded.

OCWA also maintains the sanitary sewer systems, at a cost of \$19,525 in Val Rita and \$6,000 in Harty. These systems appear to be adequate and in acceptable condition.

### **Protection Services – Police and Fire**

The volunteer fire department is still very functional. It has a Chief and about 20 volunteer firefighters. Given that some firefighters work out of town, a turnout of about 10 volunteers can be expected for training and/or response events. Morale appears to be good, the equipment is good and well maintained (by Public Works), and the fire stations are in good shape and have been subject to upgrades in 2021. The total budget for 2021 was \$115,400 including \$30,000 in capital expenditures for the buildings and equipment. The department spends about \$28,000 on personnel, including insurance.

Table 14 Comparing Spending on Protective Services – 2020 FIR

	Police	Fire
Smooth Rock Falls T	\$250	\$75
Moonbeam Tp	\$192	\$117
Val Rita-Harty Tp	\$183	\$147
Ear Falls Tp	\$394	\$178
St-Charles M	\$261	\$168
Larder Lake Tp	\$271	\$300

The table above shows that Val Rita-Harty is among the lowest spending municipalities for both police and fire services. Police costs are budgeted at \$125,682 in 2021, down from \$139,065 in 2020. Police services are purchased from the OPP.

The fire service spending is not the lowest of the municipalities, partly due to the capital investments and efforts to support firefighter morale. The Ministry of Natural Resources is contracted to provide forest fire protection at an annual cost of \$9,225.

### Recreation and Cultural Services

Recreation and Cultural Services are expected to expand significantly with the development and programming of the new Community Centre facility (the former school). A variety of capital improvements are currently underway. The City has budgeted \$145,000 in 2021. The Library Board has received a grant and its renovations are currently underway. Most projects will be completed over 2021 and 2022, with projects planned to spend about \$375,000, most of which is funded by grant.

In 2020 the operating costs of the Community Centre were \$68,000 with another \$19,000 for “Community Hub projects”. In 2021 those costs were budgeted at \$55,000 plus \$25,000 for Community Hub projects. The municipality has, consistent with the Strategic Plan, advertised for a full-time Community Centre and Communications position. This person would be responsible to facilitate volunteers and create recreational programs and community events in order to make the building truly the central focus of the community, and part of the lives of all Val Rita-Harty residents. The position is also seen as central to the communications between the municipality and the residents, covering the areas outlined earlier in terms of the resident questionnaire Renovations are still underway on the Community Centre; and COVID has imposed some restrictions on the range of activities and events that can be organized.

As a consequence, it is recommended that filling this position be delayed until the renovations are completed and pandemic limitations (including personal concerns of potential participants) allow a more effective event and programming environment.

While the focus of this position should be on creating the “buzz” around the Community Centre, ensuring there are programs and events suitable for all members of the community, they should also ensure effective communication for both Community Centre activities and other municipal

services. As noted in the survey, this will require an effective distribution of a paper newsletter and maintaining the web-site and Facebook page.

The outdoor rink is appreciated by many within the community and the incremental size and features of the change area are appreciated. It is budgeted for \$45,342 in 2021 – half of that to pay off the loan that helped build it.

The library cost \$35,5443 in 2020, with \$20,302 in salaries, \$13,430 in materials and \$1,811 in amortization costs. The 2021 budget is 28,700, plus the \$135,000 in capital improvements largely funded by grants.

### **Economic Development**

The 2021 budget for economic development is \$106,220, up slightly from actual costs in 2020. Of this, Fednor, the federal government’s economic development agency for Northern Ontario, is expected to contribute \$66,500.

The Economic Development program had a major change at the start of 2022. There was a full-time Economic Development Officer (EDO) position, shared with Opatatika in the past. That arrangement ended at the end of 2021 and a new full-time EDO was engaged with a mandate exclusive to Val Rita-Harty. This is consistent with the Strategic Plan which placed a high priority on economic development.

There are basically three components to economic development in Val Rita-Harty:

- Residential development, whether in the town sites or along the concession roads.
- Commercial/industrial development, most likely along Highway 11.
- Agricultural development.

The municipality has developed a Community Improvement Plan Incentive which is designed to encourage economic development generally by providing economic incentives. Key provisions include:

- Creation of a Community Improvement Project Boundary encompassing the Val Rita community.
- For new housing within the area:
  - There are 15 vacant, municipally owned lots (3 of them sold) in Val Rita that the municipality would like to see developed and is offering for sale for \$1,000 (conditional on development within a year), less than the market value.
  - Other municipally owned lands would be sold for up to 90% less than market value.
  - A property tax rebate starting at 100% of property taxes and declining over 5 years.
  - Reduction of building permit fees to a maximum of \$2,500.
  - Reduction of planning application fees to a maximum of \$1,000.
  - Reduction of minor variance and demolition permit fees to a maximum of \$500 each.

- Grants of up to \$5,000 for each of energy efficiency or improved accessibility projects.
- For commercial projects
  - Up to \$5,000 grant towards capital costs.
  - Identification of federal and provincial incentives applicable in Northern Ontario.

Economic development has a different reality in Val Rita-Harty than in most municipalities. Almost half of tax revenues come from the pipeline. Commercial and industrial properties make up very little of the current tax revenues, and recent trends seem to be to reducing the level of commercial activity, not increasing it.

There are some commercial properties available, including the site across from the Town Hall – and the existing Town Hall itself, when the municipality moves to the school. The grant may assist in finding buyers for these properties; it is important that the municipality not allow these properties to become derelict and eyesores.

There is some interest in the residential lots as resale house prices have risen in recent years and they are approaching the cost of building a new house – but there has been low uptake to date. Further increases in housing prices may make these opportunities more viable in the future.

There is also some interaction between the subsidies and other services, particularly the development and planning fees. There are some real costs in delivering those services and the municipality may want to at least recover those costs.

At the current recovery amount of \$1000 and the waiving of taxes and building fees it may also be worth exploring a partnership with social housing providers for affordable, subsidized, rent geared to income or social housing enterprises that would develop the land. The municipality could contribute the land as its part in the development.

The most attractive economic development opportunities may be agriculture. Some farms have been developed in recent years, both in Val Rita-Harty and adjacent municipalities. The scale is not sufficient to generate the dealerships and agricultural support industries you see further down Highway 11, but that may come in the longer term. The biggest challenge the agriculture has presented is the removal of all trees, including those that have served to curtail snow drifting onto municipal roads. The municipality should consider a requirement that some trees be retained along the roadways or at least the “upwind” side of the roads, to assist with this challenge. This could be accomplished by maintaining the trees in the municipal right of way or ensuring as part of site plan control that a tree line is maintained along the frontage of the road. This would need to be addressed in the zoning bylaw.

Similarly, most municipalities that outsource their bylaw and planning services allow the outsourcer to collect the related fees and net them out of the costs charged to the client. If this option is pursued it may be appropriate to modify the Community Improvement Plan to remove the waiving of related fees.

Thus, the new EDO could focus on:

- A review of the Community Improvement Plan to determine if all provisions remain relevant and important.
- Consideration of agriculture as an economic development activity and the consideration of tree removal particularly on the upwind side of the road.
- Marketing of the town owned lots and the current municipal building.
- Supporting private efforts to sell commercial buildings and lands to support development.

This will keep the position busy for the short term, but it is not at all clear that these undertakings will warrant full time efforts in the future. Particularly with the Community Centre and Communications not filled, it may be useful to assign some of those duties to the EDO until the position is filled.

### **Bylaw Services**

Val Rita-Harty purchases bylaw enforcement services from neighbouring Kapuskasing, with the 2021 budget being \$2,000. The cost of the arrangement is set at double the salary cost of Kapuskasing for the position. This includes all necessary items to provide the services including vehicle, training, overhead, IT, cell phone, etc. As an all in cost this is a straight forward method of cost recovery and limits Val Rita Harty from having a cost for a service that it does not use. Only the hours used in Val Rita Harty are charged to Val Rita Harty. In discussion with Kapuskasing, the regular hours make it a known and planned workload for current staff.

For Val Rita Harty the service is economical but there are issues with service delivery. In discussions with other municipalities that purchase service from the private sector or other municipalities the main issue is consistency of service. In bylaw enforcement “follow up” is the key to enforcement and the focus is not just identification of an issue and issuing of a fine. Often in a bylaw enforcement the event includes an intervention and education that result in the behaviour change or rectification of the problem as the goal is not the issuing of a fine but behaviour modification. In discussions with both Val Rita Harty staff and Kapuskasing staff a formal agreement that outlines the services to be provided and the expectation for service delivery would assist in defining the bylaw enforcement response.

### **Chief Building Official / Planning Services**

As discussed earlier in the Report, CBO / Planning services are also purchased from Kapuskasing. Similar to bylaw they are purchased at a rate of double the applicable Kapuskasing salary for the position engaged in the service to allow for benefits, vacations, training, etc. The 2021 budget for planning included \$11,000 to purchase CBO services from Kapuskasing and another \$4,000 in consulting services to process changes to planning documents.

Table 15 Planning and Bylaw Expenses Comparison – 2020 FIRs

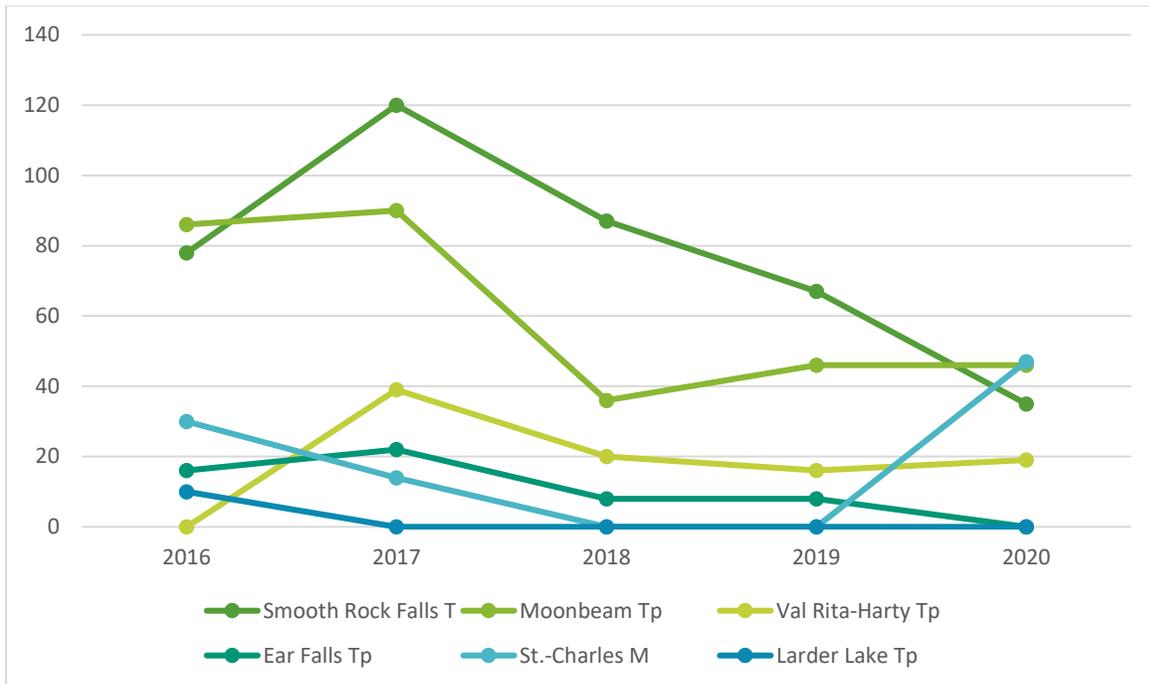
	Building Permit	Planning	Bylaw
Smooth Rock Falls T	\$0	\$245	\$58
Moonbeam Tp	\$0	\$69	\$9
Val Rita-Harty Tp	\$0	\$153	\$0
Ear Falls Tp	\$3	\$95	\$2
St-Charles M	\$31	\$38	\$7
Larder Lake Tp	\$5	\$6	\$3

The table above shows that expenses in most small communities tend to be low, largely responding to applications as and when they come. The expectation generally is that fees charged for these services will cover the costs of the services. This is not entirely true for bylaw enforcement, such as property standards and animal control. In this case, the general effort is education, with a view to changing behavior. Fine revenue may be part of the process, but is not intended to recover all costs.

Planning and CBO/Building inspection services are an on-demand service. If no one requires information or submits an application then there is no demand and no fee for services. Therefore the cost of having the service ready and available is born by the service provider. Kapuskasing is a service provider to a number of neighbouring municipalities to the point that at least one full-time building inspector is required to service the workload outside Kapuskasing. However, the workload is not planned and consistent but mostly concentrated in the construction season. It is our understanding that Kapuskasing has expressed an interest in amending the arrangement with municipalities to cost recover more than the direct salary cost but also include the cost of having the service ready and able to respond. For example, if no applications are received during a month, there is still a cost of having the service ready and able to respond. In addition, the fees for the application for the building permit are not remitted to Kapuskasing but to the municipality. The municipalities may be netting out more revenue than what is paid out for the service, particularly those with higher numbers of building permits.

Kapuskasing has put forward a proposal that all the purchasing municipalities should contribute equally towards the costs of a dedicated staff member in Kapuskasing. That would be unfair to Val Rita-Harty as it has a lower level of building permit issuance. Val-Rita-Harty should agree that the purchasing municipalities share the full cost of a dedicated person, but suggest perhaps that the costs be allocated to the municipalities based on the level of building permit activity – either the number of permits issued in each municipality, or the value of those permits, which would better reflect smaller and larger permits.

**Chart 1 Building Permits by Municipality – 2016 to 2020**



The chart above makes it clear that the level of building permit activity can vary quite widely from municipality to municipality and from year to year. Having an approach that allocates the costs among municipality based on the level of building permit activity in the municipality would be fairer, and more closely resemble the revenues municipalities receive from building permits.

It may also be useful to suggest that the permit fees be collected by Kapuskasing and netted out from the costs assigned to municipalities. This could help establish common fees and reduce the need for applicants to make two trips or deal with two institutions to meet their planning and bylaw needs.

We heard from many individuals about the need to pursue property standards more effectively, particularly on a variety of properties on the concession roads. Having Kapuskasing hire a dedicated individual to handle CBO and property standards issues could provide the extra resources required to ensure this can occur. It would also make a suitable activity to ensure this position can remain busy during lulls in building activity.

**Cemetery**

The cemetery is the responsibility of the Municipality and costs about \$5,800 per year to operate and maintain.

## **Health and Social Services**

Health and social services are all provided by other agencies. Contributions to the Porcupine Health Unit amounted to \$26,820 in 2021, while contributions to the ambulance service amounted to \$50,356. The municipality contributes \$29,440 to the North Centennial Manor and \$173,726 to the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board which has an office in Kapuskasing. The municipality makes an annual contribution of \$4,406 to support hospital capital costs.

## **Community Transportation**

The Community Transportation “Flex Shuttle” provides service between Kapuskasing and the adjacent rural communities, Opatatika, Val Rita-Harty and Moonbeam. It provides an on-demand shuttle service between the rural communities and any location in Kapuskasing, and back to the individual’s home. The program is fully funded by a provincial grant, and is operated by Val Rita-Harty.

Participation in the program has been modest, partly because of COVID, partly because the service is only offered two days a week in each direction, so it does not provide a real alternative to owning a vehicle. The program is budgeted at \$158,333 in 2021, and \$123,435 was spent in 2020. It is budgeted to tail off in 2023 with no expenditure in 2024. The service is uneconomic and would lose considerable money, based on the experience in other municipalities, even without the constraints imposed by COVID. The program should be terminated when the provincial funding expires.

## **Waste Collection and Disposal**

During 2021 Val Rita Harty purchased garbage collection services from the community of Moonbeam at a rate of \$1717 per collection day. This has been the practice for several years. In 2021 there were 31 collection days of service for a total cost of \$53,227. The waste is brought to the landfill operated by Val Rita Harty and there are no disposal fees charged, either for municipal waste, or for items brought to the landfill. Tires are accepted free, large furniture items are free, although refrigeration equipment costs \$25 if the refrigerant is not removed. The Municipality has a landfill attendant who is present during opening hours, generally three days a week in the summer and two days a week in the winter, both for limited hours.

There is no recycling collection service provided at the moment though some survey respondents indicate a desire to explore the cost of implementing the service. Moonbeam does provide recycling collection to its residents and brings the collected material to Kapuskasing for processing and shipping. Survey respondents and interviewees also expressed an interest in moving to a weekly collection year round, or at least extending the summer weekly collection period later in the year.

Table 16 Comparing Solid Waste and Recycling Costs per Resident– 2020 FIR

	SW Collection	SW Disposal	Recycling
Smooth Rock Falls T	\$47	-\$227	\$0
Moonbeam Tp	\$101	\$97	\$0
Val Rita-Harty Tp	\$74	\$44	\$1
Ear Falls Tp	\$151	\$156	\$0
St-Charles M	\$0	\$204	\$0
Larder Lake Tp	\$69	\$88	\$75

The table indicates that costs per resident of solid waste collection in Val Rita-Harty are modest, and lower per resident than those in Moonbeam which provides the service – although Moonbeam also collects recyclables and includes the costs under solid waste collection. St-Charles collects solid waste and recycling, but reports all the costs under solid waste disposal. The landfill operation in Val Rita-Harty is relatively inexpensive. The recycling program is also very inexpensive – but primarily because it does not include the collection of recycling.

There was some interest among interviewees in bringing waste collection in-house, eliminating the role of Moonbeam in the collection process. The issue with the provision of a service like waste collection for a municipality the size of Val Rita-Harty, is the cost of getting into the business. The purchase of a compacting garbage truck with the ability to dump collection carts is about \$355,000. This is the biggest component in the cost for the service. In a seven year financing analysis at 4%, the cost to service the loan is 64% of the annual cost. The estimated delivery time to manufacture a compacting garbage collection truck is about 16 months. While the chassis is manufactured by a traditional truck manufacturer, the body for collecting and compacting the waste is a speciality manufacturer such as Labrie based out of Quebec. They have to procure the truck chassis from the United States and then modify it for the collection body which also adds exchange risk to the equation. As an option to immediately reduce costs or expand service, the purchase of a compacting garbage truck is not viable and will require an interim solution or continuance of the existing contracts in order to allow sufficient time to procure the compacting garbage truck.

The annual tonnage collected in Val Rita Harty and reported in the Financial Information Returns is 280 tonnes in 2020. On a weekly basis, that is about 5 and a half tonnes of waste. A typical tandem axle industry standard garbage truck equipped with a Labrie Expert 2000 side loading body will hold about 10 tonnes of waste before needing to dump. Val Rita Harty is half the payload of the vehicle. The compacting ability of the vehicle is likely not necessary given the close proximity of the landfill. The purpose of compaction on a garbage truck is to allow the vehicle to stay on its route longer without having to go to the landfill. When there is insufficient waste to fill the truck or the trip to the landfill is short then the operational efficiency gained by having the ability to compact the waste is not as important.

Table 17 Comparing Costs of Internal and Purchased Waste Collection

	Total Costs	Cost per Day
<b>CONTRACT</b>		
Moonbeam cost	\$ 53,227	\$ 1,717
2021 Collection Days	31	
Cost of Contract expanded to full year (52 days)	\$ 89,284	
<b>INTERNAL SERVICE GARBAGE TRUCK</b>		
Finance (7yrs at 4%)	\$ 4,852	
Labour Cost	\$ 1,008	
Maintenance and Fuel	\$ 550	
Fuel	\$ 516	
Insurance	\$ 250	
Administration	\$ 376	
Internal Monthly cost	\$ 7,535	
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$ 90,421</b>	<b>\$ 2,917</b>
Finance 10yrs/4.5%	3,594	
Monthly Cost	\$ 6,277	
<b>Internal Full Year cost</b>	<b>\$ 73,325</b>	<b>\$ 2,430</b>

Note: Maintenance costs will rise as the vehicle ages. They assume indoor storage in the winter.

As can be seen from the table, the costs of conducting garbage collection in-house would be higher than the costs of the current contract. They would decline if weekly garbage collection was extended, largely as a result of decreasing the impact of the purchase of the vehicle. However that analysis also shows that Moonbeam might be willing to reduce the cost of their service if it were extended to more days.

Val Rita-Harty has 330 households. A route for a side-loading waste collection vehicle should be comprised of about 650-700 households to maximize a regular 6-7 hour collection day before the truck has reached full payload. This does not include travel time to get to the start of the collection route or to the landfill. With 330 households, Val Rita Harty is not a full day of collection. This means the capacity of the vehicle will not be fully utilized on the day of collection and, given that one day should be more than sufficient to accomplish the collection, the vehicle will sit unused for the majority of the week unless other work could be found. It should be noted that Val Rita-Harty would have to compete with Moonbeam and potentially Kapuskasing in seeking additional work.

If Val Rita-Harty would like to explore options for purchasing the waste collection service it could issue a tender to see if there are any private haulers that would be able to complete the

work at a lesser cost. In addition, Kapuskasing could also be a competitive provider of the service, which could give Val Rita-Harty more than one option to purchase the service.

An alternative solution that is more scalable to the number of homes and the waste stream, would be a dumping pickup truck insert with cart tipper or a dumping trailer similar to what is used for landscaping. Both of these options will require more labour but they are significantly less capital intensive than purchasing a new truck. The landscaping trailer also presents the option to use the trailer for other purposes. In addition, if there is a desire to implement a recycling program a simple partition across the trailer allows the trailer to be a two stream trailer capable of maintaining separation of the materials – no comingling which results in processing issues. This would accomplish the separation of paper fibers from containers. A dumping landscaping trailer can be purchased for \$15,000 to \$35,000 depending on the desired payload capability. Both of these options, pickup truck insert or landscaping trailer, do not require heavy equipment licenses. Because there is no requirement for special licensing, it allows more staff the ability to fulfill the requirements of the position. Depending on the option summer students may even be capable of providing the necessary staffing during summer months in order to cover vacation and the weekly collection schedule.

Table 18 Waste Collection Using Landscaping Trailer

Item	Estimated Cost
Purchase Price FOR TRAILER	\$ 35,000
Trailer over 3 years	\$ 12,359
Fuel	\$ 6,240
Insurance for Trailer	\$500
Labour 1 person per hour	26
Collection Day Hours	7
Collection Days	31
Total Salary	\$ 5,642
Benefits (28%)	\$ 1,580
Projected Total Cost	\$ 26,321
Cost per collection day (31 days)	\$849.05

The use of the landscaping trailer will be more labour intensive for the actual collection, requiring the worker to empty the bin into the trailer. This could be avoided with use of the pick-up truck insert. The landscaping trailer would be best suited to routes that do not require reversing. However, it will be more scalable to the service needs of Val Rita Harty. There is a smaller municipality that uses a pickup truck with truck bed cap to haul waste from about 110 properties. This practice requires double handling of the waste which increases the labour component. However, the landfill is located within the community and this is very cost effective for the volume of waste to be collected and transported.



Figure 2 Waste Collection Trailer in use

The picture below shows an Easy Dump Pickup truck waste collection insert with cart tipper option. It requires a 3/4 ton or 1 ton truck for use and will fit either short or long bed option, although the long bed option would obviously have more capacity.

One additional issue to note is that the purchase of a compacting garbage truck will increase the pressure to find other communities to service in order to spread the cost of the equipment over more homes/users. To put it another way, to cost recover the purchase of the compacting garbage truck Val Rita-Harty will have to sell services and compete with other municipalities and the private sector. The secondary impact on the need to sell services to other communities to offset or cost recover the capital of the garbage truck is on staffing. In order to staff the vehicle to be used in other communities, Val Rita



Figure 3 Pick-up truck insert

Harty staff must have additional time within their current work week to complete the collection in Val Rita Harty as well as have additional time to provide service elsewhere. This would mean that currently there is insufficient workload during the week for the existing staff – or additional staff would be required.

There was considerable interest among survey respondents in extending the weekly collection either year round – or at least later in the year. At the moment weekly summer collection ends in September; residents note that there are warm days later in the fall as well. There was also considerable interest in the collection of recycling. This can be a particular challenge as the public often seems to seek a recycling collection that captures all “recyclable” materials, even though plastics in particular have no practical means of recycling and there is no market for the materials collected, so they generally end up in a landfill.

In summary, it is recommended that Council not purchase a garbage truck. Ownership of a garbage truck requires use of the truck at least five days a week. There are already trucks in Moonbeam and Kapuskasing and there is very little chance Val Rita-Harty could find other municipalities that would use its service. If there is continued interest in in-house solid waste collection, it should be done with a lower tech dumping landscaping trailer, or a pick-up truck insert that would lift the bins currently in use.

The municipality should also consider purchasing more days of collection under the Moonbeam contract in order to handle the warmer fall period. It should also look at a recycling collection process, limited to paper/cardboard and bottles/cans, with no plastics accepted. The ability to put plastics in the recycling helps convince residents that they actually are recycled – when their use should instead be discouraged.

### **Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan that is almost complete does include a section that references timelines for reporting either monthly or quarterly and an annual review. It is very important that the annual reviews happen. Too often strategic plans are developed and not kept current. Each year the objectives and the projects within the strategic plan need to be discussed and adjustments made. In particular, funds need to be budgeted for these projects if necessary. The strategic plan document is not where the work stops. The next step is the development of workplans. One technique that is useful in this stage of the corporate strategic planning process is the use of “project charters”. This is an important step as the detailed workplans (project charters) include the description of the project which helps clarify what the project will and “will not” address. Too often staff complete a project or near completion of a project and Council says that is not what we expected of this project. Clarification and agreement on the front end of the project is key. Project Charters also identify the timeline, resources (internal or consultants), known constraints, public consultation requirements, and sources of information/inputs for the project. Once Council agrees that the project charter if completed will meet the expectation then staff can go away and implement. One item to note: the project charter is the plan to guide the work, it is not the completed project. Sometimes this stage can drag on as people try to solve the problem or complete the project before agreeing on the workplan.

### **Human Resources**

During the interviews with staff and Councillors many identified overall human resource concerns such as clarity on positions/roles, terms of employment, compensation, and procedures.

As part of this project a review of job descriptions was completed to ensure that they supported the needs of the organization and strategic plan.

In support of the Strategic Plan to develop a retention plan for staff key aspects of the terms of employment were reviewed and developed such as development of pay grid and position classification with pay equity requirements. Development of and clarity of policies and procedures with the creation of a complete HR Policies and Procedures Manual (with supporting forms for procedures).

These have been developed and submitted to Council for separate consideration as supporting pieces of the comprehensive service deliver and organizational review.

## Summary of Recommendations

- 1) Continue to raise water and sewer rates at least consistent with inflation.
- 2) Make seeking funding for the water system upgrade in Val Rita a priority.
- 3) The Economic Development Officer should report to the CAO and the Economic Development Committee should meet more often, but as an Advisory Committee to Council.
- 4) Consider delaying hiring of the Community Centre and Communications Co-ordinator until facility upgrades are completed and COVID restrictions eased. The EDO may have the capacity to assist with some of the planned work until the position is filled.
- 5) Have the EDO conduct a review of the Community Improvement Plan with a view to eliminating the deferred planning and building fees.
- 6) Continue with the Moonbeam contract for solid waste collection, purchasing additional days of collection in late spring and early fall. Before the contract expires, solicit bids/proposals from Moonbeam, Kapuskasing and any private collection organizations active in the area.
- 7) Conduct a recycling collection limited to paper/cardboard and bottles/cans (no plastics). Options to purchase the collection from Moonbeam should be compared with the costs of acquiring a dumping landscape trailer and conducting the collection in-house.
- 8) Negotiate with Kapuskasing and other service users with a view to finding a cost sharing mechanism that protects Kapuskasing but bases the allocation of costs on the extent each municipality uses the services, rather than simply dividing the costs between municipalities.
- 9) Discontinue the Flex Shuttle service when provincial funding ends, or ceases to cover all costs.
- 10) Develop project charters for each of the projects in the new Strategic Plan to guide the work and also allow Council to allocate staff time and resources to complete the projects.
- 11) Implement the recommended job descriptions, salary grid and position classification system with pay equity, and Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual.
- 12) Adopt the new position descriptions, HR policy and pay grids.