

Hi everyone,

So it seems that the information on the Lytton website and Facebook page are not in-depth enough and folks would like to know what is going on in more detail. Some of you know me, some of you don't. I have a tendency to be blunt but will always do my best for anyone in need and will work to get the job done. I am one of the Village Councillors as well as an employee of the RCMP so I consider it my duty to help at this time. If you want to know any more about me, ask Peggy.

That being said, here are some things you might not know. I, too, lost my home on 6/30. It burned to the ground while I tried to help at the wildfire, my husband in the car keeping our two dogs calm. After talking with my Corporal at the south end of town, I knew we were homeless with only the clothes on our backs and whatever I had in my bag. I then had to walk back to our car, climb in, face my husband with that information and see the devastation slam into him.

My friends and neighbours lost their homes. One of my fellow Councillors also lost his home, racing out the door with his family while flames were feet away. I tell you this not for pity but so you understand that we are in the exact same boat as you. I want to go home, too. I want to be able to look for the tiniest momento of my father that might have survived the fire. He died the month before I was born and I had a photograph and a few items that served to connect me to him, nothing more. My head knows these things are gone but my heart aches brutally for them. I want to be able to cook on my brand new stove that I saved up to buy and waited four long covid-months to get but it's a melted puddle of metal and glass. Yet I can't take the time to cry for everything my family has lost (though I keep starting to at the worst possible moments) because there is a mountain of work to be done for our residents and our village. Period. No excuses. No "I'm tired" or "I don't feel like it, I'm stressed" or "I could really use a day off" or even "it's the weekend". There is literally no time right now for us to grieve our personal losses; we have to work for you to ensure you have what you need right now and in the coming days.

The night of the fire, when there was nothing more to be done but get to safety, I took my family to Boston Bar because communications had gone down in Lytton earlier in the night and I had to get in contact with Symone. We spent the night frantically trying to contact friends to confirm their safety, connect with family to let them know we were okay and communicate with the Village Office staff to initiate the EOC and figure out our next steps. Thursday morning we drove to Kamloops after a sleepless night and more calls than I've made in a year. I walked into the Lytton EOC which at that time was housed in an office in the TNRD building and started helping Symone and Anne, the only other people there, as best I could. I had to step out to grab some clothes on Friday because you can only wash so much in a motel sink and what I had been wearing for two days smelled of smoke and was greyed with ash. We haven't stopped since except to grab some sleep here and there or find something to eat, mostly caffeine and sugar, to keep us going. We have been in the EOC everyday, doing the work of ten times the number of people to ensure that the residents of our community were taken care of with the Mayor and my fellow Councillors Hay & Leitch providing as much support as they humanly could with us all spread out across the region and virtually no tech to connect us.

To be clear, not once have any of the people doing the loudest complaining reached out to say "how can I help?", or offered to get whatever scraps of information we had managed to acquire, out to our people. Not once. They have our cell phone numbers and emails and obviously the ability and time to reach other residents yet all that we've heard have been complaints that we aren't doing enough. And the kicker is a portion of them are not even residents of Lytton; they live in the TNRD so we do not have any say in how they get their support or resources for them, and they do not have any say in what our residents do or don't do. The deliberate misinformation from those who should, and do, know better is galling.

We might not be out there giving interviews and making the news but we have been working every day for 12-15 hours a day, initially with only our cell phones and an iPad, to ensure our residents have support in place to get food and accommodations. On top of that, all the administrative functions by which a municipality is governed have to keep working. Our lives and homes have been shattered but for the rest of the world it's just another day. We lost everything in the Village Office, including all the Village's EOC equipment; our server with all the data on it; and our backup server housed in a separate building. All that data has to be recovered somehow; what can't be recovered has to be redone. This means replacing decades of work.

To help protect you, Symone and Anne have requested Ministerial Orders to take care of the following:

defer your tax payments and penalties;

defer property tax sales;

defer water and sewer payments and penalties;

request an answer on the state of the by-election;

confirm all of our agreements with the Province.

They, along with the Mayor, have been in calls and meetings with the Regional, Provincial and Federal governments to request everything from emergency assessment teams to the funding needed to pay for all of this because none of it is free. The TNRD EOC Team has worked with us to request that the emergency support services be put in place for our residents to name just a one thing and tried to support us in getting answers to what we need. These services are only available to you while you are under an Evacuation Order. If you have insurance, you will be moved off ESS at some point; if you don't have insurance, an alternate solution is being worked on for you. We haven't forgotten any of you. We have received firm commitments from the Provincial and Federal governments to aid in rebuilding Lytton and we are working on securing more monies to make sure everyone gets their home back without it costing them anything but that is something that is going to require many meetings. It isn't impossible but it will take some time, so please be patient. There are no conspiracies with big corporations; we are ensuring Lytton and her residents have an immediate and long term future.

Every choice and decision we make is with an eye to having homes we can all go back to. We are not trying to keep you from returning. As of right now, we do not control the site. The Ministry of the Environment currently controls access to the Village site until all hazards have been removed and air quality assessments and ash testing are completed. Once everything is safe and clear, the village will be returned to our control and the next phase begins. In the meantime, new fires are popping up and

earlier ones expanding and posing risks to the area again. The situation is fluid and must be monitored every day to see where fires have shifted to or are projected to impact. To add insult to injury, we aren't the only ones facing this type of terrible situation: there are currently 24 States of Emergency, 24 Evacuation Orders and 41 Evacuation Alerts in the TNRD region alone. And it's only July 17th; there are 2 more months of this coming.

We are in meeting after meeting and call after call with more agencies than you can shake a stick at it to make each stage of this process move forward in a timely manner; to obtain the funding that will be needed for all of those stages, including rebuilding; and ensure Lytton residents are taken care of while the cleanup and rebuilding happens. It might not feel like it now but winter is coming and we need to ensure suitable accommodations are in place well before then.

As of Monday, Rob Roycroft will be working on our Interim Housing for our residents. To give you an example of one call, our daily briefing call yesterday morning had over 150 participants on it from dozens of agencies and lasted over an hour. Meetings scheduled for Friday alone were at 8:30am, 9:00am, 10:00am, 11:00am, 2:00pm, 3:30pm and 6:00pm. These are the ones deemed necessary and sometimes we're in different meetings at the same time because there are so many. In between those were calls and urgent "5-mins" meetings.

To allow Symone and Anne to focus on the recovery and rebuild steps, we have engaged Team Rubicon, a volunteer organisation of disaster relief specialists. Team Rubicon is taking over EOC duties with Immediate Incident Management Team support which includes Planning, Site Logistics, Operations, Safety and more. They will also provide follow-on operations including ash sifting and debris removal once the site has been transferred back to us. Their arrival has lifted an enormous amount of work from our shoulders.

We have been asked a number times about how the next steps would happen so here's a broad outline. This not a timeline for their implementation as some will take place in sequence will others can happen concurrently.

- Working with various Provincial and Federal agencies to obtain funding
- Emergency Environmental Check (the hazard assessment happening now)
- Request Critical Damage Assessment
- Initial stage of cleanup (toxic stuff)
- General cleanup (general stuff)
- Service rebuild or repair/reconnection (some of these will be done in phases)
- Planning
- Redesign
- Rebuild

I get that folks are angry and hurt and scared about what comes next. Right there with you but it doesn't help anyone to be cruel. I hope those who have been using this awful circumstance for their own benefit will now pause and consider how much more harm they are doing to people who have suffered enough, and stop spreading rumours, innuendo, or outright lies, or sending abusive and threatening emails and messages to us. We need to help each other and pull together in the same direction. And if you think you can do a better job, maybe you should have stepped up instead of treating like dirt the very people working to get you what you need to put your life back together.

I'm sure some are going to be insulted over my saying that but, hey, I did say I was blunt. And I will still work to help you, just like the Mayor, Councillor Hay, Councillor Leitch, Symone, Anne and our Village office staff having been doing all along, because all Lytton residents matter to us.

If you want to know how things are moving, keep an eye on the weather and current fires. You can find up-to-date information on the fires at:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/5815bca37239492c98e4324daf5f955d> or go to the TNRD website at tnrd.ca and look for the Wildfire Dashboard. There is a weather map at cwfis.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca If you feel the need to make your hair stand on end, look at the satellite image of fires in our area alone at earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/148530/blazes-rage-in-british-columbia and remember that photo is taken from space and is almost 3 weeks old. There are more now.

We are all tired, we are all in pain, and we are all worried but we are still working daily on your behalf as we have been since day one and will continue to advocate for Lytton and her residents, always.

-Lilliane