

MINUTES

VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Friday, March 28, 2025, AT 12 PM

County of Paintearth and Zoom

Elroy Yakemchuk	County of Two Hills	Chair
Fred Crowle	Town of Hanna	Vice-chair
Dale Norton	County of Paintearth	Treasurer
Dale Pederson	Beaver County	Board of Directors
Dale Hedrick	St. Paul County	Board of Directors
Sonny Rajoo	Town of Two Hills	Board of Directors
Kevin McDougall	Town of Castor	Board of Directors
Greg Skriver	County of Newell	Board of Directors
Ron Checkel	Town of Coronation	Board of Directors
Len Bullock	Town of Vegreville	Board of Directors
Lorin Tkachuk	County of Lac La Biche	Board of Directors
Russ Norris	Town of Vauxhall	Board of Directors
Carly Firth	Town of Taber	Board of Directors
Jim Willet	Village of Coutts	Board of Directors
Margaret Plumtree	Executive Director	

Call to Order

Chair called the meeting to order at 12:04 pm

Agenda

Moved by Ron Checkel to approve the amended agenda. Carried

Minutes of October 25, 2024

Moved by Dale Norton to adopt the minutes of October 25, 2024. Carried

Highway Concerns

The board reviewed and discussed highway concerns across all zones. Moving forward, advocacy will prioritize:

- **Main priorities:**
 - Adding passing lanes, especially at:
 - The hill and bridge between Taber and Vauxhall
 - Emerson Bridge
 - Ashmont (resurfacing and a passing lane)
 - Alliance
 - Between Killam and Lac La Biche
 - Addressing highway maintenance, including Hwy 28 and Hwy 55
- **Secondary priorities:**
 - Promoting installation of electric vehicle charging stations (municipalities could access the Green Fund)
 - Addressing speeding concerns in Vauxhall, Hanna
 - Highlighting traffic volume concerns at the Hwy 36 and Hwy 14 intersection in Viking

Partnership Development

A discussion was held on current and potential partnerships and memberships:

- A partnership has been established with Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA)
- Membership is active with Alberta Municipalities.
- Exploring membership with the Rural Municipalities Association (RMA).
- Ongoing discussions for a potential reciprocal partnership with Rumble Alberta.

Communication & Digital Outreach

The Executive Director provided an update on VMHA's two core pillar platforms: **ExploreVMH.ca (Tourism)** and **GrowEast.ca (Economic Development)**, both of which continue to advance the association's mandate to promote tourism, highlight community assets, and attract investment along Highway 36.

◆ ExploreVMH.ca – Tourism Platform

- Showcases communities, attractions, and experiences along the Eastern Route.
- Recent work includes adding and updating content, with a current focus on festivals, events, and rodeos.
- Active promotion through Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn; posts are scheduled as possible due to the casual nature of the role.

- Plans underway for a tourism training and onboarding page for entrepreneurs, with online learning and event listings.

Next Steps: Increase partner listings, refine content, explore collaboration with Indigenous Tourism Alberta, and plan summer 2025 promotions, including map distribution and a potential tourism conference.

◆ **GrowEast.ca – Economic Development Platform**

- Supports economic attraction by profiling communities, industries, and opportunities.
- Recent updates include detailed community profiles and features such as “Your Path to Growth” messaging, data on housing, internet speeds, labour force, small business stats, and training opportunities.
- Integrated with ExploreVMH.ca to highlight the connection between tourism, lifestyle, and workforce attraction.

Next Steps: Build business and workforce resources, add regional investment and success stories, prepare data reports and visuals for grants and stakeholder presentations, and launch targeted social media and trade show outreach.

Next Meeting will be Zone Meetings

Margaret and chairs of zones will discuss next meeting date for zones.

Adjournment

Moved by Russ to adjourn the meeting at 12:49 pm. Carried.