



**TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN**  
**ADMINISTRATION'S QUARTERLY REPORT TO COUNCIL**

To: Mayor and Council  
From: John Thomas, Chief Administrative Officer  
Subject: Administration's Quarterly Report  
Date: January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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In addition to the normal day-to-day operations, the following highlights activities undertaken by Council and Staff at the Town of Lake Cowichan during the quarter, ending December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. This report is jointly authored by department heads and persons reporting to the CAO.

Department	Activities/Comments
<b>Council – Governing Body</b> <i>(Council, Council Committees, Workshops, Seminars).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sept 9 – Special Council Meeting</li><li>• Sept 9 – Committee of the Whole Meeting</li><li>• Sept 16 – Regular Council Meeting</li><li>• Sept 18 – Advisory Planning Commission Meeting</li><li>• Oct 14 – Committee of the Whole Meeting</li><li>• Oct 23 – Advisory Planning Commission Meeting</li><li>• Oct 28 – Regular Council Meeting</li><li>• Nov 4 – Committee of the Whole Meeting</li><li>• Nov 25 – Regular Council Meeting</li><li>• Dec 9 – Committee of the Whole Meeting</li><li>• Dec 16 – Regular Council Meeting</li><li>• Dec 18 – Advisory Planning Commission Meeting</li><li>• Dec 23 – Special Council Meeting</li><li>• Members of Council attended Health Network Summit</li><li>• Members of Council attended Reconciliation Workshop</li><li>• Members of Council attended UBCM Conference (meeting with Ministers and Ministerial Staff about healthcare, lagoon management, environment, housing, land use planning, and infrastructure)</li><li>• Members of Council, Staff, and Regional Partners met with VIHA staff on healthcare in the community and region</li><li>• Strategic Plan Workshop</li><li>• Awarded Freeman of the Town – Fmr. Mayor Ross Forrest</li></ul>



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<p><b>Corporate Services</b></p> <p><i>(Administration, Legislative Services, Climate Action, Economic Development, Human Resources, Elections, Special Projects)</i></p>	<p><b><u>Administrative/Legislative</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Council Remuneration Bylaw - Completed</li> <li>• Updated Credit Card Agreement for the Town - Completed</li> <li>• Permissive Tax Exemption Bylaw - Completed</li> <li>• Updated Fees and Charges Bylaw – In Progress</li> <li>• Updated Zoning Bylaw – R3 Setback correction – In Progress</li> <li>• Draft Delegation of (select) Development Approvals Bylaw – Under Review</li> <li>• Hired a level 3 water operator (fully qualified) to lead our water/wastewater systems operations (huge success).</li> <li>• Commenced recruitment for a Director of Bylaw and Development Services.</li> <li>• Closed 9 regulatory files, 1 ongoing 2025</li> <li>• Continued advancement of various discussions with Parties.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Elections</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training through LGMA for the Civic election in October 2026 / Elections Bylaw is being drafted</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Special Projects</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TEAMS training for many departmental staff – 15 registrants in attendance.</li> <li>• Freeman event preparation for January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – Invitations have been sent to family/friends of past and current Freemans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cowichan Lake Education Centre &amp; Tourism Centre</b></p> <p><i>(CLEC Operations, Tourism Centre Operations)</i></p>	<p><b><u>Facility Maintenance</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressed some much-needed upgrades to the main hall and dining room. The walls/trim/baseboards were prepped by our maintenance and custodian team, and the hall was painted with two coats of premium paint sourced from our local hardware.</li> <li>• As well, staff attended to smaller projects that needed attention after a high usage season and special attention by maintenance to look after some safety items that had to be modified ensures safety for our workers and or guests.</li> <li>• Currently we are working on fine tuning the possibility of rebuilding and enhancing the forest walk within the CLEC boundaries that the Yes Camp have committed to funding and the budgeted amount of \$25,000.00 Is included in the 2026 approved capital budget for CLEC.</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should this project move forward, a contract would be awarded according to best practice. Funds would be secured prior to commencement of the project. Staff would work with the contractor to ensure the scope of work was to standards and the trail would be completed in June of 2026. The trail would be an interpretive walking trail with signage that would also include our Local First Nation Language. The trail would be available for Centre guests as well as to the public.</li><li>• Also noteworthy is the ongoing evaluation of potential grants that would help with making building upgrades and or waterfront improvements that will help to attract a diverse target group.</li><li>• Also, noteworthy is the fact that two, not for profit organizations and current customers would like to help with funding of projects that will improve this Community owned facility. Letters of support from some high high-profile customers are on file that will support building improvements when the time is right.</li></ul>
<p><b>Planning and Development</b> (Bylaw, Building Inspections, Development and Building Permits, Planning Services)</p>	<p><b><u>Building Department</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• October-December Building Permits issued = 11 Completed = 6</li><li>• October-December Dwellings started = 7 Completed = 5</li><li>• 2025 Dwellings started =34</li></ul> <p><b><u>Bylaw Department</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• October-December Bylaw complaints = 13</li><li>• Property Maintenance complaints = 4</li><li>• Animal complaints = 2</li><li>• Vehicle complaints = 3</li><li>• Stop work orders = 1</li><li>• Illegal burning = 1</li><li>• Illegal Dwellings =1</li><li>• Sheltering overnight = 1</li></ul> <p><b><u>Planning Department</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Met with Provincial Planning, Land Use and Property staff to discuss status of Bill 44 requirements.</li><li>• Met with CMCH HAF program to discuss status of deliverables</li></ul>



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	<p><b>Regional matters</b> – participated in the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Planning meeting – October 28 Clay Reitsma presenting Regional Services North Cowichan methodology</li> <li>• Next Gen 911</li> <li>• Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Siting Policy Focus Group</li> </ul> <p><b>Applications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Development Permit and DVP application staff report to Council in Q4</li> <li>• Subdivision application – Emerald Valley – follow up</li> <li>• Building Permit and Business license reviews</li> </ul> <p><b>Bylaws</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R3 amendment bylaw</li> <li>• Development Approval Procedures Bylaw draft</li> <li>• Fees bylaw - Planning fees</li> <li>• HNR GIS review – meeting Bill 44 requirements. Review is completed.</li> <li>• Updated website to add housing related information – requirement of CMHC HAF grant</li> <li>• Meetings with developers and applicants as needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Services</b> <i>(Accounting, Finance Management, Payables, Receivables).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025 year-end process has started</li> <li>• Interim audit completed by MNP</li> <li>• Work on 2026 budget in progress; Fire Department, Lakeview Park and Cowichan Lake Education Centre budgets presented to Council</li> <li>• Fleet insurance and property insurance renewals completed</li> <li>• Reporting requirements and claims being submitted for grant funding including the Sewer Treatment Plant, Canada Summer Jobs etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Protective Services</b> <i>(Fire and Rescue)</i></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>During this quarter, the Fire Department maintained a high level of operational readiness while responding to a wide range of emergency and public service incidents. Members continued regular training, equipment checks, and officer coverage to ensure effective emergency response and community safety.</p>



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Services, Fire Smart)	<p><b>Operational &amp; Administrative Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business Meetings: 3</li><li>• Officer Duty Shifts Covered: 21</li><li>• Training Practices Held: 9</li><li>• Apparatus / Truck Checks Completed: 4</li></ul> <p><b>Emergency Response Activity</b></p> <p>The department responded to 36 emergency and service calls, including:</p> <p>Medical &amp; First Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Responder Calls: 5</li><li>• Lift Assists: 3</li><li>• Medical Aids: 2</li><li>• Overdose: 1</li><li>• Cardiac Arrest: 1</li></ul> <p>Fire &amp; Life Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fire / Smoke Incidents: 6</li><li>• Structure Fire (Mutual Aid): 1</li><li>• Alarm Activations: 3</li></ul> <p>Rescue, Public Service &amp; Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motor Vehicle Incidents (MVI): 8</li><li>• River Rescue: 1</li><li>• Public Service Call: 1</li><li>• Hydro / Electrical Trouble: 3</li></ul> <p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This quarter reflects a balanced focus on emergency response, training, and officer coverage, with a continued emphasis on medical response and motor vehicle incidents. Mutual aid and rescue capabilities remain an important component of service delivery. The department continues to provide reliable emergency services while maintaining readiness through regular training and equipment checks.</p>
<b>Public Works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Works continues to do inspections and repairs on public Facilities. Recently we have done repairs on the dock at Saywell</li></ul>



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<p><i>(Operations, Facilities, Parks, Roads, Infrastructure Management, Water/Sewer)</i></p>	<p>Park. We have installed some new lighting at the Duck pond pedestrian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bridge and several light replacements and repairs around town.</li> <li>● We have been looking at some upgrades and renovations at the Kaatza Health building to better suit the extra volume of patients.</li> <li>● The Bell Tower school building painting has been completed. There are still some repairs that are required on this building, and we will be requesting funding for this.</li> <li>● The Water Treatment Plant is operating as per design and is in good operating condition.</li> <li>● We had our main raw water pump fail and were unable to find parts due to the age of the pump. We have a new one on order and are hoping to receive it in January 2026.</li> <li>● The Town Sewer lagoon, we have now received the environmental assessment report, and our engineers are working on the design for the upgrades. This is our largest project for the next few years.</li> <li>● We are planning some water line upgrades in 2026 as the budget allows.</li> <li>● We will be requesting funding to tendering the design work for a new water main line from the Water Reservoir to South Shore Road.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emerging Issues of Note</b></p> <p><i>(Items which may become a priority within 1-3 months)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strategic OCP review include climate adaptation and meeting Bill 44 requirements</li> <li>● Density Bonus and Rental only Zoning Review – prepare RFP terms of reference</li> <li>● Short term rental</li> <li>● R-3 zoning amendments for permitted uses</li> <li>● Short term rental</li> <li>● Procurement policy implementatio</li> </ul>



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Respectfully Submitted,

John Thomas, MBA  
Chief Administrative Officer

Co-authors of this report:

- Alex Guterson, Bylaw Enforcement Officer & Building Inspector
- Brigid Reynolds, Planner
- Dalton Smith, Manager of CLEC Operations
- Doug Knott, Fire Chief
- Jas Sandhu, Superintendent of Public Works
- Roni-Lee Roach, Executive Secretary
- Ronnie Gill, Director of Finance/CFO