

TOWN OF AULT

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Hello, my name is Sharon Sullivan, and I have had the pleasure of working for the Town of Ault for almost 24 years. I served as the Town Clerk/Treasurer until May of 2023, when I was honored with the position of Town Administrator. I have also been serving as interim Town Clerk and have been transitioning into this new role since that time.

The Town is currently working on an update of the Comprehensive Plan and the Municipal Code. I am pleased that several of you participated in the comp-plan survey that was on the website regarding growth and land use issues. Many of the comments brought to light a lack of information the community may have regarding everyday issues the Town faces. This letter is for the purpose of communication regarding many of those issues.

Ault is often referred to as “A Unique Little Town” with a population of approximately 2500 residents. Ault was originally known as the McCallister Siding and later as Burgdorff Siding, then renamed in 1897 after Alexander Ault, a local hero who saved the agricultural community from financial ruin by purchasing the entire grain harvest during a time of economic hardship. Ault was incorporated in 1904 and has been through many changes since that time. The Town is built on land originally granted by the U.S. government to the Union Pacific Railroad, which was then sold to finance the railroad's construction. Ault also lies near the historic Trapper's Trail. Its economy was and remains rooted in the surrounding agriculture, although many who live in Ault now commute to neighboring municipalities to work.

Ault sits at the intersection of two major highways, US 85 and Hwy 14. Due to this fact, Ault deals with a large amount of transient traffic and truck traffic which travels through the main street of the Town (which is also Hwy 14). Both of these highways are the responsibility of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). Ault can make requests to CDOT regarding the condition of the roadways, but ultimately, the decision of any work or repairs are CDOT's decision to make. A recent traffic safety study was done in cooperation with CDOT, Weld County, Colorado State Patrol and local law enforcement agencies for the Hwy 14 corridor. Many areas of Hwy 14 were flagged to receive improvements, which includes areas within the Town of Ault limits. We are hopeful these improvements will be coming soon.

Ault, as with any municipality, relies on tax dollars and fees to operate. Many comments in the survey questioned how tax dollars are being used. I would like to offer some points of clarification. The metro district tax, which was mentioned in the surveys a few times, is a tax for the metro district in Conestoga. The Town of Ault does not receive any funds from this tax. Ault has a mill levy of 6.76 mills, which is one of the lowest tax levies among municipalities in the state and you will notice one of the lowest mill levies assessed on your property tax statement. The mill levy only provides approximately \$288,000 to the Town's budget per year. Other tax revenue received by the Town includes sales tax, highway use tax and franchise tax. The Water and Sewer Funds are enterprise funds which operate on fees and must maintain a positive balance. It has been my experience over the years that Ault leadership has made efforts to be frugal with the funds in our care.

Many comments stated that more services should be available to the residents with several good ideas such as trails, community art, park and recreational improvements and rec centers. Please keep in mind that more services also require more revenue. Grants provide some assistance, but the bulk of each project would be funded by the community. The Town makes efforts toward improvements, which are made slowly and as cost effective as possible. This year you will see the completion of pickle ball courts and a new half pipe for the Skate Park. Water line and street improvements were done on Second Street. We have many infrastructure needs that must be addressed in the next few years.

I understand the frustration of many as to the cost for the utility billing in the Town. Please understand that rising costs and the regulations imposed by the State are not an option for the Town. For example, upgrades to the WWTP facility have been mandated by the State twice since 2006, and we are likely facing a third upgrade in the next few years. I can tell you that the leadership did not “fail to reserve enough funds”, but the mandates force upgrades and laws require funds to meet a certain debt service. I have witnessed the leadership of the Town do their best to keep billing costs as low as possible.

I hope this information helped to explain some of what your Town leadership deals with on a regular basis. I appreciate the interest each of you shared in your survey comments and would like to hear from those of you who have not had a chance to comment or ask a question. Please feel free to send me an email anytime at sharon@aultcolorado.gov with your comments and questions. You are also welcome to attend the public meetings for the Town of Ault Town Board of Trustees every first and second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Ault Town Hall.

Sharon Sullivan
Town Administrator

A Unique Little Town