AUC
Alberta Utilities Commission

Synapse Real Estate Corp.
Synapse Data Centre Power Plant Project

Costs Award

November 3, 2026

Alberta Utilities Commission
Decision 31044-D01-2026
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Proceeding 31044

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1 Introduction

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission considers applications by the Olds Residents for Responsible Development group (ORRD) and the Town of Olds (the Town) for an award of costs for their participation in Proceeding 30732[1] (the original proceeding). For the reasons below, the Commission approves $44,420.70 in costs for ORRD and $11,998.35 in costs for the Town.

2. The following table sets out the initial and supplemental costs claimed by ORRD, the costs claimed by the Town, and the amounts awarded:

Claimant	Fees Claimed	Disbursements Claimed	GST Claimed	Total Claimed	Fees Awarded	Disbursements Awarded	GST Awarded	Total Awarded
ORRD - initial costs claim								
Ackroyd LLP	$38,069.50	$7.15	$1,903.84	$39,980.49	$38,069.50	$7.15	$1,903.84	$39,980.49
Brian Wiens	$3,052.50	$0.00	$152.63	$3,205.13	$3,052.50	$0.00	$152.63	$3,205.13
Intervener honoraria and disbursements	$0.00	$518.00	$22.50	$540.50	$0.00	$518.00	$22.50	$540.50
Total ORRD - initial	**$41,122.00**	**$525.15**	**$2,078.97**	**$43,726.12**	**$41,122.00**	**$525.15**	**$2,078.97**	**$43,726.12**
ORRD - supplemental costs claim								
Ackroyd LLP	$661.50	$0.00	$33.08	$694.58	$661.50	$0.00	$33.08	$694.58
Total ORRD - supplemental	**$661.50**	**$0.00**	**$33.08**	**$694.58**	**$661.50**	**$0.00**	**$33.08**	**$694.58**
Total ORRD - initial and supplemental	**$41,783.50**	**$525.15**	**$2,112.05**	**$44,420.70**	**$41,783.50**	**$525.15**	**$2,112.05**	**$44,420.70**
Town of Olds								
Brownlee LLP	$23,902.50	$1.80	$1,195.22	$25,099.52	$11,427.00	$0.00	$571.35	$11,998.35
MPE Engineering	$635.00	$0.00	$31.75	$666.75	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Cambium Inc.	$4,020.00	$0.00	$0.00	$4,020.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total	**$28,557.50**	**$1.80**	**$1,226.97**	**$29,786.27**	**$11,427.00**	**$0.00**	**$571.35**	**$11,998.35**
Total amount claimed by parties				**$74,206.97**	**Total amount awarded to parties**			**$56,419.05**

3. The original proceeding was convened by the Commission to consider an application from Synapse Real Estate Corp. for approval to construct and operate a 1,400-megawatt (MW) combined-cycle natural gas-fired power plant with a significant amount of backup diesel generation (1,800 MW). The Commission's Rule 009: *Rules on Intervener Costs* effective July 1, 2025, applies to the costs of participation in the original proceeding. ORRD and the Town submitted their costs claims within the 30-day timeline permitted by the rule and notice of the

[1] Proceeding 30732, Synapse Data Centre Power Plant.

costs applications was issued.[2] The record for this costs proceeding closed on October 7, 2026, the date it was determined that no information requests were required.

2 Olds Residents for Responsible Development's claims

4. The ORRD group consisted of over 200 individuals some of whom own or occupy lands in the project area. The group raised concerns regarding proximity to residential areas, the strain on municipal services, impacts to property values, increased noise, agricultural impacts, negative health effects, and effects on the environment in the original proceeding.

5. The ORRD and its members within 2000 metres of the project or whom resided in the town of Olds were granted standing in the original proceeding[3] and ORRD is eligible to recover costs in accordance with sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Section 4 of Rule 009.

6. The following is a breakdown of the initial and supplemental costs claimed by ORRD:[4]

Claimant	Hours			Fees	Disbursements	GST	Total
	Preparation	Attendance	Argument				
ORRD - initial costs claim							
Ackroyd LLP	82.10	0.00	0.00	$38,069.50	$7.15	$1,903.84	$39,980.49
Brian Wiens	8.25	0.00	0.00	$3,052.50	$0.00	$152.63	$3,205.13
Intervener honoraria and disbursements	0.00	0.00	0.00	$0.00	$518.00	$22.50	$540.50
Total ORRD - initial	**90.35**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**$41,122.00**	**$525.15**	**$2,078.97**	**$43,726.12**
ORRD - supplemental costs claim							
Ackroyd LLP	2.10	0.00	0.00	$661.50	$0.00	$33.08	$694.58
Total ORRD - supplemental	**2.10**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**$661.50**	**$0.00**	**$33.08**	**$694.58**
Total ORRD - initial and supplemental	**92.45**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**$41,783.50**	**$525.15**	**$2,112.05**	**$44,420.70**

7. Synapse raised the following issues with ORRD's initial cost application: that Ackroyd continued to incur legal costs despite Commission direction to suspend preparation of information requests and intervener evidence, that ORRD duplicated efforts of the Town with respect to air quality concerns, and that Ackroyd has claimed for the time required to travel instead of claiming only for mileage.

8. ORRD responded that the time entries after the Commission's direction to delay preparing information requests and intervener evidence were focused on file coordination,

[2] Exhibit 31044-X0021, AUC – Notice of costs applications; and AUC – Notice of costs applications (no exhibit number) filed in Proceeding 30732 on September 17, 2026.

[3] Exhibit 30732-X1289, AUC letter - Ruling on standing and Exhibit 30732-X1864, AUC letter - Second ruling on standing.

[4] ORRD filed revised costs application documents on September 17, 2026, as Exhibit 31044-X0015.01 and Exhibit 31044-X0016.01.

management, and monitoring responsibly. ORRD submitted these entries were reasonable and should be approved.[5]

9. ORRD also submitted that the travel time is reasonable and should be approved. Richard Secord coordinated the travel time for the original proceeding with travel time for another proceeding, greatly reducing the costs of the in-person meeting. ORRD also noted that the Commission has previously considered in-person meetings can be important to understand and serve clients needs.[6]

10. ORRD submitted that there was no duplication of work on air emissions with the Town given that the hours claimed by its expert were associated with the preparation of information requests and the preparation of a report. ORRD added that all of the time claimed occurred after Proceeding 30732 was created and halted on June 16, 2026, at the request of the Commission.

11. The Commission finds that ORRD acted responsibly in the original proceeding. The Commission is also satisfied that the initial and supplemental costs claimed are consistent with the scale of costs in Appendix A of Rule 009.

12. ORRD claimed intervener disbursements in the total amount of $518.00 for hall rentals ($450.00) and 3D Print & Design of a datacenter scale model ($68.00). The Commission finds the claims are reasonable in the circumstances of the original proceeding and are approved.

13. The Commission finds that the initial and supplemental legal costs claimed for Ackroyd LLP and the consulting costs claimed for Brian Wiens are reasonable and approves those costs in full.

14. The Commission agrees with ORRD that the time entries after the Commission's direction to suspend work on information requests and intervener evidence were reasonable. These time entries related primarily to reviewing new materials filed on the record and communicating with ORRD members, and not the preparation of information requests and intervener evidence. The Commission finds this was reasonable in the circumstances.

15. The Commission also continues to view in-person meetings as relevant to understand and serve clients needs. The Commission also accepts that Ackroyd acted reasonably in coordinating in-person meetings in different proceedings to manage costs effectively. The Commission therefore approves the time claimed for travel.

16. For the reasons above, the Commission approves ORRD's claims for recovery of costs in its initial and supplemental costs applications in the combined total amount of $44,420.70, consisting of combined total legal fees of $38,731.00, consulting fees of $3,052.50, legal disbursements of $7.15, intervener disbursements of $518.00, and combined total GST of $2,112.05.

[5] Exhibit 31044-X0025, 2026-10-01_ORRD Costs Reply Submissions, PDF page 2.
[6] Exhibit 31044-X0025, PDF page 2.

3 Town of Olds' claim

17. The Town participated in the original proceeding as the municipality whose residents, infrastructure, and services would be directly affected by the construction and operation of the project.

18. The Town was granted full participation and cost eligibility in the original proceeding[7] and is eligible to recover costs in accordance with section 21 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Section 4 of Rule 009.

19. The following is a breakdown of the costs claimed by the Town:[8]

Claimant	Hours			Fees	Disbursements	GST	Total
	Preparation	Attendance	Argument				
Town of Olds							
Brownlee LLP	63.30	0.00	0.00	$23,902.50	$1.80	$1,195.22	$25,099.52
MPE Engineering	3.50	0.00	0.00	$635.00	$0.00	$31.75	$666.75
Cambium Inc.	20.00	0.00	0.00	$4,020.00	$0.00	$0.00	$4,020.00
Total	**86.80**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**$28,557.50**	**$1.80**	**$1,226.97**	**$29,786.27**

20. Synapse raised the following issues with the Town's cost application: that the costs related to the prior Synapse application[9] predate the original application and were the subject of a prior cost claim;[10] that some of the work included is associated with municipal functions, e.g., bylaw and permit process review, rather that the original proceeding; and that Brownlee LLP has included costs for administrative and support work that are not eligible under Rule 009.

21. The Town responded to Synapse's comments as follows: the costs relating to Proceeding 30625 are related to the same project at issue in the original proceeding and are therefore recoverable; and costs related to the interplay between municipal jurisdiction and the Commission's process are relevant. However, the Town acknowledged administrative costs are not recoverable and should not have been included.

22. The Commission finds that the Town generally acted responsibly in the original proceeding. The Commission is also satisfied that the costs claimed are consistent with the scale of costs in Appendix A of Rule 009.

23. However, the Commission does not approve the full amount of the costs claimed in respect of the services performed by Brownlee LLP, MPE Engineering or Cambium Inc. for the reasons below.

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7 Exhibit 30731-X1289.

8 The Town filed revised costs application documents on September 16, 2026, consisting of Exhibit 31044-X0010 through Exhibit 31044-X0013, inclusive.

9 Proceeding 30625, Synapse Real Estate Corp, is seeking approval to construct and operate the Synapse Data Center, a 1.4GW (nominal capacity) natural gas-fired power plant with an attached 1GW Data Center.

10 Proceeding 30722, Costs Claim for Proceeding 30625 - Synapse Data Center Project.

24. The Town claimed legal fees for Brownlee LLP in the total amount of $23,902.50. The claim was supported by four invoices, included in Exhibit 31044-X0012. The Commission extracts certain information from the invoices in the following table:

Exhibit 31044-X0012 page reference:	Invoice #:	Date range for time entries:	Total billed hours:	Total legal fees claimed for the invoice:[11]
PDF pages 3-4	601810	Feb 18, 2026 - Feb 26, 2026	18.35	$7,323.50
PDF page 7	605208	Mar 1, 2026 - Mar 9, 2026	3.00	$1,193.00
PDF pages 10-12	606808	May 11, 2026 - May 28, 2026	33.35	$12,753.25
PDF pages 15-16	611262	May 29, 2026 - Aug 28, 2026	8.60	$2,632.75
		Total hours claimed:	63.30	$23,902.50

25. The legal fees claimed in Invoice 601810 and Invoice 605208 pre-date the filing of the application in the original proceeding. Section 2(2) of Rule 009 states: "Unless the Commission otherwise directs, these rules do not apply to any pre-application process connected with a [facilities] proceeding . . ." Further, Section 4(4) of Rule 009 states: "Unless otherwise directed, all costs applications must be filed within 30 days after the facilities proceeding, facilities review proceeding or other proceeding is closed."

26. As noted by Synapse, there was a previous cost claim to address costs associated with Proceeding 30625.[12] The Town has not explained why it did not submit a cost claim with respect to Proceeding 30625, or why is it appropriate to consider these costs, well past the 30-day deadline to submit a cost claim. While Proceeding 30625 and the original proceeding both contemplate the same project, they were separate proceedings, with separate costs processes. The Commission therefore denies the legal fees claimed in Invoice 601810 and Invoice 605208 as relating to a separate proceeding and being filed out of time. For these reasons, the Commission disallows $8,516.50[13] in legal fees claimed for work performed before the application in the original proceeding was filed. This disallowance results in a total of $15,386.00[14] in legal fees remaining eligible for costs recovery.

27. The legal fees remaining eligible for costs recovery include 2.5 hours for Kayla Smith,[15] claimed as "Admin/support services fees" at the rate of $60.00 per hour.[16] Since Rule 009 states: "Legal fees are deemed to include all overhead charges implicit in the normal operation of a law firm, including work performed by administrative, clerical or other support staff"[17] this amount is disallowed. This $150.00 disallowance results in a total of $15,236.00[18] in legal fees remaining eligible for costs recovery.

28. The Commission finds that research and work related to municipal bylaws is related to the original proceeding. The Commission often considers impacts of projects on municipal

[11] Total legal fees claimed per PDF page 1 of Exhibit 31044-X0012, Town of Olds, Supporting invoices, in the column labelled "Subtotal."
[12] In Proceeding 30722, Costs Claim for Proceeding 30625 - Synapse Data Center Project, the Commission considered and decided the Olds Residents for Responsible Development's costs application for participation in Proceeding 30625.
[13] $7,323.50 + $1,193.00 = $8,516.50.
[14] $23,902.50 - $8,516.50 = $15,386.00.
[15] Exhibit 31044-X0012, PDF pages 1, 15 and 16.
[16] Exhibit 31044-X0013, Town of Olds, Costs spreadsheet, Row 26.
[17] Rule 009, Appendix A – Scale of costs, Section 4.
[18] $15,386.00 - $150.00 = $15,236.00.

issues, including whether the project is compliant with municipal planning documents and land use policy.[19] The Commission therefore approves the time entries related to municipal bylaws.

29. However, the Commission finds that other time claimed relates to tasks not related to the original proceeding. Specifically, there is a significant amount of time related to research into the Alberta Electric System Operator's function and role. The original proceeding did not include an application for a connection order, and the project was not intended to connect to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System. The Commission therefore finds that research on the Alberta Electric System Operator's functions are not related to the original proceeding.

30. Because Brownlee LLP uses block billing, it is not possible to determine the exact time spent on tasks related to the Alberta Electric System Operator's functions. The Commission notes that there are 41.95 hours claimed, not including hours on Invoice 601810 and Invoice 605208, and approximately 11.15 hours,[20] or approximately 26 per cent, including tasks related to the Alberta Electric System Operator.

31. For these reasons, the Commission applies a 25 per cent reduction to the legal fees remaining eligible for costs recovery. Following this reduction, $11,427.00[21] in legal fees remain eligible for costs recovery. The Commission finds that the legal fees of $11,427.00 claimed for Brownlee LLP are reasonable and approves those costs.

32. The Town's claim for Brownlee LLP also included a disbursement of $1.80 for printing. The claim for printing was described as "Other Charges: Laser – Printing Letter paper."[22] The scale of costs in Rule 009 states "To support the environment, and given the existence of the eFiling System, the Commission no longer permits cost recovery for photocopies."[23] For this reason, the claimed disbursement is denied.

33. Accordingly, the Commission approves the Town's claim for Brownlee LLP in the amount of $11,998.35, consisting of legal fees of $11,427.00 and GST of $571.35.

34. The Town claimed consulting fees for MPE Engineering in the amount of $635.00 and filed a supporting invoice which is dated March 31, 2026.[24] The Town also claimed consulting fees for Cambium Inc. The supporting invoice for Cambium, in the amount of $4,020.00, indicates the work was performed during the "Period From: 03/01/2026 to 03/31/2026."[25]

35. Similar to the denied legal fees discussed above, the incurred fees for MPE Engineering and Cambium Inc. pre-date the filing of the application in the original proceeding. These costs would have been subject to a previous costs process to address costs associated with Proceeding 30625. The Town has not explained why it did not submit a cost claim with respect to Proceeding 30625, or why is it appropriate to consider these costs, well past the 30-day deadline

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19 See for example, Decision 28906-D01-2026: 2569059 Alberta Inc., Alberta Electric System Operator and AltaLink Management Ltd., Laramide Battery Energy Storage Facility and Connection, April 30, 2026.

20 Exhibit 31044-X0012, PDF pages 10 and 11, the time entries which include research on AESO functions sum to approximately 11.15 hours (2.25 + 4.65 + 0.75 + 3.50).

21 $15,236.00 * 0.75 = $11,427.00.

22 Exhibit 31044-X0012, PDF page 12.

23 Rule 009, Appendix A – Scale of costs, Section 5.

24 Exhibit 31044-X0012, PDF page 18.

25 Exhibit 31044-X0012, PDF page 21.

to submit a cost claim. The Commission therefore denies the fees claimed for MPE Engineering and Cambium Inc. as relating to a separate proceeding and being filed out of time.

36. For these reasons, the Commission disallows $666.75 to MPE Engineering and $4,020.00 to Cambium Inc. in fees claimed for work performed before the application in the original proceeding was filed.

37. For the reasons provided above, the Commission approves the Town's claim for recovery of costs in the total amount of $11,998.35, consisting of legal fees of $11,427.00 and GST of $571.35.

4 Order

38. The Commission approves applications 31044-A001 and 31044-A002, under sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Rule 009, and orders as follows:

(1) Synapse Real Estate Corp. shall pay intervener costs to the Olds Residents for Responsible Development group in the total amount of $44,420.70 within 30 days of this Order. Payment shall be made to Ackroyd LLP on behalf of the Olds Residents for Responsible Development group.

(2) Synapse Real Estate Corp. shall pay intervener costs to the Town of Olds in the total amount of $11,998.35 within 30 days of this Order. Payment shall be made to Brownlee LLP on behalf of the Town of Olds.

Dated on November 3, 2026.

Alberta Utilities Commission

Cairns Price
Commission Member