

Council of North Cypress-Langford, January 13, 2020

The council of the Municipality of North Cypress-Langford met on Monday morning, January 13, with all members present and Reeve Adriaansen in the chair. Also present were CAO Fraser and Development Officer McEntee.

The first business of the day was a delegation from Ken Waddell and Kate Atkinson of the *Neepawa Banner*. Waddell spoke first, not just as the publisher of the *Banner* but as president of the Manitoba Community Newspapers Association. Subscription based papers are particularly at hazard; a comparison of the subscription numbers with the population numbers shows a loss of "reach." Ads dry up. Waddell favours a free-distribution model that allows him to claim a better reach, making his ads more desirable. The consequence is that his only revenue is from ads and inserts, with a sideline in printing.

The *Banner* now comes to all 1400 of Carberry's mail boxes, and also to Brookdale, Wellwood, Justice, and the rural routes north from Austin. It is available in more than a hundred boxes throughout Neepawa, which would reach most residents of Langford who don't get their mail from Brookdale. An arrangement with Robert Smith puts the paper in the Sidney store. Additionally, the paper is available on line at www.mywestman.ca as full-page .pdf files — you see the whole paper, ads and all, and with no pay wall. Advertising flyers can be targeted to particular post offices, and the insertion rates are better than Canada Post charges for independent flyers.

For Carberry content, the *Banner* now runs a page of news including reports from Gladwyn Scott, and will consider any and all submissions for publication. Because of the reach of the paper, there can't be a disproportionate amount of Carberry news, but they will definitely try for a page particularly interesting to this area. Waddell and Atkinson were pleased to consider calling the page "Carberry/NCL" rather than just "Carberry."

Council thanked Waddell and Atkinson for their presentation. They already make use of the *Banner's* ads to fulfill their public notice requirements under the Municipal Act.

Finance and Accounts:

The financial statement for December 2019 was referred to council, and accounts totaling \$7,671,669.85 and direct withdrawals totaling \$112,902.94 were approved for payment.

Planning Matters:

Though there is no sure date for the approval of the province for the Planning Document, it should be quite shortly — within the next month or two. What will then be required is to update the council's zoning by-laws to comply with the Planning District's overall plan. As North Cypress's by-law dates from 1983, and Langford's from 2009, there will have to be a careful

review and redrafting to keep everything consistent. Development Officer McEntee strongly recommends that all member municipalities in the Cypress Planning District use the same consultant to ensure consistency. He also warns that though the province will grant up to 50% of the costs of such a review, the grant funding is limited, and the cutoff for grant applications is January 15. That is to say, immediately. He has contacted Glenboro and Carberry on the matter already and suggests requesting a grant for costs of \$40 thousand, even though that is almost certainly a high estimate. It is no problem to underspend, compared with the difficulties of asking for more money later.

The actual choice of the consultant, whether by agreement on a preferred firm or advertising an RFP, can wait; the grant application cannot.

On another matter, the determination of the capacity of the feedlot to the west of town is still in discussion. A meeting will have to be held with all stakeholders; the municipality, the owner, Manitoba Agriculture, Municipal Affairs, and Cypress Planning. At the end, whatever capacity is agreed on, the consequences in terms of a manure management plan will be mandated, not negotiated.

A persistent complaint about unsightly 'sea cans' in a residential area reveals a 'grey area' in the zoning by-law, one that might well be considered when the upcoming review of the by-law takes place. On the face of it, the 'cans' are a legitimate use of the property if covered by a permit. Unsightliness is difficult to assess and describe.

By-laws:

By-law No. 2/2019 to establish rates for the Langford Utility was given its final reading, and passed unanimously. It now becomes law, and the lengthy approval process of the Public Utilities Board is successfully concluded.

General Business:

Council at last approved the 2018 Audit as recently presented by Meyers Norris Penny. They hired Teresa Fiskel as ACAO for the Municipality of North Cypress-Langford, and set her salary. They then approved an Interim Operating Budget to cover the period from January 1, 2020 until the adoption of the 2020 Financial Plan.

A request for support from the Neepawa and District Medical Farm and Leisure Lottery in their application for a license by agreeing to fund any shortcomings in their line of credit was once again passed. In the many years the Lottery has been active there has never been a shortfall.

Council took time to discuss the details of the leases on the seventeen quarter sections the municipality owns, all but one of which are tenanted. The basic lease has been for \$20 per quarter per year plus the applicable taxes. This has been in place since that was reasonable. The committee

looking into the leases suggested raising the price to \$150 plus the taxes. Their suggestion was that this would apply to all the leases, including those that have been negotiated and contracted at a different rate. Council felt that it would be improper to overturn a signed agreement, and instead raised the basic rate to \$150 plus taxes *except* where other agreements are in place.

The closure of the newspaper, as discussed earlier, has forced a change in the way council's news is disseminated. Council favours sending out a newsletter from time to time with the most important news. The full report that the News-Express once printed will be made available by email to anyone who asks to be put on the list, and accessible on the municipal web site. The legal requirement of the Municipal Act is that notices of public hearings and so forth must be in a newspaper (the *Banner* has been approved for that purpose, and is already regularly used); on the municipal web site; and posted in the Municipal Office. In addition, notices are posted in the post offices at Brookdale, Wellwood and Edrans. Carberry's post office no longer allows such notices.

There was discussion of who would create and publish the newsletter; it isn't a small job. The CAO will be able to call on several people for help, but will be considered the one responsible. It was agreed that for a start there would be an issue to be mailed out with the tax notices, and another around Christmas time.

The Manitoba Good Roads Association holds an awards banquet each year to reward leaders in the creation and maintenance of Manitoba's roads. NCL has often been recognized at these events. The decision of whom to send to the banquet was tabled pending the announcement of the costs.

Council was presented with a quote from an exterminator to attend to any mouse infestation at the Carberry and Brookdale Public Works shops. This has been left to the Public Works staff in the past, and though there was some question whether the cost of several thousand dollars was justified, the majority decided that having the problem properly and consistently handled by professionals was preferable. Mice can seriously affect equipment they infest, and mishandling pesticides or dead pests can be a lethal hazard. Health and safety are primary considerations.

Asset Management is an exercise that is being mandated by the government to be practiced by all municipalities. It involves keeping an account of everything owned or controlled — from file cabinets to culverts and bridges — and knowing their expected life-span and renewal schedule. MuniSight, a software company presently used by the municipality, has an application that will introduce and maintain an Asset Management routine that will meet the government requirements. Council was asked whether they would like a demonstration from MuniSight. The costs for such a service are not small, AMM will be asked to lobby for funding to set up such a

system, but at least they can be claimed under Gas Tax. It was remembered that MLA Eileen Clarke spoke highly of the system during her recent visit. CAO Fraser was asked to look into what other municipalities are doing, and the costs they are facing.

The Golf Course is experiencing some difficulty with feral cats, and asked if the council would be able to help in any way. Council declined; such problems have to remain the concern of individual landholders.

Council agreed to renew membership in the Hudson Bay Route Association at \$300 per year. The port of Churchill has reopened, and shipped 137,000 Tonnes of prairie grain in 2019.

On the advice of their consultants Eco-West, council passed an addition to their Climate Change Local Action Plan, undertaking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 20% below 2016 levels for municipal operations within 10 years, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 2016 levels in the community within 10 years. Concerns were expressed about how binding such targets could be; no methods of measurement or sanctions have been presented. The Climate Change Local Action Plan has enabled the municipality to access government Climate Change funding.

The CAO asked what municipal employees not covered by the union agreement should receive as a cost of living adjustment. Council agreed that they should receive COLA which is set by the province each year.

The CAO has been contacted by an insurance firm that claims to be able to reduce the premium paid by the municipality by \$1600 per annum, and offer better coverage compared to the existing Blue Cross package they source through AMM. AMM has warned that there are small, aggressive firms offering benefits they are unlikely to be able to maintain. The size of the AMM's constituency and the solidity of Blue Cross argue for the best possible deal. If any change is considered, many firms would have to be considered, including whatever the union is offering.

The problem of the funding of the Rec Districts was brought up. It was hoped that going to a special services levy would provide transparency about Rec spending, but the discovery that the special services could not be charged to certain types of land — particularly railways and pipelines — meant that some districts were disadvantaged. Another Public Hearing has been called to rescind the special services by-law and get back to the original system of funding from general revenue. The new policy for the rec districts will have to look carefully at catchment areas and responsibilities.

To restore the error that took the cemetery's perpetual care fund into general revenue, Council resolved to pay the Carberry Plains Cemetery the sum of \$284,578.29, representing their surplus and perpetual care.

Communications:

Spruce Plains RCMP sent in their November and December statistics.

Ronald McDonald House Charities sends thanks for council's ongoing support, and asks for their support in 2020.

The Neepawa Chamber of Commerce and Neepawa Tourism will be holding their joint AGM on January 27. Individual tickets are \$50, and sponsorship opportunities are available.

Prairie Mountain Health Palliative Care Team, who organize Camp Bridges for bereaved children and teens, will be holding their camp this year at the Circle Square Ranch on May 29-31. They are thankful that they can meet the \$15 thousand cost of the camp this year without asking for further donations.

The Brookdale Cemetery writes to thank council for the \$2000 grant they received in 2019, which assisted with their costs of mowing.

Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation thanks Council for their membership in the Homegrown Conservation community, and sends their annual report.

Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association will be having a day seminar on March 18th in Carberry which will be an informational session for elected municipal officials on the multiple topics.

The Neepawa Curling Club writes to ask for assistance with repairs necessary to their facility.

Around the Table:

Councilor Blair suggested that the motions of council be numbered sequentially through the year instead of starting fresh each meeting. It would make seeking and recalling particular motions easier, since there wouldn't be the duplication of all the numbers. The CAO and the council agreed this was a good idea, and will go ahead with it.

Councilor Olmstead reminded everyone that the Wellwood Community Club's Mixed Bonspiel will be held on January 24 & 25, and that their Poker Derby will take place on February 8. She also thanked the Public Works graders for the work they have done with scrapers to reduce the danger of icy roads in the area.

Councilor Tolton asked if Teresa Fiskel's position at the front desk was being advertised, and was assured it was.

Councilor Murray had attended the meeting of the Neepawa Fire Department, and brought their statistics for work done in the Langford area. They are looking to buy some self-contained breathing apparatus, and wondered if Carberry/North Cypress-Langford would like to join with them to get a better price. He was advised that C/NCL had just recently purchased some. Perhaps they can partner with others in the Mutual Aid District. They are looking to create a list of available water tankers to help with grass fires and the like. EMO Brad Wells has a list of farmers with tankers and open irrigation pumps, and the Mutual Aid District maintains such a list as well.

Neepawa already has a list with all its colonies and major farmers, they're just looking to get as complete a list as possible. They are also looking for donations to help them acquire a side-by-side.

Councilor Drayson warned of ratepayers "shopping around" for a better opinion than the one given by the first councilor they approach. He was recently annoyed to find that someone had disregarded his refusal to permit clearing of a conservation corridor, and claimed that another councilor had permitted it. It was agreed that it might be a good idea, when dealing with an angry (and/or sneaky) constituent of that kind to advise other councilors what was happening to forestall anything similar.

Reeve Adriaansen has been contacted about the growing elk population in the area. There is nothing that a municipality can do about something that is Manitoba Conservation's responsibility, but it might help to lobby for some changes in the hunting license regulations to allow landowners a higher priority in issuing licenses.

CAO Fraser reported that the Fire Hall Extension should be complete by the end of this month, a matter of pride and congratulation for all involved. She asked if anyone had discovered any better safety programs while at the AMM convention, but no one had. She asked if she should go with the program offered by 1Life Safety or find out some other names.

She also reported she had received an inquiry from Manitoba Infrastructure whether there was a concern from North Cypress-Langford about the lighting at the intersection of the Franklin Road and Highway 16. No concerns were expressed.

She asked Council to consider opening a separate bank account for the Gas Tax money. It would make the use of Gas Tax money more traceable. Council felt that opening separate accounts was more elaboration than needed, when proper bookkeeping will keep the figures separate.

Lastly, she asked to schedule a pre-budget meeting for early February. The meeting adjourned at 12:35.