

Bancroft police costs to increase

By Nate Smelle

CAO Hazel Lambe has updated council on changes coming to Bancroft's OPP costing model.

As part of her report at council's Nov. 14 meeting, Lambe explained that the 2018 annual OPP billing statement showed that the total cost of policing services for Bancroft next year will be \$1,109,664 ? up \$13,055 from 2017. The statement also revealed the base cost in 2018 will represent 57.4 per cent, or \$191.35 per household.

Calls for service in 2018 will make up for the remaining 42.6 per cent of the bill, with residents in the Town of Bancroft paying \$268.95 per property.

Lambe pointed out that the billing statement also includes reconciliation adjustments for 2015 and 2016. In total, Bancroft residents will pay \$494.82 per household for police services.

She said the most significant changes to Bancroft's OPP costing model in 2018, will be the result of properties being excluded from billing and the collective agreement settlement.

According to Lambe, last January a delegation from the town expressed to Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Marie-France Lalonde that many of the properties now excluded ? billboards, solar and wind farms ? should have remained as chargeable properties. She said the delegation also made it clear to Lalonde that the town maintains the position that all properties with the potential to require the need for any emergency service (fire, police, EMS) must be charged equally.

?The activities we've tried to curb with economic development, and the services we provide here indicate calls for service,? said Lambe.

?It isn't a reflection of what our residents and our constituents are creating in calls for service. It's because we have such a high population ? much higher than just the town on our own ? so those calls for services are obviously going to Bancroft.?

The original recommendation based on analytical findings from the last review of the OPP cost model, were to increase the base amount to 60 per cent and reduce the calls for services to 40 per cent of the bill.

Acting mayor Paul Jenkins said he believes this ratio would be fairer to the people of Bancroft.

?It should be 60/40,? said Jenkins. ?We get hit hard on the calls for service aspect of this.?

Highlighting that the minister showed interest in the town's report, Lambe said that she has requested the town be a part of the OPP costing model review coming up in 2018. She also said the town has requested to send a delegation to the 2018 ROMA Conference to speak with the minister personally about the issue.