

Council gets costing on recycling



Mayor Bernice Jenkins honouring John O'Donnell of Bancroft on his retirement after 40 years of service in emergency services, most recently as acting chief of Hastings County EMS. O'Donnell noted that when he started, Bancroft's ambulance was operated by a funeral home. / TONY PEARSON Special to This Week

By Tony Pearson

After Bancroft council initially received a slew of confusing figures about the cost of the town taking over the collection and disposal of household and business recycling, treasurer, Craig Davidson, presented figures to last week's meeting of town council which showed that as claimed, the move should prove economical.

According to Davidson's numbers, the town will spend \$79,000 for a truck to handle the new recycling operation - \$57,000 a year for the lease, and \$22,000 for its operation and maintenance. It will also pay \$57,500 a year in new fees for moving the recycled material to the recycling centre. Finally, it will spend \$412,000 on renovations to the waste site, mostly for new compactors (\$230,600), plus other site construction (\$127,100); there are also planning, engineering, and consultant charges plus a contingency amount (\$56,900). The total amount (\$414,600) will be paid off over a ten year period at a rate of about \$45,000 a year.

This amounts to a total expense of around \$180,000, offset by about \$87,000 in revenue from provincial recycling incentive programs. That leaves a net cost of about \$94,000. This compares to a net cost of about \$105,000 if the town were to continue to have its recycling handled under the current outside contract. So the savings are better than \$10,000 a year ? and could be considerably more if future contracts had cost increases of more than 6 per cent, which the town considers likely. This would mean that the town would have its capital investment repaid within ten years.

There are still some questions. For example, the town take-over model assumes that no new town staff will be needed. The town now uses two workers for garbage pick-up, and the recycling contractor uses a third person, so whether the increased workload can still be handled by the two current town workers, or more staff hours will be needed, is open to question.

To be safe, given the confusion of previous reports from Greenview (Bancroft's environmental engineers), Council approved Deputy Mayor Paul Jenkins' motion to set up an ad hoc group to look at how the process was managed, as well as develop guidelines for presenting major capital projects in future.

The treasurer also presented figures on the town's water account. These show the town's share of the Snow Road water main project at \$230,000 (the Province contributed \$2 million). The other capital spending this year will be about \$50,000 in plant repairs. These costs will be met with a transfer of \$275,000 from the town's water reserve account. At the same time, it appears that 2016 water system costs will exceed water user charges by about \$35,000. Council will consider whether current rates need adjustment at a future time.

CAO Hazel Lambe reported that she is still working on a solution to Bancroft's burgeoning sewer deficit. Better flow statistics are needed, although OCWA, the current sewer managers, are apparently claiming that more metering would prove prohibitively expensive. OCWA has been summoned to October's council meeting for a performance review.

Turning to another financial issue, council unanimously rejected the staff suggestion to purchase a new propane furnace for the town office building, at a cost of \$101,677 (the low bid from a Peterborough firm. Since council had previously allocated only \$50,000 for

the project (including \$6,000 for design work), the recommended purchase would have put the town well over budget. Council sent the whole issue back to the building committee to come up with a more economical solution.

The other major initiative taken at council was a contentious one. By a vote of four to three, council passed a motion by Councillor Mary Kavanagh to dismiss the volunteer building committee and take total control of the York River boardwalk. Kavanagh was supported by councillors Charles Mullett, Barry McGibbon, and Tracy McGibbon. Mayor Bernice Jenkins, Deputy Mayor Paul Jenkins, and Councillor Bill Kilpatrick opposed the motion. For more on this issue, see the Commentary on the editorial pages. Council also heard from one of the stakeholders on the local transportation issue, as Heather Inwood-Montrose, CEO of Community Care North Hastings, outlined new initiatives taken by the TROUT in the area of 'travel trade:' promoting area visits by international tourists. She also discussed efforts to bring together all the transport providers in town to work out a coordinated plan for meeting the spectrum of local transportation needs, and hopefully leveraging more provincial funding.