

Mayor takes leave of absence

By Tony Pearson

Taking the advice of her doctor and her family, Bancroft Mayor Bernice Jenkins has decided to take some time to rest and restore her health and strength. She will be off for an indefinite period. While she is off-duty, Deputy Mayor Paul Jenkins will take over her functions.

"When I first decided to run for council over a decade ago, I said to my family and to myself that I was willing to invest the time and energy needed to do the job properly, as long as I could give it my best. To deal with the numerous challenges of running a town, keeping it moving forward, and bringing about needed change – all that takes a lot of energy, a lot more than it sometimes appears on the surface," the mayor stated. "But at some point, age catches up with you, and the wear and tear keeps mounting every year." "Bancroft needs 110 per cent from its mayor," she continued. "While I'm not ready for the nursing home just yet, my batteries aren't as fully charged as they usually are. A mayor can't just sit back and give orders. She has to lead by example. That means a lot of research, a lot of discussion, a lot of meetings, a lot of reports and applications, a lot of presentations. It takes a toll. I don't want to continue the role if I can't perform as well as I expect of myself and as well as Bancroft residents have a right to expect."

Jenkins admitted that the stress of attempting to keep together what has frequently been a fractious council hasn't helped her health and well-being. "I have always expected that council members would show civility and respect to each other and to staff. I may be a dinosaur, but I believe we still need these qualities to meet the serious problems we face. So I hope that council will support Paul. I know staff will step up and assist in every way possible."

She expressed her hope and trust that progress will continue on the major issues facing the town. "I wish everyone working on behalf of Bancroft all the best of luck in the months ahead. If I can regain the strength and vigor that I'm accustomed to hav[ing], I will rejoin the effort to make Bancroft financially healthy and economically advancing. I'll weigh things up at a later date. Right now, my doctor threatened that if he saw my car anywhere near town offices, he'd call the OPP to remove me."

Acting Mayor Paul Jenkins, on behalf of council, wished the mayor the best. "She can take all the time she needs. Family and health are the most important things." As for his new role, he stated that he was looking forward to it, although it will mean a lot more extra work. "But I'm expecting to get lots of support from my fellow councillors and town staff."

Looking ahead, Mayor Jenkins noted that her attachment to Bancroft remains strong. "There's one thing I am certain of," she added. "Whatever happens, Bancroft's future will always be in my thoughts and Bancroft's well-being will always be in my heart."