

Town to pay \$100,000 for station

By Tony Pearson

As previously reported in *Bancroft This Week*, the town is acquiring the historic train station, and will be relocating town offices there sometime in the new year. The deal involves the back taxes owed the town by the chamber of commerce.

In essence, the town will pay the chamber about \$50,000 for the building, some of its furniture, and its 'intellectual property' such as its databases on tourism. The chamber will then pay the town what it owes. Mayor Bernice Jenkins noted that the taxes were thus not being 'forgiven' but the town was acquiring the building for its value.

The building's value is close to \$1 million. However, the mortgage holders Fred and Wendy Melanson - also the people behind the restoration of the station and the establishment of the Bancroft Mineral Museum - have agreed to take a tax credit and lower the mortgage to \$100,000 payable over five years at zero per cent interest. Considering that's a two-thirds cut, it shows a generous spirit. The town expects to make the \$20,000 a year cost back in savings on heating and utility costs when compared to their current office building.

Some costs remain such as legal fees and land transfer taxes. There's also the cost of the move itself, and needed renovations to items such as the wiring to accommodate town needs.

The gem and mineral museum will remain at the station as will a tourist information centre.

The town will have some property choices to make in the new year starting with what to do with the current town office building.

The library, currently in a building that can't be made wheelchair accessible, could move in. Alternately, the library could move into Club 580 which Bancroft owns. It appears that because of uncertainty about school closures, it won't move into North Hastings High School, an option formerly discussed.

The town will have at least one, and possibly two, buildings to put on the market in 2017. Balanced against that is the need to find a new spot for the works yard. This move was necessitated by the province's decision to raise the rent on the current yard by \$100,000.