

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS

Minutes of a meeting of the council of the R.M. of Morris held on Tuesday, December 14th, 2004 commencing at 7:30 p.m. in the R.M. of Morris council chambers. Reeve Martens and Councillors Groening, Kornelsen, Neumann, Robert and Wiens were present with Reeve Martens in the chair. This meeting had been called by Reeve Martens as a public hearing regarding by-law number 1584/2004, which is a debenture by-law for a proposal to spend \$250,000.00 on the wellness centre within the Town of Morris.

A total of 18 persons, whose names and addresses are attached, attended the hearing.

Reeve Martens called the hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone present. Reeve Martens gave a brief history advising that the Town had asked for the money, and the R.M. had offered to pay \$25,000.00 per year for five years. The Town rejected this offer. The R.M. offered to pay \$250,000.00 up front and issue a 20-year debenture. In exchange, the R.M. of Morris would no longer be responsible for any portion of the operating costs. The operating costs are presently about \$16,000.00, but have been as high as \$30,000.00. Reeve Martens also listed the operating mill rate levies for all of the CCD's. The R.M. intends to continue paying extra monies towards the library, swimming pool and curling club. The R.M. council is not looking at a new tax, because there has always been a 1-2 mill levy for operating costs, which would now disappear. Reeve Martens then asked to hear from anyone who was in favour.

Mr. Bill Fulford spoke on favour of this proposal. He advised that he has 15 family members living in the area and 13 of them use the facility. Mr. Fulford discussed the problem with rural depopulation, and advised that one of the reasons for this depopulation is the lack of proper recreation facilities.

Reeve Martens asked if anyone else was in favour and no persons indicated that they wanted to be heard. Reeve Martens then advised that council would hear anyone who was opposed. Reeve Martens read a total of 4 separate letters being from Shoreline Swine, Mike Toews Farms, Byron and Laurie Edel and Bob Ritz. Reeve Martens asked if anyone was there to speak in opposition.

Mr. Rolf Penner advised that he is a young farmer raising a young family. He is opposed to the \$250,000.00 expenditure. Mr. Penner feels that this is contrary to the role of government and that the persons wanting to use the rink are a minority special interest group. Mr. Penner advised that a wellness centre or an arena is not a public good, but a luxury item. Mr. Penner advised that no one needs an arena. He also advised that he will be using the facilities in the future, but thinks that others should not be subsidizing him. Mr. Penner stated that it would be private capital that will pay for this rink. Not enough people saw the need to finance this arena privately. A copy of Mr. Penner's presentation is available.

Mr. Dick Enns advised that his reason for objecting is that he wants to see R.M. monies staying in the small communities. Mr. Enns feels that the R.M. council should spend the \$25,000.00 payment on small-town facilities. Mr. Enns believes that the Town of Morris is not responsible in spending their monies.

Bruce Mazinke reported that he sees the R.M. as being viewed only as a source of money. He questioned what the R.M. is responsible for. He has four children and enjoys the facilities.

Gord Siemens advised that he has been fighting for years to get school tax off property. Now there has been some success and it looks like we will get a wellness centre added on.

Stan Siemens advised that he was glad the arena is being built. He uses most facilities in town, but advised that on a per capita basis it is too much money for one facility. Mr. Siemens stated that the reason for boundaries is not to keep people in. The reason for these boundaries is to adjust the mill rates per area. Mr. Siemens stated that there was a

total of between 140-150 residents in this area. Mr. Siemens feels that the contribution should be based on residents rather than on assessment. Once this mill rate is locked in for 20 years it cannot come off.

There were no further presentations and Reeve Martens asked for questions.

A question was asked, "What are the duties of the R.M.?" Reeve Martens replied that the R.M.'s duty is to provide services, which would include drainage, water, roads and some recreation.

Udo Penner questioned about the mill rate that is already levied on these properties. The answer given was that the existing mill rate would come off the taxes.

Stan Siemens suggested that maybe there should be a district committee. He feels that this area needs a separate committee. Answer given was that there must be a willingness to make such a committee work. The Town of Morris is set up differently than the other Community Centre Districts. In Morris, the town council runs the arena.

Councillor Fraese attended the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Stan Siemens reported that being on such a committee would be a simple job. All they would have to do is set priorities and a budget.

Bill Fulford, who is also a Councillor for the Town of Morris, stated that the two facilities together cost \$170,000.00 per year.

Rolf Penner asked if the original was \$125,000.00, how did it get to \$250,000.00. The answer was that each Community Centre District has an approximate 2-mill levy.

Bruce Mazinke asked how do we get here. He has watched the struggle to build a new arena and also the collecting from the area.

Reeve Martens advised that the R.M. of Ritchot tax base provides capital, and users pay for the up-keep. If user fees do not cover the costs then the door is locked.

Bruce Mazinke expressed concerns about a long-term deal. He felt that a small area was coming up with this money.

Councillor Neumann advised that the council had made a mistake to sign the old agreement. This agreement was based on the R.M. paying for 18% of the operating expenses.

Councillor Groening stated that for the last 20 years the R.M. has been paying for a percentage of the operating. He believes that it is a good deal to pay for capital only.

Councillor Robert suggested that the R.M. should set up a C.C.D. to hold the line in the future. The town would like to have seen a larger contribution.

Rolf Penner expressed concern because a statement had been made that both facilities could operate without subsidies. Mr. Penner is skeptical of a capital contribution. He believes as soon as there is a loss, council will be asked for more money.

Mr. Matt Goertzen asked if there was any idea of what percentage of the Morris C.C.D. uses the arena or percentage of outside people that will use this facility. Council did not have this information.

Mr. Lorne Hamblin asked if the 1.746 mills would be locked in for 20 years, and was advised "yes". Mr. Hamblin questioned whether having a local committee could guarantee no increase for another facility, and the answer was "no".

Councillor Robert advised that there is no Morris C.C.D. committee.

Reeve Martens advised that the R.M. thought this was reasonable because it was a comparable mill rate to other CCD's.

Councillor Neumann advised that it would be a much harder sell to raise rates in the future.

Councillor Robert reported that a new swimming pool could be financed over the whole R.M. rather than just the Morris C.C.D. A pool or a library could go over the entire municipality.

Stan Siemens advised that recreation is per capita. The rate is high because the assessment is high.

Bruce Mazinke asked if the residents had any say and asked if we are overbuilding.

Dick Enns asked if council was shown any plans or diagrams that had an engineer stamp.

Reeve Martens advised that he had looked at several plans and that the R.M. was not consulted on engineered plans.

Dick Enns reported that the arena is being built on a six-inch, high-pressure water line.

Councillor Fulford for the Town of Morris reported that Stan Siemens and Bill Fulford are on the building committee.

Dick Enns stated that he had never seen an engineer allow building on high-pressure lines.

Gord Siemens questioned whether the levy would continue anyway even if the debenture were defeated.

Stan Siemens stated that a committee needs to be set up by the R.M. of Morris.

Councillor Kornelsen for the R.M. of Morris questioned the mayor of Morris on how much cash had been raised.

Mayor Barrie Stevenson replied that it was difficult to answer because of pledges, etc. Some pledges have been received and others have not. There will be a public meeting on January 8th to discuss the fundraising.

Leighton Siemens asked why we are worried if the rate is the same. Mr. Siemens is involved in 8-and-under hockey and over ½ of the children are from the country.

Councillor Robert reported that the rate used to be \$27,000.00 for operating.

Councillor Neumann reported that it used to be that the R.M. of Morris paid 18% and the town 72%. The R.M. paid 28% for years, then reduced because there was fewer people. Councillor Neumann continued that under the present agreement there is no dollar limit to the 18% costs.

Bruce Mazinke asked whether a C.C.D. meeting could be set up now.

Reeve Martens replied that this meeting was to deal with debentures.

Gordon Siemens suggested that we are signing our lives away for a 20-year period. He suggested that we need a C.C.D. committee first.

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Chris Hamblin asked "If 1.7 mills looks after the debenture, what about the library and other recreation facilities?"


Reeve Martens advised that these would be taken out of general revenue.

Bruce Mazinke asked if other CCD's have input.

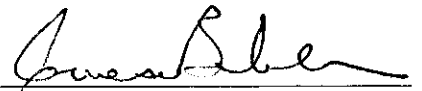
Councillor Groening reported that each C.C.D. makes recommendations, but the council has a final say.

There were no further questions and Reeve Martens thanked everyone for coming out. He stated that these comments were valuable and that council would make a decision at a later time and everyone present would be notified.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.



Reeve



C.A.O.