

# Pontiac council - end of pursuit of Mr McCann

Mo Laidlaw

Over 35 residents attended the regular Pontiac council meeting on the 12th June 2018, at the community centre in Luskville. There was a large contingent from Quyon, including the former mayor Roger Larose, as well as former councillors Denis Dubé, Lynne Beaton, Inès Pontiroli and Bill Twolan.

Diane Lacasse asked about recovering legal fees from former mayor and councillor Eddie McCann. "If I didn't pay my taxes you'd put me in collection," she said, but "I don't want a fight between Quyon and Luskville." Pam Komm asked the mayor, "If I had a debt will you make it go away?" The response was "No."

Ms Beaton spoke in support of Mr McCann, as a resident of Quyon who worked on Council with him as mayor from 2009 - 2013. "We spent hundreds of hours working together, and he was the height of professionalism, honesty and integrity. Many in the municipality will say good things about him." The anonymous "concerned citizens" who want McCann to refund the fees, didn't reveal themselves. The legal advice from Me Lafrenière is that the Municipal Code makes the Municipality responsible for legal fees of elected officials unless there was intent to deliberately harm the municipality. The Court of Appeal indicated that Mr McCann had acted in good faith and that the case highlighted confusion in the Act respecting elections. "We doubt that a Court would impose this financial burden on Mr. McCann. If the Municipality undertook proceedings to recover the fees, further costs would be incurred on both sides, and the Municipality would again have to pay Mr McCann's defence costs." (The full text of the legal advice is on the municipal web site.)

Council passed a resolution to stop seeking to recover Mr McCann's legal fees, given the lawyer's advice that the municipality would be unlikely to win. Councillors Draper-Maxsom and Howard voted against the resolution, and Mayor Joanne Labadie added her name to those in favour, although she is not obliged to vote unless there is a tie.

## **Mayor's presentation of highlights of 2017 financial report**

Québec law 122 changed the date of the required report on the municipality's financial situation from four weeks before the budget to the following June. It is on the web site. The highlights:

Revenue in 2017 was \$8.5 million, with \$7.8 million in expenses. Operating surplus is \$695,000, considered reasonable by the auditors. Several grants increased revenue and some projects were postponed because of floods, explaining the surplus.

The contribution to the MRC for police services was \$1.9 million, about 25%.

The municipal debt ratio was 78¢ per \$100, compared to 99¢ for the other MRC des Collines municipalities. We have no choice but to continue investing in infrastructure.

The external auditors are accountants Piché Lacroix. They reminded the municipality that TECQ grants (gas tax) had to be used before the end of the year. However the Québec government extended the deadline because many municipalities had delays getting engineering studies completed.

The auditor's report confirms that the Municipality is soundly managed and the Finance department is being cautious.

## **Ditches on 5th concession**

Blake Draper and Ed Scott added to previous concerns about blocked ditches on 5th Concession causing flooding on farmers' fields, as well as a new hole in Taber road where the culvert collapsed when the school bus passed. Mayor Labadie said there is no quick fix as ditches have been neglected for many years. Culverts need replacing or lowering if the ditches are deepened. The engineers have to look at the problems before anything can be done. She is discussing with MNA André Fortin and hopes to clarify the responsibility for draining fields.

## **Flood acquisition**

43 ch des Voiliers (near Plage Bélisle) will be acquired by the municipality for \$1, with the owner accepting the Public Safety Ministry's payment for properties affected by the 2017 spring floods.

**Expenses approved since the last regular meeting**

Invoices amounting to \$80,186 and fixed and pre-approved expenses of \$565,979 for May 2018, and incurred expenses for June of \$36,239.

\$124,588 to Construction Edelweiss to prepare and pave parts of ch Crégheur and the Lusk project.

\$64,225 to Lamarche McGuinty for gravel and crushed stone to add to 3.2 km of ch River and Kennedy.

\$47,654 and \$18,519 in supplementary costs for LCC & Associés, the builders of the community centre in Quyon.

\$44,813 to JB McClelland to supply culverts and drainage accessories.

\$13,256 to Équipements 3L for an extractor fan and CO2 fire extinguishing system for the Quyon community centre.

\$6,007 to Spectralité/Signoplus for barriers and signs for the public works department.

A maximum of \$2,500 for a street light at Outaouais/de la Rivière.

\$1,500 to Donna Kennedy to water and maintain the municipal flowers in Quyon.

\$1,000 to the Canadian Championship Dog Race in Bristol.

Minutes of council meetings contain the full text of bylaws and are posted on the municipal website: [www.municipalitepontiac.com](http://www.municipalitepontiac.com)

Mo's reports are archived at: [www.heritagepontiac.ca/Municipality](http://www.heritagepontiac.ca/Municipality)