

Pontiac Council meeting - council supports Ontario francophones

Mo Laidlaw

The Pontiac municipal council held their regular meeting on the 11th December at the Luskville Community centre, with only about 12 members of the public in attendance, as well as all members of council, and the Director General.

Public input.

Sheila McCrindle asked again about money in the budget for compost pickup starting in June 2019. Mayor Joanne Labadie said that the call for tenders has not yet been sent out. About \$35,000 has been put aside for this.

Joan Belsher wanted to know when the consultant's report on the floods will be available. Ms Labadie said it is late because of the second flood, vacations, and the loss of the communications director, but only awaits a few administrative items. Ms Belsher would have liked a consultation on the budget. Ms Labadie replied that she and councillors have listened to taxpayers in the last 13 months about their priorities. Ms Belsher is very disappointed about compost collection: "a lot of people are against door-to-door pickup."

At the end of the meeting she asked when the community centre in Quyon will be open. Ms Labadie stated, "definitely no New Year's Eve party." The municipality should receive the key from the contractor on the 13th December, and then it will be possible to start installing the kitchen appliances which have been in storage since August, do the gas hook-up and so on. The wheelchair ramp has not yet been poured. There have been many challenges, particularly keeping within the budget of \$1.5 million with no contingency fund. It will not be possible to reserve the centre until it is open.

Andrea Goffart, a farmer from Beechgrove, wanted to hear what councillors expected from the recent consultation on agriculture. Pontiac has 40% of all agricultural land in the MRC des Collines. Ms Labadie said that the report had not yet been received. At the consultations it was suggested that the MRC should have an agronomist on staff. Many MRCs including Pontiac use l'Arterre (arterre.ca) to help with start-up, partnership and transfer of farms, but Des Collines has a different concept.

Carl Hager followed up his complaint from a year ago. The burnt-out house on his street has been there for 5 years, and is dangerous and decreases property values in his neighbourhood. Ms Labadie explained that it is not as easy as "bulldozing derelict houses", there is a legal process to be followed, and considerable cost. "This issue comes up many times," she said.

A self-described septic system expert who filed a complaint about his neighbour's septic system seven months ago, wanted to know what had been done. Ms Labadie said that the inspector had run tests and nothing irregular was found, the file is closed. The complainant insisted that the test process was incorrectly done.

Council meetings in 2019 will continue to be on the second Tuesday of each month, except for the January meeting on the 15th. The May meeting will be held at the Breckenridge fire hall, and the August meeting at the new community centre in Quyon, all the rest in Luskville.

A resolution to ask the Premier of Ontario to reverse his decision to remove services for francophones was passed, with Councillor Maxsom voting against. Jean-Claude Carisse later thanked council for supporting Franco-Ontarians. Ms Labadie said this supports minority language rights across Canada, including anglophones in Québec. Rick Knox said he was disappointed in council's support for the resolution.

Councillor Maxsom also voted against the adoption of a policy on harassment in the workplace.

Following a Superior Court agreement on December 4, there will be an out-of-court settlement with H el ene Gervais and Alain Larose, who sued the municipality in 2016 about a building permit mixup. No further details are available yet.

Expenses approved at this and an earlier meeting:

Invoices amounting to \$85,989 and fixed expenses for November of \$559,284 and incurred expenses for December of \$9,021.

\$21,305 for a 2.4 m diameter culvert for ch Kennedy, and \$18,833 for a 2.1 m culvert for ch Swamp, from J.B. McClelland & Sons.

The Federation of Quebec Municipalities will provide assistance with management of human resources for \$12,750.

A contract has been given to Maria Eugenia Sahagun Huerta to coordinate the Quyon community centre project, for a maximum of 260 hours from January 1st, at \$36 per hour.

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