

# Pontiac Council meeting - Floods and garbage collection

Mo Laidlaw

About 30 residents attended the first question period of the regular meeting of Pontiac municipal council on the 14th May 2019 at the Breckenridge fire hall, but only about half remained for the council meeting. Charlotte Laforest has agreed to stay on a bit longer as Acting Director General. She attended along with Pierre Said, the new Executive Assistant, who has worked with the ministry of Municipal Affairs, and has useful expertise. Mayor Joanne Labadie introduced him to the audience, "He started work on Monday, with a baptism of water, as the municipality continues to be in a state of emergency."

## Floods

The state of emergency was renewed for five more days, subject to approval of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS). The water level is still above major flood level. Some areas are evacuated and several municipal roads are flooded. Questions were raised about the cost to the municipality of various emergency services provided. Ms Miller was concerned about CISSSO mental health workers not needed in Pontiac that could have been sent to other areas. CISSSO is funded by the Ministry of Health.

Labadie said that victims received \$600 from donations to the Red Cross. The municipality is responsible for the first 3 days of housing for evacuees, after which the MPS pays. There will be a financial aid package from the MPS, "we don't know how much yet, but it was 75% in 2017."

MPS pays for help from the armed forces. The municipality cannot ask directly for army help, although Labadie is meeting a colonel the day after this meeting.

Siri Ingebrigtsen asked about a post mortem on the flood, sandbagging and organizing volunteers. "Communication needs to be improved. We could have got more done. It goes further than sandbags, supplying food and respite for exhausted single people left in the home, manning pumps." Labadie replied that 170,000 sandbags were filled compared to 45,000 in 2017, but communication with volunteers was an issue highlighted in the report by Jean Perras on the 2017 flood (now tabled and therefore available to the public on the municipal website). "We had limited resources. In Québec the army could fill sandbags and help with municipal property but were not able to build walls on private property, unlike in Ontario. Clean up will take a long time. We will request the army to come in to help remove contaminated sandbags from private property when the water goes down."

Eardley-Masham road is a provincial road, the responsibility of the Ministry of Transport to repair washouts.

Property owners are responsible for keeping their entrance culverts clear to avoid ditches overflowing, as on Maple Lane.

Unfortunately the Blés d'Or seniors group were bumped from the Luskville community centre when the emergency measures were announced, after spending 3 hours cleaning and decorating for their event, booked a year before, but somehow missing from the system.

Sue Lamont, looking to the future, asked "If the government displaces people, where will we put them?" Labadie suggested that there will need to be flexibility, to build in parts of the green zone less desirable for agriculture, to avoid a decrease in population.

## Problems with garbage and recycling pickup

Several residents had questions about this, with garbage or recycling not being picked up since February (not related to the flood). This started when the contractor had truck problems and could not obtain a suitable replacement. Labadie said that at least until the end of May the pickup will be Thursday and Friday, as that is when a truck is available from a bigger company. The truck has an arm to pick up the wheelie bins. Bags etc left outside the bin will not be picked up. Laforest said, "We're sorry for the problems." (Recycling on 23 and 24 May, Garbage on 30 and 31 May.)

"The contract with Tom Orr Cartage will not be extended, as it cannot deliver the service. We'll be going out to tender," said Labadie. Residents will be informed of the new schedule for June and later.

Michel Labelle commended the municipal clerk who answered the phone for her excellent work, responding to frustrated people. To the suggestion that containers be provided for people to bring their

garbage, Labadie replied that flooded areas have been provided with containers for flood material and dumpsters for garbage, but these are not to be used by other residents.

### **Ch des Pères Dominicains**

Several residents had questions about the poor state of this road which has been on the list for repaving "for 20 years". Labadie said that "the priority this year is to finish ch de la Montagne. Then the ditches on ch de la Rivière and Dominicains must be dealt with as the lack of drainage is affecting Pères Dominicains. The trial on "Flex patch" has been good so this may be used to temporarily fix the holes. Heavy truck traffic because of the flood has made it worse. Unfortunately there are delays, work that was supposed to start in April hasn't happened."

Bill Twolan asked why Gauvreau got the contract for the ch Alary repair rather than a local firm that could have been cheaper. Since the Charbonneau commission, major contracts are tendered through the provincial website [seao.ca](http://seao.ca) to limit collusion on construction projects. Local companies should also check the municipal website frequently to keep informed.

Twolan also thanked the fire department for their prompt response to a grass fire when a small fire got out of control earlier in May.

### **Untreated sewage going into the river?**

Anita Trudeau asked if the rumour on Facebook is true. Labadie replied, "Instead of listening to rumours, inform yourself at the municipality, or on the website or municipal Facebook page. In fact, 10% of excess water from the flooding that gets into the sewers is being filtered and released into the Quyon river. The entire village would be evacuated if this were not done. All solid matter is going to the treatment lagoon."

Unfortunately even the cities of Gatineau and Ottawa are still releasing excess water during high rainfall, because storm sewers are not separate from sanitary sewers. See the Ottawa Riverkeeper report, <https://www.ottawariverkeeper.ca/brewery-creek-and-beyond-our-report-on-water-quality-in-the-river/>

### **Request to the CPTAQ**

Council supports Gérard Martin in his request to the CPTAQ to allow him to divide over 130 hectares of his farmland on ch Pères Dominicains and ch de la Rivière into two properties, with no change in agricultural use.

### **Approved:**

Invoices amounting to \$153,948 and fixed expenses for April, \$491,995; and incurred expenses for May, \$4,043.

\$500 to the Pontiac Scholarship fund for a student from the municipality.

At the end of the meeting Thomas Soulière commended Councillors Isabelle Patry and Leslie-Anne Barber for their help. Barber replied, "There are many people we want to thank when this is all over."

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

The municipal website is [www.municipalitepontiac.com](http://www.municipalitepontiac.com)