

# Pontiac Council meeting - after the flood

Mo Laidlaw

About 30 residents attended the regular meeting of Pontiac municipal council on the 11th June 2019, held again at the Breckenridge fire hall as the Lusville centre is being used for flood assistance by the Ministry of Public Security (MSP).

## **Public input, mostly on flood issues.**

Several people raised the issue of flooded roads meaning no access and therefore evacuation, although their residences were high and dry, on Sapinière and Bord de l'Eau. Mariève Beaulieu asked if there is a grant from the MSP to raise the road. Louis Garneau suggested that as the municipality now owns many (unusable) lots on Bord de l'Eau it should help pay. (These abandoned lots cannot be sold or built on. However if the road was widened it could possibly become a municipal road.) Sandy Hollis mentioned that empty lots are becoming eyesores, being used for parties, camping and dumping. Some cottage properties damaged in 2017 have been abandoned and are rotting.

## **Re-integration and clean-up**

Other residents have problems getting the electricity turned back on although the house is dry, and are frustrated with the delay in getting dumpsters for flood debris. The municipality originally suggested that individuals should rent their own dumpster and claim back the cost from MSP, to reduce problems of distance from individual lots and use by non-authorized people, but MSP won't refund cottagers, and some contractors refused to rent to individuals or had conditions on the material dumped. Instead the municipality will rent dumpsters and have them delivered to individuals, but since the estimated cost is \$80,000 for 3 weeks, it has to go to tender which will mean a brief delay.

Sand bag pickup will start on Saturday, 15 June on Cedarvale, and work westward towards Quyon, using the municipal loader and truck. The schedule will be on the municipal Facebook page and website. Volunteers are required to move sandbags to the edge of properties. Wet material is considered contaminated. Sand will be taken to the Ecocentre and used on roads next winter.

Heavy equipment will be rented from local companies to remove the dike from Quyon, for \$52,600 plus tax. The stone will be used to continue the improvement work on ch River started last year.

## **Cost of the flood emergency**

Lise Philippe asked about the cost of the flood for the municipality. Mayor Joanne Labadie stated that the MSP provides a grant of 75% of the cost of sand, trucks, dumpsters, and overtime for municipal employees etc. The flood has cost \$400,000 up to 11 June.

Sherril Noble is concerned about houses in the flood zone that have lost value. Labadie agreed, saying that she has discussed this with MP Will Amos and Québec Minister for the Outaouais Mathieu Lacombe. "Pontiac is 40% Gatineau Park, 40% agricultural zone. The waterfront was traditionally the best growth area, so where are new homes to go? The reality is different for small rural municipalities than for Gatineau and Montréal."

## **Communication needs improvement**

Camille Beaufort was impressed by community participation but felt that communication with school boards about buses was lacking and didn't keep track of families that moved several times.

Sheila McCrindle suggested that communication was not great despite being highlighted by Jean Perras' report on the 2017 flood, that council received last August. Labadie reminded her that Dominic Labadie left last August and wasn't replaced until the middle of the crisis. The municipality plans to work on updating the emergency plan frequently, since it is foreseeable that floods are the new normal.

**Other matters**

Roger Larose, Joan Belsher and Louis Garneau were concerned that the mayor didn't know the location of a new fire truck. "But the Fire Director knows," Labadie retorted.

Seven insurance companies were asked to submit offers for collective insurance for employees. Only two replied and their offers did not comply so were rejected. New offers will be requested.

A property on ch du Saphir (#1075) will be acquired by the municipality for \$1 following the spring 2017 floods. This is in Plage Charron, immediately to the east of ch Kennedy.

Summer day camp staff are hired, including two support workers for special needs children.

Councillor Sue McKay will replace the mayor or councillor Draper-Maxsom on the Mohr's Landing and Quyon Port Authority responsible for the ferry docks on both sides of the river, when necessary.

**Approved:**

Invoices amounting to \$316,862, and fixed expenses for May, \$814,971; and incurred expenses for June, \$25,139 including tax.

\$36,120 plus tax to Arsenal for air bottles for respirators for fire fighters.

\$450 plus tax for 4 chemical toilets for the Quyon tractor pull.

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