

RM OF SPRINGFIELD COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 2, 2019

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Note: These are my notes, I sometimes paraphrase items, I leave out items I do not consider of importance to taxpayers, I sometimes transcribe dialogue word for word...or leave dots to indicate omission of something, occasionally I even quote as indicated by " " marks, and I do not include the commentary of every speaker on Council, only those I consider add something to the discussion. It is my own personal feeling that there are certain on Council that employ a tactic know as **posturing** (behavior that is intended to impress or mislead) to promote their cause. It is my ability to speak to issues where I was not allowed to speak during Council meetings as we are restricted to Question Period and cannot comment on the comments of Councillors during the process.

Agenda - Add #1 Provincial Curling Club into Closed Meeting and #2 Manitoba Infrastructure Stakeholder meeting.

Question Period

Darryl Speer - We have had three requests in the last year for a change of use in the MX zoned properties, MD Steel, OETM, and BT Construction and our understanding we have at the Aggregate Task Force was that before these properties could be changed from MX use, they had to be delisted by the Province, and further that they had to be rehabilitated to Provincial standards and approved by them and they also for a change in use had to be re-zoned. So if this does not apply in these instances, I would like to know why this is the case. **Mayor Fell** - So when those applications came forth, Council does have the authority to approve under Conditional Use and the majority of Council exercised their democratic right to approve those applications. **Darryl Speer** - This is contrary to By-Law 73-22 which is an RM by-law. **Mayor Fell** - So again they are allowed under the Conditional Use by-law ??? um and Council heard the applications and there was a majority of Council therefore it was approved. **NOTE:** This is yet another example of the Mayor suggesting that a municipal council has the authority to ignore their own and provincial laws. One could question that the CAO who is responsible for giving direction to Council on correct policy and procedure did not interrupt and advise the Mayor that further research would be advisable. Council members are also complicit as it is their duty to abide by the law, express their opinions in public, and represent their constituents without being influenced by Mayor Fell. In short, everyone at the Council table appears to be reneging on their commitment to honour their Oath of Office. **Darryl Speer** - You are not allowed according to the Province. **Mayor Fell** - Thank you, Mr. Speers. If you would like to have any further questions regarding this, feel free to email our CAO and she'll get back to you. **NOTE:** The CAO is present and seated directly beside the Mayor. Why can she not respond directly, affording the audience an opportunity to hear the reply, rather than the Mayor deferring the speaker to email where, if and when the response is forthcoming, no one else is privy to it. Alternatively if the CAO does not have an immediate response, she could prepare and report back at the next scheduled meeting so the public as a whole can be advised.

Heather Erickson - I note in the Police Report there is an introduction of two new Auxiliary Officers without any names or bios and there is no mention of the cost of having these two new officers. Who are they? Where did they come from? How much are they costing taxpayers, if anything? Why wasn't this mentioned at the recent Police Board meeting in March? The Chief Mark Kane was there but provided no hint or suggestion of taking on Auxiliary Officers and it was not mentioned on the agenda. There was no discussion of the addition to the Springfield Police Service in either the COW meeting or Council meeting. Who is authorizing these initiatives? **Mayor Fell** - So I need those questions you have need to be directed to the Police Chief or the Chair of the Police Board. We fund the police service of Springfield. We do assume liability for the Police Service but we do not have direct authority to make decisions on their day to day operations. **Heather Erickson** - However it is part of the report in your council meeting. **Mayor Fell** - It is. **Heather Erickson** - ... on this agenda and there should be someone in here to respond to it. **Mayor Fell** - Um. **Heather Erickson** - there are two people here from the Board.... **Mayor Fell** - This is for information for Council but again if you have specific questions, please direct them to the Board or the Chief of Police. Thank you. **(NOTE: In addition to Anne Wowchuk, the Chair of the Springfield Police Board, and Greg Penner, one of the members, the Councillor that sits on the Police Board, Peter Williams, was at the Council table. You would think at least one of them could have provided an immediate answer to my question and if not, committed to providing me with the information subsequently. One thing I did not address in my questions and should have, but that Mayor Fell answered anyway, is liability. She said "We do assume liability for the Police Service". But the question is, WHO ASSUMES LIABILITY FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE AUXILIARY OFFICERS if they are operating as they do and did under the R.C.M.P. program as volunteers, and wearing a uniform with epaulets identifying them as Auxiliary, Springfield Police Service. If something happens to them while in the performance of some duty under our auspices, are the taxpayers of the municipality going to foot the bill for the legal liability? This was tried several years ago when the R.C.M.P. prohibited their wearing RCMP Auxiliary uniform insignia. The then Police Chief, Terry Pheby, took on Paul LaPorte as an Auxiliary Officer but**

a difference of opinion on uniform (i.e. the stripe on the pant which is exclusive to police officers) occurred. The project was abandoned. Some R.C.M.P. Auxiliary Officers from Beausejour did contact me as then Chair of the Police Board and ask if the new Chief of Police would be interested in their services. Their contact information and program materials were given to Chief Kane but he did not express interest at that time. What has changed subsequently? Are the restrictions imposed by the Police Board that existed when Chief Pheby and the Police Board tried the program, that is, no use of police vehicles, stripe, weapons, etc. going to continue? These questions could not be asked at the recent Police Board meeting as the whole process has not been advertised to the public until this Police monthly report and the next Police Board meeting is not until June 12, 2019. The writer will be addressing these matters in short order to the Chair of the Police Board, Anne Wowchuk. Her response will form part of a subsequent set of notes.)

Is there any other questions from the Gallery? Seeing none, I will close the Question Period

Springfield Recreation Centre Request for Proposal - Be it resolved that the Council of the RM of Springfield approve the proposed Request for Proposal for design and construction services of the Springfield Community Recreation Centre.

Councillor Wilson - I supported and voted for adoption of the Springfield Recreation Master Plan in 2016. One of the recommendations of the Rec Plan was a multiuse facility in Oakbank to fill gaps in interactive participation, a gathering place for more than 400 people in Springfield, and a community gathering space in Oakbank. I believe such a space is needed in Oakbank. This needed development was identified in the Springfield Rec Plan as a long term RM wide initiative and it identified the Recreation Commission as the focus for collaborative planning for recreation actions. I understand that the Recreation Commission received the RFP that's on the agenda tonight for review yesterday evening. The Rec Plan also stresses the need that new recreation assets be developed without penalty to existing centres and that a financially self sustained funding model based on the volunteer run organizations be operated on a full cost recovery basis and that program and use data be collected to support extension of the facilities and to identify demographic gaps. That being said and considering that the proposed \$8 million centre is a very significant investment for the RM, I've got questions. Has the Recreation Commission been supplied with demographics use information to identify the need for a new centre and the gaps such a centre would fill and have they had time to review it and provide the RM Council and citizens in general with their consideration whether or not this is..they can be reasonably certain that the recreation need is there? That is #1. #2 Has the recreation centre size, facilities, and revenue operations plan confirmed by a current Needs Analysis? And I believe this is particularly significant given the Recreation Plan suggests the new facility of more than 300 in two places and more than 400 in one place and a proposed RFP establishes a size for the building in Oakbank of 1,000. Another question, has the ongoing need to be self sustaining and need to ensure existing Rec Centres are not going to suffer whether loss of revenue or user volumes and the consequent liability? Has this ongoing need been confirmed by a business plan that takes into consideration the recent establishment of a 400 plus seat recreation centre in Cooks Creek and the review of that business plan by the Recreation Commission so they can make an informed recommendation to Council? Another comment, another question is that the level of funding that's been identified by the Rec Plan is up to 1/3 RM funding, 2/3 government and private. To this point the Recreation Planning has been in the range of in 1981 federal/provincial contribution 32%, RM contributions 7%, and that leaves 61% for the club to raise and that was the Hazelridge rink to up to 2016 which was 25% RM funding, 5% federal/provincial, and 70% Cooks Creek was theirs and I would just like to know why this funding model which is fairly consistent as far as the amount that's to be input by the club itself is going to be changed and 50% RM funding proposed to the ongoing operation of the new facility that is then factored in as we go forward and had the Recreation Commission had a chance to define on it. I guess what I am saying is the RFP does not ask for a Business Plan, it does not ask for a Use Analysis, or it does not address how the proposed centre will be developed and run so as not to compete with existing volunteer Rec Centres throughout the RM. So I would ask Council in light of these factors whether the move to spend significant funds on designing a structure that would be supported by massive borrowings supported by RM taxpayers is in fact premature and that fiscal prudence and community consensus building needs dictate that Council and Springfield recreation community overall need to receive much more information regarding how such a massive expenditure actually fits as appropriate in the RM and fits the RM community needs and that the Council review of a current cost recovery and replacement business case for any structure is a necessary first step and that this financial plan or step is also specifically intended in our RM Rec Plan if we are going to be following that before we proceed to award \$150,000. facility design construction RFP. I would ask that Council defer this motion until such time as this financial and marketing information has been presented, reviewed by the Rec Commission, and a recommendation supporting such a facility, whatever it might be, has been presented to Council by these community recreation providers. Thank you. **Mayor Fell** then asked Doug Murray, Facilities Manager and Shawn Wilkinson, Director of Community Services, to come forward. She also stated she would address some of his points because they have actually discussed this as a Council already so part of the RFP creates that revenue stream to show how much we will make from programming, it will lay out what we can charge for or what we should charge for it, you cannot do that before unless you have a plan and this is creating the plan for that facility. **(Note: When did that discussion occur because there is no mention in any of the agendas of COW or Council meetings? If the discussion is being done in closed session, that is not transparency as the Municipal Act is specific in what is or is not considered subject matter for In Camera discussion.)** There is no agreement about funding models for community centres and this is not a community centre, this is a municipality initiated facility so...and I would also like to point out to Cooks Creek ..and our budget hasn't been finalized

.. but we are giving them an additional \$150,000. which makes our municipal contribution half a million dollars which is almost 50% of the cost of the project. I am very happy as a Council that we want to support Cooks Creek and everything that they are doing. We did have a recreation meeting last night, we had confirmation ...Councillor Ralke was there as well....from every leader of the community centres across Springfield and there was somebody there from every ward...resounding support for this facility and going forward with this to RFP. Personally I think it is long overdue. It's not just an Oakbank facility, this is a Springfield facility and everybody in the RM will have access to it and I think this RFP will give us a lot of information. We've already done the Recreation Master Plan, they've spoken to the public and resoundingly came back and the public said that this is something that we want. And people here are paying tax dollars and if this is what they want, this is the first step in the process and there will be a lot of public consultation that comes back ...timer sounds...a lot of public consultation after this comes back. That is part of the RFP as well. I actually would like something clarified in our fee...so I know it mention software in the RFP but I would like turf to be put in there so um it's very clear that we should look at a turf facility. Now I don't know if we'll go forward with it but I would like it to be..be.. so the turf would be in the plan. Um, I have heard that it is a revenue generator we would have to go out to the public and say, you know, the cost is x amount higher however we will bring in this much more revenue therefore we are actually bringing more revenue in to pay for the facility and I think it is a valid conversation to have so I was wondering if Council would agree to just clarify that bit in the RFP. **Shawn Wilkinson** - Just to clarify, would that be a separate component. **Mayor Fell** - Yes. **Councillor Wilson** - Again, I must preface my comments by saying I think this is a needed facility and I think the general overall approach to it is good. The idea that a multipurpose facility that provides recreation opportunities to the community that are not presently available anywhere else is huge. The fact that it is proposing to be a very large venue...is a very positive thing. ... The object and direction of my questions is fiscal prudence and I think thatthere's a consensus on Council and probably in this room that this is a facility that is wanted..that is needed...and in principle I am not sure anybody disagrees with this. What I am counselling here is that we identify what exactly is needed and the size and the operating approach that this is going to take so the recreation community in Springfield and the taxpayers think their Council has their "ducks in a row" (have confidence in the decisions being made). The idea of a current needs analysis and some kind of a financial business plan that includes the concepts that are in the Rec Plan which are self supporting operationally, is a reserve being maintained for ongoing replacement and maintenance, what is their projected revenues versus expenses on which to base an informed decision. The other consideration is are we going to be drawing users from other clubs which are mainly volunteer run and funded and that is not acceptable. **Councillor Ralke** - I will always preach how proud I am of Anola and all we did...we raised everything. Nobody had to put any money in for anything. **(NOTE: My memory may be faulty but I am convinced that the RM of Springfield, that is taxpayers at large, contributed \$400,000. to the building of the addition to the Anola Community Club.)** This is an RFP that gives our staff the opportunity to go forward to get bids and interested parties to give us ideas of what would be good for our community. ... We'll be able to see what they offer us ...be able to see their suggestions...understand what it is that we need. This agency will review what is available in the surrounding areas...then they will tell us ...this is what we are hoping this RFP will do. The RFP doesn't mention cost or how it will be run. **Councillor Williams** - does not think we should delay with more studies and more analysis. **Mayor Fell** - Thinks this RFP will provide more information and said she does not think Council would want to go ahead without a lot of public input. **Councillor Fuhl** - Thinks the RFP will come through and tell them whether it is affordable or not and feasible. **Councillor Wilson** - What I want to know as someone that is responsible for spending the taxpayers' money ...how we can do that and the how is the size of the building. Do we need something that seats 1,000 people or 800 people? I would like to see a Business Plan because without that you may build something that is not self supporting and requires infusion of taxpayer dollars every year. Mentioned a survey sent out a number of years ago. One of the questions was, Would you like to have a pool in Springfield? and the overwhelming answer was YES. Wrong question. Would you like to have a pool in Springfield if everybody in the RM that contributed to it would have to pay an extra \$1200. on their tax bills? I think the answer would be considerably different. If it is only going to be utilized for large events, is it going to be self sustaining? **Mayor Fell** - Said everything will be answered by the RFP and thanked Doug and Colleen. Thinks it will give us a lot of answers, solutions, and options to talk to the public about. According to Shawn Wilkinson and Mayor Fell, the RFP allegedly is to go out to the public and ask them what they want and would support as a first step but Wilson still said it did not require the preparation of a Business Plan which Wilkinson replied could be done after the information was gathered. One of the questions to be asked according to **Councillor Bredin** is how this building could be used and he sees it as an emergency centre, major memorial or funeral services (cited Humboldt as an example), and major or mid-sized conferences, more than just sporting, socials and wedding activities. **(NOTE: There is a huge space available in the upstairs of the Firehall which cost taxpayers in excess of a million which is sitting empty, not to mention the large foyer of the Administration Building. There are also the school gyms and church halls available for mass evacuations. Because of the train tracks, where the likelihood of a major event other than due to weather is likely, not everyone may be able to reach these locales in Oakbank and would rely on their local community centres and schools. Major weather events could also limit the potential of a multipurpose centre located in Oakbank as an emergency centre in terms of accessibility.)** **Mayor Fell** closed the discussion and called for the vote. **CARRIED 5 - 1**

QUESTION: It seems to me this RFP at a cost of \$150,000. is a duplication of the work done by the contractor hired to do the Recreation Master Plan.

NOTE: The majority of attendees left at this point.

Winnipeg Metropolitan region inc. 2019 Membership - Councillor Wilson - Asked for an update on John Q, on Procurement Approach, promised OFC Fire Reporting situation and on the Fibre Internet Initiative next month. **CARRIED 6-0**

Question Period Discussion - Mayor Fell suggested due to feedback, she wondered if Council would entertain extending it to 30 minutes if required. **Councillor Ralke** - Did not want individual extensions beyond 5 minutes each. **Councillor Wilson** - Suggested adding 15 minutes at end of meeting but **Mayor Fell** was adamantly opposed to that as vote has already been cast and therefore no purpose. In the beginning attendees have input on upcoming agenda items. (Note: But it is my observation that their suggestions are ignored.) **Councillor Wilson** - Asked that Mayor Fell call for a show of hands of how many in audience have questions when the Question Period starts. **CARRIED 6-0**

NOTE: Mayor Fell acts as if she is the only person on Council that can respond to constituent questions when other members, including the CAO, should be able to contribute as well. This is particularly true when the question refers to a matter on which certain members of Council are better informed or are the councillor for that ward. It would appear that decisions are pre-determined by Council at working meetings before they are presented at the public meetings and that any councillor adding commentary, when in Council chamber, is just repeating what might have been said in private. The entire meeting appears to be scripted. When the Mayor asks for Council's opinion, if someone does hold up their hand and speak, it is apparent to the audience by her body language that she does not appreciate an opinion contrary to her own and often makes haste to thank the speaker and move directly to the resolution and the vote. If you read my attached letter, you will find that becoming the Mayor has not changed Ms. Fell's behaviour and her desire to control.

Meeting adjourned.

Some time ago I participated in an initiative to address harassment and bullying at municipal council tables. Last week there was an article in the newspaper in this regard and I wrote a letter to the Editor in response which was published on April 3, 2019 which I am attaching for anyone wishing to read it.