

This is an email record of my inquiry regarding a missing cheque number of their List of Accounts for December. What is interesting is their reluctance to provide me with a copy of the voided cheque. Aside from the pre-printed information on a cheque, including the Cheque No., the only information added is date, payee, amount both in script and numbers, and the signature authorizing the payment. I did not request the reverse side of the cheque where a signature would appear and perhaps a company stamp.

3 Feb 2021, 10:35

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com>

to Colleen, Jody

There is a cheque missing from the List of Accounts on the January 19, 2021 meeting, cheque #151273. Could you please provide me with the details of this cheque, the payee and the amount. Your early attention to this matter would be appreciated.

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> 3 Feb 2021, 15:00

to Colleen

Thanks for registering me for the Town Hall. I would like the details of this missing cheque. I am sure the information must be easily obtainable as cheque registers are numerically kept and I would imagine the invoices are kept in the same order. I recall signing some myself and they were always meticulously in order of the cheques.

Colleen Draper Wed, 3 Feb, 15:05

to me

Cheque 151273 was not included on the list because it was voided and reissued to 4927461 MBLTD for \$300 on cheque 151291. Staff was not aware that even voided cheques need to be on the list so that will be corrected going forward. Finance will probably be responding to you directly as well.

Colleen Draper, CMMA

Chief Administrative Officer

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> Wed, 3 Feb, 15:10

to Colleen

That would be great. I would like a copy of the voided cheque from Jody.

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com>

Wed, 3 Feb, 15:25

to Colleen

What was this payment of \$300. to that numbered company for? Could you provide me with a copy of the invoice?

Colleen Draper Thu, 4 Feb, 11:32

to me

It was a refund for a variance application as it was withdrawn by the applicant.

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com>

4 Feb 2021, 11:39

to Colleen

Would you not have an invoice?



Colleen Draper Thu, 4 Feb, 12:24

to me

There won't be an invoice for a refund of a variance fee. It is an internal request from the planning department to the finance department to process a refund. This is in relation to Variance application 20-47 on the November 26, 2020 planning meeting.

Jody Thiessen Fri, 5 Feb, 10:31

to me, Colleen

Hi Heather,

The RM started to use a new report for cheques and the report removes voided cheques.

The cheque was voided and re-issued under cheque #151291.

Jody Thiessen CPA, CGA

Finance Manager

RM of Springfield

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> Fri, 5 Feb, 12:22

to Jody

I would like a copy of the original cheque that was voided and a copy of the new cheque.

Jody Thiessen Fri, 5 Feb, 14:14

to **Colleen**, me

Hi Heather,

Can I understand why the request to see the cheque? My understanding between the CAO and myself the information and explanation was provided. Information regarding the vendor to whom the municipality has written a cheque to, the amount of the cheque and cheque number has been made public.

At this time a copy of the original voided cheque and the new cheque will not be made public.

Jody Thiessen CPA, CGA

Finance Manager

RM of Springfield

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com>

Fri, 5 Feb, 17:11

to Jody

That is public information. I could ask the same question, what is your reluctance to produce something that is public knowledge. Why would you not want to provide me with a copy of the invoice, the cancelled cheque and the new cheque. Your reluctance makes one wonder what is the reason for your reticence to share those documents. You are aware I can make a request for the documents through other channels but in the interests of good governance and the guiding principles of the RM Strategic Plan, accountability and transparency, teamwork, lead by example etc., one would think you would not want to become known in the community as being secretive. If you do not provide the information, I will go to the next level and that will not put you and the Council in a good light in the media.

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> Fri, 19 Feb, 14:35 (3 days ago)

to **Jody**

It is now February 19 and you have still not provided me with a copy of this cheque. In the meantime, I have been perusing the Lists of Accounts for the last several months. I will be compiling a list of cheques for which I would like further explanation and will send it to you under separate cover.

Colleen Draper Fri, 19 Feb, 16:08 (3 days ago)

to **Jody**, me

Ms. Erickson,

There is no need to provide you with a copy of the void cheque as our list of accounts provides the recipient's name, cheque number, date, and amount of cheque. **There is no other information on the cheque that you would see that you don't already see on a cheque register other than the banking information in which does not need to be public.**

You had originally asked for an invoice related in which I responded we did not have one. I have attached the back up that I referred to that we received from the Planning Office to generate the cheque. This would be what you call an "invoice". The cheque was voided because we had an incomplete address. The address was corrected and a new cheque was reissued.

You advise you can request documents through a different channel, I will assume you mean a FIPPA request. When reviewing the FIPPA website, it advises the following:

- Once council has authorized the accounts, information regarding the vendor or individual to whom the municipality has written a cheque and the amount of the cheque may be disclosed. The municipal cheque register is the document that offers the best summary of this information.
- All information in the cheque register is public, with exception of the names of social allowance recipients. Municipalities will typically disclose a cheque register without the names of social allowance recipients, just the amount of the payments.
- While it is difficult to imagine the circumstances under which an individual would want to review the actual invoices in support of the accounts, these should also be disclosed upon request once the accounts are approved by Council. Personal information, such as residential addresses and phone numbers (if different from the business address), would not be disclosed.

We have followed the FIPPA regulations in regards to what information needs to be provided publicly and will consider this matter closed.

You are welcome to forward a list of other cheques you require more information on and we will gladly provide you the details, as we have previously done on numerous occasions.

Colleen Draper, CMMA

Chief Administrative Officer

RM of Springfield

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> Fri, 19 Feb, 18:06 (3 days ago)

to **Colleen, Jody**

Perhaps you did not read the third bullet of the FIPPA information you provided:

While it is difficult to imagine the circumstances under which an individual would want to review the actual invoices in support of the accounts, these should also be disclosed upon request once the accounts are approved by Council. Personal information, such as residential addresses and phone numbers (if different from the business address), would not be disclosed.

However I will not pursue this further, but I will make it known to the public that the Administration of the RM is less than forthcoming regarding their expenditures. This more than anything would raise questions in the minds of ratepayers as they would wonder what is the reason for non disclosure.

Colleen Draper Fri, 19 Feb, 18:56 (3 days ago)

to me

To be clear, the "invoice" was provided to you. Cheques are not invoices.



Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> Sun, 21 Feb, 17:58 (6 days ago)

to Colleen

Thank you for your time.



Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> 26 Feb 2021, 16:11 (20 hours ago)

to **Jody**, Colleen

I would like to say that it is not a good policy to simply remove a numbered cheque from the sequential cheque register, rather for transparency purposes it should be listed and marked voided. Missing cheque numbers indicate to the public that there is something untoward going on in the financial department of the RM. I would suggest you review your policy. As indicated in the FIPPA rules, it states:

Perhaps you did not read the third bullet of the FIPPA information you provided:

While it is difficult to imagine the circumstances under which an individual would want to review the actual invoices in support of the accounts, these should also be disclosed upon request once the accounts are approved by Council. Personal information, such as residential addresses and phone numbers (if different from the business address), would not be disclosed.

I have thought this over and feel that due to your reluctance and inconsistent advice as Colleen first indicated it would be provided, I am asking that you provide the requested document. Should you decide not to voluntarily provide me with the information, I will make a request through FIPPA and that does not look good to the next level of government, particularly if it is something non nefarious and easy enough to provide. Your call!!!

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> Fri, 26 Feb, 16:14 (20 hours ago)

to Colleen, Jody

Further I strongly recommend you review your new policy of not listing cheques that are voided for whatever reason. It raises serious questions in my mind, and likely those of other, as to accountability. It is a simple matter to list the cheque and mark it as voided.

Colleen Draper Fri, 26 Feb, 16:19 (20 hours ago)

to **Jody**, me

Ms. Erickson,

Again, I have provided you with a copy of the "invoice" as requested, see attached. A cheque is not an invoice.

A policy is not required in this regard. As advised we started using a new report that did not automatically include voided cheques. We have corrected that and going forward the cheque number will be listed and noted as "Void".

Attachments area

Heather Erickson <heatheranderickson@gmail.com> 26 Feb 2021, 17:33 (19 hours ago)

to Colleen

I think in the interests of transparency. that is a very wise decision. Missing numbers from a sequence of cheques makes people quite nervous.