

RM of Springfield Committee of the Whole Meeting March 10, 2020

WITHOUT PREJUDICE (E&OE)

In light of Provincial recommendations surrounding COVID-19, Council of the RM of Springfield has made the decision to close regular **Council and Committee of the Whole** meetings to the public until further notice. A recording of all meetings will be placed on the municipal website for public information. Any public hearings required under *The Municipal Act*, *The Planning Act*, or any other applicable Act, will remain open to the public but will be relocated to a larger venue, if possible, to reduce close contact between individuals. **Sent March 13th at 6:16 p.m. DOES THIS MAKE SENSE AS ONLY 5 REGULARLY ATTEND COUNCIL AND COW MEETINGS? PLANNING MEETINGS & BORROWING BYLAW HEARINGS WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE PEOPLE ATTEND. This is not concern for residents' health, to me it's an attack on democracy.**

Once again, I urge everyone to attend the Borrowing By-Law hearing at a location to be announced at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 24, 2020 because this is the only opportunity you will have to voice your opinion on the proposed new \$18 plus million Recreation Centre to be located between the skate park and the RM Administration Building off Springfield Drive. There was no consultative meetings, only open houses with conceptual drawings in which residents of Springfield had no input. This is contrary to the recommendations contained in the Recreation Master Plan for which the previous Council paid good money and where residents of all communities were given the opportunity to voice their opinions. It is highly likely that those who support it will be in attendance and speak for approval of the by-law.

AGENDA - Can you believe that there was a last minute addition and it was another Delegation presented by Seahawk Services? What happened to the requirement for advance notice of Delegations? **Someone from the Springfield Fire Department should have been there to listen to what was being proposed as it affects them most of all.** If it was not on the agenda posted to the Web Site, how would anyone know to come when they don't even know it is happening? Councillor Williams added this delegation. **HE AND THE C.A.O. SHOULD KNOW BETTER!** Further there is a Police Board meeting March 11th. which is now being held in the Firehall in Oakbank. When the Province allowed that access on to PTH 206, they stipulated it was only for emergency vehicles. How then can a public meeting be held there? It was scheduled for the Council Chamber last year and yet somehow the Red River Basin Commission AGM suddenly took precedence over a previously scheduled meeting. Further as of 11:30 p.m. March 10, 2020, the agenda for the Police Board meeting had not yet been posted. **TRANSPARENCY???? I think not. PUBLIC SERVICE???? I think not. TEAMWORK???? I think not.**

DELEGATION - Landmark Planning and Design re: Eastern Manitoba Proposed Water Co-op (presented by Donovan Toews and Jim Pratt) - He started by saying that water is very important and that is well understood by this municipality. That may be so but Council has not done a very good job of protecting the aquifer from which water comes to supply the towns of Oakbank and Dugald. **By-law 73-22** which was passed to set rules and regulations for the extraction of aggregate **has never been enforced** and dredging below the water level is now the norm. The previous Council was trying to address this with their Aggregate Task Force which met every month and had representatives from the aggregate industry, from the construction industry, from the Province, from Council, from Public Works, from the Administration, the Police Service, and three citizen representatives. On **January 15, 2019 Resolution No: 19-019** dissolved the current Aggregate Task Force and formed a new Aggregate Committee with **Jim Campbell, former Reeve of Rockwood, Manitoba appointed as Chair** and consisting of 2 Council appointments, 2 Citizen appointments, and 2 Industry appointments to be confirmed at a later date. The only indication of any activity was an advertisement in the Clipper soliciting applications from interested citizens to serve as representatives on the Committee. The member appointments have never been confirmed publicly. Since then, there has been no report at the Council table of meetings and their progress toward protecting our water supply and other issues. **There is high potential for contamination of our drinking water** as a result. The Manitoba Water Services Board (MWSB) retained Landmark Planning to explore the possibility of a water co-op for east Manitoba. The Province has been encouraging the establishment of regional water systems. Several water co-ops exist throughout Manitoba (e.g. Pembina Valley Water co-op, Border Valley Water Co-op). It is important for municipalities to plan for times of water shortage and to benefit from efficiencies. Funding is available to encourage water projects. The entire presentation can be read by going to the Agenda of this meeting on the Web Site where it is posted. However, from what I took from the presentation, the farther east you go in the Province, the better the water quality and quantity. People to the west of Winnipeg take water from the Red River and treat it for supplying to residents. However the level of the river, particularly in drought years, can be quite low. In 2005 there was an attempt by the Pembina Valley Water Co-op to augment their water supply by drilling a well in the Sandilands area to pump water west of the Red River. It went before the Clean Environment Commission and was never approved. Mr. Toews was quick to point out that water belongs to everyone in the province, regardless of its location. They are looking at supply in several locations, Shoal Lake, Sandilands, etc. At this point, he emphasized, this is just a starting point and an idea to be considered by Councils. He did respect the 15-20 minute time restriction and went through the slides which can be seen on the Agenda for the meeting. **Jeff Bell from Friesen Drillers was in the audience.** Council and the audience were given the opportunity to ask questions. **Vic Gerbasi and Darryl Speer** in the audience questioned the 2005 Co-op attempt by Pembina Valley Co-op to pump water from Sandilands and **Hugh Arklie** provided more clarity about the 2005 failure and stated that if Shoal Lake was being considered, it would involve First Nations consultation. Mayor Fell asked how the Pembina Valley Coop works. Donovan Toews asked that Council consider their water needs into the future and discuss the proposal.

DELEGATION - Seahawk Services - Councillor Williams - As a Council, we have a real concern about our Fire Service as we are about to embark on hiring a new Fire Chief. And one of the issues that I had talked about with these gentlemen was how do we do an evaluation of our fire

service and should it be left up to the new Fire Chief to do and the answer came back I believe very strongly No. You should have a third party do the evaluation of the Fire Service and then Council will then have some documentation of policies and what not that they can direct to the new Fire Chief so that he can do the implementation without fear of him being the bad guy and making changes. **Ben Vanderzwagg** - I am here today with Jaime Coutts who is on the staff with us at Seahawk and he represents Seahawk and Seahawk is a business that supplies services to the fire industry from fire truck sales to fire truck service and most fire equipment and more recently we developed a consulting response division called Seahawk Performance and that's where Jaime came on board so. My background...I was the Fire Chief of the Town of Carmen and the RM of Dufferin providing fire chief services to that community and with them for 19 years, Fire Chief for 10 years. This has been a passion of mine, this performance division. Jaime came on board to help us develop it essentially, what we call now the CR Eval Tool and there's a way for Council, Fire Chiefs and firefighters to evaluate their fire departments against best practices regulations and outstanding requirements. **Jaime Coutts** - 28 years with the Slave Lake fire department and regional fire service over in Alberta. In August I decided to take a break from that and do some consulting work. Because I was an ambassador of the Canadian Volunteer Fire Service association and these guys from Seahawk said why don't you partner up and build this evaluation tool. Where the evaluation tool comes from, in 2011 about 1/3 of the community that I was the Fire Chief for burned down and the government came to us and said, well, here's 20 million bucks, fix it. They spent the next 9 years trying to figure out what that means to make it better. We had to go through a process of evaluating ourselves and then to look at it from someone else's eye so what we wanted to do is build something that has less opinion and sides. So he wanted to share it with the fire service in general so he partnered with Seahawk Fire Service Association to make this product available across Canada. It took 1700 hours to properly develop the tool which looks at the whole fire service, Administration, Operations, Health & Safety, Training...equipment and facilities...hazards that affect the community. Plug info into tool and come out with Best Practices, Reparatons, and Requirements. Carmen only received an overall score of 58%. Ok on Operations but not so good on Administration, Health & Safety, Advanced Training. **Councillor Williams** said he had sought out Ben to discuss the fire service with him. Would the tool help with the Industrial Park? **Jaime Coutts** - Gave a rather long response which I believe amounted to Yes. Councillor Williams asked other questions and again Coutts rambled on about how the tool could help. **Councillor Wilson** spoke to a Fire Smart Program which Coutts felt fit right in with his tool. **Jaime Coutts** - Continued his narrative about his tool and the work he is doing with other municipalities etc. at length with prompting from Councillors Williams, Wilson and Fuhl. **Heather Erickson** - How much does this service, this evaluation cost? **Mayor Fell** - We haven't got a quote, we haven't put it out for RFP or tender yet so I am not sure. I'm sure we'll discuss that. Once Council discusses it we'll come forward to Council meeting and then the price would be there. I don't think it is appropriate for you guys to give a cost right now. **Heather Erickson** - I was just going to say, couldn't he give us a ball park figure. They've completed one with Carmen so they would know how much that one cost. **Mayor Fell** - No, again when it comes to a Council meeting if we decide to move forward, the price will come out from that. **Darryl Speer** - I'd like to follow up on that particular point. There's an introductory offer, what is the introductory offer? **Colleen Draper, CAO** - So we're going to put out an RFP or a tender....it's not fair to get a cost right now. **Darryl Speer** - No, he said there would be an introductory offer for 35 communities they are working with, what is it? **Mayor Fell** - So you can e-mail it, we're not discussing the cost right now. If we decide as a Council to go forward, we'll do it through our proper processes. **NOTE: Ben Vanderzwagg indicated he was prepared to answer the question during his presentation, however Mayor Fell, supported by the CAO, would not allow him to divulge that information. Subsequent to the COW meeting, in conversation with Mr. Vanderzwagg, he stated that the price for a 240 hour analysis with his tool would be \$25,000. This would vary based on the extent of the evaluation as basically the cost is approximately \$105./hour.** **Hugh Arklie** - I have an ironic comment. Earlier today I started out on a letter to the Office of the Fire Commissioner who was interviewed about 3 weeks ago expressing concern about rural fire readiness and he had some generic comment about how to keep your yard clean and trim your trees and that sort of thing and I found myself talking to the radio a lot although they can't hear me ...I was very frustrated ...(Mayor Fell laughs aloud) I was frustrated by his response and I think this is what Rick was getting at maybe. I couldn't hear your complete question and comment. But where I live in the RM of Springfield, I'm in a as are many other people in a transitional zone between the prairies and the boreal forest. So if you were to be in an aircraft looking down you would see dozens and dozens maybe hundreds of forest groves and copses, some of them interconnected, most of them separated by agricultural fields or wetlands or whatever and invariably mixed in there are houses and dwellings where lots of people live particularly east of Birds Hill Park, I don't know, 3 miles, 4 miles east and north and south ...and in there also are a number of properties that are accidents waiting to happen. So there's garbage everywhere, there's careless storage of materials, and forests if you take time to look at them are maturing to what I think is a dangerous level of flashpoints and fuel for wildfires. It's one thing to imagine a property burning but people who are making the presentation today will tell you that once 5 acres starts on fire and the trees are mature and half of them are Roman candle quality spruce trees that those fires will jump cultivated fields, they'll jump roads, they'll jump wetlands and I'm really worried about our community hazard assessment and our readiness for that sort of thing and you came very close to it 2 years ago, I think Rick was referring to this, there was careless use of a fire pit on Laden Crescent which burned a portion of the 5 acres next to it that didn't have a house on it. The Fire Department was outstanding, they came very quickly and even though the wind was blowing they put the fire out really fast and with the wind gusts we could have had a mini Fort McMurray there so I think what has to happen, what I'd like to see happen is some sort of a Hazard Assessment from the point of view of fire prevention and looking into things we can do. For example, we keep on inviting more and more people to live here, people coming out looking for rural life styles but they end up embracing things like burning barrels and burning pits and burning grass and burning piles of brush. This can't be done anymore. There's just too many accidents waiting to happen. I include one down my street years ago where the neighbours got together to wet blankets and put the fire out. This is a serious situation. Burning in Birds Hill Park is one thing but when that fire sweeps east instead of west it'll burn dozens and dozens of houses. It'll be a tremendous tragedy. And it's just waiting to happen out there. There are thousands of unreported houses that are abandoned and events that are happening from time to time that are risky like ATVs on the Hydro line

with their hot exhausts. We're living in a dream world if we think this is only going to happen in Ft. McMurray or the Okanagan Valley or the hills of California. East of Birds Hill Park is waiting for it to happen. The things that scares me the most about living there and I would like to see some Community Hazard Assessments. That's the gist of my letter that I haven't finished yet that I'll be e-mailing to the Fire Commissioner. He encouraged Council to give what he had said some thought. **Unidentified lady** - Mentioned she had a disabled child and reported it to fire department and is this part of the assessment? **Councillor Williams** threw in that they had recently attended a Disaster Management Conference that gave them a much better understanding of the issues and that Council has to be more involved. **Darryl Speer** inquired as to why the score for Carmen was so low considering the length of time the Chief had served there. The answer was that there was no play book so Seahawk is trying to help them create a check list and standards from community to community as the operational side of the job takes up most of volunteer firefighters' available time. **Mayor Fell** ended the discussion by saying "we do have another delegation coming so we're going to end" but that was not quite the truth (but I am pretty sure many were pleased to see it end) as there was no further delegation presenting. As they were packing up, **Councillor Wilson** called them back to the table and asked them another question about Levels of Service. The response, I feel, was unnecessarily long winded. **NOTE: One of the first things that the former Reeve Bob Bodnaruk called upon me to do, as the Councillor assigned responsibility for Police and Fire, was to meet with the Fire Chief Jeff Hudson and one of his volunteer firefighters who worked, I believe, for the Federal Government where part of his job was emergency response planning. It was agreed by the Reeve, myself and the Fire Chief that this individual would work on setting up a Emergency Preparedness response plan and to some extent, he did. Some of the potential disasters identified were proximity to at least 2 major rail lines and potential derailments and such natural disasters such as tornadoes, some of which have affected this municipality, as well as fires and other extraordinary weather events. When the Folk Festival was on at Birds Hill Park at least one year I know of, the meeting room in the Firehall was set up with telephones and tables to respond to any emergency that might require action. We do have an Unsightly Property by-law (15-09) but perhaps the feeling is that if the RM becomes too punitive, many people might think twice about living here and it is not often enforced.**

5.1 RCMP Advisory Committee - Mayor Fell - Said this had been talked about at the last Council. **Councillor Wilson** found the provision for this committee in the Police Services Act and expressed his feelings to both the Police Board and Council that one should be formed. He stated he felt the Committee should consist of Council. **Mayor Fell** - Suggested the CAO could write to the Local Detachment here in Oakbank and quote the legislation and suggest they would like Council and representatives from the Detachment to be on the Committee. **Councillor Ralke** did not think it should be all of Council as it was only an Advisory Committee. **Councillor Wilson** suggested all of Council could attend at their discretion and **Mayor Fell** and the remainder of Council agreed. She directed the CAO to take care of the matter.

5.3 Traffic By-law 20-07 - Blaine Moffat - Presented some deletions, changes and additions. He did not have immediate answers as to the jurisdictions of border roads such as Gunn and Wenzel. **Unidentified Lady in the Audience** - I almost hit a little girl this morning at Dugald School. The intersection of Dora and Jaffray is a gong show. She went on to say that the road is very congested by the school as people are dropping off their children and school busses parked there are doing likewise. Then there is the Seniors Co-op that also generates traffic and parking. **Evidently the Dugald School has now locked the door that accessed their parking lot off Holland Avenue where people used to drop off their children or they would also use the parking lot at the Community Club.** Now that the main door of the school is the only one open, allegedly for security reasons, everyone now uses Jaffray and Dora. It is a challenge every day and there are only 2 Stop signs for a 3 way stop. It has been exacerbated by the addition of the Day Care. People are parking right up to the Stop sign. The lady was visibly upset by the near accident and she has talked to the staff of the school, the school bus drivers, everyone and it is pitting neighbours against neighbours because some don't want to have to stop dropping off their children right at the front door of the school. There is a need for No Parking signs but even then, they are not obeyed. **Mayor Fell** said they can't stop people dropping off their children at the school. **NOTE: I believe a number of her children attend that school.** **Unidentified Lady in the Audience** - Said she believes the school staff and bus drivers would prefer the use of the school parking lot for drop off but the change in door policy has been implemented by Supervisors. **Mayor Fell** directed Blaine Moffat to look into possible solutions to this issue. **NOTE: It would appear that no forethought was put into the decision to lock the door that accesses the parking lot and community club. Both the staff of the school and the school bus drivers agree that a potentially dangerous situation exists due to the congestion on Jaffray at the Dora Street intersection with both school busses and parents in vehicles dropping off and picking up children. A simple solution to the problem would be to re-open the side door on to the parking lot, create a drop off zone there where there is no parking allowed, and either hire or perhaps have a volunteer guard stationed in the area to ensure smooth flow of vehicles and children and provide security. Another solution could be to have a crossing guard at Jaffray and Dora but given that people are not adhering to the rules now, I feel the former is the better solution. Jaffray is a narrow street and not conducive to large amounts of vehicular traffic but the Senior Co-op and the addition of a Daycare have led to increases in both parking and traffic. The proposed expansion of Dugald Estates will only serve to exacerbate the situation.** COUNCIL THEN WENT INTO CLOSED MEETING, CAME OUT, AND ADJOURNED.

NOTE: At the beginning of the meeting, Mayor Fell had directed that both doors of the Council Chamber remain open. This is very distracting as, due to the height of the ceiling in the foyer, it is an echo chamber and what occurs at the front desk, the talking and laughing and noise even in the back hall, is heard by everyone in the Council Chamber. Madame Mayor had apparently brought her newborn to the building (?COVID 19) and that may have been the reason but again, I wish to say that being a Mayor is a job and if the Mayor cannot devote 100% of her attention to that job, there is a Deputy Mayor to step in and run the meeting. Both some members of Council and members of the audience have enough difficulty hearing in the Council chamber as the acoustics are not good, in spite of the \$10,000. worth of baffles that were added after the building was completed, without the added loud sounds emanating from the foyer, talking, laughing, etc.