

**RM of Springfield Committee of the Whole Meeting**  
**May 25, 2021**  
**Duration of Meeting 9 minutes and 47 seconds**

**NOTE: I printed a copy of the agenda and any reports on it prior to the meeting. One of the reports attached to the agenda I printed was Report Number 2021-01 by Doug Murray, Facilities Manager. On Page 3 of the report under Financial Impact, it stated "The building and land was purchased for \$1,603,290.14 with ....". On May 29, I went back to the agenda on the web site to check something out and found that this has now been changed to "The building and land was purchased for \$1,633,323. including legal costs with....". IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO CHANGE THE FIGURES ON AGENDA ITEMS AFTER THE AGENDA HAS BEEN APPROVED BY COUNCIL IN THE FORM IT WAS WRITTEN, COMPLETE WITH ATTACHMENTS. Once tabled into the meeting, any changes should be done at a subsequent meeting, a corrected report produced at that time and approved with the changes which would be included with the agenda and minutes of this subsequent meeting. Further the report should be labelled "amended" and not appear as an original. Also included should be an explanation of the difference in amounts. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE CHANGE? Thirty thousand dollars is a significant amount.**

**WITHOUT PREJUDICE (E&OE)**

**6.2 92 Don Valley Parkway Purchase and Renovation - Mayor Fell -** So Colleen and I chatted. We thought this would be a good time just to bring this information forward to Council regarding the Firehall in Ward 1. **NOTE: It would appear decisions regarding purchase versus renovations etc. were arbitrary between CAO Draper and Mayor Fell. Council was not included in their investigations until after the fact in this report which is being presented 6 months after the actual purchase.** Doug did a great job of preparing a report. **NOTE: At the October 6, 2020 Council Meeting one of the items on the agenda was a FIRE SERVICE REVIEW REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS. The CAO stated that a review of the proposals was done by herself, the Director of Community Services, and the Human Resources Manager, no one from our Fire Service or perhaps even a member from an adjacent municipality's Fire Service to ensure objectivity. The contract was awarded to Transitional Services Inc. from Alberta for \$52,327. There is no mention of that organization being consulted prior to the December purchase of the above facility for our Fire Station in the Industrial Park. In other words, there was no technical advice evident in the purchase that this building would be suitable for our Fire Service. Such facilities have very stringent requirements insofar as construction etc. No mention is made of the date of purchase in "Doug's" report. The Report indicates it is 4 pages long but there are only 3 pages included with the agenda. Could this be the information regarding financing that was included in the November 17, 2020 meeting in By-law 20-05 amending from constructing a building to the purchase and renovation of an existing building? At that meeting, Councillor Wilson is suggesting that they pay cash for the building rather than borrowing. In the Clipper, May 20, 2021 edition, Councillor Wilson is quoted as saying "we have the ability...to pay cash for the firehall...that we could apply to this resulting in well over a half a million dollars in savings.." for which he was severely rebuked by Mayor Fell and Councillor Ralke.** Um Colleen do you have anything to add to that? **Colleen Draper -** I was hoping Doug was going to be here **NOTE: I feel that the CAO, responsible for all staff of the RM, should have been able to do more than "hope" Doug would attend the meeting. Surely she could have required him to attend.** to add any kind of detail that he thought would be important for council but uh it looks like something's come up for him so um other than the information in the report um I know that the firefighters are in the new hall now and they're very happy to be there and enjoying the space um but you know, we had indicated that we would give a public report um kind of on the renovation side of it so we had budgeted \$350,000. for renovations. We're still under that amount um and I was hoping Doug would be here with more details (laughing) on that but there is some work to be done but um I believe the last time we checked we were at \$230,000. so we do have quite a bit of room left. Um we did purchase the building and land for just over \$1.6 million..... **Mayor Fell -** And when was it purchased, Colleen? **NOTE: Surely the Mayor would have been advised of such a major purchase at the time it was being conducted. Was the CAO not keeping Council as a whole apprised of the negotiations on an ongoing basis?** **Colleen Draper -** In December 2020. Um so we had a tight timeline for renovations uh because we did want to give notice on our current lease so we had til April, the end of April to be out of there so we were able to do that. Um and then it was just interesting that when I spoke to Doug, he had indicated that when looking at purchasing versus buying, he had estimated that uh the cost would have been between 3.5 and 4 million dollars and would have taken at least two years to build so uh he was able to renovate that in a 5 month period to get the firefighters into the new space for just over 1.6. **Mayor Fell -** Um I also chatted with Jody today to confirm what Colleen said. **NOTE: Why would the Mayor have to consult the Finance Manager at this point in time to "confirm" what the CAO had said?** We are under budget for those renovations. Um I think the purchase of this building, Council and Administration together, um it was a long investigative process of trying to find a suitable property and when this came up, uh staff ran the numbers when it first came up and it made sense to buy and renovate. Um taxpayers were saved between \$1.5 and \$2 million dollars on this, this feature of renovating versus building new. There is tenants in the building too and that helps support the cost of running and maintaining that building and we're very happy that we uh the firefighters are in there and the renovations are almost complete, is that correct? **Colleen Draper -** Yes, there were some delays because of COVID, we didn't um anticipate like the delays for supplies and that type of thing that Doug has had to deal with so he was able to do the major renovations that would not affect the firemen once they're in there and now they're kind of just painting and tiling and you know doing some of that minor stuff that they can still do while the fire station's operational. **Mayor Fell -** That's perfect. So they're ...they should be done shortly. Is there any comments or questions from Council? **Councillor Fuhl -** Ya I just follow up seeing that we have this report in front of us, I was just curious if the CAO uh knows uh anything about the signage. We had

talked about some signage on Redonda Road just to give more visibility where the Firehall is and I was just wondering if there is anything to follow up on that? **Colleen Draper** - I will have to find out. I know I did get an e-mail from Doug on the signage um I don't have a timeline when it's going to be installed but they are working on it. **Councillor Fuhl** - Great. Thank you. **Mayor Fell** - Any other comments or questions from Council? **Councillor Ralke** - I just want to say a vote of confidence to everybody for coming through with this and I said I know it's only been 8.2 1/2 years for me so I am thrilled and ecstatic and so happy that it's now complete and done so thank you to staff, thank you to Doug, thank you to everyone. **NOTE: Is Councillor Ralke campaigning? As stated before, staff is paid to do a job. While it is nice to compliment them once in a while on the job they are doing, I think it is a bit excessive to be "thrilled" and "ecstatic" when they perform as required by their position descriptions.** **Mayor Fell** - Well and to say that uh er to add on to that not only was Doug working on the Firehall in Ward 1 uh they're just completed or almost done completing the Firehall renovations in Anola as well so uh happy to see these projects finishing off. **Councillor Bredin** - Just wondering if I realize we've got lockdowns and then that but at some point would we have a grand opening for that, maybe fall time I guess maybe is more realistic possibly. **Mayor Fell** - Um the CAO has mentioned that she would like to do that, it depends on restrictions but she also talked about doing a municipal open house next late spring and uh she has actually a lot of great plans for that and that would happen at these buildings but depending on restrictions we may be able to include a couple of the locations as well um to do it all at once so it's just going to depend on COVID but yes that is the plan that we want to really show what we're working on and ...thank the firefighters and let the public know as well. **NOTE: This sounds like campaigning for the next election, something the CAO should not be involved in, particularly as in past elections she was the Senior Elections Official. In point of fact, it sounds more like something Mayor Fell's previous campaign manager, Gladys Williams, the spouse of Councillor Williams, might be suggesting.** Is there any other comments from Council? Can I have a mover and seconder to adjourn, please? **MEETING ADJOURNED 9 MINUTES & 47 SECONDS.**

**NOTE: When I was on Council between 2014 and 2018 the search for a suitable firehall in the Industrial area was underway. One location on Gunn Road was being considered but did not become available. However the discussions regarding the location of the Firehall always maintained that it should be on a major thoroughfare to ensure maximum accessibility to the area. Don Valley Parkway is not a main route and is, in fact, a loop road of sorts, the top of the loop being Matheson Parkway. This location is closer to Matheson Parkway than Gunn Road but seems to have access to Redonda Street via Diamond J Road. It seems to be gated at the street front which could present a problem as part of the building is being leased to a trucking company and the lot could be congested. While the Facility Manager, Doug Murray, is reported to state "it was estimated that to purchase land and construct a building of this size in this area would have cost between \$3.5 to \$4 million dollars", it would not appear a professional estimate was obtained. Rather, it was purchased for \$1,633,323.00 with an estimated renovation budget of \$350,000. The first mention of it was May 19, 2020 when they passed First Reading of By-law 20-05 which said "...that the funds so raised shall be for the purpose of financing the construction of a new firehall and/or purchase and renovation of an existing building for a firehall within the Springfield Industrial Area (16-11-4E)". However the documentation for the \$2.165 debenture attached to the item in the agenda was dated March 6, 2020. In November 17, 2020 20-05 Borrowing By-Law for Firehall (Industrial Area) 2nd and 3rd reading was passed based on the recommendation of the Facilities Manager, supported by the CAO and members of the fire service, according to Mayor Fell as no report was attached to the agenda. Had they paid cash for the building, as suggested by Councillor Wilson, instead of putting \$1.5 million in a Contingency Fund, they could have saved taxpayers approximately \$500,000 in interest charges over the 10 year period of the loan.**

**Councillors should be holding the Mayor and CAO accountable for how this Firehall project was dealt with. The function of Council is to protect the interests of ratepayers from poor business decisions. Unfortunately some of the bad decisions they have already made are letting Tervita Corporation locate a Hazardous Waste Facility in the heart of our Industrial Park, allowing Berger Peat to locate on Agricultural land adjacent to a Rural Residential area, sanctioning Parrish & Heimbecker locating a Grain Storage Facility again on land zoned agricultural and then expecting ratepayers to pick up every cost except supposedly the construction of the road improvements, and letting CanWhite Sands Corporation bore holes into the aquifer that provides potable water to the communities in the southeastern quadrant of Manitoba.**