

**2024 FINANCIAL PLAN HEARING**  
**Tuesday, April 30, 2024**  
**RM of Springfield Council Chambers**

WITHOUT PREJUDICE (E&OE)

LENGTH OF MEETING 1 hour 45 minutes

**NOTE: I would strongly encourage every ratepayer to read this particular meeting as what transpires below will affect their taxes for many, many years into the future. It is up to ratepayers to advise their council the items they feel are not absolute requirements. If they do not, Council, of course, will postulate that the constituents are in favour of their spending plans. Nowadays with e-mail, it is a simple matter to contact all of Council at once without even leaving home or having to purchase a stamp.**

**2. CALL TO ORDER - Mayor Therrien** – Thank you very much. We’re going to start the RM of Springfield meeting uh **there** for April the 30<sup>th</sup> of 2024 uh at exactly 6 p.m. and this is regarding the 2024 Financial uh uhPlan hearing. Uh my name is uh Patrick Therrien. I’m the Mayor for the RM of Springfield and I’ll introduce Council in descending order. Uh to my right Deputy Mayor and Councillor Ward 1, Glen Fuhl. Uh Councillor Ward 2 is Andy Kuczynski, uh Councillor Ward 3 is uh Mark Miller, and uh Councillor Ward 4 is uh Melinda Warren. Um this’ll be pretty uh uh simple in terms for my job uh**there**, we’re just going to uh hear from people uh uhin the audience and on line. If I can get a mover and seconder for calling uh , well I guess I don’t even have to uh do that. We’re going to start off with a uh Powerpoint uh presentation that should take us 40 minutes or so uh and I’ll hand it off to uh is it Amram that’s going to do it? Ok, then I’ll hand it off to our CAO and she’ll uh ...give us the presentation. Yes, you can have questions. Did you get this... ya... **NOTE: There is several minutes of blank space on the recording.**

**3. POWERPOINT PRESENTATION 2024 Financial Plan Presentation4. 2024 FINANCIAL PLAN DRAFT AS OF APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup>**

**Amram Bangura** – Sorry, I didn’t know I was muted and we’re looking at the slides with Assessment and Property Tax Information and we have a table on the left of the slide that shows over a 10-year period the assessment for the Municipality’s portioned assessment and the changes in assessment over that period and mill rate showing 2024, we can see at the bottom of that table we have an assessment of 1.6 \$1 billion 694,765 thousand and a mill rate is 9.993 with a 1% increase over the 2023 mill rate of 9.894 and on the right it’s just to show the trend of assessment mill rate over the years from 2015 to 2024. Move to the next slide....on the next slide we’re showing uh the portion of taxes for Municipal and School Divisions. School Divisions access 55% of the total tax for a typical um residential property and then 45% for the RM. And the next slide also shows the breakdown of that, taking the Education Support levy into account for both residential and the commercial property. The next slide..... go back ..... next ..... next ..... next one..... so here we’re looking at um these charts showing the portions for Municipal when we combine the Municipal, the Education and we break, we have a breakdown between Education Support levy and the School Division taxes so we can see for Residential Municipal taxes 33% the support levy, Education Support levy is 27% and then School Division 40%. For commercial property, it’s almost the same with a slight difference on Education Support levy and School Division.

Next slide please. Then on the next slide we have examples of property tax calculations comparing 2023 to 2024 for an assessment of \$500,000., a property with that assessment, looking at um Sunrise School Division as our example for School Division taxes and then Municipal tax. What that would be, what that was in 2023 for School Division, 2005, 91.55 Municipal tax of two thousand two twenty-six point fifteen in 2023 compared to 2024, the same assessment value of \$500,000. with the 2024 mill rate for School Division, Sunrise School Division mill rate in 2023 was 11.518, in 2024, 12.325 and that comes to two thousand seven hundred and seventy-three dollars point thirteen cents, uh a Municipal tax of two thousand two forty-eight forty-two cents and overall increase is two hundred and three dollars, eighty-five cents. This is on the assumption that the Province has announced uh a school tax rebate of 50% but that is not factored in this calculation.

Next slide please. And on this slide is an example for a farm property ... farm property, the portion assessment is at 26%, the mill rate’s at the same, the assessment value the same assessment value of \$500,000. and we have School Division tax in 2023, one thousand four ninety-seven, thirty-four cents, Municipal tax one thousand two eighty-six twenty two cents in 2024 with the new mill rate, School Division mill rate of 12.325, School Division tax one thousand six hundred and two dollars twenty-five cents, Municipal tax one thousand two ninety-nine and nine cents, overall increase of \$117. at the bottom of the slide there, 78 cents. The next one lastly is commercial property and there also the School Division and Municipal taxes compared to 2023 with an overall increase of two eighty-nine dollars, forty-four cents at the bottom of the slide.

Now we’re going to look at the General Operating Fund, a summary of the General Operating Fund. At the top of the Summary, we have the Revenue side at the top where we have the total taxes collected and where we have columns for 2023 Budget, 2023 Actual and 2024 Budget and on the right of the 2024 Budget, we have a column that shows the percentage of each line item there, for example the Total Tax Levy at the top as a percentage of the Total Revenue. So we have a total Tax of 41 million in 2024, 897697 as a percentage of \$36 million which is the total revenue, 835,719. And then we have the variance, 2024 variance over 2023, that is the Budget Variance, and then the percentage variance. So from the Tax Levy less the School taxes, and then we arrive at the Municipal taxes so in 2024, Municipal taxes \$17,581,990. and then all the revenues are added to that \$9,547,880 and we have a deficit recovery which is from 2022 Audited Financial Statement and that is \$852,537. and we have transfers from Reserves of \$8,853,313. to give us a Total Revenue of \$36,835,719. municipal revenue. On the bottom we have the expenses, we have one line for the Municipal Operating Services, that is our Operating Budget 2024 of \$18,627,112 and that is a 2.3% increase over 2023. We have Fiscal Services which is Capital, we have \$9,805,336 for capital for the General .... and that is including Utility and then we have Fiscal Services, Debentures which is \$1,308,795 and transfers to Reserves, \$6,241,940, then we have the Deficit Recovery to balance out the deficit recovery under the Revenue side. So that’s a summary of the General Operating Fund, a total Operating Fund of \$36,835,719.

Next slide. On this next slide we have a 3D pie chart showing um percentages of the makeup of the various revenue sources and we can see that the Municipal taxes is 46% of the total. We have transfers from Reserves 24%, transfers from Accumulated Surplus 2% that’s the deficit recovery from 2022, we have Other Revenues from our services 13%, Provincial grants, those are grants relating to Operating and Capital 8%, Federal grants 5% and Grants in Lieu of Taxes 2%. The next slide, and this is just a list of uh other revenue sources, User Fees for Recreation Programs, Permits for development, Building Permits, plumbing, lot grade levies, aggregate mining fees, recoverable fees from MPI, user fees for Handivan Services, Licenses, and etc. And the next slide we have broadcast fees of our expenditures, we have Operating Expenses, Capital Expenses, Debt Servicing **NOTE: This is a big one. The interest for a year on the current debt...and that does not include the debt that this Council is planning on burdening residents with...is enough to purchase one or two necessary large pieces of equipment for Public Works.**and

Transfers to Reserves. Those are the 4 broad categories of our operating expenses and they are also shown here on this pie chart, the next slide showing Operating Services make up 51% of the total Operating Expenses, our growing reserves which is transfers to reserves makes up 17%, Debt Servicing is 3%, and Capital Infrastructure 27% of the total Operating expenses. The next slide we have a breakdown of the operating services. These are the day-to-day operational activities of the RM. We have general government, an increase 4.7% over 2023, protective services 4.6%, transportation, environmental services, public health and welfare, environmental development services, economic development services, recreational and cultural services. That is what makes up the total operating budget of \$18,627,112 **NOTE: He expresses that number in groups ... 18 six two seven ... one one two. I find that an odd way for a Finance Manager to state dollar amounts.**

**CAO Draper** – I'll just quickly go over each segment and what uh those services include and just generally what caused the increase or decrease from 2023. So for General Government the services include Council and Legislative Services, CAO, Admin and Finance, HR, IT and Asset Management, Independent Annual Audit fee and Manitoba Assessment Services levy. The service cost increased 4.7% from 2023. Uh this was due to the membership cost increases, increase in consulting services, annual audit fee increase, increase in health and safety materials and supplies, increase in software licenses and IT related costs, and salary pay scale increases. Protective Services includes Springfield Police Services **NOTE: I feel this Service should be discontinued as in the current mode of operation, our Municipal officers are being used by the R.C.M.P. Oakbank Detachment in lieu of acquiring additional RCMP officers. We pay for the RCMP through Federal taxation and is essence, now we are subsidizing that Service with our property taxes by providing them 2 additional officers.**, Fire Services, Facility Maintenance, 911 Services, Flood Control and Emergency Measures, Animal Control and Pest Control and Building Inspection. Our service cost increased 4.6% over 2023 uh mainly due to salary increases, **NOTE: One big expense not being mentioned is that ratepayers paid the legal fees for the officer charged with firing his weapon within the Police office and presumably, the repair of any damages. That same officer is still employed by the RM. I feel he should have been removed and should have been responsible for his own legal defense.** firefighter training cost increases **NOTE: If I am not mistaken, new members of our Fire Service are mainly trained in house by existing firefighters, most of whom have been with the service for quite a number of years.**, and increases in Part 3 inspection consulting fees. Transportation Services includes road construction, dust abatement, sidewalks and boulevards and street cleaning, snow and ice removal **NOTE: I am pretty certain we are paying for the snow removal in the driveway and parking lot of Dugald Place which is a private entity. This was put in place by former Mayor Fell and I believe still continues. Other similar facilities pay for their own services. Ratepayers could save some money there. Now they are proposing putting a recreation center/pool there, again at the expense of general ratepayers who will not benefit to any extent.**, bridgework and street lighting. Transportation services costs increased by 3% from 2023 due to an increase in the dust abatement budget, increase for street lighting, traffic services cost increase, and some drainage costs were rolled into our Transportation Services. **NOTE: I personally feel those who obtained dust abatement and street lighting should pay for it out of their own pocket if these are not available to the general public. Further the additional drainage costs, I believe, had to do to some extent with the upgrade of the Dugald Water Treatment plant and the drainage of the new subdivision to the south of it.** Economic Development Services include mosquito control, West Nile virus, destruction of pests, drainage of land, Tax Incentive Grants, rural weed control, and water resources. Our Service Costs decreased by 14% from 2023 due to the reclassification of some of the drainage of land costs that I mentioned were rolled into the Transportation Services Budget. This change did not impact the overall budgeting ... operating budget. Environmental Health Services include garbage and waste collection, Municipal non-potable wells, and other environmental studies. This service cost decreased by 1.4% from 2023 due to a reduction in environmental study costs used for consulting services. Public Health & Welfare services include cemeteries, handi-van and social assistance. Service costs decreased by 17.4% from 2023 due to a reduction in the cemetery budget. **NOTE: No explanation as to why the reduction?** Environmental Development services includes Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, Beautification and Land Rehabilitation. Service costs increased by 15.8% from 2023 due to an increase in legal fees and an increase in Municipal tree planting program. **NOTE: Again, I would like to point out that I don't think it is a proper use of tax dollars to provide free trees, for which the Municipality pays, to residents. That is using the taxes of ratepayers at large to benefit a handful of residents. Taxes should be collected to provide general services to all residents of the Municipality such as road maintenance, snow clearing, drainage, etc. The trees ARE NOT FREE. The ratepayers are all paying for them.** Recreational services include recreation administration, community centers and halls, skating rinks and arenas, parks and playgrounds, services to seniors, grants, museums and library. Service costs increased by 5% from 2023 due to increased cost of materials and supplies for parks and playgrounds, service to seniors cost increase, increase in the grants budget, and salary increases. **Amram Bangura (without microphone)** – Now we'll go on to the Capital Budget, 2024 Capital Budget, the slides. They are over budget. So on this slide we're showing um the Capital Expenditures by Department and on the far right, you have the ?? top column there, it shows the total of the Capital Budget for 2024 and these are in millions of dollars so we're looking at the total of two million and fifty-nine thousand dollars and then moving left of that chart, for Utilities, the total of the Capital Budget is three million, two hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars, um Solid Waste fifty thousand, Public Works, two million seven hundred and twenty-six thousand, the 2024 Fleet Program, two million, two hundred and eleven thousand, Recreation three million and twenty-two thousand, Fire Services fifty-six thousand, Facility Maintenance eighty thousand and Administration one million six fifty-nine and we will see a breakdown of these in the following slides.... slides following. So for Administration the first table at the top, IT network infrastructure fifty-nine thousand, and purchase of land 1.6 million. Facility Maintenance, Public Works Building well, thirty thousand dollars, um building alarms upgrade, building alarm upgrades fifty thousand dollars, that makes up a total of eighty thousand for Facilities Maintenance. Community Services, Springfield Center Landscape develop site, landscape developmentum this is a carryover project. It is a project carried over from 2023 to 2024, twenty-two thousand six seventy-seven and then Springfield Recreation Center is one three million dollars. Solid waste, the Hillside bin reconfiguration fifty thousand dollars. Next slide. Fire Services ...we're looking at protective...personal protective equipment forty thousand dollars, self-contained breathing apparatus sixteen thousand and ten dollars. And we have photos of what those Capital items look like for the fire services. The next slide we have the Fleet Program. We have leasing of four Motor Graders and two excavators, Fire tanker, Fire truck, a police vehicle, a fire engine, three light fleet trucks and fire, we have a ?? trailer, asphalt trailer, and a replacement bucket for loaders. That makes up the total of two million, two hundred and eleven thousand, six forty-nine and for Public Works, we have the Active Pathway Capital Program, the Capital Road Works, we did that, surface road, Springfield Road reconstruction, railway culvert upgrades, survey equipment, bridge repair program, Donaldson Drain, **NOTE: And that, I will say again and again, is a colossal waste of money. The drain works fine as it is. Straightening it, as I can see, seems to only benefit one person and I have asked Council countless times what benefit doing that is for the ratepayers and have received no valid reply...in fact virtually no reply. But I do know this was an idea introduced by former councillors Lucko and Brown many years ago, and discouraged when I and Councillor Wilson were councillors. The idea remained dormant until recently. Mr. Brown's daughter, Ms. Warren, is now on Council.** holiday electrical light upgrades, a total of

two million, seven twenty-six thousand. **NOTE: The majority of that amount is the Donaldson drain straightening.** And the Utility Capital we have the Capital projects, the Main Street watermain extension fifty thousand, Oakbank.... Dugald/Oakbank Water System Water Plant \$2.5 million, Dugald Lift Station Pump Upgrades ninety thousand, the lagoon expansion three hundred and seventy thousand **NOTE: And all of those required to allow a developer to proceed with residential development.** Springfield Road Lift Station upgrade, thirty thousand, cellular communications system fifty thousand, Anola Water Treatment Plant expansion, fifty thousand, **NOTE: Again to benefit a developer to proceed with residential development.** utility vehicles sixty-five thousand, systems lift station repair, fifty thousand, a total of three million, two fifty-five thousand. Lastly we look at the Utility Fund, and for Utility we have a chart, a pie chart, a 3D chart showing us the categories of the revenues for Utility. There is water sales, 13% of total revenues, sewer charges 12%, other revenues make up 3%, um transfers from Reserve for Debentures, 4%, transfers from Reserve for Capital, 68% and the last slide is on the Expenses side of the Utility Fund so water supply 11%, sewage collection and disposal 12%, transfers to Utility Reserve 4%, Debenture payment 4% and Transfer to Capital from the Utility Operating Fund from grants and from Reserves 69%. That comes to the end of the presentation. **Mayor Therrien** – Thank you, Amram. That’s an excellent presentation uh by the way. Um what’s that? Is that better there? Oh the camera ... how do I do that, Kristy? Ok. Alright uh then we’ll start on the uh the questions uh people come up to the podium, same thing, make your uh uh um presentation or your questions uh, uh state your name and uh your address. Uh we’ll go on line and to the audience uh **there**. Um I don’t see anybody on, on line so we’ll start in the audience uh **there**, who wants to be the first. Edwin? **Edwin Giesbrecht** - I’ve got to have a chair, my chiropractor, Dave, was on maternity leave this week so .... I’ll just sit myself here. **Mayor Therrien** – Does he have to have the microphone in front of him, I guess. **NOTE: You know, as a ratepayer, I would like to see the RM purchase a few hand-held microphones. They seem to have only one whenever there is a public meeting. They spend money on things a lot less useful.** **Edwin Giesbrecht** – Check. Check. Do I have 5 minutes, Sir? Is the clock running? Um 5 is fine. I wanted to make a brief statement here. My principle focus is on our debt. As we all gather here tonight, the shadows of our financial reality loom over us like specters in the night. We stand on the precipice of a dire situation, one that threatens to engulf us in a sea of debt so vast and treacherous that it’s depths seem unfathomable. The budget before us in not merely a ledger of numbers and figures, it is a haunting estimate, a testament to the fiscal abyss that stares back at us with cold, unrelenting eyes for how many years to come. Caring for the community involves responsible fiscal management that prioritizes the well-being of every member, ensuring their present and future prosperity, however burden of debt often falls heavily on residents, **NOTE: It always falls on residents because governments do not have any money in and of themselves. Their entire revenue stream is dependent upon residents, through property taxes, fees and levies etc.** impacting their livelihoods and future opportunities. Consider the implications of budgeted Capital borrowing and projected debt in municipalities. Each individual from the youngest child to the eldest senior is saddled with a significant per capita debt, potentially amounting to thousands of dollars. This financial strain contradicts the fundamental principles of community care. Throughout history, economic challenges have tested the resilience of municipalities from the Great Depression to the current complexities exacerbated by aging populations and unforeseen crises like the pandemic. Prudent financial decision-making is paramount. Yet risky endeavours such as over-estimating market returns, underestimating pensions, or embarking on idealistic projects including erroneous contemplations of inflation, recession, or depression can exasperate fiscal woes, pushing communities toward insolvency. Moreover the plight of vulnerable demographics like fixed-income seniors living below the poverty line underscores the ethical imperative of responsible government. Taxing them out of their homes under the guise of addressing housing needs for seniors or otherwise epitomizes a paradoxical approach to community care. The very individuals who contributed to their communities now potentially face displacement, their shelter threatened by unstable financial practices. Residents need not be financial experts to recognize the precariousness of their situations, struggling to pay essential bills like Hydro or prescriptions while facing the looming specter of property tax explosion corrodes trust in Municipal leadership. When residents fail to meet their obligations, the cycle of financial distress perpetuates, no matter who’s at fault, further straining community resources. Do not forget, contrary to more recent and forgiving decades, that a property owner has only three hundred and sixty-five days to pay or face the wrath of our Administration by the very ones imposing the debt load upon those impoverished souls. **NOTE: And I don’t know about other areas but out where I live, it is not only the elderly that are impoverished. There are young people that are struggling to make ends meet.** I ask Council what has become of caring for our community. The question arises ... how many defaults will it take before prioritizing fiscal prudence over reckless borrowing practice. Springfield must confront this reality and reassess their priorities, placing the welfare of their residents above short-term gains. True community care demands accountability, transparency and empathy in decision-making, ensuring that no member is left behind in the pursuit of fiscal stability and prosperity. It is that cautious integration of a large margin of error that’s helped past municipalities through financial difficulty, however your approach to capital projection of around \$55 million in debt precariously implants around three thousand, six hundred and eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents of debt on every man, woman and unborn child within your term. Is that how we should care for our community? Try six thousand eight hundred and seventy-five dollars by the time your principle and interest are paid for only after the public has succumbed to such Draconian impositions on taxation. I suggest Council take a step back, sharpen their pencils, and further retain an expert consultant to oversee the redraft of the budget. I think you would be wise to enlist for such expertise a local resident we have right here in our midst in Miss Jan Nysten. If you are wondering of my plans with duct tape on Council, I would like to draw your attention to a time of things to come and what your budget represents, never mind the unforeseen expenses. I’ll leave it at that. Thank you, Mayor. **Mayor Therrien** – Thank you, Edwin. Um I’ll go on line here, I don’t see anybody on line. Uh anybody else uh uh like to uh in the audience. **Darryl Speer** – It has a ring to it. Am I on or am I off. I’m looking at the uh budget .... **Mayor Therrien** – interrupting Just state your name for people uh **there** uh.... **Darryl Speer** – Darryl Speer, Springfield. Uh looking at the Capital Projects by Department uh 2024 it only talks about the Oakbank water system uh water treatment plant at twenty-five million, five hundred. Um I’m getting an overall price considerably higher than that and it’s looking at the Capital, it’s like uh 26.9 million. Am I missing something? **Mayor Therrien** – What page are you on uh Darryl, if you mention it **there** just tell us which page to go to? **Darryl Speer** – I don’t know if it has a page number... **Mayor Therrien** – Ya, bottom right. Oh, I’m looking at the uh the drafts. **Darryl Speer** – I’m looking at your ... ok **NOTE: People are talking in the background but I can’t hear what they are saying.** **Amram Bangura** – Yes, so the table there um shows the Capital projects for 2024 only and there’s the 5-year Capital which is on page 14 of the Plan, Financial Plan. So we have five hundred thousand you’re seeing there for the Dugald/Oakbank Water System and the amount is expected to be the same on that project in 2024 only and in 2025 and beyond on Page 14 of the Financial Plan, you will see the rest of that makes up the twenty-nine twenty-four million. **Darryl Speer** – Well, I’ve got 26.9. Did I add something up wrong? **Amram Bangura** – So if you go to Page 14 of the Plan, the Financial Plan...so that’s where you see 26.9, you see there, that is just on 2025 up to 5 years. It does not include the 2024 figure of 25 million. **Darryl Speer** – So when you add that together, what do you come up with? **Amram Bangura** – Twenty-nine point 4. **Darryl Speer** – Well, I think what I’m going to ask Council to look at is to step back and

reassess this both from the uh current estimate for 2024 and going forward for 5 years and uh look at developing something that's less costly and uh in terms of expensive treatment and waste by-product that is being proposed by this Water Treatment center, it's a 5 stage green sand filtration with reverse osmosis which requires expensive dealing with sequestering the wastewater and also disposal of the by-products. **NOTE: Granted I live east of Anola but I have been using the water from the Sandilands aquifer for over 40 years without any sort of treatment other than a Canadian Tire filter in the pipe in the basement to remove some of the rust (from the iron) which gets changed maybe every 3 months.** Uh I've looked through the East St. Paul water report and they've been sourcing .... Sourcing their water from Springfield for many, many years and uh they have a water treatment report that's very simple. It's 10 pages long, uh the Water Treatment Report for Springfield is...is like about 50 pages long and uh so what they point out is that they are having a **major source of water uh from the Oasis well field uh and that's been serving them well and uh in 2022, they propose a new well** at the same site which is in Springfield by the way and uh that's going to be developed this year and uh they don't have any of the issues that are being proposed for the Dugald uh Oakbank water system uh because they're pulling water **that meets drinking water standards**. Uh it has to have uh **very minor treatment of ultra-violet just for precautions sake and chlorine for distribution**. And they have like 1388....that's one thousand three hundred and eighty-either connections and they've had no drinking water safety issues with this water and going back in time and up to the last water report which is March 21<sup>st</sup> of this year and so I went and did a, you know, a kind of a review of the Report, I had a look at the Water Treatment Plant on Wenzel and it's similar in size to our Water Treatment Plant in Oakbank. And it makes no mention for this...bringing this new well in service of having to expand the operation so they clearly have a better handle on where to source their water from and that's in Springfield and I think we should be uh looking at that and I think we should be uh appreciating the water we have already and that is the water we are drawing from the Heatherdale well field. Uh it's being threatened as we speak uh by deep water dredging and uh by gravel washing is being right in the draw zones of the wells and this shouldn't be happening. And I brought this to the attention of Phil Pawluk, I brought in the pictures and uh that was last year. I've asked for updates so it doesn't happen again and he says I have to refer to the CAO. I asked for information there and it's not available to me so I'm going to ask Council. **You get that information** because we do not want the same thing happening again for another year. This has been going on year after year and I ask... direct that you uh rethink this thing on this Water Treatment Plant because I think **if other RMs can use water from our RM and it serves their purposes with a safe....** actually a greater number of connections, that we better step back. And I can assure you they won't be spending \$29.4 million on their water treatment plant and that's a fact. Thank you. **Mayor Therrien** – Thank you, Mr. Speer(s). **NOTE: Does the Mayor just have a poor memory or does he deliberately add the "s" to his name.** Um anybody else? **Karen Lalonde** - ... got this prior to when we picked up the budget because it, it really makes things a lot more clear than kind of look through the financial thing there ... **Mayor Therrien** – And it does. It was well done uh Amram's uh part **there**. And we only got it too at the same time as you. **Karen Lalonde** – Ok. I appreciate it. But I had more questions after I looked at it but uh anyway, Karen Lalonde, Oakbank. Um I was looking and Council inherited approximately ten-million-dollar debt from the ... from the other Council, prior Council. This Council is outperforming it to approximately sixty million by spreading it out until 2027. The interest on this debt will continue for twenty years. Fees and permits used to cover the majority of Planning Department operational costs but no longer, indicating developers are not paying their fair share. Uh Mr. Mayor you committed to building two hundred houses per year, I believe you said, fitting into the blueprint for better housing and this will uh increase our operational costs not to mention infrastructure. The Prime Minister created mass immigration and is responsible for the rise in house prices. He should be the one solving it. I don't believe that Springfield has to solve ... or help solve this problem, us being just a rural community and not a large city. Good business sense or even common sense would indicate a 1.3 million-dollar surplus should be used to keep borrowing as low as possible, instead Council decided to get into the real estate business. The purpose for purchasing the land on Oakwood was because a deal couldn't be reached to purchase a portion of it that has existing RM drainage etc. on it. If the seller won't accept that assessed value of the land, then expropriation should take place. The cost and legal fees are insignificant purchasing of a land that's worth 1.6 million dollars. In my humble opinion, this Budget is filled with outrageous borrowing and bad economic decisions that are out of control. Some members of Council seem to not understand that in a democratic government it is for the people and by the people, not top-down rules and I believe we should be more open and transparent so that....so many residents don't even know about half of this and I feel that they should be informed. Uh the other thing ... one last point that I want to make is next year's reassessment and other years way back, what we used to do to uh keep the um taxes a little fairer for people rather than having a large increase is we used to decrease the mill rate and it offset the horrendous uh impact and I guess that's all. I just ...thanks. I hope you will revisit this Budget and sharpen your pencils and really think about the amount of money that's being spent and how residents are going to pay for it. **Mayor Therrien** – Thank you, M'am. **NOTE: Again he seems to have forgotten her name. He knew her name when he first referred to her. I find that somewhat dehumanizing and disrespectful.** Um on line. I see uh nobody. Um in the audience. Jan. **Janet Nylen** – Janet Nylen, Oakbank. I guess my first question is are you limiting us to the time we have. **Mayor Therrien** – Uh 10 minutes is fine. **Janet Nylen** – Ok. So could I ask that the 10 minutes doesn't include lengthy answers or could the answers be at the end of my presentation. Cause it.... **Mayor Therrien** – Uh it's hard to ... it's hard to say uh. Why don't we just proceed and then we'll see how the time goes.... **Janet Nylen** – Well if you could give me some latitude because of long answers, I'd appreciate that, you know, like it.... ok **NOTE: I believe people in the audience were volunteering to give her their time.** **Mayor Therrien** – There's no... there's no time... everybody's got 10 minutes but uh .... **Janet Nylen** – Well I... **Mayor Therrien** – If the answers are uh longer then we'll...it's like a soccer game, if there's a lot of penalties, then we'll give you extra time at the end. (Laughter from the audience and Ms. Nylen) **Janet Nylen** – Well it is like a soccer game, ya. Ok my first one is just on the presentation itself, I just um where it says 2023 carryover, does that mean that the money raised in 2023 by projects funded by taxes, not Reserves or not by borrowing, will be taxed again this year or was the money put into a Reserve for next year. **Amram Bangura (without microphone at the start)** – So we have some projects um funded mostly by Reserves and grants so .... but if it was approved last year, those carry over because the money was coming from the Reserves. **Janet Nylen** – But there were a number of projects funded by taxes. **Amram Bangura (without microphone)** - ... taxes for these projects. **NOTE: Can't hear what he says at the beginning.** **Janet Nylen** – Ok I just don't want to tax them in 2023 and 20...ok thank you, good. Ok it's been my past practice for financial plan presentations that the prior year's revenue and expenses budgeted and actuals become part of the current year's budget, the first and second columns on your uh Financial Plan. Is that practice used for this Budget? **Amram Bangura (without microphone so can't hear everything he says)** - ... the prior year's budget and actual. **Janet Nylen** – So can you explain **why some of the figures in the Budget are not the same as in the December 31<sup>st</sup> financial statements as adopted by Council on March 19<sup>th</sup>?** **Amram Bangura (without microphone)** – So we ... right there, it's on the actual side. The Financial Statements that Council received in the March .... It's a financial ... before the ... entries.... and uh those figures we reported to the Province by March 15<sup>th</sup>. And then after March 15<sup>th</sup> is when we make those accounting entries which would include ... estimates, some of which have not cash flow entries so income and finances so .... **Janet Nylen** – Well, ok so this is going to be the

lengthy answer so can you keep that in mind and then we'll go back to it. Like I've got like 8 questions, that's ...that's not a lot but I, I guess I counted...like when I was there and it was before PSAB was really um ingrained, you would look at your year end statement and those figures are brought forward. I can't do that anymore so that's my point that I'm trying to make. Like for example on the Financial Plan near the bottom of Fiscal Services, there were transfers of um of actual of one million six hundred and twenty-six thousand nine hundred and thirty for the General Reserve but on the December 31<sup>st</sup> financial statement it was four hundred and fifty-three thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine. So...so there's a big difference and I, you know, I ...so um it's also reflected in the total of the transfer payments to the first page of the Budget and the resulting differences as I would have done it and you know, I accept the way you're doing it but I wish there would have been an explanation of why there are changes and what they impact but um the Operating Surplus would have been seven hundred and seventy-four thousand, not two hundred and twenty thousand as recorded. Um I think you can explain that seven hundred and seventy-four thousand but we're talking of thousands of dollars of differences that the public doesn't know anything about. So it basically makes your Year End Financial Statement not, not accurate and if Council's not being reported on how it's being changed and adopting the cSowhanges or revising your Year End Statement, moving forward we have no record. We don't know what these new changes are that you're saying you have to put in.

**Amram Bangura**—So my answer would be they are prepared on a cash basis almost ..... cash basis a multi cash basis from January on to the end of December and that is what we report to the Province and then after that comes in and pays us entries from accruals because bills have been coming in and bills have been paid in the year that they come in to the following year, they have been coming in also for the month of March. **Janet Nysten**—Yes, and this statement was adopted in March, March 19<sup>th</sup>. **Amram Bangura**—And yes, we even had a ... cheque that was sent ... the 2023 cheque right now we had a cheque that came in, in March and at the end of February so all we're saying the entries...that's why we have the year end period that are going year end entries as some were reported to the Province the March 15<sup>th</sup> Financial Statement. **Janet Nysten**—The March 15<sup>th</sup> you've reported to the Province, you're making changes. What I'm suggesting is the changes that you make get reported to Council, get report ...like I can read them if you revise your December 31<sup>st</sup> statement and report it to the Province, otherwise that December 31<sup>st</sup> statement hasn't got any...there's no kind of continuity for us to follow. Anyway let me go on because I'm running out of a bit of time.... **Mayor Therrien**—Well, I just uh maybe Amram can, can uh discuss that uh he's an accountant .... **Janet Nysten**—No, I get it... **Amram Bangura**—So the one last thing sorry ... **Mayor Therrien**—Go ahead, Amram. **Amram Bangura**—Uh so we're also dealing with body counts ...**Janet Nysten**—I know... **Amram Bangura**—...and they were past entries that uh were recorded in 2023 that we should have recorded and if we did not record it in that year they were ...we had to adjust to put them in so when we have situations like that it will be...it will be ...Province for bills, 2023 bills to come in until we receive them in 2024 and want to account for them in 2023. **Janet Nysten**—But you can't, you can't just unilaterally change a statement that's been presented and adopted by Council. If the Auditor comes and he hasn't come yet, he comes late in the year, you know you can say that this came in after the statement or revise your statement. Often a year end statement is revised because of late entries or something that's occurred. I guess I'm just trying to say that there's no transparency and accountability that we know ... if you know but the public doesn't and I don't think Council knows. **Mayor Therrien**—Well, we rely on, on our accountant here, he does an exceptional job .... **Janet Nysten**—I'm not questioning that ... **Mayor Therrien**—... so uh ... I know but ... **Janet Nysten**—I'm questioning the accountability ... **Mayor Therrien**—...that the principles that they're following is the professional standards principles. **Janet Nysten**—No he's not. **Mayor Therrien**—And...and the accountant that does the auditor as well, does the audits, has...has no issues. **Janet Nysten**—Well, we can follow that up with other ... like ok I'll just move on. Um then I looked at the Revenue pages and I saw that the transfer from Reserves was also different both from the Budgeted and also by Actuals, then I looked at the impact to the Accumulated Reserve Fund and reserve funds are only recorded on financial statements so that's our only indication of what money we had in Reserve Funds and in 2022 at the year end, there was twenty million, six hundred and two thousand and in 2023 there was forty-three million one hundred and nineteen thousand, that's a difference of uh a lot that we can't account for, twelve million dollars over expenditures from Reserves should require an explanation. I think part of it might be um the 5 million, 600,000 dollars from the grant uh that the Province paid for DOWS but if that came in as a grant and goes into Reserves, then you can't report it now on your 5 year Capital Plan as a grant still outstanding. It's come. We've got the money, that money should be in the Reserve and that money in the Reserve should be accumulating the interest you've got from when it was put in there in my opinion. **Amram Bangura**—So ... so the grant was recorded in 2023 (yes) under normal circumstances because it is a conditional grant, it should not be recorded until the condition is revealed but the money came and we had to show it in the 2023 Financial Plan and then we transferred it into Reserves. Now the project is going to start this year, 2024, so then when we are doing the accounting for it, whatever comes from that Reserve for the Capital Projects from the grant portion also has to be shown as a grant because it was grant that is relating to capital and the grant amount has to be capitalized when we are accounting for that Crown asset so it's...it's in the Reserve and when we fulfill the condition of the grant, as the project is on ..., whatever portion of that grant amount is used will come back into Operating from the Reserve. **Janet Nysten**—That's not my point. My point is you've received the money, it's in the Reserve, and then now if I look at your Five-Year Capital statement, it shows that that's part of the grant money you're still going to get so it shouldn't ...we're...we're saying we're going to get the same money twice. We can't call it Reserve money and we can't call it Grant money anymore. **Amram Bangura**—It's in...it's in the Reserve (yes) so that is what.... it's not shown on the 5-year Capital Grant.... **Janet Nysten**—Yes, it is. It's under Other. **Amram Bangura**—It's shown as um a Reserve. **Janet Nysten**—No, it's shown under Other...you're...you're ... well, unless you know of another grant you're getting. Like you've, you've .... Council in their public hearings have talked about the ten... **Mayor Therrien**—Why don't we just let him ... **Janet Nysten**—... ten million.... **Mayor Therrien**—... find that. We're giving you an extra 5 minutes. **Amram Bangura**—So when we say the Financial Plan right.... **Janet Nysten**—The 5-Year Capital Plan. **Amram Bangura**—So on Page 13 ... **Janet Nysten**—Well, whatever it is. **Amram Bangura**—We have on Page 13 for the DOWS project ... **Janet Nysten**—No, I want the 5-Year Capital... **Amram Bangura**—I'm just...I'm just ... I'm just checking on the page 13.... **Janet Nysten**—Well, that's not the answer. **Amram Bangura**—And then on Page 14 of the DOWS project it's also what is there is coming from the Reserve. **Janet Nysten**—On the far right hand side it says Other and it says the total of the grants that we've been told in the public hearings we're getting from the Province towards these projects and I guess my point is we can't treat it again as new grants when we've got it already. It's a, it's a Reserve now and I don't want ... like it ... we're ... **Amram Bangura**—I ... it's on Page 14 we have the DOWS so we have the 10.3 million shown there ... **Janet Nysten**—My point is ... I think it's well taken or it should be well taken that if you've received the money, it's ... it's ... it's not due anymore as a grant. It is now money in your Reserves and how you treat it when the project is spent or you know, you need it, is ... it's not my concern. **Amram Bangura**—Well, it's in the Reserves ... sorry M'am, it's in the Reserves but there it's just uh um to show that this is money...it came in ... it was grant...it came in as a grant and from this area that it's a new grant it's not new money but it's just to show you that the 10.3 million um is grants that's um only in the Capital. **Janet Nysten**—Uh well to me it's double dipping, really. But anyway, I'll go on. Um the um \$900,000 of um added returns from investments or increase over budget from Returns from Investments, I think

it was said when you were purchasing the lagoon land, or the land east of Elm, that that was found money, that it was because of uh grants received and that uh um it wasn't ... the purchase wasn't going to impact the taxpayer. Um \$900,000 at 5% would take an investment of \$18,000,000 on a calculation. I checked today what the variable rate offered by Access is and you could maybe negotiate as a big corporation a better rate but to earn \$900,000 takes an investment of \$23,377,000 dollars. So I don't know where the \$900,000 comes from. It could be part of all of the Reserves that the Municipality had but again if that \$5.6 million dollars was a grant to the Water Treatment Plant, then I think that the interest on that money should go into the Water Treatment Plant Reserve. Now I think you do a journal entry at each year end that the...you, you add all your Reserves together and then based on the percentages of the Reserves, you write down the interest earned on those accounts, is that correct. **Amram Bangura** –The calculation on the.... **Janet Nysten** – Ya so can you tell me where the \$900,000, how that came about. **Amram Bangura** –So I don't know which \$900,000 you are talking about ...**Janet Nysten** – Returns from Investments, what's the .... **Amram Bangura** –The Actual 2023 .... **Janet Nysten** –2023 what is ... exceeds what you budgeted. **Amram Bangura** –So in 2023 our budget or interest income ... **Janet Nysten** –\$153,000 ... **Amram Bangura** –... was \$165,000. (ok) and we got an actual of 1 million ...over one million it was over one million, interest. **Janet Nysten** – From what investments? **Amram Bangura** – It's from all the savings in the bank account. **Janet Nysten** –No but are they not apportioned to the Reserves as well? **Amram Bangura** –Well, from the Financial Plan you will not see that, you....what is apportioned to each, each Reserve. **Janet Nysten** –Well, ok, so then you don't see it but it's taken away and put into those Reserve accounts at year end, correct, ... **Amram Bangura** –Uh hum ... **Janet Nysten** –... so it's not sitting there as General Revenue anymore. We can't spend that money.... we can't put it again into General Reserves because it's already been apportioned to the different Reserves. **Amram Bangura** –So I'm really...I want to get over to what's the point you're trying to make, M'am. **Janet Nysten** –The point is it's ... the Municipality was fortunate enough to have returns from investments of \$900,000 dollars, it's not just General Revenue, it's revenue that should go to part to the Reserves, all of them and then the part of whatever the Municipality has in it's Operating fund would be the general...returns from investment portion. And I guess I bring that back to the purchase of the land because you...it was clearly said that that was found money and it's not found money, it should be money that accumulates in our Reserves and makes them larger. That's my point. **Amram Bangura** –And that's what happened, the interest accumulates on the Reserves. All the money is in one account at the bank so we don't have specific accounts for each Reserves (no, I know) then at the end of the year, like you said, the Reserves are ... the interest income is apportioned to the various Reserve accounts. **Mayor Therrien** – One minute left there M'am. **Janet Nysten** –(laughing) Oh ok. **NOTE: I would be laughing too because I am sure they have been talking for more than 10 minutes.** Let me go to the big ones then. **Mayor Therrien** –Well, are you going to get that done in one minute? **NOTE: Someone in the audience I believe says "no she should have ...."**No, she has...we have ... we've been more than ... **Female in Audience** – She has been spending a lot of time ... **Mayor Therrien** –We've been more than uh uh being the time at...so we've got a minute, go ahead M'am. **Janet Nysten** – Well, I'm going to keep on and you can um...there are 30-line items in the Financial...the 2023 Financial Statement that exceed...are over a hundred thousand filtered to a million and 5 of them are over a million. I don't think that this Council is looking at those particular line items and knowing why you're not hitting your budget target. I don't think budgeting is being taken seriously by trying to target budgets, do the projects that have been approved and if you want to change it you can, you can have other priorities but it should be discussed and it should be a decision. It ...I think that that's too many highly excessive errors to...not errors, overspending or underspending without explanation to the public. And... **Mayor Therrien** – We've had, we've had all our presentations for ...from all our uh Departments. Uh we've been doing this uh for a number of month uh now so they've given us all the details on that so it's not that we just got this and that's it. This has been going on for a while. **Janet Nysten** –I'm not saying that Sir. I'm saying when you make a budget and you say, I'm going to build this road, you don't build the road and you go and buy a truck or something else. That's a fundamental change that used to be done by Council changing their priorities because they needed the truck. And then the public knows why the projects that you had in last year's budget are not being done or haven't been done. And we're just moving forward in a way that's more transparent. Um what is the status of the um Springfield Road, Homan Road borrowing by-law because in 2022 that was Borrowing Bylaw 21-24 was recorded as being there for \$3,271,000? It has pretty much been done um and this year's bud...or last year's budget it was reported for a borrowing for \$1.6 million dollars for that road and this year it now shows as \$852,537. as being taken from the General Operating Fund because of the audit uh deficit that was uh found. So what is the status of that borrowing bylaw? **NOTE: Some woman is speaking in the background without benefit of microphone, seemingly explaining the answer but who can hear it?** That borrowing by-law is not showing in this budget. The funds have not been borrowed. I'm just bringing that to your attention. **CAO Draper** - Well, as far as I'm concerned, the project is still being completed so there's minor uh drainage and you know, items being done that we're still collecting bills so I mean we haven't finalized the borrowing by-law yet, if that's what you're asking. **Janet Nysten** –No, I'm saying under Part 3 of the borrowing that you're going to be doing this year, will that not be done, like it's not done, when is that going to be shown and reported. **CAO Draper** – Like the debenture? That we're looking at next year for that because we haven't received all the final invoices on that project yet. **Janet Nysten** –Ok. Thank you.**NOTE: I am the farthest from being a financial wizard but I only know about my own money situation. If at the beginning of the year, I decided to sock away some funds to, say, fix my roof, and it doesn't get fixed that year, the money stays in reserve for the project but when I budget for next year, I don't again put funds aside for the same job. I think that is what Ms. Nysten is suggesting is happening with the RM Budget. I may be wrong.**And to recap, this is just going to be a summary and I'll be done. Financial Reports to have meaning and provide confidence to ratepayers must be prepared in a consistent and acceptable manner. Once adopted, changes should only occur by disclosure with suitable explanation and then by formal adoption by Council in my opinion. We are talking about millions of dollars of public funds here. This draft budget should not be passed as submitted until these figures shown are consistent with the 2023 budget amounts and the December 31<sup>st</sup>, '23 year end or year-end as revised Financial Statements and any adjustments explained to Council and adopted by resolution in my opinion. The need for a Water Treatment and Lagoon Expansion I feel will be needed but not all at once and not without significant contribution from developers. **NOTE: If I recall, Mayor Therrien indicated he was on close terms with the individual that is planning rural residential development in Dugald.**Borrowing ... puts the debt on today's taxpayers for something they may never need. They have already paid for their own sewer and water services. The 5-year Plan will exhaust our Reserves and burden us with debt. Something should be put into the budget to indicate how development will offset these costs. I cannot find anything in the budget that will do that. There's no indication that building permits are going to be increasing, development fees are going to be increasing, there's none of that. So thank you very much. **Mayor Therrien** – Thank you, M'am. How much time was that total because I don't want anybody to leave here and say that we shut down Mrs. Nysten. Is that like 25 minutes. 18 minutes so this'll .... (laughter) ... thank you. Uh on line. I'll say... can't see anybody there and in the audience. **Tangi Bell** – Hello. **Helen Garand, Springfield** – This is further to Edwin. Um this budget and future year's budgets will increase individual taxpayers' annual burden beyond reasonable limits. Infrastructure expenditures in excess of \$50 million dollars in a relatively short

term, we are told, are meant to build more houses to attract more people to Springfield and in part, to provide affordable housing. I wonder at what cost. Many residents will be required to pay taxes to support infrastructure that will never benefit them. For example, the Water Treatment Plant which will not benefit rural residents and the Rossol development in Dugald where there is no indication that the developer will be contributing to bringing services to the site so the cost again will be borne by taxpayers. There are many low-income families in the Municipality that are barely making ends meet and this will create an unreasonable burden for them and possibly push them out of the Municipality entirely. Many of these uh families are second and third generation and have contributed to building Springfield and they will be forced to leave to accommodate newcomers with deeper pockets. Council has lost sight of the fact that this is a rural Municipality with only 16,000 people and 6,000 households give or take and that it's not possible to turn Springfield into a city. Thank you. **NOTE: I think that is exactly what is gradually happening. Springfield is being absorbed just like Transcona, which was once a separate entity, was into the Metropolitan City of Winnipeg. Just look at how outlying communities like Tuxedo, Headingly, Fort Garry, etc. are now considered part of the largest Manitoba city.** Mayor Therrien – Thank you, M'am. Um anybody else? Who? Ok, we'll do it on line then. I don't see the hand uh there Kristy. Oh. Go ahead, Tangi. **Tangi Bell – NOTE: At the start, there is a terrible echo happening when Ms. Bell is trying to speak.** Is everything alright there? There's feedback going on. Mayor Therrien – No, you're good here. **NOTE: Their own recording belies that statement.** **Tangi Bell –** Ok, thank you. Um I just want to pick up on the point where you said that you wanted to make sure that people didn't think you shot Ms. Nylen down but what I feel is that did occur was a rush to get her through and make her points across and to me that's not fair or meaningful for anybody here as ratepayers to be rushed through things. I also want to say that I had my chat button um disabled. **NOTE: I DID TOO!** Apparently it's due to uh a number of participants being here. I'm counting 22 and that also includes staff and Council so I'm not sure what the number of ...the number that Council has declared that all of a sudden they would shoot that chat box down but what I was saying is, I would give my 10 minutes to Miss Nylen for her to continue as I feel that many of her points need to be answered. And I don't think that they were. I would like to say that I agree to the points that have been brought forward, particularly the lack of transparency, the proposed wasteful use of osmosis water treatment plant and the costs that will now be given to all the ratepayers for that. Uh protecting the current wells from aggregate mining is very important and would solve a lot of the issues that we are seeing. And leave housing development to the private sector and if you want to do that...particular...not ... not Council get into housing. But I believe that the developer really needs to pay more to ensure that all costs are covered from all of this development. And again this Budget is far too rich for citizens um and it doesn't focus on the services and I find that really wrong and so I ask this Council to step back and look at a more affordable budget. Thank you. Mayor Therrien – Thank you, M'am. In the audience. On line. I don't see anything on line or in the audience so maybe we'll go around the uh Chambers here for uh councillors who want to.....**NOTE: Another lengthy pause on the recording.** .... ok, thank you. Um anybody on Council want to add anything uh more? Mark? **Councillor Miller –** Uh thank you, Mr. Mayor. I think ... is it on....yep... ya, I've had some responses, texts and e-mails in the last few days uh regarding this and a number of my constituents and people in the Municipality share some of the concerns that were raised here this evening and I just wanted to ... because they didn't formally submit anything uh that I wanted to share it with Council and of course, to the public, that they echo the concern in the rural residences that uh we may be mis-stepping and overlooking or taking advantage of rural residents uh in terms of the Water Treatment Plant. And I have to say I'm somewhat of a supporter of the Water Treatment Plant going forward but I do not support the uh... the taxing of ratepayers throughout the Municipality, I think it can be done in an LID **NOTE: Local Improvement District. That is where the beneficiaries of the initiative are the only ones paying for the service.** or a situation where those who are receiving the benefit of that uh would actually pay for that and/or as we've said before, the developer has a ... a larger contribution because who is going to be financially gaining from this. It's not necessarily the RM. We can go again and rehash this but residential properties do not provide um any cash value to an RM. It's a drain going forward with public works and so forth because it can't just be a flash in the pan. You see at the end of the day a new property and new taxation but at the end of the day, uh if you add up all the costs associated with it and don't take my advice, take it from the Institute of Urban Studies across the country or anywhere else, in Europe or locally in the United States, rural residences don't uh benefit a municipality. **NOTE: In actual fact, the largest percentage of tax paid to our RM comes from the Industrial area owners.** Uh it's the industry that yes, it could drop...absolutely and we want to work on that part of it. Uh I just wanted to also share some of the comments from residents. Uh I think at the current state we have debt that's just around \$8 million dollars and if you look on Page 14, uh people have pointed out that up to 2027 we're going to be looking at upwards of \$82 million dollars so I think it was one of the presenters here today said that uh there's an absolute acceleration of debt coming within the next uh 3 to 4 years that has never been seen in this Municipality before. **NOTE: And I hate to harp on the same thing over and over but one of those debts being incurred is for the expropriation of land and the actual work of straightening the Donaldson Drain which IS ABSOLUTELY NOT REQUIRED. The drain works as it is right now. There are a few residents on Hnats Landing behind the Petrocan at the corner of 15 and 12 that do not like the current drain passing behind their homes before it crosses 12 and proceeds at an angle northward to Cooks Creek. And the other is the Water Treatment Plant to enable increased residential development in Dugald.** I'm somewhat concerned with that. Um I know we don't want to stall and we don't want to be a No to everything kind of a Council and I certainly don't want to be as a rep but I think we need to advance, we need to make progress and all the rest of it but we have to manage our debt sensibly and responsibly through contributions from the Province and from the Federal Government and so forth. Again whether we look at the federal policy of immigration, we're feeling some of the benefits and some of the detriments to that but we have to uh not carry the load and unfairly do that and I know AMM **NOTE: Association of Manitoba Municipalities...the organization to which all Manitoba municipalities pretty much belong that meet on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting all.** and other uh municipalities are feeling this crunch as well but let's be responsible in that approach uh no question about it. **NOTE: Generally speaking, people that immigrate to Canada from other countries gravitate to cities, not rural communities.** I guess my final comments would be uh you know, there's lots of challenges within this municipality. This is our first budget as this new Council, that's...that's absolutely true and we want to echo and be respectful to the people that came out, I think uh it's fantastic to see you know people participate in this meeting tonight and on line. Um I think we can do perhaps a better job going forward, especially knowing that next year is going to be an assessment...reassessment year and that we're going to see a huge bump in uh in revenue or at least we'll have some revenue uh increase but I have 2 or 3 questions directly for Amram if I may and I'm not sure if you're prepared to have these questions but one of them would be, a 1% increase in the uh in the budget itself, in the tax, how much does our RM yield or how much additional revenue would we receive with every 1% that's increased on the ratepayer? **NOTE: There's another long pause in the recording.** Ratepayer – I can't hear him...he's muted or something. Amram Bangura – (Faintly) Can you hear me? (finally on microphone) So we have an assessment of about 1.29 billion and the mill rate is close to um 10 with 9% (fades out) ... so one 2% (fades away again) and then (very faint...can't hear what he's saying) ... Councillor Miller – Thank you and that's very helpful. **NOTE: Too bad it is not helpful for anyone listening to the audio.** I ... at the current state of affairs,

how much debt do we have on the books? Am I accurate in saying on page uh... I had it here... just so we know and the public knows for the record, on Page 11, is it truthful to say that we have uh \$7.1 million dollars in current debt? **Amram Bangura** – Yes, so our outstanding debt is about 7 million plus but again, so the Province calculates um the borrowing capability for each municipality. This Municipality has a **borrowing capability of one hundred...one hundred and fifteen million dollars** plus and the outstanding debt is just about 7 million in 2024. And one of our debentures will be paid off in fact in 2024. Um so we have a very low debt compared to the capacity of borrowing that this RM has, one hundred and fifteen million dollars borrowing capacity and we only have borrowing of about 7 million dollars. **NOTE: I may have a borrowing capacity of \$100,000. but that doesn't mean I should be borrowing that much for something that is not necessary just because I have the capability. The interest accrued on that debt could almost buy me another property over the years and I get nothing from that interest that I paid.**

**Councillor Miller** – That's great. That answers that question and how does that relate to other municipalities in general? Uh are we pretty much equal or uh are we at the low end or higher end to, in comparison to the other municipalities across the Province? Do you know that answer ... **Amram Bangura** – I don't have that at the top of my head but looking at us with a very low debt um I wonder ... not many ... financial plan. **NOTE: He keeps fading off into the distance and I cannot hear what he is saying.**

**Councillor Miller** – And I'm somewhat comfortable with that but again it's the going forward in the 3-year ... if we hit a threshold of somewhere up to \$82 million um I get really nervous but that's just me. **Amram Bangura** – And I can speak a little bit to that on Page 14, these numbers are coming from Page 14. Page 14 is the 5-year Capital Plan, five years from now and some of those we've shown the funds will be coming from Reserves but five years from now there's a lot that will come into play that can change all of that. Ya it's the lagoon project in that...on that Page 14 which I believe Cansoo is going to look at and we dug very detailed into the analysis of the Water Treatment Plant but we've not gone that far into the lagoon. But then the figure is shown there on Page 14 as a project that's coming. I...I...whether when we get there, it's going to be a borrowing of \$22 million, I cannot speak to that but it's shown there on Page 14 now as part of the Plan, the planning process. **Councillor Miller** – Uh thank you for those answers and I just wanted to say to the public and to the Council, I've been uh very pleased with Amram's work, uh in the last little while. I know if I ever had any questions or inquiries, that he's been receptive and into answering them so thank you for your work on this uh file, Amram. **Councillor Kuczynski** – Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I would like to maybe add a little bit more what Councillor Miller said. Um we're not going to be borrowing like Capital 5-years, it says \$87 million but here on Page 13 saying that we're going to uh spend \$13 million dollars in 2024 so that's going to add altogether to a hundred million dollars. So a hundred million dollars over the 5 years if we're going to pay interest rates on it for 7 years maybe...no, 5 years only until 2029, we're going to probably be **on the hook for two hundred million dollars with the interest charges**. So that we're going to withdraw **a hundred million dollars** from this community **just to pay interest charges** on the money that we are going to borrow. I don't think this is fair for the community. We can do a lot of other things for a hundred million and families can build their future instead of paying taxes just on the borrowing of money that...that this Council wants to spend the money in the near future. Um I know we're getting some grants and everything but I want to ask Amram, um how much money a year do we put to the Reserves? **NOTE: Amram's answer is not recorded.** And that money is coming from residents or with grants and everything else? **NOTE: Again, Amram's answer is not recorded.** Ok, so how much just from taxation, how much do we put to the Reserves? **Tangi Bell** – He's muted right now. Nobody can hear him out here. Amram is. **Amram Bangura** – So at this moment, ... what's the transfers to Reserves that is coming from the taxation. **NOTE: He starts out loud and by the end of the sentence, you can barely hear him.** But if we, if we look at our Capital service...you spoke about the Capital on Page 13. On Page 13 the \$13 million that we're spending on Capital, the bulk of that money is coming from Reserves and grants and the only amount that uh **NOTE: Again his voice fades away.** ... will be coming from taxes is .... three hundred ....thousand dollars. **Councillor Kuczynski** – Ya, but the money coming from the Reserve, it's still taxpayer's money. I...I... I see the Province and Federal Government, they put some money to the Reserve through grants but the majority of the money is always coming from the ratepayers here. And then that's what my concern, like we should have those numbers and release to the public how much we're getting from taxation to Reserve, maybe we're overtaxing people if...if we're getting huge amounts of money, maybe we should give a reduction in taxation to the residents in this Municipality. **Amram Bangura** – So on Page 9 of the Financial Plan, we have um a list in there of the grants coming into the RM in 2024, the ones that are operating grants and capital grants. That information is on Page 9 of the Financial Plan, Parts 2 you see the conditional transfers grants and then we see the Federal grants there and for the specific projects that those grants are coming in. **Councillor Kuczynski** – So you at this moment cannot tell me what...how much money we ...going to our Reserves from the taxation. **Amram Bangura** – You know... **Councillor Kuczynski** – Maybe ... maybe...you don't have to, you know, but if ... **Amram Bangura** – What I can say to you, so our Operating Budget ... our Operating Budget is 18. ... about 18.4 million and that the Municipal levy amount is less than that, it's 15 million plus...the amount we levy for is not enough to cover our operating expenses so grants come in to cover our operating expenses. **Councillor Kuczynski** – So that means that we are living over our ... over our budget, ya, we're living in debt. (laughing) So how can we ...how long can we live in debt? **CAO Draper** – That's how all municipalities operate though, not just us... **Councillor Kuczynski** – I know but that doesn't mean that we should too because everybody...my neighbours spend the money foolishly, that I'm going to do it the same way. I don't want to, you know, live above my means because I know where that leads, you know. Eventually...eventually going to catch up with everybody, you know, if you spend the money that you don't have. **Amram Bangura** – So Councillor, if we look at Page 1 of the Financial Plan, we can see that the Total Expenditure does match our Total Revenue and for the Operating side, when we talk about the Operating Expenses, we do get...receive some... **NOTE: Again his voice fades off and you can't hear what he says.** ... to fund our operation because these operations, they are the services that we provide to our residents so we receive grants and like we've shown on Page 9, there is several grants that come in to fund our Operation ... (fades off again) So the Operating Expense is basically services that the RM provides to its residents. So if we...if we don't fund that, it means we have to cut back on services and that might impact the residents negatively. But we do have the funding so there's the levy amounts and then there's the grants that come in to help ensure that services are provided, as a minimum, services are maintained. **Councillor Kuczynski** – Yes, I read today, in today's newspaper, the Free Press that the Minister of Municipal Affairs said that they are going to kind of look at the municipality finances and maybe generate a little bit more revenue for the municipalities because they know that it's a problem and uh every municipality is going to require help, you know, to...to provide services to the residents. But I want to thank you very much for that and um...um we have to be very cautious what we're going to do in the future and uh because that does not look too rosy for us if we're going that way because uh if all the other governments are in debt and they are going to say, well ok we have no more money for grants, then what do we do, you know, and we cannot be charging an exorbitant amount of money uh by borrowing and then paying the interest on this money and that is going to be on the back of every resident of this Municipality. Thank you. **Councillor Fuhl** – Ya, I'd like to speak to the Budget. Um I know all of us are very concerned about debt and I realize that. Also at the same time, we also have to be responsible for the debt and in that every Council member I'm sure is concerned about the debt going forward. Having said that, though is, is the community has to be able to take some risk, an educated

risk, I call it. Um I started my business, I took out a loan and that loan developed into making profit and then that eventually came along a sustainable business, I will refer it to the same way as this. **NOTE: Mr. Fuhl started a business called Video King just on the cusp of the Internet coming into general use. Modern people do everything on their cell phones, watch movies, conduct business, purchase things, communicate with one another, etc. They do not rent movies. A business in Oakbank had Mr. Fuhl's rental movies on display for years and finally asked him to remove them as they did not generate any revenue to speak of. Mr. Fuhl I believe subsequently branched out into supplying contained water supply but even that is available to anyone at large box and grocery stores. I think his most reliable source of income is that which he receives for being a councillor.** Um yes we have a minimum amount of debt, we're comfortable with it, but in order to grow and again, I live in this Municipality and I had that opportunity. I believe every resident here has that opportunity to live in this Municipality and I know that there things don't come cheaply, I know inflation has hurt everybody but having said that, is...is we have to take that educated risk and we have to be able to develop and be able to allow other residents live in this community just as well as ourselves. I realize that things are very expensive, I don't like eighty some million dollars debt no more than anybody else but they're the facts ...the reality to the inflation of what costs are today and I just wanted to say that we are being responsible. Things do cost money and I will be as a Councillor to the RM and the residents responsible to this. **NOTE: Would someone please explain to me what Councillor Fuhl is getting at? Borrowing for a Water Treatment Plant that is not required by our current residential development is not the same as him borrowing to start up a business. His loan was for a purpose that had potential to earn him revenue. Borrowing for a Water Plant we do not need has no opportunity to generate revenue. The residential development proposed will in time result in property taxes but it would be millennia before those taxes would come anywhere near to offsetting the cost of the borrowing and the beneficiaries of the new development would not be the ones paying for the borrowing. It would be ratepayers that have resided here for many years and will see no benefit from the Water Plant.** We all want the best for this Municipality and I realize that debt is a concern. At the same time, we have to take a little bit of risk to that. The Water Treatment Plant is \$26 million dollars. I come back to the Open Houses that we've had. The developers in the end, they're coming ... they're coming to the Municipality today to develop here but we have no water for them so now we ...what do we do, we turn them away. Well, I can tell you this. I've been in towns in my own business where the Mu...the town is there today and not...or there yesterday and not here today and why? Because they didn't grow.... they sat status quo and I can tell you that is not good. Status quo is not the future. And I just want to express that. Thank you. **NOTE: He would know that from the status of his own business, I presume. What he is doing is rambling on about nothing that is really related to the subject at hand just to establish his presence on Council. HE EXPRESSED NOTHING OF VALUE.** Mayor Therrien – I'll finish this off here as the Mayor. I have that uh privilege uh here. This is our second budget. Uh the last year, 2023, uh was a learning uh year being our first with a property tax assessment uh being the clincher and that but just ... it increased our...our Reserves and gave it some more money but also it increased uh um the property taxes uh there. Um we decided to go for a 02.9% increase um also inflating our...our... our Reserves, I call it the "rainy day" uh fund uh and like Councillor uh Miller or uh I'm sorry, um Fuhl uh there, we have to have things in place uh there, it's impossible to run the RM um without getting into debt. **NOTE: I take offense at that statement. One should not be getting into debt. If a developer has a large tract of land that he wants to develop into residential units, and it is not serviced, it is incumbent on the developer to provide the necessary services to enable the development, not the long-standing residents of the RM who will realize no benefit from the development. The RM should not be borrowing money and providing services to benefit a developer.** It's just...the numbers are just don't...uh don't work out that way so this Budget in 2024 has instead of a property tax reassessment like in 20 uh 23, we have a high increase in our School Division because we've got 3 School Divisions. We're paying uh 5, 7, and 7% more, the taxpayers are uh so that's the increase, that's...that's the uh boomerang that's going to be hitting us uh there and we're still only going to be asking for a 1% uh increase in the Budget which is relatively small compared to other RMs and I uh I'm the first to say I really don't care too much about the other RMs, I only care about this RM. Uh that's...that's my main interest and that's the main interest of all the other uh councillors here. Uh we have to note that Public Works, the cost, the fuel, the huge costs of equipment **NOTE: What about the cost of the Public Works Director using a fleet vehicle and of course, fuel, to commute back and forth to work for many years? Should ratepayers be paying for that? Most of them, I do believe, are responsible for paying for their cost to get to their workplaces.** uh and the repairs are ...are, you know, exorbitant, they've gone up 30% uh oh...in one year. So Fleet management uh we're paying for our Fire trucks, we're paying cash for our fire trucks, **NOTE: Yes, and we are paying the money at least a year or more before we see the finished product being provided. That does not make good fiscal sense to me.** we're saving uh for what uh uh for these days uh so this isn't that we're going into debt uh for everything there, we are saving. The other councillors before us, the other uh uh Administration before us were saving so uh the other councillors...we took a baton and this is what we got. Uh we've got a very low ceiling of \$7 million dollars uh in debt uh comparative that is, that is nothing uh on a one point 6 billion dollar uh assessment uh for this RM. Our infrastructure is old, it's ... like every other RM and I mentioned this before and all the other uh discussions with uh Mayors and Reeves, councillors, uh CAOs in other uh RMs, they're facing a very uphill battle when it comes to old infrastructure um and that ... that is a uh a concern uh for myself um and we're reliant uh on...on grants uh you know we're uh our taxable assessment like I said is \$1.6 billion. We have a debenture of uh 7 point uh or 7 million dollars uh there, a total of 9 uh that are maturing in 2023 or 2030 uh twenty year debentures. The Utility Debenture is \$395,000. uh and we can get rid of one of those uh ... we can make a resolution to uh to get rid of one of those that's coming due uh uh soon uh just uh to get rid of some of the expenses uh there. Sorry is um am I interrupting you. I can hear you. So if you'll just allow me to speak, then we can...you can carry on a conversation after. Uh so uh we have a Strategic Plan and a Developmental Plan and in 2018 and 2019. These are basically our operational plans and uh these are addressed uh uh in all the uh um the operations that we try to get through in all our Departments. We want to make sure that uh everybody is in line with those plans so we need to address this uh further in our discussions coming in June to try to mitigate??? uh our Strategic Plans and so on. Uh we've also had uh initiatives uh the Donaldson Drain is going to allow the uh Anola there to uh um in flooding for hundreds of houses which will make this uh area far more appealable and allow our community to grow. **NOTE: Well, he opened the door. The Donaldson Drain has been in place and working for many years. It comes from the east down 15 and crosses by the Fire Hall in Anola and goes down a drain behind Hnat's Land and turns and crosses 12 and goes north at a diagonal. What the RM is proposing to do is straighten the drain so it flows basically just north of 15 directly east to the Diversion rather than flowing northward towards Cooks Creek. This is not improve anything. In fact, the water used to flow directly east through the town of Anola in a ditch alongside 15 when I first moved here in the 70s. Then it was diverted to flow northward instead. I would like to hear from the "hundreds of houses" flooded. For one thing, we have been in a drought cycle for many years now. The straightening was the idea of two councillors that served before my term, Lucko and Brown. Undoubtedly this will benefit, I can think of one in particular, constituent, opening the possibility for sale of some of his land for development. Other than that, it will benefit no one at all and it will cost over a million dollars and that may not even include**

the expropriation of land required. I would urge everyone to send an e-mail to the Mayor asking him to provide proof of the flooding of "hundreds of houses" in the last 10 or 15 years. Ask him specifically where these houses are located and why no mention of it was made in the local newspaper. The flooding of properties, like for example on River Road, is due to the fact the land is very low and marshy to begin with. That is the natural state of the land but a developer comes along and purchases this land and then subdivides it into residential lots, raises the roads into these lots, and the purchaser of those lots is left to build their residences up and in some cases, pump the water off their land. Uh our Water Treatment Plant uh as... as mentioned before uh the infrastructure is...is old. It has to be uh it's timing out. We have to uh uh get on with the Water Treatment Plant so our community uh can uh can uh expand. We got 10.6 million dollars and as we discussed here uh tonight, uh it's getting interest and it's getting millions of dollars in interest with the other Reserves that we have in place **NOTE: And the interest accrued on each of these Reserves should go right back into that Reserve, not be funneled off into General Revenues and called "found money" and used for some other purpose than for that for which it was intended.** as...as a community on our grants and our property taxes is not uh ... is something of a reality but the problem is, once we get our Water Treatment Plant we can start looking forward and not be so reliant uh on property taxes. We can get our businesses up and running and allow us to not be so strong on uh property taxes uh so this community uh when we start uh uh making these initiatives, looking for the future, uh that's the main thing. Not just in a 4-year term uh but for 20 or 30 years down the road. Um so with our Water Treatment Plant, this will allow us our Recreational Center uh to advance uh which is noted in our 5-year Capital expenditures. Uh we're looking at a phased-in approach which is a cost-effective uh manner that we uh felt was better suited to our RM. Uh the Recreational Center is an integral part of uh we have to look at the differences between wants and needs uh and all these initiatives here is basically stuff that has been waiting and waiting. Our recreational center has been waiting for 31 plus years. **NOTE: And in the meantime, the community clubs in each of the towns have been effectively providing all sorts of recreational activities in all those years with mostly volunteer help. The Recreational Center of which he speaks will be staffed with full time employees, costing ratepayers yet more money. The fees they charge for activities will in no way cover the cost of maintaining such a facility, much less paying for staff. Just my educated opinion. Councillor Wilson actually investigated that through such a facility in Winnipeg years ago and that was the answer he received. Much of the time it sits empty and idle, particularly in the summer months.** Um so I, I know that some of the numbers uh sound pretty uh pretty high but uh it's kind of a floating number in our uh um Amram has uh discussed that uh. Uh we are indebted \$7 million dollars which uh I'm not going to say that's...uh 7 million dollars is a lot of money but uh financially our Reserves uh far exceed the 7 million dollars so we're...we're in a very good position here and we're actually looking rosy so I would think that said I've got nothing further to add. Um Melinda, you're the last one. Uh Amram, did you want to finish it off at all or uh no, I caught you off guard, eh (laughing). Then I, unless there's other questions from Council, uh I'm prepared to uh to adjourn uh here. Uh um is there...**at this point here!** I'm going to close the uh public hearing and no further questions can be uh allowed uh um and do we do the uh mover and seconder for adjournment? Then at this point here, 7:45 p.m. we'll close the uh the hearing. Thank you very much uh folks.

## 5. ADJOURNMENT