

## Town Council December 10, 2024

The Council of the Town of Carberry met at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, in their council chambers with Mayor Muirhead in the chair, and Councilors Kalinowich, Sudak and Rea. Also present was ACAO McConnell. Youth Councilor Boganes sent regrets.

### **Finance and Accounts:**

Council accepted the report of the ACAO and received the Financial Statement for November 2024. Accounts by cheque, electronic payment or direct withdrawal totaling \$854,393.64 were approved for payment.

### **By-laws:**

By-law 09/2024, which establishes the fees and charges to be collected for the Town of Carberry, was given its second and third readings and after a unanimous recorded vote will become law.

By-law 10/2024 amends the Town of Carberry Health Action Committee By-law. It was given its second and third readings. After a unanimous vote on the latter, it became law.

The Code of Conduct by-law, #16/2022, requires that it be examined annually. Council has reviewed it and passed a motion reaffirming it.

### **Unfinished Business:**

The mayor and CAO met with the Minister of Justice to discuss the state of policing in the recently expanded Blue Hills Detachment. They discussed recruitment and training, the possibility of adding other levels of enforcement, such as Community Safety Officer or Auxiliary Constable, and where the funding might be found for them. At AMM, they also met with the highest-level officers of the RCMP in a meeting that included representatives from most of the municipalities covered by the detachment. Again, they discussed recruitment, training, and supporting locally funded CSOs or auxiliaries. The COPP program was also examined. Although there was some resistance, the officers accepted that the pressure was heavy and justified and agreed to schedule more meetings to explore all possible approaches. The local COPP is apparently typical, in that volunteers do not find that they can rely on the backup they require when the nearest officer on duty may be as far away as Souris or Rivers. New volunteers are hard to encourage when the old ones become disaffected. Reversing this trend will be a part of the

solution. Recent changes in the protocols for mental health crises require that two officers must accompany the subject to the support that they need and remain there until there is a resolution. The cost in manpower to a thinly staffed detachment is critical, so it is being suggested that a lesser level of officer may be introduced to meet the needs of the mental health protocols and free up the officers to carry on their duties to the detachment.

Mayor Muirhead suggested that it may be time to devote to the policing issue the concentrated attention that in the past two years has been lavished on health care problems.

The Joint Services Agreement with North Cypress-Langford has been passed back and forth and polished for some time now, and was to have been presented at the recent Joint Councils' Committee. How it was missed isn't clear, but Council would very much like to see it presented, accepted, and set in place. It is to be presented to the very next Joint meeting.

In an effort to avoid losses of time, money and service, the administration has been drafting contracts for tendered work and trying to give them "teeth" in the form of some sort of penalty clause for failure to deliver. Legal opinion has been sought, and apparently recent supreme court interpretations limit the enforcement of penalty clauses. What is required is a justifiable pre-assessment of "liquidated damages" that the failure to deliver may be expected to cause. An unsubstantiated penalty can't be enforceable, particularly if "unconscionable" or "oppressive." It means that contracts will probably each have to be run past the lawyers to meet the requirements and be effective.

### **General Business:**

Because the collective agreements and Town policy require that any employee leaving service with the Town be given up to 250 hours of accumulated sick pay, the ACAO is suggesting setting up a reserve to cover any sudden draw.

The planning district has forwarded information of a proposed subdivision in North Cypress-Langford near the Town's boundary. Six building lots of just over an acre would be created at the north end of Howard Street. They would most likely require attachment to the Town's sewer system, among other considerations.

The province, along with consultants Landmark Planning and engineers WSP, brought to the council and the public a presentation of the proposed

intersection improvements at PTH1 & PTH5. This was the second iteration of the public consultation undertaken. The grade separated intersection (overpass) is listed as the most impactful alternative of the eight presented and remains the choice of council despite the considerable extra cost involved. On the whole, public reaction is getting impatient to see work done rather than discussed, but there is to be another meeting during the winter to present a short list of choices, and a further meeting to present the final choice that will be offered to MTI.

The Western Manitoba Regional Library sent the draft minutes of their November meeting, during which their budget was presented, requesting a per capita levy of \$14.15 for all members.

Council supported a joint application with NCL to the Manitoba GRO program for development of multi-use pathways in the future recreation property.

Council agreed to purchase tickets for the Chamber of Commerce's Awards Banquet on January 8, 2025, for all members of Council.

Council resolved to engage MicroAge as their IT Services provider.

Council adopted a fence policy (MO 01-2024) which among other stipulations sets the maximum height of a front fence at three feet, and rear or side yard fences at six feet. For visibility reasons corner lots are separately treated.

To provide for timely and secure payments during a work stoppage of Canada Post, Council adopted an Electronic Banking Policy (GG05-2024). Its effectiveness and need to be continued will be assessed at the end of the present work stoppage.

Five transfers from reserves to the general checking account were approved, covering work on the old shop's demolition, the Transfer Station, doctor recruitment, and the new loader.

A detailed Emergency Plan for 2025 was prepared by Municipal Emergency Coordinator Sudak and accepted by resolution.

As required by the Municipal Act, an interim budget was passed for operating and capital expenditures from January 1, 2025, until the adoption of the 2025 Financial Plan.

From the Joint Meeting, a series of resolutions were passed relating to fire department wages, for which Councilor Sudak excused himself. All

wages were increased equivalent to increases in the provincial minimum wage each time it increases. Furthermore, an increase of \$.50/hr. was approved retroactive to October 1, 2024. In a separate resolution, all joint employees not covered by an agreement receive a COLA of 3% effective the first pay period of 2025.

Councilor Sudak returned to the meeting.

As suggested by the AMM's insurer, a policy requiring users of joint facilities to carry their own insurance cover and laying out the details (JS 02-2024) was passed.

A group of concerned citizens operating as 'Westman Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention' are looking to create a Mental Health Initiative in the area. They hope to offer a counselling program to provide services to those seeking counselling but unable to find services due to long waiting lists. The hope is to create a more resilient and supportive community. They ask Council for help with donated office space and publicity/promotion, and perhaps access to handivan services for those without transportation. Council agreed that the program was worth looking into, and suggested the proponents appear as a delegation before a joint councils' meeting.

With regret, Council was obliged to accept the resignation of John Anderson following the receipt of a letter of resignation to the CAO. This takes effect immediately — December 10, 2024. As mandated, Council directed its Senior Election Official to hold a by-election as soon as reasonably possible.

### **Reports:**

The CAO provided background on several of the resolutions on this meeting's agenda. He was very positive about the recent AMM convention, where a lot was accomplished. He has met with MLA Pankratz, who has been a member of WFPS and rural paramedic. They discussed mental health initiative for first responders and look forward to new initiatives. As a member of the MMA's executive committee, he is involved in advocating that requirements for municipal administrators be increased, including membership in their organization where they can enforce a code of conduct. The aim is to counter the wave of stories about fraud and mismanagement in municipal administration. He was unable to attend this meeting because he was selected by the premier to receive the King Charles III Coronation Medal at the Legislature. He pointed out that much had been achieved in

2024 of which Council could be proud and looks forward to 2025 and what can be done next.

The EDO had several projects in her report. First was the highway signage. She received four quotes to supply the signs and recommended the one from OnPoint, who as Print One Studio had done much of the earlier signage. Their quote was also the lowest, and they have the logo and fonts on hand. The meeting questioned whether the second lowest, who made claims of a form of UV protection that offered as much as nine years without fading, were offering a more valuable service. A suggestion was made that the signs offer a line of reason to visit the town and give the distance in minutes rather than kilometres.

The EDO reported that the presence of the film crew from Normal Films had been generally very positive. The crew were approachable and helpful, and the visit was invigorating for the community. She reported on her activities, particularly the contacts made on Advocacy Day at the Legislature, when Economic Development Officers meet with a wide range of MLAs and cabinet ministers. She hopes to take a booth in the main area of the RMWF, and asked Council's permission to reserve one. Council agreed that it was money well spent. With the Chamber of Commerce, a committee organized a 'Christmas in Carberry' festivity on December 20, along with a Parade of Lights. Council agreed to decorate the new loader to participate in the parade. The Chamber has restarted the tradition of an Awards Banquet held in conjunction with the AGM. This will be held in early January. Councillors will be attending the banquet and are encouraged to join the Chamber for their "Business after 5" evening at Callaghan's on January 21. With the Health Action Committee, she will be encouraging PMH to include Carberry in its Rural Medical Week. This is a week-long feature of the U of M's medical faculty that brings medical students to stay in rural communities for a week to learn and understand how rural medical practices function. She hopes to accommodate four students and ensure that they are housed and shown the best of the community. The project was mentioned at AMM, and all agreed it was an excellent recruitment strategy. With the new Daycare Committee, they are seeking developers to give the quotes necessary to apply for funding. Applications must be made and approved before March of 2026 to qualify for funding, but they hope to be open even before that.

The Fire Department were gratified by the response to their Firemen's Ball, which was rated a great success.

Public Works has been kept busy with the amount of snow falling recently. They have taken flak for leaving windrows across some driveways but have been back to clear them promptly. An earlier start on a known snow day would be an advantage.

The Buildings Committee had to address the failure of the furnaces at the library, but the repair was prompt and effective. A water softener and RO filter will be installed to address the water quality in the Drop-in kitchen.

At the Transfer Station, the old shack will be moved to Langford, and more gravel has been brought in to ease the slope off the scale ramp. Staff continue to endure bad tempered abuse when enforcing the new fee structure. This is inexcusable; they are very helpful and doing a job that needs to be done. The 'Job Jon' that was there is in heated storage for the moment, but its fate is unsettled. There is quite a credit on the lease-to-own contract, but to keep it is costly, and it is at risk of taking ruinous damage if it faces winter temperatures unprepared. The Buildings Committee will be left to decide its fate.

The Arts Council has had a full season of programs, with more planned for the new year. The Children's Business Fair will be held on May 10, 2025; a course in mixed media is offered by local artist Nova Cassan.

The library is struggling to arrange alternative transportation for the many inter-library book transfers that would normally be handled by Canada Post. They have prepared a wish list of improvements and repairs they would like to have accomplished and will have to hold a strategic planning meeting to prioritize the list.

The Health Action Committee is excited about the planned arrival of four medical students to spend a week in May learning about the practise of rural medicine here. With the CAO and mayor, they visited the clinic in Neepawa and discussed many ways in which they could work together. PMH assures them that they intend to keep at least two acute care beds open for patients who need not be transferred to a larger centre.

Cypress Planning District will shortly be interviewing several promising candidates to replace Planner Andrews.

The Rec Board has been offered a different connection to facilitate the streaming of games from the CPCC but is concerned that the cost is assessed per person, and not enough of an advantage over the installed system. The sound system is down, and speakers have been borrowed from NCL until a new one can be installed after quotes have been tendered. Trees are to be ordered for the campsite area of the new Rec Lands. Advice on what species will be sought from Rodney White at the Whitemud Watershed District. The Zip-line is installed and inaugurated; the soccer pitch is now leveled. The Gala is coming up soon. The Splash Park Committee continues to develop fundraising efforts for their project. The idea has been floated to develop ski/snowshoe paths around the Rec lands and the town. The Manager of Leisure Services has several ideas for winter recreation projects.

The Daycare project continues to get more filled out. The CAO will attend the next meeting, which will include Cooperatives First, in early January to develop an RFP to get some costing. The committee continues to ask whether they should be charged rental on municipal buildings when the event is entirely for the benefit of the municipalities. They were, however, granted \$1,000 from each of the municipalities to offset the rentals they would be charged. In this way the precedent of waiving rental fees is avoided. They will need to apply for their grant before the end of January.

The Drop-In exterior is now fully painted and signed, now looking for quotes to paint the interior in spring. A water softener and filter will be installed for the kitchen, and a roll-up door will be installed to separate the kitchen from the general area. Floor shuffleboard is in full swing. A quote of \$700 to install an exterior plug for Christmas lighting was judged a bit rich for this year's budget. The Centre has a healthy bank balance; they can do quite a lot without troubling the building committee or the council.

### **Communications:**

WMRL sent the draft minutes of their recent board meeting.

Manitoba Justice's Policing and Public Safety Branch advised that Carberry's Policing Grant of \$261,626 will be received.

Western Financial Group advised that Carberry's Municipality Infrastructure Grant application was accepted, and the grant would be \$5,000.

Youth for Christ Portage advises that a steering committee has been formed to oversee a community youth program by a partnership of churches

in this area. They hope to establish a safe space for young people to meet, engage in positive activities and receive guidance.

AMM sent a copy of the extensive brief they prepared for the premier and the cabinet for their annual meeting in November.

### **Around the Table:**

Mayor Muirhead advised that he had been interviewed by the Free Press and the CBC about rural Emergency Room service and physician recruitment. He travelled on the CPKC Holiday Train to Brandon, and gave a speech of welcome at the Carberry stop. He wished all a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and safe travel.

Councilor Kalinowich mentioned that Public Works should take care not to leave large piles of snow at street corners where visibility would be affected. He suggested that a reserve be created to acquire a town vehicle that could be used on the occasions that councilors and/or staff would be charging mileage. With attractive decals it would serve as a traveling billboard and “show the flag.” The meeting agreed and suggested that a reserve was not necessary; a serviceable used SUV could be acquired for a small enough price to be bought at once. The mayor suggested that a budget be set, and the hunt started. There is, it seems, a sufficient surplus to this year’s budget. The CAO added that setting aside some money for the purpose was still a good idea, ready to replace the first purchase when necessary.

Kalinowich went on to ask how the town’s merchants felt about the recent disruptions caused by the movie crew from Normal Films. Around the table were nothing but positive recollections. Kalinowich added his wishes for the holiday season.

Councilor Rea commented that the dangerous lack of snow clearing at the rail crossings has now been very well addressed and added her holiday wishes to all.

Councilor Sudak expressed his appreciation of the level of cooperation and professionalism shown by the crew from Normal Films. He was appreciative of the overtime taken by the snow crews to keep the town accessible and tidy. He hoped that all town and joint vehicles would be given the cleanest decals as soon as the weather will permit. The effect on the appearance of the taxpayers’ property is good for the community. He too concluded with best wishes for the holiday season.



Council went in camera to discuss personnel matters, and subsequently adjourned at 9:30 pm.