

LOCAL

Public talks arena future

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With an estimated 1.5 years of life left in the Colborne Cramahe Arena, whether or not to proceed with fundraising for a new facility remains to be decided.

"The biggest question is going to be, of course, funding," Jim Williams, Chair of the arena board told the audience of 50-plus people at the August 11 public meeting called by the Arena Board to hear proposals and opinions on future direction. "Our first step is to find out what the next step should be."

A new roof for the arena will cost an estimated \$500,000 to \$1-million. To build a new arena will be \$2-million plus. The 1999 operating budget for the arena is approximately \$200,000 a year. Colborne Village and Cramahe Township each con-

Maureen Canfield of Colborne Cramahe Figure Skating Club

The club has declared itself in favour of a new arena to serve Colborne Village and Cramahe Township. The club announced a \$500 contribution to initiate the fundraising.

The club is urging a task force be formed to tackle the planning, time lines do fundraising for a new arena.

"Personally, I feel we would be negligent as parents is we did not ensure recreational facilities remain in the community," Ms. Canfield said.

Don Clark, Colborne Cramahe Minor Ball

A new facility, capable of providing services "to the entire community", 12 months of the year, is needed in the area.

"We'd like to see the project started as soon as possible," Mr. Clark read from his presentation at the public meeting.

tribute \$34,000 in tax dollars, leaving \$132,000 covered from user group fees.

"We were breaking even, outside the cut rates given to the Colborne Cramahe Figure Skating Club and minor hockey," Brad Chapman reported. "With the regular rates from other groups, we were breaking even" during the seven months of winter operation.

What about municipal reserve funds, the municipal council reps were asked.

"The village has an estimated \$1.4-million of reserve funds," Deputy-reeve Pat Westrope said. "We rely on that investment to contribute \$60,000 to \$80,000 to the annual budget. Some of those funds could conceivably be used for a new facility."

Cramahe Reeve Stu Oliver

tants, engineers, spend the money on a demographic study, not only for recreation, but the area's overall growth."

Nick Hathway, Colborne Tourism, Promotion and Development committee

"We are very supportive of an arena facility, and additional facilities," Mr. Hathway said. "We do urge fiscal responsibility."

He recommended the development of a business plan as a check point, and a marketing plan to check out area facilities and this area's potential to bring a unique facility to the village. With marketing and with development, the potential for fundraising could be feasible, Mr. Hathway said.

Ed vanEgmond, Colborne Cramahe Minor Hockey

reported Cramahe Township has an estimated \$1.3-million in reserve funds.

Asked if a specific amount could be announced at the meeting, both council reps noted it takes a vote of all council members.

"We would need to know what we're contributing dollars to, how much are we are working toward," Deputy reeve Westrope noted.

Later in the meeting, Colborne Reeve George Boycott elaborated: "A new arena could be \$2.5-million, and that's without a canteen. For council, the arena isn't the only issue. We have roads and sewage issues. Even if the two councils put in \$300,000 each, you would still have to raise \$2-million. That's about \$1,000 per household over five years."

"The question is will people pay for it? It would be nice to have a pool, but they loose money like hell, so the financial aspects of this are tremendously important. Let's face it, those reserve funds of councils are everyone's money."

Asked if a debenture could be issued to fund the arena, Reeve Boycott said, "A debenture has to be paid with tax dollars. An arena could cost you another \$100 per year on the tax bill for five years. You would have to see if that would work, if that's what people want."

There was a wish list for a new facility, including a new ice pad, an indoor pool, indoor meeting rooms, the establishment of a community centre.

"Ultimately, who is going to make the decision to put a group together" for a new facility, Cindy Greer asked. "Is it the arena board, the arena board and both councils, or just the coun-

Who we are

According to Stats Canada figures from the 1996 census, Colborne Village and Cramahe Township have a combined population of 5,474 people.

Of that total, 1,198 are listed as "students" while another 805 are listed as "seniors".

But when the statistics are broken down further by municipality, disparities emerge.

Cramahe Township has a population of 3,420 people of whom 779 are students, 405 are seniors. Described as percentages, Cramahe Township population is 22.8 per cent students, 11.8 per cent seniors.

Colborne Village, with a total population of 2,054, has 419 students and 400 seniors. As percentages, the figures translate as 20.4 per cent of the village population are students, 400 are seniors.

Cramahe has nearly twice as many students as seniors in its population. Colborne has nearly as many seniors as students.

cils?"

"I don't have the answers," Jim Williams replied. If a task force is formed, it must be strong enough and committed enough the raise the funds.

Don Clark estimated a committee will have to be prepared for a five-year commitment is a new arena is proposed.

Mr. Clark said the Optimists Club withdrew its support for a seniors centre because the Optimist mandate is to support youth. The club is prepared to back the arena because it serves sports for youth.

Colborne council was supporting the proposed seniors centre, Pat Westrope assured Maureen Canfield: "We put it (financial support) in our July budget figures but they didn't come back to council for the dollars."

"Maybe our community should look at a new roof until more funds

are available," Stan Chapman said. He noted the Baltimore community began fundraising for a new arena facility, raising \$50,000 only to see the original arena cost estimate rise from \$1.2-million to \$1.5-million while the fundraising was going on.

"I don't see how we can get the money," Mr. Chapman admitted. "It will be a hard sale for \$2-million to be raised."

Asked what subsidies are available should a major fund-raising project be undertaken, Mr. Williams explained Millennium Fun dollars can be used only for renovation of facilities - not for new structures.

"What we need is a committee to look into fund raising," Mr. Williams said.

Input from the August 11 public meeting will be discussed at the August 26 arena board meeting.