



It was formal time for East Northumberland Secondary School (ENSS) last Friday - rain or no rain! Left to right, Nicole Monardo, Darnell Culhane, Stephanie Scowcroft, Kristina Wakimoto, Alexis Twiddy and Andrea Dart with town crier Bob Willick.

Formally fun

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Above, valets who did yeoman service in the pouring rain were ENSS teachers, left to right: Craig Petherick, Jeff Girdlestone, Gord Buxton and Wally Alderdice.

PHOTO BY MANDY MARTIN

Old arena razing delayed

BY MANDY MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

The demolition of the 35-year-old Cramahe Colborne arena is on hold.

For an estimated \$50,000, the old arena was to be razed. The funds were to come from a parks and recreation reserve fund, thus avoiding having the cost tacked onto the tax bill. However, \$50,000 is \$50,000, CAO Merlin Dewing outlined at the June 12 budget deliberations.

"If it were my building and it was going to cost \$50,000 to tear it down, I would do my utmost to find another use for it," Mr. Dewing said. Even if the building is "leased" out at no cost, if the insurance liability is assumed by the user, the township saves money and avoids the \$50,000 cost. Further, if any revenues are realized for the building's use, they could go back into the parks and recreation reserve fund to offset future demolition.

The property on which the old arena building stands "has no strings attached,"

Councillor Ray Kelly noted.

When the park in which the arena sits was formed, five people donated lands that are now part of the 13 acres. One of the conditions of several land grants was that it be used for recreation.

The old arena committee, which was formed in November last year, considered four options.

Council and the old arena committee accepted a 1998 Greer Galloway consulting engineers' study finding the old arena has reached the end of its useful life.

The committee originally looked at disposition of the entire 13-acre property where the arena sits. In their study, they realized the municipality "might not have full or sole discretion to determine the parcel's use". When this was determined, the committee concentrated its efforts of disposition of the building.

The old arena committee recommendation was to raze the old arena after ball season and before winter this year. It would take three to four weeks.

5.9% tax hike for ratepayers

Colborne Chronicle June 20, 2002
BY MANDY MARTIN
STAFF WRITER

After much number-crunching and deliberation, Cramahe Township has a 2002 budget. The council approved the 2002 budget Tuesday evening, June 18.

The bottom line for taxpayers is a 5.9 per cent increase on the tax bills. That means a house valued at \$85,000 will see an \$81.70 increase, \$96.30 on a residential property valued at \$100,000, or \$125.16 on a home assessed at \$130,000.

While the township will be spending an estimated \$5-million this year, after drawing on reserve funds and subtracting revenues coming in, the net municipal budget is around \$3,346,000.

"This was difficult budget to finalize," Cramahe Reeve Jim Williams says. "We began the year in a deficit position due to an appeal involving a substantial amount of assessment, we had to reinvest in our Public Works fleet by purchasing two new tandem plow/sander units, we continue to pay the Keeler Centre debt and we face the growing demands to improve roads and infrastructure."

The municipality acts as tax collector for boards of education and Northumberland County. Of the total tax bill paid by the Cramahe taxpayer, roughly 50 per cent goes to finance municipal costs, 27 per cent for county requirements, and the remaining 23 per cent for education (public and separate).

"The education portion is the same as last while the county increase was 6.7 per cent this year," Reeve Williams, who is also county Warden this year, said. The 5.9 per cent increase to Cramahe Township ratepayers includes both the education and county portions to be forwarded by the township.

"When we started out this budget process, we were looking at a 23 per cent increase. Now it's 8.9 per cent (municipally)," Councillor Ray Kelly says. "I'd like to thank our new CAO (Merlin Dewing) and all staff and council members for bringing it down as low as we did this year."

Councillor Jane Boreham also praised Mr. Dewing, noting the municipality has started to place money in reserve funds this year for next.

"We're starting the building process. We're on the upward swing now," Coun. Boreham says.

"I believe taxes in previous years have been kept too low," Deputy reeve Lee Dekeyser says, "and now we have to do some catchup for our ratepayers. Last year's loss in taxes (from lowered assessments) really hurt us."

"It bothers me we have to look at these kinds of numbers, but the good thing is there are some solid business processes that are now in place, especially for capital equipment. I believe these interim steps we are taking will allow us to avoid these huge spikes in capital spending. I give Merlin (Dewing) credit for bringing this to our attention and getting us started."

Cramahe Township began 2002 with a \$130,000 deficit. For the past two months, the council members have been debating borrowing large sums of money to finance day-to-day operations and capital projects. That has been kiboshed by Mr. Dewing. He likened township financial operations to a "leaky row boat."

For more budget stories, see pages 2 and 15.