

NEWS

■ **COUNCIL:** AMP is mandated by province

Plan reviews Cramahe assets

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For Northumberland Today

CRAHAME TOWNSHIP - Council received its Asset Management Plan (AMP) on Jan. 14 from consultants, Public Sector Digest (PSD).

In a lengthy oral presentation, PSD director of business development Matt Dawe laid out his company's findings and recommended path for the future.

Council had difficulty with the plan on more than one account. In relating his evaluation of the status of the township's assets, Dawe admitted the data was already out of date in at least two areas. And his projected tax increases of over 2% for the next 10 years did not sit well, either. The increases will be needed if the township is to eliminate current deficits in the funds required to replace or repair township equipment and services.

The AMP is mandated by the province and is expected to be a living document, says Mayor Marc Coombs. As data is received and work is completed, the projected needs will change. In the meantime council can now assess the most urgent needs and the risks involved if it does not act.

Page 51 of the PSD report grades the township infrastructure in five areas. Based solely on their age, bridges and culverts received a grade of F. But everyone at the meeting admitted that this was misleading as information from a biennial report in late

2013 will reveal that the bridges are not as bad as the PSD report suggests. If they were, they would require an annual additional input of a quarter million dollars.

Cramahe operations director Dan O'Brien suggested this might bring them up to a grade C.

O'Brien commented at the meeting that six bridges will need work in the next five years.

The D+ rating for the sanitary sewer system is even more misleading as it does not take into account the \$7.3 million upgrade now nearing completion.

The report states that 75% of the twp. Roads are in fair to excellent condition. Over 40 km. of the township roads are in critical condition, but nearly 90 km. are in excellent shape. To bring the poor roads up to acceptable levels would require an additional \$750,000 annually over the current \$383,000 spent from property taxes, provincial gas tax and reserves.

When Coombs noted that the township has spent \$6 million in the past seven years on roads, Dawe responded that only sustainable and ongoing funding can be included in the projections. Federal and provincial grants cannot be included.

Cramahe's water system is well funded with half its mains in fair to excellent condition and 97% of its facilities in good to excellent condition, earning it a grade of B.

Storm sewers, with a rating of "B+" earned the highest grade in

the PSD report. Ninety-nine percent of the township's storm sewers make the grade.

Council must decide where to go from here. At the top of the list is the input of the 2013 bridge report so that the data is realistic. Then council must decide what it is going to spend, evaluate the greatest needs, calculate the health and environmental risks of non-action, and determine how it will pay for the work.

Cramahe needs to begin inspecting its underground services, says Dawe. By establishing the condition and working proactively, the township can cut its repair costs in one third on sanitary sewers and extend their lifespan by up to 75 years. He recommended evaluating the oldest pipes first.

Measuring quality of service is more problematic the consultant explained and will take some time to do accurately.

If the township were to implement all if the recommendations of the PSD report it would need an increase of over \$1 million annually, and this was clearly not acceptable to council.

Deputy Mayor Jim Williams suggested that even the 2.2% annual increase for 10 years is too much and put forward the notion of spreading the increased costs over 15 years. He and Councillor Ed Van Egmond were both concerned that there would be budget increases in other aspects of the township's operations as well.

TH NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY JAN. 17/14

Christmas hampers made spirits bright

Welcome to Colborne Legion Branch 187's mid-month dinner Friday, Jan. 17! It's a treat for just \$10 a person: steaks (yup!) and burgers with mashed potatoes, coleslaw, carrots, baked onions and carrot cake for dessert. Dinner is served 5 to 6:30 p.m. and there's lots of parking available.

Congratulations to Branch 187 members Bill Lutton and Howard Siddel who won the Zone 2 snooker tournament at Brighton Jan. 12. Our team now goes on to compete at the district level.

Because of the generosity of our community and its volunteers, more than 90 Christmas hampers were delivered this past Christmas. It takes a lot of co-ordination and work to assemble the hampers which include gifts and food items. The Colborne Legion reception room is the centre of activity for the volunteers of all ages who come out to help and deliver the hampers. There are many angels among us! An estimated 147 adults and 96 children shared the Christmas spirit that's alive and well in Cramahe Township.

The branch made it through the disruptive Christmas ice storm intact — with a small challenge remaining. The ice build-up around our sign on King Street East makes it treacherous to hang the "open" sign. But, no problem! We are open daily at 1 p.m. and,

for now, are placing the sign in the front door windows. C'mon in! All are welcome!

When Colborne resident Gene Wile reorganized rooms in his home, Donna Rusaw suggested a Storage Wars party be held. Items Gene no longer wanted were concealed within boxes and bags and auctioned off at a party. The event was a great hit. The \$500 in proceeds were presented to Colborne Legion Br. 187 president Patti May by Gene on Dec. 7.

The sold-out New Year's Eve party and dance was a great hit! With the high-energy, live country / rock band Sawmill Road, the crowd rocked until the wee hours of 2014. Thanks to organizing chair Linda Ferguson, assisted by Donna Rusaw and Richard Loader and others, for a great time. And also to Ernie Dunk who drove the bus to take people home.

The monthly Colborne Legion executive meeting will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at the Colborne Legion. At 7:30 p.m., the general membership meeting gets underway. All welcome! Come out and let us know what you'd like to see happening.

The next monthly eight-ball pool tournament will be Sunday, Jan. 26 at the Colborne Legion.

There are cash prizes to be won for first-, second- and third-place finalists.

Sign in at 11:30 a.m. for the random pairing of partners. Registration is \$7 per person. A lunch is available for \$3. Play begins at 12 noon on the two pool tables in the club room.

For more information or to pre-register, call the Legion and register with the bar steward: 905-355-5479 or e-mail Bill Lutton at bill@creditsupportservices.ca .

Without a shadow of a doubt, you'll have fun at the next moon-shot euchre tournament Sunday,

Feb 2 (Groundhog Day) at Colborne Legion. Register (\$5 per player) by noon for an afternoon of play. Great prizes to be won! A homemade, delicious lunch is available for just \$2.

The next roast beef dinner will be held Friday, Feb. 7 featuring homecooked beef, scalloped potatoes, peas, mixed veggies, soup, bread or rolls, tea or coffee and cherry chocolate cake for dessert. Serving from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Legion, cost is \$12 per person.

The mid-month dinner February 21 will be a comfort to all: meatloaf, macaroni and cheese, broccoli, carrots, bread or rolls, tea or coffee, soup and Apple Kringle (think struedel) for dessert. Just \$10 per person serving 5 to 6:30 p.m..

Future dinner dates include roast beef March 7 and a St. Patrick's-themed meal on March 21.