

Plentiful water supply found for Rockwood

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner

They got water! After months of searching and drilling two unsuccessful test wells, a plentiful new water supply has been found for the village of Rockwood. Public Works foreman Greg Pierce told Guelph/Eramosa councillors Wednesday that a new test well drilled earlier this month within the village boundaries has been found to have the water volume, which the community needs as its backup supply. Pierce said the search for a new well began with a train derailment in 2000 when a diesel fuel spill threatened the village's existing water supply. Had contamination oc-

curred the community would require 42 tanker loads of water daily to supply its needs. Although the problem was avoided, the accident highlighted the danger of having only one source of water for the village and prompted the hunt for a new well. Pierce said the well still has to be tested for water quality and meet assorted other Ministry of Environment (MOE) standards before it can be approved for use. A system will need to be designed for delivering the water to the community in case of any emergency and various permits will be needed from the MOE before the well can be brought into service. He estimated that process will take a minimum of seven months to complete.

Tax hike to homeowners

Preliminary facts and figures for the Guelph/Eramosa (G/E) budget show homeowners facing a two per cent increase in their 2002 tax bill.

As municipal treasurer Laura Smith put it, that's an \$18 hike on a home with a \$250,000 assessment.

Before anyone heaves any sighs of relief, however, she points out that's only the municipality's share of the bill and that's only on a house. Other assessment classes, such as commercial and farms, are set by Wellington County council as a ratio to residential rates. The County has not set those ratios yet and she has received no indication on the timing for that.

She also reminded council and the eight observers who turned up for the initial budget presentation, that the municipality only controls a small share of the tax levy. Last year the bill was divided approximately 44 per cent for the County, 31 per cent for education and 25 per cent for the municipality.

Adsett said the latest version of the County budget showed a 2.6 per cent increase over last year's figure. That would provide an increase of more than \$100 on a house assessed at \$175,000.

One comfort for taxpayers, Smith said, is the fact there won't be any reassessment this year. The next one comes in 2003 and will bring

house values to the 2001 level.

Reassessment played a big part in last year's huge increases because taxes are based on assessment and assessment is now based on current property values. Last year's reassessment moved property values from 1996 figures to 2000 values and house prices rose dramatically in that period.

Council received the recommendations from staff as a draft budget but held no discussion on the budget's contents. That will come later once taxpayers have had a chance to look at the figures, said Mayor Dave Adsett.

The timing of the presentation follows council's oft-expressed desire to set the municipal budget earlier in the year so taxpayers can adjust their personal budgets accordingly. However, since municipal tax bills must include County and education levies, delays by those bodies often seriously delay passage of the local budget.

The draft contained no unexpected items and continued work set out in the roads maintenance program and the parks and recreation master plan.

Parks and recreation director Glen Smith suggested delaying the capital cost on the Marden Community Centre

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The Rockwood MILLER



Hindley's decision to resign catches councillors by surprise

Councillor David Hindley's decision to resign caught his fellow members of Guelph/Eramosa council by some surprise, but not without understanding.

No one was aware of his changed viewpoint when they saw him at Wednesday's budget meeting although the announcement was made in a letter to the mayor faxed to the municipal office the following Thursday morning.

"The (Guelph) Mercury

hung him this morning (in an editorial calling for his resignation.)" Mayor David Adsett said. "Teresa (Gibson-Smye) makes great copy for the Mercury, and the Tanner too. I think all the publicity council and the township was getting just got to him and he said he didn't need it."

Coun. Les Foote said he was "sorry to see it turn out this way. We'll miss him. He tried to do a good job."

"I supported his right to decide to stay so I guess I have to support his right to go," said Coun. Doug Breen. "But I told him if he was resigning for my sake he didn't need to bother. It's unfortunate. Notwithstanding his personal life, he was a really good councillor. He had excellent background and on a personal level, I'll miss him a lot." Coun. David McCrae also supported Hindley as a "decent man despite his per-

sonal problems" and commended him for "probably (doing) the honourable thing here."

He said his only concern has always been whether Hindley had the right to retain his seat and the original legal opinion given to council seemed to support that because the Municipal Act is silent on such situations. "I understand now that the Elections Act was where he ran into trouble," McCrae said. "What annoys me is what we're paying a lawyer for. We aren't experts. That's why we went to a lawyer. This should have been researched more thoroughly in the first place."

Adsett and Breen both lay the resignation squarely at the door of former mayoralty candidate Teresa Gibson-Smye after her attack during Monday's council meeting.

Breen repeated his comments from Monday's council about the constant undermining of council activities which has taken place during this term.

"We're open to enough criticism in general; Dave may not have wanted to give them a legitimate reason to criticize," Breen said. "She got one of us and there's four more to go."

He said he received a number of calls after Monday's meeting and the general consensus was that Gibson-Smye was "just trying to get Adsett."

Adsett said council will probably follow its traditional pattern for filling vacancies by calling for applications rather than holding a by-election. Applicants would then be interviewed and the best candidate appointed to the seat.

Looking at his own career, Adsett said he was ready to walk away after one term as reeve. "All I ever wanted was to see a junior councillor come along ready to take over and carry on," he said. "But if you walk out people think you're a jerk. After this psychological warfare this term... I don't have to put up with that."

Advice causes resignation

"New advice" caused Guelph/Eramosa Ward 4 councillor David Hindley to throw in the towel Thursday, Feb. 21, after Teresa Gibson-Smye attacked him and then all of council under the Elections Act at council's Feb. 18 meeting.

In his letter of resignation, which took effect immediately, Hindley said he believes "the controversy about (his) right to continue sitting as a councillor is interfering with council's ability to carry out its mandated job". While he appreciates the support of his constituents and his fellow councillors he has "far too much respect" for them to allow the controversy to continue.

In a telephone interview Hindley refused to say whether the additional advice came from a private or a municipal source.

"Let's just say I should have listened to my father's advice when I was thinking about running," Hindley said. His father, the late Lloyd Hindley had more than 20 years experience as the township's clerk and was urged to seek a seat on council after his retirement. He always refused. "He always said 'never put your hat in a political forum'," Hindley recalls. "I should have listened to him."

Hindley said he feels very sorry for the residents in old Guelph Township, his constituents north of Highway 24

in old Eramosa Township and the old and good residents of Rockwood and Everton.

"There were a lot of good people I represented," he said. "It was only a collective few who have done this."

Referring to the vicious nature of the attack on his personal and public life Hindley said "This is beyond my upbringing and I'm no angel."

On the positive side, his council experience "got (his) mind working" and he enjoyed it.

Now he feels it's time to sit back and he won't be seeking the seat again at this time.

"Although I may be seeing you in 2003," he said with a wink.

Rockwood man charged with impaired driving

On Sunday, February 24, 2002 at 7:07pm, Wellington OPP responded to a report of a 1998 Chevrolet pick-up being driven across a lawn in Rockwood. The officers located the vehicle on Main Street South and the driver had been drinking.

A 51-year-old man of Eramosa Township, Ontario is charged with Impaired Driving, Driving with more than 80mgs and Having Liquor Readily Available. He is scheduled to appear in Guelph court on April 5, 2002 to answer to the charges.

Witness Sought
Wellington OPP are seeking the assistance of the pub-

lic in locating a witness to a serious motor vehicle collision that occurred on Thursday, February 14, 2002 at 10:43pm on Wellington County Road 124 near the 3rd Line of Eramosa Township.

The witness was operating a white or grayish coloured mini-van. This van was passed by a red Buick, which collided with a black Honda Civic.

We are asking anyone that knows who this witness may be to contact Constable Comden of the Guelph Detachment of the County of Wellington OPP at (519) 822-7250.


Prowler Apprehended
On Friday, February 22,

2002 at 11:10pm, residents on Daniel Street in Erin returned to their residence to find a suspect prowling around their residence. They chased the prowler on foot and notified the Police.

Officers responded to the scene and began searching for the suspect. The suspect was spotted nearby and after a short foot chase, was taken into custody without incident. The suspect was also found to be in possession of a small quantity of marijuana.

An 18-year-old man of Erin, Ontario is charged with Prowl by Night and Possession of a Controlled Substance. He is scheduled to appear in Guelph Court on April 5, 2002 to answer to the charges.

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