

Council supports keeping professional firefighters

Guelph/Eramosa council decided to support the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in their efforts to prevent discrimination against professional firefighters who also volunteer their services in other communities.

Called "double-hatters" by their union, some of these professionals are being threatened with dismissal for moonlighting at a volunteer department.

"I understand the basis for the union's concern is the possibility the men may ar-

rive for work too tired to do their job properly because they were moonlighting at a fire for their volunteer department," said Coun. Les Foote. "But if they're going to cut them off fighting fires, then they should cut them off all their other moonlighting jobs, too."

Mayor Clint Martin said in the construction industry there were always professional firefighters moonlighting at other trades like carpentry or painting during their free time.

"What the union really wants is to see all fire departments manned by professionals," said Coun. David McCrae. He estimated it would cost the municipality millions of dollars to go to a full-time fire force.

Foote said thanks to mutual aid arrangements with a neighbouring municipality, the whole year's worth of coverage in the old Guelph Township area only costs what it would cost to hire two professional firefighters.

"But you couldn't do that," McCrae

pointed out. "You can't take a truck out without four people on it. So multiply that by staff to cover us 24/7 and the price is just phenomenal. It would cost the municipality millions to replace what our volunteers do for us."

Clerk Janice Sheppard said volunteer departments are also the training ground for many full-time firefighters. They start training as a volunteer and that gets them valuable experience to get their foot in the door to a full time position somewhere else.

Suggestions wanted on doctor shortage

Guelph/Eramosa councillors want to hear from the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons about their suggestions on how to deal with the province's doctor shortage.

Council advised clerk Janice Sheppard to contact the association and take them up on their offer to make a presentation on the topic. While no date could be suggested, Sheppard said she'd like to see it be part of a regular council meeting so the public could be present to hear the speaker's suggestions.

The Rockwood MILLER



Speeder of Week

A 20-year-old driver from the United Kingdom has the distinction of being Wellington OPP's Speeder of the Week.

Sergeant Rick Weiler, conducting traffic enforcement on Hwy. 6 at Clair Rd. observed a 2004 Grand Am travelling at a high rate of speed on Sat-

urday, August 7 at 2:55 p.m. He activated the radar beam and it registered 151 km/h in a posted 80 km/h zone.

Nishan Chelvachandran, 20, from the United Kingdom is charged with speeding and scheduled to appear in Guelph court on October 5.

Water problems at Centre not solved by new well

Drilling a new well for the Eden Mills Community Centre has not solved that facility's water problems.

Public Works Manager Larry Van Wyck said tests of the treated water from the new system are satisfactory. However, the new Ministry of Environment rules require the raw water entering the system to be tested, too, and that has produced unsatisfactory results. E-coli was found in the untreated water and the well falls in the category of groundwater under the di-

rect influence of surface water. Such sources must be monitored for turbidity and the results logged daily.

The checks can be done manually with an annual cost of \$18,250 or an online turbidity meter and data logger can be installed. Operating costs for this would be lower but would still be \$15,000 to \$20,000 plus administration charges.

This type of meter would also see 200-300 litres of water dumped into the septic holding tank daily

making it an impractical solution. While the water could be directed back into the natural drainage course, the shallow bedrock in this location makes that cost prohibitive.

Van Wyck suggested council might want to examine new water regulations expected in coming months to see whether requirements for water systems for facilities run by an organization might be easier and cheaper to meet than those for a municipally-owned facility.

Strategic Plan

Staff urged to think money-saving

BY MAGGIE PETRUSHEVSKY
The New Tanner

Already staff at Guelph/Eramosa has begun looking at the municipality's strategic plan, its master plans, the roads needs study and the fire business plan. From these foundations staff and council can make suggestions and decide on changes in light of the service analysis and the cost of changes.

Cheyne said front line staff will be asked for suggestions on changes that would make operations more efficient or cost effective.

Part of the process will see staff preparing summary sheets for their departments which will document the

cost of services they provide and alternative levels of service. This will also show how each service fits into the strategic plan, the history of the service, problems with delivering the service, whether it is a mandatory service and whether it is provided by staff or through a consultant.

The budget will need to include increases in the costs of wages, insurance and utilities since they are not negotiable items.

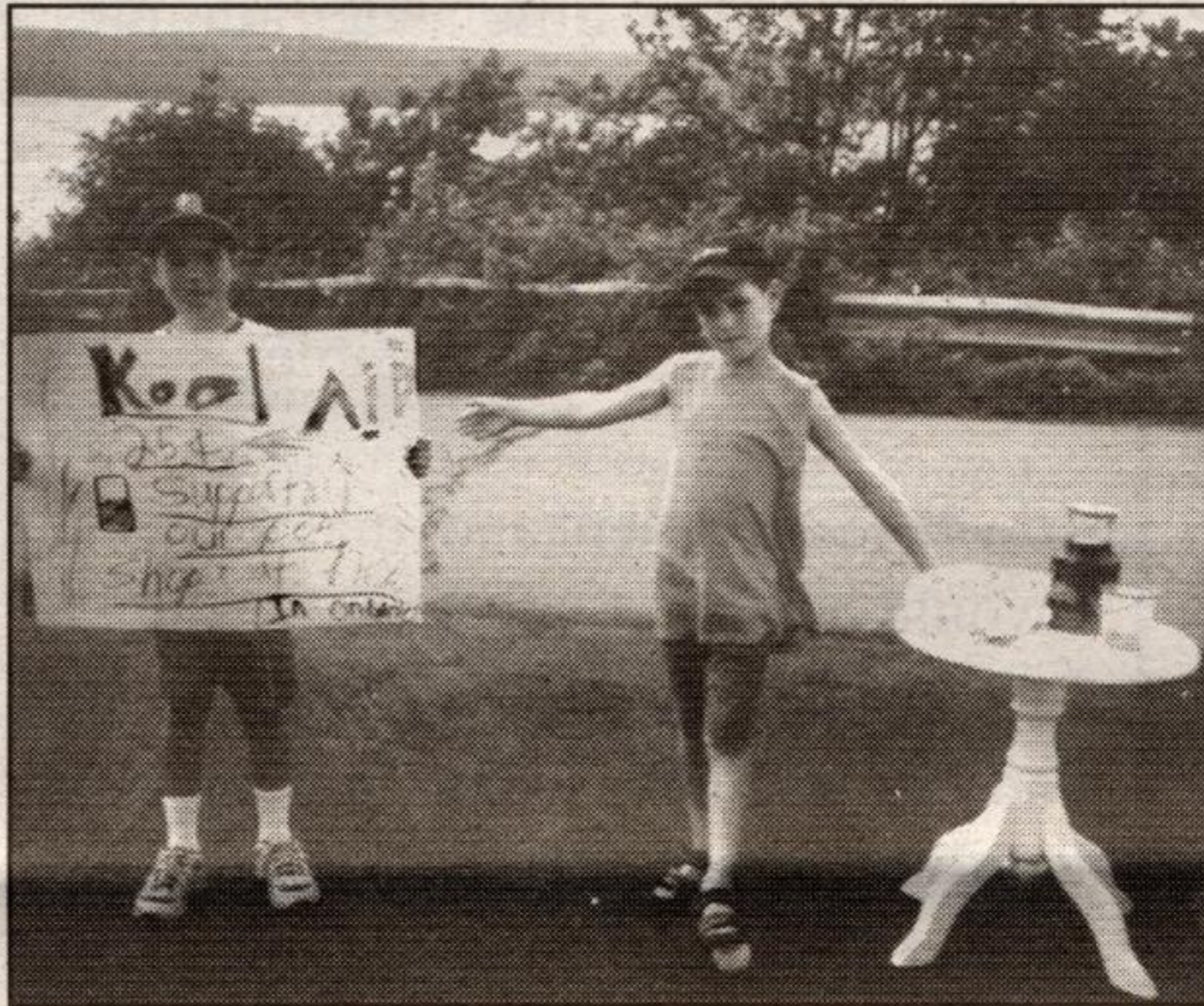
While all this information should ideally be readied through July, heavier summer workloads for roads and park managers means it may be September before everything is in place so the treasurer can prepare reports for review by the

clerk and management teams in October.

Cheyne said she hopes to give council a draft budget in November and spend the month of December researching and reporting the answers to any council questions about the budget.

Then through January council can hold their special council meetings and discussions in preparation for taking the proposed budget to the public in February. This will also be the time for public meetings if any are needed. Then by the end of February council should be able to adopt their budget for the year instead of it taking until April, as has been past practice.

Councillors praised the new process and tossed around ideas for rewarding staff who generate good, cost-saving ideas.



ON THE ROCK: Even while on vacation in Newfoundland, Steven and Joshua Kelly continue to raise funds at their Kool-Aide stand for their favourite pet store, 4-D's "back home in Rockwood, Ontario" that was destroyed by fire in June. - Submitted photo

Firefighters hurt in blaze

Officers from the County of Wellington O.P.P. responded to a report of a structure fire at the Hermosa Valley Apartments at 7870, Highway 7 in Eramosa Township on Saturday at 11:43 am. Firefighters from Guelph also responded to the scene.

All of the occupants of the building were evacuated safely and no tenants were injured. Three firefighters were injured when the fire

flashed back at them. Two
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