



LEARNING TO SKATE: Kaleigh Johnston, Alexa and Mackenzie Paton are having a great time learning to skate on the outdoor rink at Lloyd Dyer Park last Sunday. *Rebecca Ring Photo*

New councillors uncomfortable with processing of accounts

By Rebecca Ring

As part of every regular meeting, council is asked to approve accounts payable for the township for each period. Councillor Reta Moyer questions this process. She stated she called Manager of Finance Linda Cheyne and asked about the water tower costs being paid out to planning, legal and engineering firms totalling \$373,247.57. Cheyne explained the township will recover these costs. Subdivision developers will be billed for 77%, as that is the percentage of new users, whereas the township pays 23%, which represents the percentage of existing users.

Councillor John Scott asked Cheyne when the township would be paid back these recoverable costs. Cheyne advised these fees are paid according to the agreement with the firms "with a provision to bill out," adding that the fees are recovered in development charges.

Scott asked again when they will be paid back, and Cheyne responded, "Bills go out once a month."

Moyer stated, "We're acting as a vehicle for carrying

Cornelisse is trying to get the word out that the rinks at Lloyd Dyer Park are ready. He and the other volunteers flood them once or twice every night after 10 PM. The lights are on for the public to skate and play hockey until then.

financial burden" and asked if interest is charged from the time money is paid out until the time it is received. She joked that she would like someone to carry her mortgage and credit card debt interest free for awhile.

Mayor Chris White responded, "On February 7 we'll go through the financial process. There are no carrying costs."

Moyer responded that according to the Municipal Act, the township can charge up to 15% interest to developers and apologized for being new to council. "The solution is to sit down and go through the process with Finance," White said, to which Moyer brusquely replied: that should have been done when it was requested weeks ago.

Councillor Roger Knapp asked Cheyne if it's possible to see accounts payable and accounts receivable once a month, saying, "It is easier to authorize these payments if both sides of the balance sheet are known." She replied that council has not received them in the past. White commented, "As questions come forward, we can get information for the new council members." Moyer reiterated that a meeting to discuss matters for making decisions was requested weeks ago.

Scott replied, "You are asking us to approve something we're totally ignorant of," with Knapp adding, "We don't know." White asked if they were willing to incur

interest charges by deferring the accounts, to which Moyer responded, "I am personally liable for my decisions and the information I need is not readily available." "It is always available with Linda," stated White. Moyer pointed out the Municipal Act states that councillors are not supposed to individually run to staff with questions.

Councillor Doug Breen offered a solution to "pull out any specific worries and pass the rest." But Clerk Janice Sheppard advised, "These were all approved in the last budget."

Scott responded, "I have no problem with pre-approved budget items. We can work on the knowledge function later."

Cheyne explains she has not had time to meet with council yet as her department is working on year-end tasks and putting a new software system in place. Moyer, who asked for a recorded vote complained "It is not you and the new system delays that are causing my problems. Past practices are influencing what is happening now. I don't accept past practices as necessarily appropriate now."

Moyer voted against approving the payment of \$543,507.75, while White, Breen, Scott and Knapp approved it. Knapp later said, "We have to know both sides of the balance sheet. I'm not micromanaging finance but I have to be comfortable. We've already approved almost one million dollars."

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Volunteers keep rinks running

By Rebecca Ring

Skating on outdoor ice rinks is truly a Canadian tradition. Every community should have at least one. Lloyd Dyer made sure Rockwood had a couple, one for skating and one for hockey, since 1967. In the park named for him, the tradition continues thanks to enthusiastic volunteers.

Ken Cornelisse has been flooding and shovelling the rinks for four years now. He started by helping out Steve Slavin, who had to stop due to physical issues. Cornelisse assumed the responsibility

and is now helped by seven others. One helper is earning her community service credits at school.

The changing weather has affected the process, as it depends on below freezing temperatures. Cornelisse says, "Last year was difficult because the temperatures kept fluctuating above and below freezing. People didn't come out as much because they didn't know if the ice was ready or not. This year we had a very late start but the forecast looks good for the next ten days." He "was

very satisfied to see" that the rinks were busy last weekend, with as many as 36 skaters on both at one time.

Guelph/Eramosa Township owns the rinks. Last year, staff proposed a policy for volunteers, which is currently being revised. Cornelisse says that Council agrees it was unnecessarily restrictive and adds that the new Council is very supportive and interested in finding solutions, saying, "They are keen on getting ice rinks built and keeping a good volunteer base in the community."

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