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New gambling rules have some town councillors leery

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

In a close vote Monday night, town councillors approved in principle the sale of Nevada break-open tickets from third party locations while maintaining the municipal bingo licencing fee at two per cent of the take.

Nevada tickets have been sold in town by three community groups. New provincial legislation has opened the format and created a possible windfall in revenues.

Now each group which sells Nevada tickets can do so from only a single location in town, but that location can be a high-traffic third party retailer who is entitled to a five per cent commission. Each third party seller can only provide tickets for one organization.

Mayor Gord Krantz expressed concern that local groups would be shut out of prime locations by better funded, highly organized provincial and national charities.

"There is nothing that sets limits on priority," said Milton's director of finance, James McQueen. "There is no discrimination at the provincial level. Licenses are supposed to be granted on a first come, first served basis."

Representatives of several national charities said that money collected locally would be spent 100 per cent by the local chapter.

"Even with a provincial licence we hope to use the money locally," said Blake Hurst of Health Promotion Strategies, a group which represents several large charitable organizations. "Fears of the money collected here going to some head office in Toronto are unfounded."

In addition to the Nevada break-open tickets, the general committee

heard of changes in the laws which regulate bingos.

Municipalities can now license bingos up to \$5,500 rather than \$3,500, and raffles up to \$50,000 instead of \$5,000. Because of this the province will no longer be sending municipalities a 50 per cent rebate of provincially licensed lottery event fees. That sum last year was less than \$5,000 in Milton.

Councillors debated increasing the licensing fee on local bingos to three per cent of the take, but backed down when they heard that the bingo business was on the decline. The two per cent fee will stand for three months, when council will review the situation.

"The new legislation impacts us a lot," Mr. McQueen said. "There is more administration required and new rules which generate more work for the town."

The town is required to maintain a more extensive control on operators of lottery events. Checking funding allocation, group eligibility and investigations of problems are just a few of the increased local requirements.

Councillor Ron Furik told the

committee that bingo revenues are substantially down. He cited several examples of problems, saying that some charities and non-profit groups are on the brink of dropping out of the bingo business as a way to raise funds.

Mr. Furik said he didn't want to hike the licensing fee to the proposed three per cent because that might cause some groups to abandon bingos. There are 31 groups in town fundraising through them.

Councillor John Challinor disagreed with Mr. Furik. He said that the licensing fee should only be left at two per cent if it was generating enough revenue for the town to cover its administrative costs.

"This is a user fee and we have to have our costs paid," said Mr. Challinor. "I want to see that fees cover our costs. Local taxpayers shouldn't be subsidizing the lotteries."

The issues will again come before councillors when they meet for the last time in 1993 next Monday. The vote for approval in principle of the Nevada tickets selling procedure and keeping the bingo licensing fees at two per cent passed at the committee level by a 6-5 margin.

Former Milton priest to face sex charges in June

A June 2 preliminary hearing has been set for a former Milton priest accused of sexually assaulting teenaged boys.

Now retired and a resident of Ayton, James Scoles, 60, faces a total of nine charges in connection with several reported assaults, some which date back to the early 1970s.

Father Scoles, a resident priest at Holy Rosary Church on Martin Street for two years in the early 1980s, appeared in Milton provincial court Monday. He was charged in May after a 24-year-old Milton man reported being sexually assaulted by a resident priest twice while a member of Holy Rosary in 1983.

The alleged assaults are said to have occurred in Milton and Ayton.

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