

Tax increases and cutbacks for Russell Township

Ratepayers in Russell Township are facing tax increases and cutbacks in services. The full extent of the increases will not be known until the Council's auditors make their report in February and the Council sets its 1982 budget in March.

The Township is finding itself in financial difficulties because of past debts, increased operating costs and unfunded capital expenditures (such as the Embrun sewer project).

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has placed the Township under supervision to allow it to borrow \$225,000.

Reeve Gaston Patenaude said in an interview: "We will not know how much taxes will have to be raised to cover the \$225,000 Council borrowed until the auditor's report is presented and the 1982 budget is set. I think an increase of about five per cent will be needed just to cover the cost of borrowing the money.

"We will be looking at cutting back expenses in areas that are not a priority such as the road improvement budget where we usually spend about \$170,000 a year. We are also expecting about \$20,000 from the Federal government to cover costs involved with the Heritage projects (the Berwick Station and Carlsbad Home renovations)."

The Council spent \$378,000 out of its operating budget on preliminary work for the Embrun sewage project before the Ontario Municipal Board had approved the project. Another \$160,000 was spent on four projects in Embrun: the bowling alley and hall, the Zamboni room addition at the Embrun arena, the Berwick Station renovation and the Carlsbad Home rehabilitation. It has also been carrying debts from past years including \$60,000 for the Russell arena.

"We should have had approval for the construction of the bowling alley before spending the

money," said Reeve Patenaude.

A report prepared for the Council by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing pointed out that "the capacity to borrow for current operating purposes and at the same time finance capital projects that do not have the approval of the Ontario Municipal Board."

The Township had to accept supervision of the Ministry in order to borrow the \$225,000 it needed.

"The general purpose of supervision," said Tracy Ruthman of the Ottawa Field office of the Ministry "is to control Council activities with minimum involvement from the Ministry having recognized the voluntary request from the Township and its need for supervision.

"Supervision comes automatically when a township has to borrow money and can't pay for it in one year" said Mr. Ruthman. Councils in Ontario are allowed to borrow up to 70 per cent of their anticipated revenue in a year.

"Supervision does not necessarily mean that a township is in dire straits," said Mr. Ruthman. "And I can certainly say that Russell is not in dire straits.

"The Councillors will basically run their own affairs and we'll get involved in the setting of the budget to make sure it is a good budget and that they live up to it. The Ministry will be involved until the debt is paid," said Mr. Ruthman.

The financial situation of the Township is causing some concern among ratepayers. In early January 15 taxpayers in Russell met to discuss the situation and decided to ask the Council for more information.

"Minutes of the Council meetings are usually posted in Russell," said Keith Dugdale, who organized the meeting. "But we haven't seen any since early October."

Wolf attacks in Osgoode

The killing of domestic animals by dogs, wild dogs and wolves is increasing in Osgoode Township.

In a report to the Osgoode Township Council on the problem, Councillor Doug Thompson said: "This last year has seen a marked increase in the number of animals killed, resulting in an increased burden, financially, on Osgoode taxpayers. Probably the most discouraging aspect of this is that very little has been done to solve the problem."

Councillor Thompson presented a plan for dealing with the problem that called for the livestock evaluator to contact the by-law officer as soon as an attack

was reported. The by-law officer would then contact the Predator officer of the Ministry of Natural Resources at Leitrim.

These three people would then inspect the site where the animals were killed to determine the number and type of predator.

"Once this was determined," said Councillor Thompson in his report, "then appropriate steps would be taken to destroy the predators."



The Berwick Station, pictured above, is one of the projects adding to Russell Township's financial difficulties. Estimates for completing the renovation of the Station are running about \$6,000 over-budget. (See story this page).

Ian Darragh photo

Ski-doo accident

The New Year was just nine days old when Russell had its first snowmobile accident of the season. A truck hit a skidoo which was coming around the corner at Concession and Church St. just in front of the firehall. Nobody was hurt in the accident.

"It's legal to run snowmobiles on the roads in Russell," said Constable Andre Dupuis of the Casselman detachment of the OPP, "because there is no by-law prohibiting snowmobiles on the streets."

"But it is dangerous," said Constable Dupuis, "Both snowmobile riders and car drivers should be very careful."

Accidents have not been a major problem in the Russell-Embrun area. Light snowfalls during the past four winters have discouraged snowmobiling. And now it costs \$500 to run a machine with no insurance — that's kept down the number of snowmobilers in the area.

Constable Dupuis pointed out that while it may be legal to run snowmobiles in the streets snowmobilers should be aware that trucks cannot readily see them. Snowmobilers should also watch out for pedestrians and not run their machines in backyards.

NOTICE TOWNSHIP OF RUSSELL

Please be advised that the Planning Board of the Township of Russell will hold its regular public meetings for the next three months on the following dates:

February 17, 1982
March 10, 1982
April 14, 1982

These meetings will be held at the Township administrative office located at 668 Notre Dame Street in Embrun at 20:00 hours.

Michel Dignard 443-3066
Secretary

AVIS MUNICIPALITE DE RUSSELL

Soyez avisé que la commission d'urbanisme tiendra ses réunions publiques pour les 3 prochains mois aux dates suivantes:

Le 17 février, 1982
Le 10 mars, 1982
Le 14 avril, 1982

Ces réunions auront lieu au 668 de la rue Notre-Dame à 20:00 heures.

Michel Dignard
Secrétaire
443-3066

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