



MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS-TURNBERRY

COUNCIL MINUTES – SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, October 7th, 2021, 7:30 pm

The Council of the Municipality of Morris-Turnberry met electronically in a special session on the 7th day of October 2021, at 7:30 pm for the purpose of receiving a delegation regarding renovations to the Brussels, Morris & Grey Community Centre

Council in Attendance

Mayor Jamie Heffer
Deputy Mayor Sharen Zinn
Jamie McCallum
Jim Nelemans
Kevin Freiburger

Staff in Attendance

Trevor Hallam	CAO/Clerk
Sean Brophy	Treasurer

Others in Attendance

Brad McRoberts	CAO/Clerk, Huron East
Bernie MacLellan	Mayor, Huron East
Doug McArter	Building Sub-Committee Co-Chair
Roxane Nicholson	Fundraising Chair
Paul Heffer	
Sandra Pepper	
Mike Wilson	Wingham Advance Times
Denny Scott	Blyth Citizen

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heffer called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm.

Mayor Heffer noted that Mike Wilson of the Wingham Advance Times disclosed the use of recording equipment for the purpose of writing articles to the Clerk in advance of the meeting.

2.0 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion 224-2021

*Moved by Jamie McCallum
Seconded by Kevin Freiburger*

THAT the Council of the Municipality of Morris-Turnberry hereby adopts the agenda for the meeting of October 7th, 2021, as circulated.

Carried

3.0 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST / POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

4.0 **Business**

4.1 DELEGATION – HURON EAST / BMGCC MANAGEMENT BOARD

Representatives from the Municipality of Huron East, as well as the Brussels, Morris and Grey Board of Management and Building Sub-Committee requested the opportunity to address Council to provide information regarding the changes to the renovation plans for the Brussels, Morris, and Grey Community Centre (BMGCC).

Huron East Mayor Bernie MacLellan thanked Council for the opportunity to speak with them and introduced Huron East CAO/Clerk Brad McRoberts.

Mr. McRoberts thanked Council for the opportunity to address them and introduced the rest of the delegation.

Mr. McRoberts provided Council with background information on the project and past budget estimates. He described the details of the project that were included in the grant application and the importance of each component, including a 35% expansion of the existing footprint, six new dressing rooms, a new lobby and viewing area, a new fitness room, kitchen renovations, auditorium upgrades and roof replacement.

Mr. McRoberts described the timelines for the project construction, being April to December 2022 and the challenges for the project that have caused the increased costs, including increased materials costs.

Mr. McRoberts explained the process involved in the Class B costing estimate that was undertaken and described the items that could be removed from the project to reduce the overall cost. He explained that those administering the grant may object to the removal of key components, having confirmed that are concerned about descoping the project, but not the extension of timelines of the project as long it is completed by 2027.

Mr. McRoberts reported that after determining what aspects of the project could be removed to reduce costs, he met with the BMGCC Board of Management, and Building Sub Committee on August 19th and 24th, resulting in the recommendation that was presented to Huron East Council.

Mr. McRoberts requested that Council increase its contribution to the project to \$469,900. He went on to note that there is an agreement in place that included responsibility for a portion of maintenance and capital costs. He acknowledged that it's a difficult situation but pointed out that if the project didn't go forward both municipalities would be in a position of having to replace the roof without the benefit of the grant money, and Morris-Turnberry's share would still be approximately \$240,000, but by adding a bit more the municipalities will have a facility that can serve the community for the next twenty to thirty years.

Mayor Heffer thanked Mr. McRoberts for the information and the presentation. He said he is aware of the challenges of dealing with a situation like this and recognizes it's not an enviable task to approach such a large increase, but that Mr. McRoberts has approached it well, cut away what he can, and that's a tough job.

Mayor Heffer presented some of Council's questions and concerns. He noted that Council had approved the initial request of \$127,000 reluctantly but chose to do so because of the potential value added by the grant, and that since Morris-Turnberry was a partner on the grant Council should have been consulted before the increase was approved by Huron East.

He noted that attendance is down at local recreation facilities, and some are not opening, making Council question such a big investment in a facility when there has been nothing to show it will be financially viable going forward. When they first addressed council, the board was asked for a business plan or alternative plan if the grant wasn't received or fundraising goals weren't met, but there were no satisfactory answers given.

Mayor Heffer continued, saying that Council is questioning the project, believing that it is no longer financially viable. Many ratepayers have contacted Council to express concerns about the costs of the project. He stated that Morris-Turnberry cannot afford the increased cost, that it would require an 8% increase to taxes or a debenture, and that the municipality is not willing to debenture this type of expense.

Mayor Heffer went on to list some of the outstanding concerns and questions from Council:

- Is there a firm commitment from teams to return to the facility once the changerooms are updated or from the gym company once the space is available?

- How much has been fundraised to date and what's the plan if the fundraising goal isn't met?
- What is the plan if the actual construction costs come in even higher?
- Is there a plan to do the work that is required only, because the expansion is no longer affordable?
- What will happen if Morris-Turnberry does not approve the increased contribution?

Mayor Heffer acknowledged that Mr. McRoberts had touched on some of these points in his presentation, that Council didn't expect answers to all the questions tonight and stated that Council will not be prepared to provide an answer tonight either.

Mayor Heffer asked if Council had any additional comments or questions.

Councillor Nelemans noted that Mayor Heffer had expressed Council's concerns and he had none to add.

Deputy Mayor Zinn agreed that Mayor Heffer had covered all of Council's concerns and said she would like some time to look at the proposal for the project and come back with a consensus of Council.

Councillor Nelemans stated that is main concern was the ability to meet the community fundraising goal, recalling that there was a high goal for fundraising for the arena in Mildmay that was not reached, and that was before the COVID-19 pandemic so there were more opportunities for fundraising events. He asked where the fundraising is going to come from.

Roxane Nicholson explained that the committee had made the decision to hire Campaign Coaches to look at the fundraising capacity in the community, and that they will be following their guidelines on how to do it. She noted that Campaign Coaches have helped with fundraising for the Wingham Hospital and a few other local arena projects. She explained that the fundraising campaign would be based on letters to potential donors as a start. She stated that with the advice they are getting from experts she feels confident they will achieve their goal.

Councillor Nelemans asked if most of the donations would be from ratepayers. Ms. Nicholson explained that the fundraising would consist of a letter campaign, and then donations for naming rights for various parts of the project. She said they would be asking for as much as \$10,000 to \$25,000 from individuals over a period of 5 years.

Mr. McRoberts described his experience with a similar project for the Owen Sound Regional Recreation Facility. He noted that the fundraising goal for that project set by the YMCA was 10 million dollars and that they exceeded that goal. He explained that there would likely be opportunities for naming rights at various levels, and that while the donors may be ratepayers, they would also be people with an interest in the facility and who use the facility, and there may be larger benefactors and businesses that want to be part of the project.

Mayor MacLellan explained that the strategy laid out by Campaign Coaches is different from what has traditionally happened in the community for fundraising, and that their assessment was that there was the potential for raising up to 2 million dollars. He noted that there was up to approximately \$700,000 that those asked said they would be willing to pledge. He acknowledged that there is always a possibility that fundraising goals won't be met, but noted that this has not been his experience. He described the approach taken with the Seaforth arena where the Municipality committed to matching the fundraising dollars up to \$400,000, and their goal was exceeded.

Mayor MacLellan asked if a member of the committee could address the questions about the lease of the gym space. Doug McArter explained that when the community was first consulted approximately four years ago people had asked for a fitness facility as there isn't one in town. Many said if there was one in Brussels, they would purchase memberships. A fitness business was approached with this possibility, they were asked to provide a business plan, and they did. The arrangement would be that they provide all required equipment and manage the operations, and it would be able to be accessed twenty-four hours a day. It would be a revenue generator, and the plan is in place, but it can't be formalized until its confirmed that the the project is going ahead.

Mayor Heffer thanked the delegation for their answers and reiterated that not all answers need to be provided this evening, staff would be following up with the questions in writing so they could be responded to.

Mayor MacLellan said he appreciated that the questions will be sent in writing to be addressed. He went on to say that one thing to address is the question of whether the facility is needed. He expressed that these facilities may not be essential, but they are an important part of the community and getting rid of the amenities will not help to grow the

community and move it forward. He acknowledged that there are other facilities with labour shortages but that these are the result of policies from upper levels of government and businesses all over Huron County are suffering. He explained that not doing anything would be condemning the work of the committee.

Mayor MacLellan continued, admitting he was shocked when he was first presented with the updated costs, but that by the time it was presented to Huron East Council he thought it was important to see the project through to ensure that the grant and fundraising commitments would still be available. He noted that there are aspects of this project that Central Huron put into their arena, and they are the reason that teams prefer using that space. Community support for the Centre has been stronger in Brussels than in many other communities, and even Campaign Coaches was surprised at the response and the dedication of the community. He stated that the Committee did a good job of cutting where possible, but it will still be a great facility. He explained that if the municipalities spent less and just did repairs, they'd still have an old facility, but if they spend more they would have a facility as good as any in the County.

Mayor Heffer thanked Mayor MacLellan for his comments and stated that it is important to get all views on the table. He thanked Mr. McRoberts for his presentation as it was helpful and suggested that if there were no further comments from Council or anyone else the matter could be left until more answers are provided.

Mayor MacLellan thanked Council for the opportunity to present this information and for sending the questions in writing. He offered to leave it open as to whether Council would like to have another meeting to discuss the responses, as sometimes it's important to have a discussion to provide answers to any follow up questions.

5.0 CONFIRMING BY-LAW

Motion 225-2021

*Moved by Jim Nelemans
Seconded by Jamie McCallum*

THAT leave be given to introduce By-Law # 49-2021, being a by-law to confirm the proceedings of the Municipality of Morris-Turnberry meeting of Council held on October 7th, 2021, and that it now be read severally a first, second, and third time, and finally passed this 7th day of October 2021.

Carried.

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

Motion 226-2021

*Moved by Sharen Zinn
Seconded by Kevin Freiburger*

THAT the Council of the Municipality of Morris-Turnberry does now adjourn at 8:41 pm.

NEXT MEETINGS:

Regular Meeting of Council - Tuesday, October 19th, 2021, 7:30 pm
Regular Meeting of Council - Tuesday, November 2nd, 2021, 7:30 pm

Mayor, Jamie Heffer

Clerk, Trevor Hallam