



Local resident Ray Puhalski voices some of his concerns during Monday's special meeting with Horton council.



Coun. Bob Kingsbury stresses a point to resident Ray Puhalski, as Coun. Jamey Larone listens during the Oct. 15 meeting.

STEVE NEWMAN/METROLAND

Mayor Eady: the tone of criticism needs to change

Continued from front

Puhalski, in a prepared statement before council, spoke in some detail about his concerns regarding the procurement bylaw and about how the current council had violated the township's remuneration bylaw. In email correspondence May 3, 2012, the township solicitor told CAO Mackie McLaren that "technically Mr. Puhalski may be right, although it is a minor issue that he raises."

On another point, Puhalski says he was under the impression that Horton council was prepared to ask their solicitor to issue a cease-and-desist order, if Puhalski continued to send correspondence to the township about council business.

In response, McLaren said that was "not entirely" accurate, but that such an issue was discussed with their solicitor.

"I could not understand why Horton's duly-elected representatives could take such action against a fellow taxpayer," said Puhalski.

Eady also acknowledged the chambers are usually "pretty empty" for council meetings, but not this time.

In addition to the five council members, McLaren and members of the media, there were also 12 members of the public. The latter included former council members Bob Johnston, Dave Bennett and Bob Hall.

Much of the remainder of the meeting dealt with Puhalski's desire to see monthly council packages posted online the Friday before the first-Tuesday-of-the-month meetings.

This, said Puhalski, would give members of the public time to review the contents and provide feedback to council members before the monthly meeting.

Mayor Eady and CAO McLaren talked about the possibilities of doing this, but made no promises. Eady stressed that the additional stress on staff, and possible additional cost, would be factored into whatever decision council makes.

One of the councillors who has taken the most offence to the nature of Puhalski's criticisms of council, as reported in the Oct. 11 *Renfrew Mercury*, over the last several months is Margaret Whyte.

In the Oct. 15 meeting, she apologized for losing her temper, after telling Puhalski that it was council's job, not Puhalski's, to conduct the township's business. She admitted to feeling defensive, but said, "I really feel this council has been honest as we can."

She also said township has made progress with providing more online presence of township business, but that it might be too onerous to expect staff to be able to post online council packages the Friday before each monthly

council meeting.

Bob Kingsbury had the most heated response of councillors.

"You should know that with every privilege there comes a responsibility," said Kingsbury at Monday's meeting (Oct. 15).

"And I feel, after numerous letters and emails we have received, that you are abusing that right. I feel you are bordering on harassment and it appears that it is only for your own benefit, and not the benefit of Horton Township."

"If you actually look at the amount of time we have spent on your concerns about potential mistakes we are making, the cost involved tells me that you are the one who is wrong. As for an apology, Ray, I would accept one from you. But if you're waiting for one from me, it's not going to happen."

"I try to do my job as best as I possibly can, with as few mistakes as I possibly can."

Kingsbury continued: "It seems to me you have appointed yourself as opposition to this council, the leading opposition, and to what benefit?"

"Do we make mistakes? You're damn right we do. We try hard not to. But if we do, we don't go back and make the same one twice."

Kingsbury admitted he was confused and didn't know what Puhalski was looking for,

because any mistakes made were "honest mistakes made as we were trying to do our job."

The morning after the meeting, Puhalski provided prepared remarks, with which he categorized the meeting as "fruitful" and a forum for all participants to voice their concerns and frustrations.

Those concerns and frustrations, he said, were with regard to actions that have "occurred on my part as well as on the part of council. I hope I was successful in convincing Horton council that my letter of April 24 (2012), re: the violation of the remuneration bylaw, was not intended to be malicious."

In concluding remarks, Eady told Puhalski the manner in which information is delivered is important, and that a suitable tone needs to be used if council is to respond suitably to criticisms and other feedback.

Afterwards, Eady told *The Mercury* that he felt the meeting set a necessary tone.

"I certainly welcome suggestions from Mr. Puhalski or anybody else. But you need time to digest them (before providing a suitable response)."

Mayor Eady said he hoped the meeting "opened up a line of communication," which includes the understanding that council isn't going to run around responding to every criticism Puhalski makes.

Renfrew & Area Health Services Village not just about doctor recruitment

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This month, members of the Renfrew and Area Health Services Village are doing the rounds, visiting not only the four local municipalities that support the corporation. RAHSV members are also approaching service organizations, churches, funeral directors and local businesses, to see who might support the organization that is trying to recruit 14 doctors by 2014.

The goal will soon be half met, with the awaited announcement (tonight) of a seventh doctor since the program began in 2010. How-

ever, substantial money remains to be raised to help RAHSV realize its goals.

The first of the four member municipalities visited this month was Horton, whose council was addressed Oct. 2 by the delegation of RAHSV mayor-members Raye-Anne Briscoe of Admaston-Bromley, Peter Emon of Greater Madawaska and Bill Ringrose of Renfrew.

A strong theme of the 45-minute address, which was delivered by Emon, was that the health services village is about finding doctors, but much more — namely economic development.

"We believe strongly that we're

not just recruiting individual physicians, but we're bringing in families," said Emon.

"They have some unique needs and unique demographics, and we feel, by including all members of the community (like real estate agents, day care operators and other business owners), that gives us an advantage when we're recruiting."

Emon referred to University of Guelph professor Al Lauzon's article in the health services village's 42-page information package. Lauzon said doctor recruitment contributions should be viewed not as a handout, but as a key part of economic development strategy.

"You're cementing good health care for your population that's there, the population that's coming, and you're also providing good paying jobs and money for the community," explained Emon. "He made a very good argument about that. I read it several times, and I hand it out as often as I can, so that's why it's included in your package."

With that in mind, Emon said the Renfrew and Area Health Services Village is moving to protect a primary component of economic development and "we need to move on and expand that base."

One issue is the need to construct more office space for new doctors,

since the Professional Building and adjacent medical clinic are now near full capacity, with the health services village still anticipating the arrival of eight more doctors by 2014.

"We have six signed up and we're going to be announcing the seventh in the next little while," said Emon.

"So, we have to find a way (to do that), whether in partnership with another facility or a private entity. We'll have to find a way to have a turnkey operation, because that is the key to bringing people in."

"The physician recruitment has been the focus... but that's not what we're all about," stressed Emon.

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Heideman and Hokum each win two timber bids

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Eganville-area lumber mills fared well in six recent timber tenders to Renfrew County.

The county awarded three tenders to Lavern Heideman & Sons, and another to M.W. Miller Logging, also of Eganville. Hokum & Son, of Killaloe, won two bids.

All tracts were for red pine, except for an Opeongo Line mixed wood dominated by poplar.

The winning bids are listed in order of the successful bidder, amount, next closest bid, and the name of the tract:

- Lavern Heideman, \$23,875 (\$21,400), Beachburg;
- Lavern Heideman, Heideman and Hokum each win two timber bids \$54,560 (\$36,000), Byer's Creek;
- Lavern Heideman, \$11,700 (\$11,466), Sermos-

- ie/Simpson's Pit;
- Hokum & Son, \$39,600 (\$24,880), Budd Mills;
- Hokum & Son, \$37,400 (\$31,900), Indian River; and
- M.W. Miller, \$34,149 (\$33,600), Opeongo Line.

"We got O.K. prices," said Renfrew County forestry services manager Jeff Muzzi. "They're reflective of the realities of the forest industry. Times are tough."

Seven companies offered one or more bids, including firms out of Wilno, Barry's Bay, Palmer Rapids and Pembroke.

Each year, 400 to 500 acres of the county forests are harvested. The county has 51 tracts spread over 16,000 acres. Typically, well-thinned red pine can be planted and forested within seven to 10 years, says Muzzi.

Over the last seven years, Muzzi says the county's price for red pine has gone up and done, with lower prices in

2007 and 2008, higher prices in 2009 and 2010 and somewhat more modest prices in 2011 and 2012.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

The County of Renfrew hosts its annual employee recognition and retirement banquet Thursday, Oct. 25.

The 7 p.m. dinner takes place at the Rankin Culture and Recreation Centre. Tickets cost \$25. They can be purchased by calling human resources administrative assistant Evelyn VanStarkenburg at 613-735-7288.

A total of 77 employees are scheduled to receive service awards for working 10 or more years. The employees come from human resources, development and property, social services, finance, public works, Miramichi Lodge (Pembroke) or Bonnechere Manor (Renfrew)

Of the 77, two will be recognized for 35 years of service and nine others for 30 years.

Eighteen retirees, including nine from Bonnechere Manor, will also be honoured.

NEW CULTURE WEBSITE

The official launch of the Ottawa Valley Culture website was Sept. 21 at the Champlain Trail Museum in Pembroke.

The website is described as a cultural mapping site that gathers information on "our rich and diverse cultural assets in the Ottawa Valley, such as arts and heritage organizations, cultural occupations and industries, cultural and natural heritage, and also explores stories, traditions and unique quality of life that shapes our identity and sense of place."

To visit the website, see www.ottawavalleyculture.ca.

A-B applies for FIT project

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Admaston-Bromley Coun. Mike Donohue has provided council with options for plans regarding a solar-energy FIT (feed-in tariff) project for the roof of the township office at 477 Stone Road.

In June 2011, a pre-feasibility study conducted by Essex Energy determined that a Micro-FIT 10 kilowatt system was the best option for the township with ground mount or rooftop panels, Coun. Donohue reported to council Oct. 4.

"However, capital costs have decreased and panels have become more efficient. Even with the new reduced pricing, the original pre-feasibility study is no longer valid,"

he said. "The return is insufficient to proceed with that."

Presently, the township would receive 54.8 cents per kilowatt hour.

Under new FIT 2.0 rules, the cost to file an application is 50 cents per kw/hour with an application cost of about \$500, the councillor explained.

The system would include 198 panels at 250 watts per panel for a system of about 49.5 kw

It will generate about \$30,000 each year in revenue, with half going to pay off the system over 20 years.

The application must be filed by Nov. 1, 2012.

Mayor Briscoe expects it to be well into 2013 before council learns if the application is successful.

Economic development the focus, says RAHSV vice-chairman

Continued from Page 2

"We're about economic development and we know there's other things to do.

"I've been beating a drum that we should be the body and fender shop," explained Emon.

"We should be doing hip and knee replacements, something like the Shouldice Clinic does with hernias.

"As the other two levels of government figure out what they want to do, as they try to cut spending, I think there's an ideal opportunity in the next three to five years for unique and different medical practices or quasi-business models."

Emon suggested the next frontier for medicine would include a quasi-public system that involves public funding and private management. As Ontario's population ages, Emon said it's "realistic we'll have to do things differently."

At present, the health services village continues its doctor-recruitment campaign, with a lack of local doctors and the knowledge that several local physicians will retire in the not-too-distant future.

Doctor shortages aren't just being felt in the Ottawa Valley, either, said Emon.

He says the Fraser Institute reported last year that Canada had a physician-to-patient ratio of 2.6 to 1,000, which placed Canada 26th among 28 developed countries that have publicly-funded health care systems.

RAHSV contributes to physician recruitment in various ways. These include administrative services and an incentive program that pays each recruit \$25,000 for each of the doctor's first six years in the Renfrew area. This helps cover extensive expenses incurred during medical training.

The recruits are also required to reside in one of the four local municipalities.

of the 77, two will be recognized for 35 years of service and nine others for 30 years.

FIRST RECRUITS

The first doctors recruited have been Jennifer Arcand, Angela Varrin, Shanti Nemani, Jessica Bodig, Phillip Pinard and Susan Krajewski. Most are already working out of Renfrew, but Dr. Varrin starts her family medical practice in July 2013.

While delighted with RAHSV's success to date, Renfrew Mayor Ringrose also said, "The reality is we want to keep the momentum going (through fundraising and long-term commitments from local municipalities to financial support RAHSV's work)."

"It is not the role, in any way, shape or form, of municipal government to become a health provider," said Mayor Briscoe. At the same time, she called doctor recruitment

a form of economic development that "taxpayers want to fund."

A similar presentation was scheduled for tonight before Admaston-Bromley council, following presentations to Horton, Greater Madawaska and Renfrew councils.

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