

**CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF LATCHFORD  
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2013  
At 6:30pm  
HELD AT THE LATCHFORD MUNICIPAL OFFICE**

**1. Call to order and mayoral comments.**

**PRESENT:**

**Council:** Mayor George Lefebvre, Councilors, Scott Green, Maxine Cannon, Jo-Anne Cartner, Larry Anderson, Theo Cull, and Dave Willcock.

**Regrets:** Councilor Cannon.

**Staff:** Lise Remillard, Chief Financial Officer

**Public:** NIL

**Press:** Darlene Wroe, Speaker

1. Mayor Lefebvre welcomed everyone and called meeting to order

**2. Adoption of the agenda as circulated**

**Resolution No.: 13/1106**

**Moved By:** Scott Green

**Seconded By:** Jo-Anne Cartner

**Be it resolved that** January 16<sup>th</sup> 2013 Agenda is adopted as amended

**CARRIED**

**3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST/CONFLICT OF INTEREST  
NIL**

**4. REVIEW OF 2013 BUDGET**

Council discussed proposed 2013 Budget.

Councilor Willcock presented a written report on ways to cut expenses. (See attached)

5. Reviewed memo regarding Town Employees sick benefits, motion to be presented  
At Regular Council meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2013.

**06. ADJOURN**


**Resolution No. 13/1107**

**Moved By:** Theo Cull

**Seconded By:** Dave Willcock

**Be it resolved that** Council now adjourn @ 8:18pm until next regular meeting or call from the Mayor.

**Dated at Latchford this 16<sup>th</sup> day  
Of January 2013.**

  
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**Mayor**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**CFO**

## **Ideas for Serious Change:**

At the last meeting, we were all tasked with giving thought to serious changes that we could make to affect serious change in the Town's financial picture. I have chosen to put them to paper.

Many of these ideas will not be popular, and I wish to emphasize that most of these are not things that I *WANT* to do, but rather they are things that I think we could do to stop our financial bleeding.

The town is not in a position to be sentimental about buildings, properties, or any other assets.

The town is not in a position to be charitable to anyone.

We have said collectively and repeatedly that we must make drastic changes to fix the financial picture which this council has inherited, but to date; none of our changes have done anything more than to slow down the bleeding.

The bleeding needs to stop. If anyone has better ideas than these, then let's hear them. If anyone wishes to be critical of these ideas or plans, then be prepared to offer better ones.

### **The Community Centre:**

This is the second most valuable property asset the town owns, following the WTP. It is dreadfully unused considering the capital investment and continuing costs to keep it. The ROI of this building would be frightening if it was actually calculated, as it should have been before the investment was made.

The operations of the town office could be moved into the building at the expense of the change rooms etc. on the East side.

Some, or the entire arena could be converted to house the Fire Department.

The Southwest corner may be possible to convert to some rental space which we could offer to the Post Office. (an example that seems a logical choice)

### **Benefits of such a move:**

We would be making good use of all of the centre, which is being climate controlled all the time anyway.

It would allow us to sell the Town Office building and the lot. Perhaps a new owner would use it as a beginning to create a new motel or other desirable business.

It would allow us to sell the current Fire Department building and lot.

It would combine all of the town's services into a neat, centrally located package in the newest building that the town owns.

It would eliminate all of the ongoing expenses associated with the Town Office and the Firehall.

The closer proximity to the Town Garage would enable better supervision of Public Works staff.

The list of benefits goes on, and we can continue to list them if we discuss pros and cons together as a council.

Additionally, use of the Centre should always be paid for by whatever organization is using it, unless otherwise approved by all of council. Power and cleaning costs etc. should not be absorbed by the town.

The coolers in the kitchen could be declared surplus and sold. These units steadily use power, and are rarely used, other than at events. A couple of large tubs full of ice on such occasions would be much more practical.

**Rink Shack:**

This building has been abandoned other than the washrooms for a long time. It is in need of a new roof, and full renovation if it was going to be used for something useful. It costs a bit of money to keep, and uses up some of our staff time to maintain. Flatten it, and allow use of washrooms and showers at the rec centre for campers **FOR AN EXTRA FEE**. Many RV's are all self contained and those people would not require access. Those who do, need to pay.

**Library:**

The library is largely unused, and dying a slow death. It could be closed and the space offered to the medical centre, or offered for rent/lease for another purpose at a rate that **MAKES PROFIT**. Otherwise, leave it empty and cold and at least save the costs.

**Public Works:**

The staff of public works is for the most part, self supervised. We like to believe that we are getting good value for the 80 man hours each week that we pay for, but we really don't know for sure. We could consider reducing staff, or cutting back hours, or making better use of the staff by tasking them with more work. For example, if we were to make the move to combine operations into the Community Centre, I'm sure that much of the building and changing of partitions could be accomplished by our fellows in Public Works. Clear directions and expectations organized in a work order system to make these changes would be a great winter project when snowplowing and garbage collection was not the agenda of the day. Even the trade work can be done by our staff, as long as the work is inspected and approved. Simple running of electrical cables and plumbing can all be done in advance, leaving only final connections etc. for the licensed tradespeople.

I'm going to bring up the grader again, at the risk of conflict, because I think selling it and using the proceeds to equip the truck with a wing makes sense. In times that a grader was needed, they are available to hire.

**Scandia:**

We could re-price this property and show the price on the sign. It is possible that people are driving by thinking that this waterfront property is out of their price range. It could not hurt to post the new price in bold print at the site, and to put some signs ahead showing "Waterfront Property for Sale 1 km Ahead". Just a thought.....

**Fire Department:**

We can examine all of the assets and determine if some are excessive. Does the Fire Department need all of the assets it has to serve the townspeople, or are some geared specifically toward highway service? Can we save money by sharing services with Coleman, or even consider contracting all of the service to Coleman? While there has been much fundraising done over the years, none of it has changed the numbers on our budget as it has been kept in the "Associations" bank account.

**Waterfront Lot on end of Macleod:**

Where do we stand with this project? What do we need to do to get this approved and offered for sale?

**Asset Inventory:**

If we had a list of all the town assets in excess of say \$200.00 in value, we may find a lot of items that are unused and saleable. A walk through the town office, town garage, and firehall may yield some significant items that could be converted to cash.

**Summary:**

I am looking at the big picture as I would look at my own business. I have been self employed for 26 years, and during that time I have made many hard decisions to keep my business in the black. Over the years I have had to cut staff hours, lay people off, terminate employment, turn the heat down and sell things that I didn't want to. I've had to identify organizations that were bleeding me dry, and find ways to be rid of them. We are in a position that we have been forced to borrow just to keep operating, and borrowing should never be anything but a choice in my opinion. In conclusion, I am again going to state that these are not things I *WANT* to do. I do not want anyone running around screaming "Dave wants to close the library" "Dave wants to sell the grader", or "Dave wants to contract fire protection to Coleman". In truth, I would like the town to be sitting in such a nice financial position that I didn't even have to come to meetings.

Dave Willcock