

Response: ?The great water and sewer debate?

To the Editor,

I am writing in response to the letter to the editor in the Jan. 12, 2018 edition of *Bancroft This Week* entitled ?The great water and sewer debate.? I felt the need to clarify the County of Hastings's roles and responsibilities as they pertain to municipal services. The county, as the upper tier municipality and the provincially appointed Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM), is responsible to provide the following services to our 14 member municipalities and the separated cities of Belleville and Quinte West:

- Land ambulance
- Ontario Works
- Children's Services
- Housing services
- Long-term Care (homes located in Belleville and Bancroft)
- Planning and economic development services

Funding for these services is provided through the provincial government and the county levy to member municipalities. The provision of such services as roads, water and wastewater services are the responsibilities of the local municipality and are funded directly by the ratepayers through their property taxes or user fees depending upon the local service in question. In the case of water and wastewater, the general principle for assessing a user charge is that those who get the benefit of the service pay on the basis of how much they use or in some cases on a flat rate.

While the county does not have any role in the town's water system operation our community and human services department does assist eligible residents with temporary financial relief assistance for any household expenses that present a short term barrier to their health and well-being, either by self-referral or indirectly through other third party agency referrals such as North Hastings Community Trust.

Some eligible expenses include food security, rent, heat or utility arrears. To apply or request further program information residents are encouraged to call Hastings County's toll-free number 1-866-414-0300.

Jim Pine

CAO, Hastings County