

Bancroft saves on garbage trucks

By Tony Pearson

Bancroft council found savings in one area last week. It is purchasing a used 2007 garbage truck for \$50,000 ? actually, less than that, as they received a \$15,000 trade-in allowance on the current truck. This net cost of \$35,000 compares to the budgeted leasing cost of \$57,000 a year over several years. Similarly, instead of leasing a recycling truck, the town is buying a used 2010 vehicle for \$70,000, a cost which will be partially offset by funds from the provincial Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF), set up to encourage recycling. Again, this one-time purchase price compares favourably with the budgeted \$57,000 a year lease cost.

Council also passed the Business Improvement Area (BIA) budget, which contains \$2,000 for the incomplete boardwalk; according to council's BIA representative Mary Kavanagh, a plan is coming to council to improve parts of the walkway. The BIA has also budgeted \$3,000 for festivals and events, although they are not organizing Wheels/Water/Wings this year. Christmas and other seasonal décor will receive \$5,000, and flowers and landscaping account for almost \$12,000. Office costs ? rent, maintenance, utilities, and a part-time staffer ? add up to \$32,000, and miscellaneous charges bring the total to \$62,000.

The BIA also received approval to drop the minimum number of directors on its board from seven to five. This reflects weakening participation by the downtown business community. At its November annual meeting, only five directors and three other members showed up.

CAO Hazel Lambe reported that at the upcoming Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) annual conference in January, Bancroft has indicated that it wants to talk to the province about power generation at the Baptiste dam and other aspects of high hydro rates in rural areas. Bancroft also wants to talk about restrictions on Clark Lake (the source of its drinking water), about affordable housing, about the wastewater deficit, and about the cost of renting the municipal works yard.

The CAO also reported that the town may receive an extended line of credit in 2017, to counter the possibility of running out of cash because of the continuing sewer deficit and other debts.

On a positive note, Mayor Bernice Jenkins noted that Expedia had rated Bancroft 10th on its list of the most friendly communities in Canada.

Also, Bancroft's library is preparing to launch a new outreach program, to deliver books and materials to those with limited mobility who find it difficult to use the library.