

Council discusses vacant seat

By Nate Smelle

Since Mayor Bernice Jenkins's resignation was tendered on Sept. 26, the public has been left to speculate on how council plans to fill the empty seat. Once the former mayor's resignation becomes official on Nov. 30, council will have 60 days to fill the vacancy.

Council took time during their meeting on Oct. 10 to discuss the options presented to them in a report from staff.

The report states that under the Municipal Act, when a seat of a member of council becomes vacant, that council is required to declare the seat vacant and determine if the seat will be filled through a by-election or by appointment. It also acknowledged that there "would be significant costs associated with a by-election," which were not budgeted for in the 2017 operating budget.

To fill the seat by appointment council has three options to choose from. First, council can appoint the candidate who received the most number of votes in the previous municipal election. The second option is for council to appoint an "eligible elector" to fill the vacancy. Or, council also has the option to choose to appoint an "eligible elector" to fill the vacancy through an established selection process. In order to qualify as an "eligible elector," a person must be 18 years of age or older; a Canadian citizen; a resident of the town of Bancroft, or an owner or tenant of land in the town or the spouse of such an owner or tenant.

With the deadline fast approaching, council also needs to decide whether they plan to appoint a sitting councillor to the position of mayor and then fill a councillor's seat; or, leave council as is and fill the former mayor's seat directly.