

Faraday council reiterates position on funding for the NHCC



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

At their meeting on Oct. 4, Faraday Township council looked at a report from the Municipality of Hastings Highlands Mayor Tony Fitzgerald regarding non-resident user fees being implemented by the Town of Bancroft at the North Hastings Community Centre Arena. While Hastings Highlands initially declined to contribute \$10,000 toward the NHCC Arena, as did Faraday Township, Hastings Highlands is now willing to donate \$6,000 toward the operation of the arena's ice surface in a gesture of good faith and in support its residents to use the facility. While Hastings Highlands has chosen this course of action, Faraday council was adamant that they'd made their position clear at their April 5 meeting, and did not intend to contribute financially to the arena until there was a new operating model in place and they were active participants in the operation of the facility.

Faraday council made their position clear on funding for the NHCC Arena back at their April 5 meeting, when examining the Town of Bancroft's request for \$10,000 toward the arena's operations. They declined at the time due to their feeling they were not being kept apprised of a plan or governance structure at the community centre since Bancroft took over its operations from the North Hastings Arena Commission in late 2022. Voting unanimously to decline the request, they said that position would stand until they get more information about a plan and governance structure for the community centre going forward.

Meanwhile, at their May 3 meeting, Hastings Highlands had initially also declined a request for \$10,000 in funding from Bancroft. However, at their June 27 special meeting of council, Bancroft resolved that user fees be implemented for any municipalities that did not come through with the requested funding.

While Bancroft's resolution did not specifically state that Hastings Highland's residents would be subject to a user fee, Hastings Highlands wanted to recognize the importance of the NHCC, asked Bancroft to reconsider any user fees for non-residents and further encourages Bancroft to continue to move ahead with a new operating model for the NHCC. They subsequently decided, at their Sept. 20 meeting, to donate \$6,000 toward the NHCC for the operation of the ice surface at the arena and in a gesture of good faith and in support of Hastings Highlands' residents so they can use the NHCC.

Bancroft Mayor Paul Jenkins said in a March 9 letter to Faraday that was part of their April 5 meeting agenda package, that they intended to meet with all North Hastings municipalities soon to develop a long-term operating model and a vision for the NHCC Arena and that it be a facility that all the municipalities could use. He said they need to gather more information so they could present a more cogent picture of the facility's health, and that this data collection was still ongoing. Ultimately, Jenkins said it was Bancroft's goal to have the NHCC be a facility that all municipalities in North Hastings could use, and they intend to meet with all the municipalities to develop a long-term operating model and vision for it. The Town of Bancroft's general manager Andra

Kauffeldt told Bancroft This Week on Oct. 17 that when a new operating model is developed, it will be developed in collaboration with municipalities who want to be part of the conversation about the future of the NHCC.

Faraday council reiterated their position on providing funding to the NHCC Arena in the absence of a new operating model at their Oct. 4 meeting. Deputy Mayor Marg Nicholson said that they'd already dealt with this at their April 5 meeting.

?I stand by the fact that we've dealt with this in the past and we made the decision at that time,? she says. ?And if [the Town of Bancroft] come up with some kind of memorandum of understanding that they want participation from Faraday again, then we could look at it at that time and make our minds up.?