

Kirby fills Kilpatrick's seat

By Jim Eadie

Bancroft has a new councillor to serve the remainder of the council term. He'll fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Bill Kilpatrick in March this year.

'Council has an obligation to fill the position,' said CAO Hazel Lambe at the May 11 regular meeting of council. 'The position has been declared vacant. It is required by provincial statute that, if it is more than 60 days from the end of the term, that council fill the position either with a byelection or appointment. It is council's choice. They considered the cost of a byelection at this point as excessive, considering we are entering the lame duck period and the nomination period is now in effect as they enter the last months of their term.'

'We considered this very seriously and council set criteria for this choice,' said Mayor Paul Jenkins. The person should be a Dungannon resident as they are replacing a Dungannon representative? have a proven interest in the community? [be] someone who does not plan to run in the next election and someone familiar with council protocol. Our choice is John Kirby and he is unanimously approved. John served in the same role on the last council when he was appointed to fill a vacancy created during the last term. He has expertise that we need and he has no interest in running for council.'

Kirby was sworn in by Lambe and took his seat at the council table.

Following a very brief discussion council unanimously approved the 2018 operating budget.

'I wish to thank staff for finding a two per cent net decrease in expenses without any reduction in services,' said Jenkins.

The mayor returned to the outstanding issue of freezing pipes during the winter time, creating the need for a number of residents and businesses to slowly run water all winter to prevent freeze-up.

'Questions are asked frequently about fixing the pipe issue ? anything can be solved with lots of money,' he said. 'This has been a long-standing problem.'

Jenkins noted that contrary to social media and other reports, the number of water service customers instructed to run their taps is 34, contrary to the number 68 as claimed. 'That is 20 residential and 14 commercial this year,' he said. 'I am told by staff that most of the freezing occurs on the private side of the lines. If that is so, it is the responsibility of the property owner and they have been subsidized by the municipality.'

Jenkins noted that the new camera imaging will assist in assessment of the leakage into the sewer lines, but the work awaits a time when the lines are not full of water so the cameras can see. 'This is a long process,' he said. 'The camera imaging could even show the leakage could be occurring in these private lines.'

Council also approved activation of the Community Improvement Program in area A, being the downtown core. This releases the \$28,000 grant from Ontario to be dispersed as individual 'downtown revitalization grants' covering half of the cost of new façade and signage improvements up to a maximum of \$2,000.

Any funds remaining will be designated for municipal infrastructure improvement in the downtown core. Businesses are encouraged to speak with the municipal office before undertaking projects to be sure they conform with the program, and determine the documentation required.

'We hope that many of the businesses will take advantage of this,' said Councillor Mary Kavanaugh.

'We are obtaining further clarification on whether smaller neighbouring municipalities without a downtown core can apply for the grant money, and give it to us,' said Jenkins.