

Meeting of the

Association of Manitoba Municipalities



with

The Honourable Ron Lemieux

Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation

February 8, 2007

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Executive Summary

A) Departmental Issues

1. Update/Overview of New Department

- Infrastructure and transportation projects directly relate to the economic growth and the public interest of Manitoba's residents
- Infrastructure and transportation are fundamental to the growth and prosperity of municipalities.
- Infrastructure is a top priority for municipalities.

Therefore the AMM would request that the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation produce a complete overview of the structure of the department so that municipalities are able to utilize services in a comprehensive manner.

2. Funding for Infrastructure Grants

- Municipal budgets are over-extended and municipal governments are not in the position to take on additional costs and responsibilities.
- Considerable funding is needed to maintain safe and accessible operation of water and wastewater treatment and delivery infrastructure, stormwater systems, public transportation, airports, railroads, and recreation and leisure facilities.
- Many of Manitoba's municipalities have neither the funding to invest in new infrastructure nor the resources to fund the above listed facilities. Municipalities are interested in upgrading facilities by contributing to infrastructure programs.
- Urban highways and the Prairie Grain Roads Program should be included in infrastructure funding programs.

Therefore the AMM urges the Provincial Government to continue to enhance grants to municipalities to meet increased infrastructure costs and work with the Federal Government in the provision of infrastructure funding programs for municipalities.

3. Highways Capital Budget

- The recent announcement of \$4 billion over the next ten years will greatly assist in improving Manitoba's provincial transportation infrastructure.
- Investment in municipal roadways will still be required to deal with the impacts that years of neglect have had and to return municipal roads to an acceptable standard.
- The significance of a well-maintained and safe highway system extends to all municipalities, through tourism, personal travel and through the transportation of goods for trade and services

The AMM encourages the Province to continue its investment in Manitoba's highway system, including municipal roads and urban highways.

4. Drainage Issues

- The AMM appreciates the increased Provincial funding to more than \$4 million for select drainage projects.
- In addition to the funding increase for drainage projects, additional resources need to be available for all aspects of drainage including maintenance, licensing and enforcement.

Therefore the AMM urges the Provincial Government to review the current licencing requirements and process to increase efficiency and ensure that there are adequate resources allocated to the provincial departments that administer and enforce drainage licences in a timely manner.

5. Rail Line Abandonment

- The relationship of communities and railways has always secured Manitoban producers effective and efficient connection to a large range of markets.
- The reduction of rail lines leads to an increase in traffic on provincial and municipal roadways causing severe deterioration.
- Municipalities understand that private investment needs to be sustainable to remain intact, however innovative solutions may be available if the current system is reviewed with all stakeholders.

Therefore the AMM urges the Provincial Government to establish a ten-year moratorium on rail line abandonment, work with rail companies to adopt a policy allowing multiple rail company access to service shippers and to raise the issue at the federal level.

B) General Issues

1. Creating Fiscal Balance

- Manitoba's municipal governments continue to take on increasingly greater responsibilities. As the importance of local community increases, it is necessary that the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal government be examined.
- Unclear legislation, such as the Water Protection Act, concern municipal governments because the financial costs in implementing and enforcing this Act are great. Infrastructure needs in municipalities throughout the province are at the top of municipal agendas however the municipal budgets are stretched thin.
- Some options to support municipal governments to serve their communities effectively are removing education tax from property and exempting municipal governments from the Provincial Sales Tax.
- Provincial/territorial municipal associations are developing a cross Canada perspective of municipal responsibilities and finances to inform municipalities of the similarities and inequalities that are currently being experienced nation-wide.

The AMM urges the Province to work collaboratively with municipalities to create a fiscal balance for all orders of government in Manitoba.

Departmental Issues

1. Update/Overview of New Department

The new Department of Infrastructure and Transportation is responsible for managing the Province of Manitoba's major infrastructure projects which were previously included in the former departments of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, Transportation and Government Services and Water Stewardship. The department is also responsible for policy and legislation surrounding infrastructure and transportation issues and therefore must consider land use sustainability in all its endeavors. These infrastructure and transportation projects directly relate to the economic growth and the public interest of Manitoba's residents. Infrastructure and transportation are fundamental to the growth and prosperity of municipalities.

Infrastructure is a top priority for municipalities in Manitoba. It is imperative therefore, that municipalities have a close working relationship with the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation to ensure that lines of communication are established clearly and projects are completed efficiently and effectively.

Therefore the AMM would request that the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation produce a complete overview of the structure of the department so that municipalities are able to utilize services in a comprehensive manner.

2. Funding for Infrastructure Grants

Infrastructure is a very important issue for municipalities in Manitoba. Municipal budgets are over-extended and municipal governments are not in the position to take on additional costs and responsibilities. Considerable capacity is required in order to maintain safe and accessible operation of water and wastewater treatment and delivery infrastructure, stormwater systems, roads, public transportation, airports, railroads, and recreation and leisure facilities.

Municipalities are not in a position to provide the full price of these vital services to their residents at a reasonable rate.

Manitoba's highway system has experienced a significant increase in vehicle and truck traffic resulting in increasingly unacceptable road conditions. Safety concerns stem from the condition of these roads and they are in need of repair. The AMM is pleased to see that the Provincial Government has made a significant contribution to transportation infrastructure. The funding contribution of \$4 billion over ten years will assist in upgrading Manitoba's transportation infrastructure to a safe and more acceptable level.

Another important area where municipalities require Provincial support is in regard to Manitoba's public libraries. Public libraries provide extensive and beneficial services to citizens throughout the province. Libraries act as a valuable educational resource and municipalities consistently raise the importance of this resource with the AMM. However, the state of the library system is an ongoing issue and key changes are required.

The AMM was pleased to participate in the Provincial Government's Public Library Review and is confident that the Province will implement recommendations from the committee's final report *Reaching our Vision: Providing High Quality, Sustainable Library Services for all Manitobans*. The AMM was pleased to see both the issues of allowing part of a municipality to join an established regional library and the need for greater funding identified in the report recommendations. The AMM was pleased to see the increased investment that the Province made to the Building Manitoba Fund in 2006. The Building Manitoba Fund provided \$7,900,000 to municipalities in 2006 with \$4,500,000 going to the City of Winnipeg and \$3,400,000 to other municipalities. The recent announcement of funding from the Building Manitoba Fund for a \$1,100,000 investment for library technology infrastructure will also assist rural and northern libraries. However the demand for library services in municipalities is increasing and long-term planning is needed to support them. To keep pace with the changing information needs of communities, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to continue to provide resources that improve public libraries across Manitoba and act quickly on the eight recommendations of the Provincial Government's Public Library Review committee's report.

Recreation infrastructure is another area in need of investment in Manitoba, however many of Manitoba's municipalities have neither the funding to invest in new facilities nor the resources to

fund the repair of cultural and recreational facilities. Communities are doing all they can to maximize the life-span of facilities and are looking for ways to further reduce costs without compromising the level of service they offer. Further investments cannot be made unless municipalities obtain additional resources and the Provincial Government is a key stakeholder in this process. Opportunities to improve the health of Manitoba's communities should include a focus on preventive measures, including investment in recreational infrastructure. Grants to recreational associations have been reduced and while the level of funding to recreation commissions has remained constant, recreation costs are rising. The Provincial Government's final report and recommendations of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force, includes recommendations that target improved funding for recreational facilities, demonstrating the need for increased investment throughout the province. Recreation infrastructure requires increased resources to remain a viable and sustainable part of Manitoba communities.

Another important infrastructure resource is water and wastewater treatment systems. Municipalities require high quality water and wastewater treatment and distribution systems in order to provide residents with clean water and environmentally sustainable waste treatment. Even with new water legislation in place, action is still required to ensure that all municipalities have access to safe water supplies. Many communities throughout Manitoba are continually under boil water orders and the Province has a responsibility to improve these conditions. The high cost of this infrastructure can deter the investment necessary to maintain the health of the population and the environment. The National Water Supply Expansion Program provided much needed resources for Manitoba municipalities and program funding was quickly allocated to areas of severe need. Faced with the completion of the National Water Supply Expansion Program it is critical for the Province to initiate a tripartite funding agreement with Federal and municipal governments to ensure access to safe drinking water and wastewater treatment for all Manitobans.

There are numerous opportunities where the Province could assist municipalities in creating and maintaining infrastructure. One of these is the reduction of operating costs for community facilities. This type of initiative would reduce overall costs without lowering the level of service being provided. Encouraging municipalities to examine their efficiency in their community

facilities could be enhanced through education and training programs. The Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program (MMEP) is a good place to start with this kind of initiative. Other possible options include reduction in hydro or MTS rates for publicly owned and operated facilities. The AMM urges the Province to consider options for reducing operating costs to allow municipalities to provide quality services in their communities at a reasonable cost.

Therefore the AMM urges the Provincial Government to continue to enhance grants to municipalities to meet increased infrastructure costs and work with the Federal Government in the provision of infrastructure funding programs for municipalities.

3. Highways Capital Budget

Manitoba's transportation infrastructure deficit was estimated at \$3.4 billion in 2004. This has no doubt increased substantially since this figure was released. The recent announcement of \$4 billion over the next ten years will greatly assist in improving Manitoba's provincial transportation infrastructure. With this increased investment, the provincial highways system will be able to handle the commercial transportation it was designed for, thereby reducing the traffic load on municipal roads to the level that they were intended. This investment will begin to restore the traffic balance to the entire highway and road network within the province. However, investment in municipal roadways will still be required to deal with the impacts that years of neglect have had and to return municipal roads to an acceptable standard.

The significance of a well-maintained and safe highway system extends to all municipalities, through tourism, personal travel and through the transportation of goods for trade and services. The positive effects this system will have throughout the province are significant as the trucking industry often selects to travel through the United States because of the well-maintained Interstate System designed to meet this industry's needs. The resultant economic benefits that relate to commercial transport by vehicle, including room and board, vehicle repairs and purchase of fuel, therefore remain in the United States.

Although the Highways Capital Budget was created to invest in provincial highways, it may be advisable to consider investing in municipal roads where they act as a significant thoroughfare. Municipal roads are commonly used when provincial highways are severely degraded or not available. In the past municipalities have allocated funding to provincial roads where this was deemed to be a strategic approach to improving transportation. The Province should be willing to do the same and where necessary invest in municipal roads. Urban highways will also require investment and should not be forgotten in the prioritization process for the timing of repairs and upgrades.

The Prairie Grain Roads Program (PGRP) should also be considered when looking at transportation infrastructure, as it is an example of an effective program that municipalities sincerely appreciate. This program has proven to be well administered and consistently funded which are necessary parts of any successful infrastructure program. The PGRP should also be considered as an effective outlet for infrastructure spending.

The AMM encourages the Province to continue its investment in Manitoba's highway system, including both municipal roads and urban highways.

4. Drainage Issues

The AMM appreciates the increased Provincial funding to more than \$4 million for select drainage projects. Doubling the total funding for drainage in Manitoba is an important step toward addressing the severe drainage needs throughout this province. Drain construction and maintenance has been a long-standing concern for all municipalities and several issues remain. Even with the substantial increase, there is an ongoing need for regular drain maintenance that has not been addressed by this funding.

Furthermore, drainage works are currently limited by the expediency of the licensing process and the Province is in need of additional staff to administer these licenses. As well, greater staffing is required for enforcement of illegal drainage activities. Delays in the administration of licencing and lack of enforcement are leading to increasing numbers of illegal drainage works. In addition

to the funding increase for drainage projects, additional resources need to be available for all aspects of drainage including maintenance, licensing and provincially administered enforcement.

Therefore the AMM urges the Provincial Government to review the current licencing requirements and process to increase efficiency and ensure that there are adequate resources allocated to the provincial departments that administer and enforce drainage licences in a timely manner.

5. Rail Line Abandonment

Railways were integral in connecting Canada and have been a vital base for transportation across the prairies since the late 19th century. This method of transportation increased the emergence of urban centres and decentralized populations. Railways have also had a significant impact on the physical characteristics of prairie cities as tracks, yards and stations are frequently central urban features, around which industries and businesses were built. The relationship of communities and railways has always secured Manitoban producers effective and efficient connection to a large range of markets.

The increasing trend towards abandoning rail lines therefore is not only of concern from a historic perspective but more so from an economic one. The elimination of rail lines may disallow the possibility of attracting big businesses to an area and reduces the number of connections between producers and markets. As well, the reduction of rail lines leads to an increase in traffic on provincial and municipal roadways causing severe deterioration.

Canadian railways are being allowed to tear up lines while many other countries are building them because it is environmentally cleaner and less expensive to ship freight when compared with transporting via truck. Municipalities understand that private investment needs to be sustainable to remain intact, however innovative solutions may be available if the current system is reviewed with all stakeholders. A crossover solution would allow short lines to run on CN and CPR lines and could make the rail business more profitable and flexible for owners and users.

Therefore the AMM urges Provincial Government to establish a ten-year moratorium on rail line abandonment, work with rail companies to adopt a policy allowing multiple rail company access to service shippers and to raise the issue at the federal level.

General Issues

1. Creating Fiscal Balance

Municipal government is playing a more important role in the every day lives of Canadians. No longer is the local council seen as merely the local tax collector and tertiary service provider. Today, municipal governments have greater responsibilities, often playing a leading role in key areas that are not traditionally municipal in nature, such as health care and environmental protection. As the importance of the local community grows, municipal government, as the order of government closest to the people, is becoming more important. Yet, municipal governments do not have the tools they need to meet these new expectations. Many communities are starting to see the decay of key infrastructure and the unfortunate reduction in program delivery as a result of limited resources and increasing responsibilities. Municipal councils are left with the impossible task of delivering all the services expected by both the citizens and other orders of government, while only having access to limited resource streams. This is not sustainable and consequently it is necessary to undertake a major review of municipal government in Manitoba to create a fiscal balance between all orders of government.

Nationally, through the work of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, municipal governments have been able to secure a full rebate of the GST as well as the New Deal for Communities or 'Gas Tax Rebate.' Community issues have become front and centre on the national stage, and the AMM is pleased with the recognition by the federal government of the importance of local government and the need to put resources in the hands of the order of government that delivers key services.

Provincially, municipal government in Manitoba has seen some advances as well. Most recently the Province announced the new Building Manitoba Fund that will link municipal grant money to provincial gas tax revenues. Manitoba is also unique in that the Provincial Government shares a percentage of income tax with municipalities through the previous Provincial Municipal Tax Sharing agreement.

While these initiatives are certainly positive, more is needed. Many of the resolutions currently being worked on by the AMM deal with issues of funding, or more specifically inadequate funding levels. A serious discussion of the resources available to municipalities needs to be undertaken. However for this discussion to be fruitful, it must be raised within the greater context of what are and what should be the responsibilities of municipal government.

Municipal government in this province has embraced taking on additional responsibilities as these have been seen to be for the betterment of the local community. For instance, many municipalities have gone to great lengths to help provincial RHAs recruit physicians. As well, municipalities have undertaken projects to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve the environment. Yet there are limits to how much municipalities can do with their current revenue streams.

We have consistently heard from the Province that Manitoba municipalities fare better than almost every other province in terms of funding transfers from provincial governments. However, this discussion is meaningless without a discussion of the responsibilities of these municipal governments. If Manitoba's municipalities are continually expected to take on additional responsibilities it is imperative that new revenue sources are made available.

Provincial and territorial municipal associations are in the process of developing a cross Canada perspective of municipal responsibilities and finances. Manitoba municipalities have heard many times that they receive more resources from other orders of governments than any other province or territory. This report, which is due to be released in May 2007, will inform all municipalities on the similarities and inequalities that are currently being experienced nation-wide and will assist in understanding the issues that need to be addressed within Manitoba.

In Manitoba, a major municipal issue is the financial implications of the recently passed Water Protection Act. While the intent behind this legislation is laudable, the overwhelming lack of detail, especially in the area of responsibilities and finances, has many municipal governments concerned. Municipal governments cannot take on the financial costs associated with implementing and enforcing this Act. The Municipal budget is already stretched too thin.

The current municipal infrastructure deficit in Manitoba further compounds the need to re-examine the resources available to municipalities. Communities are facing crumbling roads, deteriorating community centres and inadequate water treatment facilities. It is estimated that Manitoba's infrastructure deficit is \$7.4 billion, which includes \$2 billion in rural municipal infrastructure and \$1 billion within the City of Winnipeg. These are staggering numbers when compared to the revenue streams available to these municipalities. When only 7 to 8 cents of every tax dollar goes to municipalities, it is evident there is a lack of resources to deal with this deficit.

This is why the AMM has been advocating for a 5-year plan to significantly reduce the reliance on property tax to fund education. Currently the property tax base is the principal source of revenue for municipalities. However, this tax base is diminished when education tax takes up over 50 per cent. Equally concerning is the continuing increases year after year which force municipalities to seriously re-consider any municipal tax increases, as there are limits to what local residents are able to withstand. The AMM fully supports maintaining and improving the quality of education in Manitoba, however the current system of education taxation is not sustainable and in reality it is hurting local communities by limiting municipal resources.

In addition to the removal of education tax from property, there are other options to provide greater revenue to municipalities. For example, the Provincial Government can follow the lead of the Federal Government with the GST and exempt municipal governments from the Provincial Sales Tax. Not only would this leave more money in the hands of municipalities, but it would significantly reduce the costs of many major infrastructure projects, thereby freeing up valuable funding for other areas of need. This would represent a significant shift away from the current tax and return system toward a new system that allows municipalities to retain resources for community needs.

Strong communities are the foundation of a strong province and a strong Canada. As the Association that represents all incorporated municipalities in Manitoba, we understand this. The AMM has long been advocating for municipal governments to look at ways of improving how

they do business to ensure strong, sustainable communities across Manitoba. We also hear firsthand the challenges communities are facing and we see the implications provincial actions are having on municipalities. It is for this reason that we believe it is time to take a closer look at the resources available to municipalities and take stock of the roles and responsibilities of municipal government in Manitoba. It is only through this type of examination that we can truly create fiscal balance in Manitoba.

The AMM urges the Province to work collaboratively with municipalities to create a fiscal balance for all orders of government in Manitoba.

Appendix A – Active Resolutions

AMM Resolution Number 36 - 2006

Topic: Leafy Spurge

Sponsor: RM of Pipestone (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Conservation

WHEREAS Government right-of-ways along Provincial Trunk Highways are heavily infested with leafy spurge;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to control leafy spurge on provincial property.

AMM Resolution Number 24/06

Topic: Open Cut Installations on Provincial Roadways

Sponsor: RM of Franklin (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has stated that proposed culverts through the grade of surfaced roadways must be installed by one of the following methods: boring, tunneling or jacking, and open cut installations are typically considered only under emergent conditions when all other methods have proven unsuccessful or where other special circumstances may exist;

AND WHEREAS municipalities proposing to undertake drainage works within highway right-of-ways have requested permission for an open cut installation on Provincial Roadways to reduce considerably the cost to the municipality;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to allow municipalities to perform open cut installations on Provincial Roadways for municipal drainage works.

AMM Resolution Number 20/06

Topic: Rail Line Abandonment

Sponsor: RM of Thompson (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Transport Canada

WHEREAS Southern Manitoba Railway has given notice to discontinue railroad operations from Morris to Mariapolis, Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS excessive traffic has caused severe deterioration of municipal roads and provincial roads and highways;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Federal and Provincial Governments to establish a ten-year moratorium on rail line abandonment;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Provincial and Federal Governments to pressure the rail lines to adopt a policy allowing multiple rail company access to service shippers.

AMM Resolution Number 21/06

Topic: Upgrade of Provincial Roads and Trunk Highways

Sponsor: RM of Rossburn (Midwestern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS a number of hard-surfaced Provincial Roads and Provincial Trunk Highways are restricted to 65% of normal axle weight during the time of spring load restrictions;

AND WHEREAS several years ago, many of these highways were restricted to 90% of normal axle weight, but have since deteriorated;

AND WHEREAS commercial and farm trucks, in order to avoid weight restricted provincial highways re-route their delivery of goods over municipal roads;

AND WHEREAS municipalities are forced to expend thousands of tax dollars to repair damaged roads;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to upgrade its hard surface roads to standards that would only require 90% axle weight restrictions.

AMM Resolution Number 23/06

Topic: Provincial Highway Conditions

Sponsor: RM of North Cypress, Town of Carberry (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS the condition of all Provincial Highways in the province has been continually deteriorating and may soon reach a point where it is impossible to repair all of the damage;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has only budgeted a small increase in the road maintenance budget for Provincial Highways;

AND WHEREAS the costs associated with repairing asphalt have increased dramatically due to rising input costs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to increase funding for Secondary Highway asphalt repairs and resurfacing.

AMM Resolution Number 57/05

Topic: Approaches to Provincial Highways

Sponsor: RM of Dufferin (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS farming practices have changed in the last several years;

AND WHEREAS many approaches to Provincial Trunk Highways are too short to enable large trucks and semi-trailers to turn properly;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to upgrade their approaches by lengthening the culverts and increasing the width of the approach.

AMM Resolution Number 58/05

Topic: Upgrading Provincial Highways

Sponsor: RM of Swan River (Parklands District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to upgrade Provincial roads to A1 weights, as this would relieve the pressure of large truck traffic hauling commodities to and from locations off our municipal roads.

AMM Resolution Number 56/05

Topic: Municipal Control of Speed Limits

Sponsor: RM of St. Clements (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS municipalities have tens of thousands of kilometres of municipal roads;

AND WHEREAS the speed limits of these roads are governed by the Highway Traffic Board, so that affecting change to these limits is a lengthy and awkward process;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have detailed knowledge of local traffic patterns and requirements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to allow municipalities to control speed limits on their own roads, provided that provincial maximum speed limits are not exceeded.

AMM Resolution Number 40/05

Topic: Increased Infrastructure Grants

Sponsor: Town of Erickson (Midwestern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Finance

WHEREAS the costs of municipal infrastructure such as storm sewers, water lines replacement, street maintenance etc., have increased in rapid proportion and have become a strain on municipal budgets;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to provide increased grants to municipalities to meet these increased costs, which in turn provide adequate services to their residents at a reasonable cost.

AMM Resolution Number 62/04

Topic: Rocky Mountain Trailers

Sponsor: Town of Churchill (Northern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS northern and remote communities' survival is dependent on the movement of freight from the south into the north through the Provincial road network;

AND WHEREAS the cost of freight moved from south to north have risen dramatically over the past year and has undermined local economies and the growth of the North, resulting in lost economic development opportunities;

AND WHEREAS the cost of goods could be greatly reduced by moving freight using Rocky Mountain trailers;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba currently prohibits the use of Rocky Mountain trailers to move freight into the north via Highway 6;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to remove the restriction of Rocky Mountain trailers on Highway 6;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to work with all transportation sectors in removing obstacles that prohibit the cost of effective movement of freight into the northern region of the province.

AMM Resolution Number 42/04

Topic: Reinstatement of the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program

Sponsor: Town of Russell (Midwestern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Finance

WHEREAS the Manitoba Government through its Manitoba Airports Capital Assistance Program provided contributions for rural airports to ensure the safety and efficiency of rural airports;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has suspended the program effective 2004;

AND WHEREAS services such as Life Flight depends on accessing rural communities by means of local airports;

AND WHEREAS many rural airports struggle to raise sufficient funds for operating costs and have little or no capacity to raise monies for its capital improvements;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to reinstate the Manitoba Airport Capital Assistance Program immediately and ensure the continued viability for local airports.

AMM Resolution Number 47/04

Topic: Bridge Co-Operative Program

Sponsor: RM of Glenwood (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Finance

WHEREAS the maintenance, rehabilitation and construction of municipal bridges is very costly for municipalities;

AND WHEREAS major municipal bridge projects have in the past been costs shared on a 50:50 basis by the Province through its Rural Municipal Bridge Co-Operative Program;

AND WHEREAS the Provincial Government has discontinued the Bridge Assistance Program thereby placing a huge increase on bridge costs for rural municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to reinstate the Rural Municipal Bridge Co-Operative Program.

AMM Resolution Number 24/04

Topic: Standardized Medical Signs

Sponsor: RM of Pipestone (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living

WHEREAS through acute care facility closures in Manitoba 'H' signs have been removed from some community signs even though medical facilities still exist in these communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government for standardized medical signs to indicate the level of medical service available in different communities.

AMM Resolution Number 38/04

Topic: Funding for Airstrip Maintenance

Sponsor: RM of Shoal Lake (Midwestern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS Local Municipal Airports receive funding to help offset the operating costs of Local Airports through the Airport Assistance Program;

AND WHEREAS the airports are not only used by recreational users but by the agricultural spray planes, air ambulance, etc.;

AND WHEREAS this funding has remained constant while costs have increased;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to reinstate and increase the funding to help maintain the airstrips.

AMM Resolution Number 39/04

Topic: Sufficient Funding for Urban Highways

Sponsor: Town of Roblin (Parklands District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS Provincial highway systems pass through many urban centres in Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the maintenance and upgrading of these highways is a provincial responsibility;

AND WHEREAS the tremendous increase of vehicle and truck traffic through urban centres in recent years has created deplorable road conditions as well as safety concerns for urban municipalities;

AND WHEREAS current available programs such as “grant in aid” or the Prairie Grain Road Program do not address the issue of reconstruction and the upgrading of these provincial highways passing through urban centres;

AND WHEREAS urban municipalities cannot address these road and traffic issues on their own since it is out of their jurisdiction;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to address urban Provincial highway issues by setting aside sufficient funds annually specifically geared for urban highway renewal, reconstruction and upgrading in the smaller urban centres of Manitoba.

AMM Resolution Number 40/04

Topic: Costs for Highway Upgrading

Sponsor: City of Winkler (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to pay 100% of the cost of reconstruction and/or four laning of Provincial Roads and Provincial Trunk Highways through urban centres.

AMM Resolution Number 41/04

Topic: Increased Funding for Grant-in-Aid

Sponsor: Town of Roblin (Parklands District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS urban municipalities rely upon grant-in-aid programs to upgrade streets and roads in urban centres;

AND WHEREAS the funding available to municipalities for the grant-in-aid program currently at \$1.3 million is grossly inadequate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to increase the funding available for grant-in-aid programs to allow more municipalities greater access to these programs.

AMM Resolution Number 43/04

Topic: Access Roads

Sponsor: Town of Lynn Lake (Northern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS tourism is a major component of the economic development for many communities;

AND WHEREAS more tourists are targeting the Province of Manitoba for tourism opportunities;

AND WHEREAS a great number of road accessible lakes located throughout the Province are without properly maintained road infrastructure;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to ensure access roads are maintained thereby promoting greater tourism development.

AMM Resolution Number 44/04

Topic: Secondary Emergency Access Roads

Sponsor: RM of Reynolds (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, Emergency Preparedness Canada, Transport Canada

WHEREAS in some municipalities there are communities that only have one access road;

AND WHEREAS some communities have a railway crossing (either CN, CP, or Greater Winnipeg Water District) running through this access road;

AND WHEREAS when a derailment, fire or other emergency occurs there is no other exit for emergency services and therefore evacuation is impossible by road;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial and Federal Governments, and railway companies to make funding available via cost sharing grants to municipalities that desire to construct secondary emergency accesses in these communities.

AMM Resolution Number 46/04

Topic: Priority for Drainage System Maintenance

Sponsor: RM of Woodlands (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to have higher priority given to the annual mowing and clean out of ditches that are an integral part of the drainage system.

AMM Resolution Number 40/03

Topic: Restricting Re-issuance of Licenses

Sponsor: City of Portage la Prairie (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Manitoba Public Insurance

WHEREAS municipalities have enacted legislation to provide parking and municipal traffic control, including the right and responsibility to establish penalties for timed parking, location of available public parking, etc.;

AND WHEREAS some offenders do not adhere to their legal responsibility of paying penalties for infractions, which cumulatively may become a substantial sum of money to the municipality;

AND WHEREAS the methods of recovery available under current legislation are expensive and time consuming, particularly since each claim may be of a relatively small amount;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to enact legislation to restrict the re-issuance of personal or vehicle licenses until restitution for parking and traffic violations within the municipality has been made.

AMM Resolution Number 16/01

Topic: Promotion of Rail Transportation

Sponsor: Village of McCreary (Midwestern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Transport Canada

WHEREAS Omnitrax and various short line grain handlers wish to utilize existing Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Railway rail lines to transport grain within Canada and to sea port grain terminals for export;

AND WHEREAS the majority of existing roadways in Manitoba were not designed to support heavy truck traffic and are now in poor condition;

AND WHEREAS municipalities in Manitoba and the Province of Manitoba are burdened with the costs of trying to maintain roadways in Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the use of rail line transportation is better for the environment than road transportation and would also remove some heavy truck traffic from roadways;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province of Manitoba and Transport Canada to maximize and promote the use of rail transportation to transport grain and other products as opposed to road transportation.

AMM Resolution Number 17/01

Topic: Winter Road to Nunavut

Sponsor: RM of Kelsey (Northern District), RM of Riverside (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Transport Canada

WHEREAS the road system plays a crucial role in the province of Manitoba's economic development including Northern Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS some northern communities and natural resources are not currently accessible by road;

AND WHEREAS the economic vitality of Northern Manitoba is dependent on forestry and mining industries;

AND WHEREAS a direct transportation link from Northern Manitoba to Nunavut would open up new trade opportunities due to shorter distances;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Minister of Transportation and Government Services and the federal government to provide a winter road system throughout Northern Manitoba to Nunavut.

AMM Resolution Number 21/01

Topic: VIA Rail Service

Sponsor: Town of Churchill (Northern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS rail access to and from the Town of Churchill is an essential mode of transportation;

AND WHEREAS rail transportation of freight, both perishable and non-perishable goods, is vital to the re-supply of the Town of Churchill;

AND WHEREAS rail transportation of tourists into the Town of Churchill is vital for the continued economic development of the town;

AND WHEREAS rail service is the economic lifeline for many communities, which include the transportation of passengers and goods to and from communities, and directly encourages the tourism sector in Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the condition of VIA Rail train cars is below standard for many rural and northern Manitoba communities;

AND WHEREAS the customer service that is provided to rail passengers is not of an acceptable standard and there is sufficient documented proof that VIA Rail is unwilling to remedy the problems that plague this rail service;

AND WHEREAS the cost of rail travel has increased steadily over the past five years for most remote and northern Manitoba communities having a negative impact on their ability to conduct business;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities petition both VIA Rail Canada and the provincial and federal ministers of transportation to improve passenger service into northern and remote Manitoba communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities petition VIA Rail Canada and the provincial and federal ministers of transportation to improve the condition of the passenger cars, improve customer service, and reduce and stabilize the cost of transporting people and goods into northern and remote Canadian municipalities.

AMM Resolution Number 83/01

Topic: Maintenance of Provincial Gravel Roads

Sponsor: RM of Morris, RM of Macdonald (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS the Province is responsible for maintaining provincial roads;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Highways has not provided adequate maintenance to provincial roads to the point where those roads have become impassable at various times;

AND WHEREAS the provincial gravel roads are often impassable at certain times of the year;

AND WHEREAS municipal roads take added traffic because provincial roads are in such poor condition;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to maintain provincial gravel roads to a standard that would allow greater use on a year-round basis.

AMM Resolution Number 85/01

Topic: Funding for Municipal Airports

Sponsor: RM of Alonsa (Parklands District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS the operation and maintenance of small municipal airports is primarily the joint responsibility of rural and urban municipalities;

AND WHEREAS majority funding and financial commitments are also municipal responsibilities augmented by some provincial support through an airport grant;

AND WHEREAS these municipal airports are an integral part of all small communities in helping create economic stability and providing air ambulance services in health regions;

AND WHEREAS the provincial government grant is necessary to keep the small airports viable and operational;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to ensure that the airport grants are increased as the cost of operating airports continues to escalate.

AMM Resolution Number 20/00

Topic: Funding for Small Airports

Sponsor: RM of Lansdowne (Midwestern District), RM of Tache (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, Transport Canada

WHEREAS small airports are necessary for air ambulance accessibility to small communities;

AND WHEREAS small airports are important for the continued economic development of small communities;

AND WHEREAS long-term funding for runway, taxiway, and apron maintenance and rehabilitation is inadequate;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the federal and provincial governments for long-term funding for maintenance of small airports.

AMM Resolution Number 46/98

Topic: Designated Trucking Routes

Sponsor: City of Brandon (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS increased economic activity and heavy truck traffic have put a strain on municipal road infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS this strain has a negative impact upon existing infrastructure which was not built to handle increasingly heavy loads

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Union of Manitoba Municipalities urge the provincial government to develop a policy in conjunction with municipalities, to rationalize and designate truck routes utilizing appropriate municipal and provincial infrastructure.

AMM Resolution Number 25/06

Topic: Adequate Staffing Resources for Water Stewardship

Sponsor: RM of Alonsa (Parklands District), RM of Fisher (Interlake District), RM of Glenwood (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS in all instances drainage licenses are required prior to undertaking municipal drainage works;

AND WHEREAS in many instances the length of time it takes drainage applications to be approved is unacceptable;

AND WHEREAS the recent wet years, and consequent serious flooding, have resulted in greatly increased demands on the personnel of Manitoba Water Stewardship;

AND WHEREAS this has resulted in the department being unable to satisfactorily fulfill its obligations to municipalities, through no fault of its own;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to adequately staff Manitoba Water Stewardship to expedite the licensing process and to provide for enforcement for drainage works.

AMM Resolution Number 63/05

Topic: Provincial Drain Management

Sponsor: RM of St. Andrews (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS drainage is a large concern for many municipalities in the Province of Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has, in the past, provided and maintained both Provincial drains and highway drains;

AND WHEREAS the provision of and maintenance of Provincial drainage and highway drainage is not occurring at this time;

AND WHEREAS the major stumbling block to the applicable departments looking after the above responsibilities is a lack of funding;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to provide adequate funding to the applicable departments to ensure that drainage systems that are the responsibility of the Province of Manitoba are both constructed and maintained.

AMM Resolution Number 60/05

Topic: Adequate Staffing for Drainage Enforcement

Sponsor: RM of Springfield (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS the drainage of land is being undertaken across Agro-Manitoba for agricultural purposes;

AND WHEREAS a licensing process exists but many landowners fail to apply for a Water Rights License to have their proposed drainage works authorized;

AND WHEREAS when conditions outlined as part of the license are not adhered to there is little or no enforcement by the appropriate Provincial Government department;

AND WHEREAS downstream landowners and residents who have legitimate concerns with unlicensed drainage works are forced to raise complaints with Manitoba Water Stewardship staff;

AND WHEREAS there are problems in enforcing The Water Rights Act, and there is a lack of staff and/or an unwillingness to deal with illegal drainage activities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to ensure effective enforcement regarding illegal drainage activities;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a sufficient number of staff be allocated for this purpose.

AMM Resolution Number 49/04

Topic: Costs of Engineering for Safe Drinking Water

Sponsor: Town of Melita (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has mandated a safe drinking water policy;

AND WHEREAS there are communities in Manitoba under a 'boil water' order;

AND WHEREAS these communities do not have the resources to implement this mandate from the Province;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial

Government to increase funding to communities to cover the engineering and environmental costs involved in providing and ensuring safe drinking water for all Manitobans.

AMM Resolution Number 33/02

Topic: Abandoned Private Wells

Sponsor: RM of Roblin (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS the improper closure or abandonment of private wells in a flood zone provides direct access for harmful contaminants to enter underground water supplies;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Conservation deals with issues regarding underground water supplies, such as those near waste disposal sites and lagoons;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to provide an adequate approval process to ensure the safeguarding of underground water supplies whenever a private well is abandoned or closed.

AMM Resolution Number 30/01

Topic: Provincial Maintenance of Drains

Sponsor: RM of Morris, RM of Macdonald (Central District), RM of Rosser (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS inadequate drainage of agricultural land is a major concern to both the farming community and to municipalities;

AND WHEREAS municipalities continue to improve drainage to keep pace with the expectations of the farming community;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Conservation has made little attempt to maintain drainage systems for which they are responsible;

AND WHEREAS the financial loss due to improper drainage not only affects the farming community, but reduces the revenues that would be generated to the federal and provincial governments;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to undertake work on their drains to provide proper and adequate drainage;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to improve and upgrade drains that are the jurisdiction and responsibility of the department of conservation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to provide additional funding that would allow for the maintenance of provincial drains to provide efficient drainage of land in the agricultural areas of the Province

AMM Resolution Number 32/01

Topic: Maintenance of Natural Waterways

Sponsor: RM of Morris (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS the natural waterways in the Province are designated under the responsibility of the local municipality;

AND WHEREAS these natural waterways are a cost factor beyond most municipalities' capabilities for crossings, etc.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities request that the Province accept responsibility for all natural waterways and their required crossings.

AMM Resolution Number 34/01

Topic: Delays in Issuing Drainage Permits

Sponsor: RM of Bifrost, RM of Headingley (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS drainage work in Manitoba is regulated by The Water Rights Act which requires a licence from the Province to undertake any work related to any drainage system including maintenance activities such as ditch clean-outs and culvert installation;

AND WHEREAS regional water managers have the responsibility to review and process the licence applications and are responsible for very large regions;

AND WHEREAS the regional water managers are clearly unable to meet the demands for licences from both the public and private sector, resulting in unreasonable delays in obtaining licences, licences being granted after the work is performed, and a significant amount of work proceeding without licences;

AND WHEREAS the delay in issuing permits is delaying municipal drainage works;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to appoint a committee of provincial and municipal representatives to undertake a review of the licensing process with a view to either:

- a. Amending the legislation to limit the conditions in which licences are required, or
- b. Assigning additional staff to process licence applications within a reasonable time frame,
- or
- c. Both of the above.

AMM Resolution Number 39/01

Topic: Protection for Groundwater Sources

Sponsor: RM of Reynolds (Eastern District), RM of Woodworth (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS the quality of potable groundwater has always been of great importance to the quality of life and health of the citizens of the province;

AND WHEREAS a potable water source is essential for rural residential land uses;

AND WHEREAS septic fields and injection systems in rural residential developments are resulting in a negative impact on potable groundwater sources;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province to strengthen the provincial land use policies to require greater protection for potable groundwater sources.

AMM Resolution Number 26/00

Topic: Road Damage from Springs on Provincial Land

Sponsor: RM of Wallace (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS drainage is one of the prime concerns of municipalities;

AND WHEREAS municipalities have drains that adjoin provincially owned property;

AND WHEREAS activities permitted by the Province can directly contribute to the water flow in municipal drains;

AND WHEREAS the Province does not take responsibility for damage to municipal roads and drains caused by natural springs and seasonal runoff from provincial land;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the provincial government to take responsibility for the maintenance and repair of roads and drains that are damaged due to natural springs and runoff from provincial land that directly affects municipal drainage.

AMM Resolution Number 27/00

Topic: Third Order Drains

Sponsor: RM of La Broquerie (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the provincial government to acquire the right-of-way of those portions of all third order drains that they do not already own.

AMM Resolution Number 57/99

Topic: Drainage

Sponsor: RM of Argyle (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS Manitoba Conservation, Water Resources Branch, has fragmented certain drains, creeks, and rivers into areas they service and maintain and leave other areas to the land owner or municipality, which results in these drains not functioning to their top capacity and causing severe flooding and channel changes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province of Manitoba to make the Water Resources Branch or the local conservation districts responsible for maintaining these drains from the headwaters to the stream's mouth.

AMM Resolution Number 59/99

Topic: Drainage Licences

Sponsor: Town of Killarney, RM of Turtle Mountain

Department: Manitoba Water Stewardship

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has the authority to issue licences to individuals and corporations for drainage projects;

AND WHEREAS municipal corporations are aware of the impact which proposed drainage projects will have on properties downstream;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM request the Province of Manitoba consult with the local municipal corporation before issuing a drainage licence.