



Meeting with
Honourable Diane McGifford
Minister of Advanced Education & Literacy

April 1, 2009

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Departmental Issues.....	6
1. Health Professional Training and Licensing	6
2. Water and Wastewater Operator Training.....	9
3. Training Opportunities in Emerging Technology.....	11
General Issue	12
1. Alternate Revenues for Municipalities and Infrastructure Investment	12
Appendix A – Active Resolutions	16

Executive Summary

Departmental Issues

1. Health Professional Training and Licensing

- As the order of government responsible for health care, the Province must ensure that all communities have access to an appropriate supply of medical professionals, which includes the promotion of health care training throughout Manitoba.
- As well, the Province must ensure Manitoba has an adequate supply of physicians in training to meet the growing demands as physicians retire.
- Although some progress has been made, the Province has a responsibility to provide high quality health care throughout Manitoba and efforts to provide training in rural and northern areas must be strengthened.
- Municipalities support investments in education programs for medical professionals such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, midwives and diagnostic staff since they are increasingly recognized as a solution for alleviating service gaps and decreasing wait times in health delivery.
- The Province must also ensure that Manitoba's high standards for medical professionals are not compromised following the implementation of the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide additional support for locally trained medical students as part of a comprehensive strategy to address the shortage of medical professionals in Manitoba.

2. Water and Wastewater Operator Training

- Gaps in operator training opportunities within Manitoba have persisted since this process was initiated.
- This is a pressing problem since the first round of conditional licenses is set to expire in June 2009 and the Province has still not established the necessary systems to ensure that municipalities can hire certified operators.
- While there are sufficient Level I and II courses and exams available, the ongoing lack of Level III and IV courses in Manitoba remains a major concern.
- Red River College and Manitoba Water Stewardship have both expressed a willingness to design courses that respond to the specific needs of current operators, however no action has been taken to address this concern.
- Municipalities do not want to lose highly-skilled operators due to insufficient technical training and the Province must consider implementing alternative course models in order to advance its commitment to provide necessary training opportunities.
- The AMM has raised these concerns with various Ministers and in discussions with senior staff for several years, however there has been no resolution to this serious matter.
- The AMM is prepared to help in any way to ensure complete compliance.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide training opportunities within Manitoba for all operator levels to ensure that municipal facilities can employ operators with the necessary training and skill level.

3. Training Opportunities in Emerging Technology

- Manitoba has already begun to reap the economic benefits stemming from wind energy and biodiesel markets, and training geared to these sectors will further promote their growth.
- Investing in a locally trained, knowledgeable workforce will also support future efforts to enter the component production market.
- The renewable energy sector is one example of emerging technologies creating new business and training opportunities, however, the Province and its educational institutions must be prepared to respond to a variety of opportunities that rely on emerging technology.
- The Province's commitment to additional apprenticeship spaces should work to complement these developing specialized industries.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to support business development by creating local training opportunities based on the need for emerging technological expertise.

General Issue

1. Alternate Revenues for Municipalities and Infrastructure Investment

- Today's municipal council must balance community economic development, land use planning and infrastructure renewal and development with an eroding tax base and an increased reliance on application-based grants.
- The message the AMM is hoping to convey is not that the provincial or federal government has completely forgotten about municipalities, but rather that despite their efforts municipalities still face enormous challenges and more is needed.
- A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to share one percent of the Provincial Sales Tax with municipalities for infrastructure. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year.
- What should not be lost is the positive impact infrastructure investment would have for the provincial and national economy.
- A study by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found that an increase in municipal infrastructure spending of \$1 billion in 2008 (at nominal process and allocated to a

representative mix of infrastructure) would increase the size of the real economy by roughly 0.13 percent or \$1.3 billion in nominal terms.

- Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived.
- Providing municipalities with new revenue sources will not only begin to address the growing infrastructure deficit, but will help build and strengthen our economy.
- For municipal government to be sustainable into the future, and for Manitobans to have access to the quality of life they deserve, municipalities need to have access to sustainable growth revenues.

Therefore the AMM is asking the Province to undertake a serious review of the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal government in Manitoba and in the short term provide municipalities with one percent of the current PST to help address the growing municipal infrastructure deficit.

Departmental Issues

1. Health Professional Training and Licensing

The availability of health care services has a significant impact on community well-being, which raises municipal concerns for the effectiveness of the Province's training and recruitment strategy. Municipalities actively participate in the recruitment and retention of medical professionals by assisting with the relocation process and showcasing themselves as attractive locations to practice medicine. However, the success of these efforts depends in large part on establishing a pool of skilled health care professionals through sufficient local training initiatives. As the order of government responsible for health care, the Province must ensure that all communities have access to an appropriate supply of medical professionals, which includes the promotion of health care training throughout Manitoba.

The AMM appreciates that a number of steps have been taken to improve health care training over the past year. Strengthening existing programs such as the Medical Student/Resident Financial Assistance Program and increasing spaces for medical and nursing students will certainly contribute to addressing Manitoba's long-term health care needs. Locally trained professionals are more likely to continue practicing in Manitoba, particularly with the variety of return-for-service agreements that are available. For these long-term strategies to be effective, the Province must also consider the trend towards an aging physician population. This trend has led to predictions that the shortages of health care professionals will only worsen over time. Training levels must respond to these forecasts for the Province to ensure Manitoba has an adequate supply of physicians in training to meet the growing demands as physicians retire.

One of the more difficult challenges is attracting health professionals to rural and northern parts of Manitoba and targeted efforts are required to mitigate these challenges. Although some progress has been made, the Province has a responsibility to provide high quality health care in all areas and these efforts must be strengthened. In particular, increasing medical student enrolment should target the increased inclusion of rural and northern students and those expected to practice family medicine. Such target groups are essential since rural students are more likely to practice in rural areas and family physicians are in high demand throughout rural and northern

Manitoba. Recently, the number of rural students has been rising along with overall enrolment and this positive trend must continue. As well, the AMM appreciates the Province's effort to hold regional training programs outside of Winnipeg, such as the LPN to registered nurse program in Portage la Prairie, Morden/Winkler, Gimli and Neepawa. These initiatives have the dual benefit of lowering the cost of education by taking courses closer to home and maintaining student links to rural communities. Municipalities strongly support efforts to make health education more accessible and the Province should continually seek ways to expand these beneficial programs.

Rural and remote training opportunities are one example of the new approaches needed to address the current gaps in health care services. Another innovative approach is to facilitate the training of other medical professionals such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and midwives. Each of these professions received some Provincial investment over the past year and this support must continue. Coordinated teams that include these medical professionals are particularly effective in rural areas where family physicians are scarce. There is also a need to invest in training for diagnostic staff such as laboratory and x-ray technicians, since a lack of these skilled professionals contributes to emergency room closures. Municipalities support investments in education programs for such medical professionals since they are increasingly recognized as a solution for alleviating service gaps and decreasing wait times. The Province should continue to pursue these alternative strategies to complement physician resources throughout Manitoba.

Although the AMM certainly supports the recruitment of medical professionals from other parts of Canada, there are some concerns with the Province's recent signing of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). Communities respect the calibre of graduates from Manitoba's medical training programs and are therefore concerned with the Province's ability to maintain these high standards under the AIT. Cases may arise where individuals do not have the credentials required for a Manitoba license and choose to seek the same qualification in a province with less stringent prerequisites. Although municipalities want to encourage health professionals to practice in Manitoba, health care services must not be put at risk at any cost. The Province must ensure that

Manitoba's high standards for medical professionals are not compromised following the implementation of the AIT.

Improved access to health care is an important aspect of achieving vibrant communities throughout the Province. This cannot be accomplished without an adequate supply of medical professionals to provide a variety of health services to all Manitobans.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide additional support for locally trained medical students as part of a comprehensive strategy to address the shortage of medical professionals in Manitoba.

2. Water and Wastewater Operator Training

Municipalities support effective water management since safe water supply and treatment are critical to the well-being of local residents. For this reason, the AMM has supported the need to classify facilities and certify operators in order to regulate water and wastewater treatment services. However, gaps in operator training opportunities within Manitoba have persisted since this process was initiated. As a result, municipalities continue to face obstacles in certifying operators due to the insufficiency of locally-available training. This is a pressing problem since the first round of conditional licenses is set to expire in June 2009 and the Province has still not established the necessary systems to ensure that municipalities can hire certified operators. The AMM has raised these concerns from the time the Province initiated the certification process and it has now reached a critical point where action must be taken to ensure Manitoba's water and wastewater treatment is properly managed.

Water quality is a high priority for municipalities and the AMM agrees that hiring qualified operators is a necessary step in fulfilling this responsibility. However, many municipalities and individuals are finding the high cost of training courses and exams to be a difficult challenge, particularly when significant travel expenses are required. While there are sufficient Level I and II courses and exams available, the ongoing lack of Level III and IV courses in Manitoba remains a major concern. In order to pursue in-class instruction for higher certification levels, students are required to travel out of province or internationally. This significantly increases the costs associated with Level III and IV certification, thereby exacerbating the challenge of finding certified operators.

Some on-line courses are now available for Level III and IV, however direct interaction with instructors greatly assists in understanding this complex material. The difficulty of challenging the Level III and IV exams has led many municipalities to question the suitability of on-line courses. Since municipalities pay the course and exam fees, it is critical to maximize the opportunity for their employees to succeed. This includes developing a process that supports courses being conducted in communities outside Winnipeg. Therefore, the Province must ensure that adequate training opportunities are available within Manitoba to meet the requirements of the Provincial legislation at all certification levels.

In addition, the Province should ensure that there are courses tailored to experienced operators. Operators with conditional licenses have generally been employed in the field for many years and do not require the same instruction as a new operator. Rather, these individuals tend to require a brief update in preparation for challenging the exams. Red River College and Manitoba Water Stewardship have both expressed a willingness to design courses that respond to the specific needs of current operators, however no action has been taken to address this concern. Proposed changes to course design included: expanding the course time from four to seven or nine days to allow for more in-depth exploration of the material; a hybrid course where students engage in some correspondence work prior to in-class instruction; or moving courses outside Winnipeg when there is sufficient demand. The latter option is critical for smaller communities employing a very few operators since it can be difficult for these operators to leave for extended periods. The AMM recognizes that this will mean municipalities incur higher costs per course, however such options should improve the pass rates. If operators cannot fulfill the course requirements the first time, there are even greater costs associated with re-taking courses and exams. Municipalities do not want to lose highly-skilled operators due to insufficient technical training, therefore the Province must consider implementing such alternative models in order to advance its commitment to provide necessary training opportunities.

To achieve a consistently safe water supply across Manitoba, the Province must work with municipalities to ensure that individuals can obtain the required qualifications in an efficient manner. The AMM has raised these concerns with various Ministers and in discussions with senior staff for several years, however there has been no resolution to this serious matter. Even when the AMM offered to work with affected municipalities to promote alternative solutions, the Province has not encouraged or facilitated these efforts by providing relevant information. The AMM remains prepared to work with the Province and municipalities to ensure certified operators are in place, however municipalities cannot be the only active participant in this effort.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide training opportunities within Manitoba for all operator levels to ensure that municipal facilities can employ operators with the necessary training and skill level.

3. Training Opportunities in Emerging Technology

Developing new technologies leads to new ways of doing business and opportunities for greater business development in Manitoba. The focus on renewable energy is a prime example of a developing sector that relies on specific technologies and skill sets. For instance, Manitoba has already begun to reap the economic benefits stemming from wind energy and biodiesel markets, and training geared to these sectors will further promote their growth.

The AMM supports the Province's commitment to expand the production of sustainable energy resources and Manitoba must have the skilled workforce required to support these new ventures. In the case of wind energy, foreign experts are now required to assist in the construction, operation and maintenance of wind turbines. Alternatively, since the electrical components of wind turbines require ongoing maintenance, there are opportunities to engage local residents through education and training. Furthermore, increasing Manitoba's knowledge of turbine components may lead to other opportunities such as manufacturing components locally. Therefore, investing in a locally trained, knowledgeable workforce will support future efforts to enter the component production market.

Regarding biodiesel, the AMM promotes increasing production of biodiesel since it is an accessible venture that can be undertaken on a relatively small scale. Expertise is required to operate a biodiesel production facility, therefore the Province's commitment to expanding biodiesel production in Manitoba would benefit from training in support of this market.

The renewable energy sector is one example of emerging technologies creating new business and training opportunities. At the same time, the Province and its educational institutions must be prepared to respond to a variety of opportunities that rely on emerging technology. The Province's commitment to additional apprenticeship spaces should work to complement these developing specialized industries.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to support business development by creating local training opportunities based on the need for emerging technological expertise.

General Issue

1. Alternate Revenues for Municipalities and Infrastructure

Investment

The lack of revenue is not a new problem for municipalities. In fact a strong argument can be made that from its inception municipal government has not had the resources required. You need only look back to the resolutions from the founding meeting of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities in 1905 to see municipal revenues were front and centre.

But now more than ever municipalities need new tools to deal with new responsibilities and new expectations. Municipalities are playing an ever greater role in the lives of Manitobans, as the days of simply collecting garbage and plowing roads are long gone. Today's municipal council must balance community economic development, land use planning and infrastructure renewal and development with an eroding tax base and an increased reliance on application-based grants. This has left many municipalities to question whether the current system is tenable any longer.

Currently, Manitoba municipalities are more reliant on provincial and federal grants than any other province in Canada. While in some cases these types of programs are necessary (for example large-scale infrastructure projects), it leaves municipalities having to compete against one another for limited dollars and restricts a municipality's ability to properly plan for much needed investment. The amount in grant programs like the recent Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund is nowhere near the total demand, meaning there is no guarantee much needed projects will ever see funding.

Overreliance on grants and transfers leaves municipalities without the tools required to meet demands. Many issues raised by municipalities are really issues of access to revenue when stripped down to their core. For example, the need to remove education tax from property is really a municipal revenue issue, as municipalities see education tax as eroding the property tax, which is the single greatest source of municipal revenue. Over the last number of years we have seen more and more municipalities speaking out on the need for greater municipal revenue sources.

It is important that the federal and provincial governments' contribution to municipalities are not forgotten. Federally, municipalities have benefited from a GST rebate, the sharing of the federal gas tax and the new Building Canada Fund. The recent Federal Budget has made an unprecedented investment in infrastructure, which will benefit municipalities. Provincially, municipalities have benefited from the sharing of provincial income tax, the Building Manitoba Fund, and supports in several other areas. The message the AMM is hoping to convey is not that either order of government has completely forgotten about municipalities, but rather that despite these efforts municipalities still face enormous challenges and more is needed.

Municipalities must have access to new revenue sources. A greater reliance on property taxes and provincial and federal grants has created an ever-widening chasm between municipal revenues and needs, leaving future generations with what is quickly becoming an insurmountable infrastructure deficit.

A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to share one percent of the Provincial Sales Tax with municipalities for infrastructure. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year. For a community of 1,000 people, this means an investment of roughly \$185,000 in their local infrastructure, or \$370,000 for a community of 2,000 people. A community such as Thompson could see close to \$2.5 million while Winnipeg would expect to see over \$117 million. Although these amounts alone will not erase the infrastructure deficit in Manitoba, it would be a positive first step.

The AMM understands that providing additional revenues to municipalities may become more difficult as the economy continues to fluctuate. While economic projections can never be taken as absolute fact, they are often a prophetic divining rod on economic times. However what should not be lost is the positive impact infrastructure investment would have for the provincial and national economy.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has investigated this principle in depth and has found in their 2008 study "Municipal Infrastructure- Macroeconomic impacts of spending and level-of

government financing” that an increase in municipal infrastructure spending of \$1 billion in 2008 (at nominal process and allocated to a representative mix of infrastructure) would increase the size of the real economy by roughly 0.13 percent, or \$1.3 billion in nominal terms. While this would erode slightly over time with consistent investment, over a four year period it would still result in meaningful gains to the economy, dropping to a 0.6 percent increase in the final year.

The resulting investment would be felt in the employment sector as well, since a great number of industries would benefit. A \$1 billion investment in 2008 would add 11,500 new jobs, in industries from labour and material suppliers through to architects and engineers.

Giving municipalities access to additional revenues, will translate to stronger investment in our communities. The Institute for Research on Public Policy has shown that providing adequate infrastructure has both direct and indirect benefits for private-sector manufacturing.

Infrastructure is an intermediate input into the production process, with businesses locating where they have access to water, hydro and transportation. New roads reduce fuel costs and haul times. Access to high quality (and adequate) water reduces input costs. There is also evidence that increased investments in public infrastructure allow private companies to use labour inputs more intensively, translating into more jobs.

Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived. The national municipal infrastructure deficit is in excess of \$123 billion for current infrastructure with another \$115 billion needed for new infrastructure to keep pace with other developed nations. Left to deal with this ballooning deficit alone armed only with property taxes and grants, it will continue to grow exponentially. Alternatively, providing municipalities with new revenue sources will not only begin to address this growing deficit, but will help build and strengthen our economy.

The time has come for a new approach to municipal funding. The expectations of today’s municipalities are greater than any time in history. Regrettably so are the financial challenges facing municipalities. For municipal government to be sustainable into the future, and for

Manitobans to have access to the quality of life they deserve, municipalities need to have access to sustainable growth revenues.

Therefore the AMM is asking the Province to undertake a serious review of the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal government in Manitoba and in the short term provide municipalities with one percent of the current PST to help address the growing municipal infrastructure deficit.

Appendix A – Active Resolutions

AMM Resolution Number 34 - 2005

Topic: Physician Recruitment Strategy

Sponsor: Town of Churchill (Northern District)

Departments: Manitoba Health & Healthy Living

WHEREAS Manitoba is experiencing a chronic shortage of medical professionals and doctors throughout the Province, affecting the ability of all Manitobans to access adequate medical services;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to aggressively recruit medical professionals and doctors through marketing, recruiting incentives and all other means available to the Province.

AMM Resolution Number 28 - 2003

Topic: Doctor Training in Manitoba

Sponsor: Town of Arborg, RM of Bifrost (Interlake District)

Departments: Manitoba Health & Healthy Living

WHEREAS the non-availability of doctors in rural Manitoba has reached crisis proportions;

AND WHEREAS spaces at our universities are very limited with no guaranteed accessibility for Manitoba students;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba students consequently need to go to other countries to train in the medical profession;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba students who train in other countries are required to write special tests to return to set up practice in Manitoba even though they are permitted to practice in the United States and some other Canadian provinces without these entry tests;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT all necessary steps to ensure and increase spaces at Manitoba universities for doctor training be immediately implemented to adequately address the needs of rural Manitoba;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Provincial Government be aggressively persuaded to help make doctor training more affordable for Manitoba students;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if entry tests are deemed necessary for Manitoba doctors trained out of country, that the appropriate governing body ensure that the tests be set up in such a manner that those new doctors can write the tests and have the results within 10 days to alleviate additional expenses incurred attributable to that delay in obtaining results.

AMM Resolution Number 08 - 2006

Topic: Class 3 & 4 Water Plant Operators Training

Sponsor: Town of Russell (Midwestern District)

Departments: Manitoba Conservation

WHEREAS a number of small urban communities currently operate lime soda ash filtering water plants;

AND WHEREAS the complexity of the chemical process involved in the operation of lime soda ash plants has resulted in many of the facilities being designated as Class 3 or Class 4 water treatment facilities as per provincial legislation;

AND WHEREAS municipal employees have expertise and ability in operating lime soda ash plants sufficient to create consistent potable water for communities but may not have the educational and theoretical background to pass certification exams;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Provincial Government to ensure that training beyond courses designed to pass certification exams be offered so that Class 3 or Class 4 water plant operators can obtain sufficient background and knowledge to effectively and efficiently operate the facilities.