



Meeting with
Honourable Eric Robinson
Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport

April 6, 2009

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Executive Summary

Departmental Issues

1. Funding for Recreation Practitioners

- Recreation practitioners are able to guide programming decisions to engage community residents and achieve considerable health improvements.
- Adequate funding has not been available to completely fulfill Recreation Connections Manitoba's mandate, even with the recent increases in Provincial funding.
- Recreation commissions are also in need of additional funding since these important organizations have not received a funding increase since the early 1990s.
- The AMM was pleased with the 2009 Provincial Budget commitment to increase operating grants for major cultural agencies and other recreation and sports organizations, however there is some concern that a two percent increase will still be insufficient to meet existing demands for programming.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide sufficient resources for recreation practitioners to ensure high-quality recreational programming is available throughout Manitoba.

2. Funding for Recreation Infrastructure

- Cultural and recreational facilities are often neglected while other pressing infrastructure needs – such as roads and water treatment – take precedence.
- Many facilities were constructed several decades ago and municipalities do not have the resources to fund required repairs or new construction.
- The 2009 Federal Budget announcement of the two-year \$500 million Recreation Infrastructure Canada Fund begins to address the demand for a tripartite recreation infrastructure program.
- The Province must ensure that Manitoba's share of this important fund has the maximum beneficial impact for communities throughout Manitoba.
- This Federal funding will be a valuable complement to existing Provincial initiatives, such as the four-year commitment to double funding for recreation centres to over \$60 million.
- However, there are still opportunities for improvements to other recreation infrastructure programs such as the Community Places Program, since the \$50,000 maximum is still in place.
- Municipalities would also be better equipped to accommodate the escalating costs of construction and repairs with assistance in controlling the operating costs of community facilities.

- For instance, the high fees charged by Manitoba Hydro should be reduced in recognition of the limited budgets of these publicly-owned and -operated facilities.
- As well, municipalities are facing increased costs due to the Provincial requirement that government-funded buildings meet or exceed LEED silver certification.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to maximize the impact of new Federal recreation funding and to support alternative measures that reduce operating costs for recreation facilities.

3. Funding for Libraries

- The AMM was pleased to participate in the 2006 Public Libraries Review Committee to raise key municipal issues and to learn from other library stakeholders.
- Although the Province has adopted many of the Review Committee's recommendations, two key municipal issues have not been resolved: the need to review the public libraries funding formula and to allow a portion of a municipality to join an established regional library.
- The changing pressures on public libraries require ongoing investment through an enhanced provincial contribution.
- The existing per capita funding formula continually penalizes public libraries located in communities affected by rural depopulation.
- At the recent 2008 Convention, the AMM membership discussed another mechanism to facilitate library usage – a province-wide universal library card.
- There are certainly some issues to be resolved prior to implementing such a system, however there are precedents in Saskatchewan and Alberta that could offer useful models for Manitoba to replicate.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to review the public libraries funding formula and to implement measures to increase participation in public library services.

4. Joint Use of Facilities

- The AMM was pleased to participate in the Joint Use of Schools and Community Facilities Advisory Committee to promote enrichment, development and accomplishment through recreation and leisure activities.
- Throughout the development of the Advisory Committee's final report, the AMM indicated that municipalities should not be expected to bear the full costs of the joint use of facilities.
- This is particularly important as the Province implements the mandatory physical education curriculum for grades 11 and 12.

- The AMM is aware that the Province is currently in the process of reviewing the Advisory Committee's final report and looks forward to learning how the Province will act on its recommendations.
- If the Province is prepared to commit greater resources to the physical education curriculum and public schools infrastructure, municipalities will be in a better position to assist in the delivery of these important initiatives.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide additional operating funding for municipal recreation facilities as compensation for providing reduced user fees to school divisions facing new physical education requirements.

General Issues

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.
- In 2009, the Saskatchewan Government has allocated \$100 million for municipal infrastructure to be distributed on a per capita basis, as well as \$167 million for municipalities from the Provincial Sales Tax.
- 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. Funding for Recreation Practitioners

There is a growing recognition of the importance of recreational activities as a main contributing factor in an overall healthy lifestyle. Communities offering a variety of recreational opportunities derive significant benefit from employing recreation practitioners. These individuals are able to guide programming decisions to engage community residents and achieve considerable health improvements. Therefore, the increased emphasis on recreation as a mechanism to prevent health problems has heightened the role of recreation practitioners.

In particular, municipalities recognize the benefits offered by Recreation Connections Manitoba (RCM). Many recreation practitioners are volunteers, therefore the training and professional development offered by RCM is invaluable. However, adequate funding has not been available to completely fulfill RCM's mandate, even with the recent increases in Provincial funding. The recent increase of \$15,000 is beneficial, however this amount still falls short of RCM's funding requirements as identified in their business plan. As well, recreation commissions are in need of additional funding since these important organizations have not received a funding increase since the early 1990s. Since there are effective program delivery vehicles in place, the Province should ensure that adequate funding support is available to maintain the services offered by these important organizations.

For this reason, the AMM was pleased with the 2009 Provincial Budget commitment to increase operating grants for major cultural agencies and other recreation and sports organizations. There is some concern that a two percent increase will still be insufficient to meet existing demands for programming, however it is certainly a step forward. This funding level must be continually reviewed to promote the enhancement of recreational programming throughout Manitoba.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide sufficient resources for recreation practitioners to ensure high-quality recreational programming is available throughout Manitoba.

2. Funding for Recreation Infrastructure

Cultural and recreational facilities are often neglected while other pressing infrastructure needs – such as roads and water treatment – take precedence. However, research shows that recreational opportunities contribute to reducing the costs of health care and crime prevention, and are a core element in the overall municipal infrastructure envelope. Therefore, municipalities are pleased that recreation infrastructure has recently received funding from both the Provincial and Federal Governments, and are looking forward to the full implementation of these commitments. Many facilities were constructed several decades ago and municipalities do not have the resources to fund required repairs or new construction.

For this reason, the AMM and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities have been lobbying for a tripartite recreation infrastructure program for several years. The 2009 Federal Budget announcement of the two-year \$500 million Recreation Infrastructure Canada Fund begins to address the demand for all orders of government to invest in this critical infrastructure. However, since the program details are not yet available, the impact of this program for Manitoba communities remains unclear. While there will certainly be more projects than available funding, if funding is concentrated on only a few large projects, many Manitobans will be left without access to the health advantages associated with adequate recreational opportunities. Therefore, the Province must ensure that Manitoba's share of this important fund has the maximum beneficial impact for communities throughout Manitoba.

This Federal funding will be a valuable complement to existing Provincial initiatives, such as the four-year commitment to double funding for recreation centres to over \$60 million. In particular, providing additional funding through the Municipal Recreation Fund is an effective method of directing funding to municipal infrastructure projects. Municipalities appreciate the increased funding that has already been made available and are anxious for the remaining commitment to be fulfilled. Therefore, the AMM was disappointed to learn that the recent Provincial Budget did not feature further investment in recreational infrastructure. The AMM supports the Province's move to increase operating grants for major cultural agencies and other recreation organizations by two percent, however these organizations must also be supported with increased infrastructure investments.

In particular, there are still opportunities for improvements to other recreation infrastructure programs such as the Community Places Program. The substantial funding increase for this program in the 2008 Budget will certainly support several additional recreation projects, however recreation initiatives are confronting increasing costs. The limitation to fund a maximum of \$50,000 on a project means that the Community Places Program contributes a diminishing proportion of the total project costs. Since the purchasing power of \$50,000 declines over time, municipalities are required to fund a greater percentage of the total project costs. Increasing the maximum allowable amount would provide a greater opportunity for each municipality to invest in the types of recreation projects the community desperately needs.

Furthermore, municipalities would be better equipped to accommodate the escalating costs of construction and repairs with assistance in controlling the operating costs of community facilities. For instance, several municipalities have explored mechanisms for improving the efficiency of their operations through the Manitoba Municipal Efficiency Program. Yet there are some operating costs that municipalities cannot affect through internal processes, such as hydro rates. This is particularly difficult for recreation associations as they are not-for-profit organizations that provide valuable services to local communities. The high fees charged by Manitoba Hydro should be reduced in recognition of the limited budgets of these publicly-owned and -operated facilities. In addition, municipalities are facing increased costs due to the Provincial requirement that government-funded buildings meet or exceed LEED silver certification. Municipalities support the concept of environmentally-friendly community facilities, however in some cases, the cost of LEED certification approaches the amount of the available Provincial grants. As a result, this requirement significantly reduces the possible scope of projects within a given funding allocation. The Province should assist in reducing operating costs for these facilities by allowing flexibility to pursue comparable, low cost alternatives rather than adding onerous requirements. This would enable municipalities to provide quality infrastructure and related services to their communities at a reasonable cost.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to maximize the impact of new Federal recreation funding and to support alternative measures that reduce operating costs for recreation facilities.

3. Funding for Libraries

Throughout Manitoba, public libraries act as a centre of information to provide valuable educational resources to local communities. Municipalities rely on public libraries to promote literacy and support educational opportunities for their residents. Therefore, the AMM was pleased to participate in the 2006 Public Libraries Review Committee to raise key municipal issues and to learn from other library stakeholders. This process highlighted many concerns regarding the long-term needs of public libraries and confirmed that issues raised by municipalities were shared by various interested organizations. Although the Province has adopted many of the Review Committee's recommendations, two key municipal issues have not been resolved: the need to review the public libraries funding formula and to allow a portion of a municipality to join an established regional library.

The 2008 Budget made a major commitment to improving library services in Manitoba by allocating over \$1 million to public libraries, and municipalities certainly appreciate this sizable investment. Along with the 2006 investment of \$1.1 million in library technology infrastructure, the Province has made considerable progress towards enabling public libraries to modernize their services and increase accessibility. However, the changing pressures on public libraries require ongoing investment through an enhanced provincial contribution. The 2009 Budget was disappointing in this regard since there was no mention of the need for ongoing investment in libraries. Further progress can be achieved towards ensuring that all Manitoba libraries are equipped to respond to the changing demands from their communities and the Province must act on this critical need.

For instance, while increasing the overall funding allocation is definitely an important step, the distribution of this funding must be reviewed. The existing per capita funding formula continually penalizes public libraries located in communities affected by rural depopulation. The nature of libraries is such that operating costs related to facilities management remain constant regardless of municipal population. Therefore, maintaining a high standard of programming and service becomes challenging as library grants decline along with population figures. As funding diminishes, a greater percentage of a library's total funding must be allocated to cover these operating costs, leaving fewer resources for other essential investments such as technology

upgrades, program development and collection improvements. The continued reliance on a per capita formula will cause the quality of rural libraries to deteriorate. All Manitobans should have access to high quality educational opportunities and well-equipped libraries are necessary if this goal is to be accomplished. Therefore, funding mechanisms must effectively maximize the distribution of resources without penalizing municipalities for declining population.

Another challenge for public libraries is achieving increased usage and the AMM supports the development of new mechanisms that would promote both greater municipal and individual engagement. Since 2000, the AMM has advocated for portions of a municipality to join a neighbouring regional library to allow residents to access the most convenient services. Some municipalities cover a very large geographic area and the nearest library may not be the same for all residents. Such municipalities would prefer the option of dividing their support across more than one neighbouring public library, however this is not possible under the current legislation. As a result, many municipalities in this situation choose not to provide any funding to library services which can deter library usage among residents and impede the viability of neighbouring libraries. In general, there is widespread municipal support for public libraries and this policy should be changed to encourage greater municipal participation.

At the recent 2008 Convention, the AMM membership discussed another mechanism to facilitate library usage – a province-wide universal library card. Such a system would eliminate the need for municipalities to choose a particular library to support while potentially increasing overall usage due to the ease of access for Manitobans. There are certainly some issues to be resolved prior to implementing such a system, however there are precedents in Saskatchewan and Alberta that could offer useful models for Manitoba to replicate. As the Province moves forward to address the remaining recommendations from the Public Libraries Review Committee, alternatives such as these must be considered.

Since the AMM participated in the Public Libraries Review, we have continued to discuss these issues with other stakeholders, such as the Manitoba Library Trustees Association. There is still support among library stakeholders to move forward on these recommendations, and the Province must respond to these important issues. Libraries contribute vital services that

contribute to the educational development of Manitoba communities and require Provincial support to effectively respond to community needs over the long-term.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to review the public libraries funding formula and to implement measures to increase participation in public library services.

4. Joint Use of Facilities

A healthy and active population is key to maintaining a vibrant community, therefore municipalities are committed to investing in public recreation facilities. Municipalities recognize that creating partnerships is crucial to enhancing and expanding the local recreational opportunities that are available. Such partnerships lead to cost efficiencies since infrastructure is in place to meet a variety of community demands for recreation.

For this reason, the AMM was pleased to participate in the Joint Use of Schools and Community Facilities Advisory Committee to promote enrichment, development and accomplishment through recreation and leisure activities. Developing joint use agreements presents an important opportunity for municipalities and school divisions to work together in order to offer greater recreation options to Manitobans.

Throughout the development of the Advisory Committee's final report, the AMM indicated that municipalities should not be expected to bear the full costs of the joint use of facilities. The Province must continue to play a role in funding recreation infrastructure in schools, as well as other community resources such as libraries and recreation centres. This is particularly important as the Province implements the mandatory physical education curriculum for grades 11 and 12. Municipalities share the Province's concern for promoting healthy living among all students and are fully prepared to work with school divisions to make the necessary facilities available. However, many municipalities already offer reduced rates to school divisions and municipal governments cannot unilaterally sustain the funding required for these new arrangements. The cost of fulfilling the new physical education requirements should not be downloaded to municipalities. Rather, the Province should provide funding to offset the costs of municipalities providing recreation services to school divisions.

The AMM is aware that the Province is currently in the process of reviewing the Advisory Committee's final report and looks forward to learning how the Province will act on its recommendations. The Province recently made some important commitments that should assist in resolving this issue. In particular, the recent announcement of an additional \$1.6 million to support the implementation of the grade 11 and 12 physical education requirements should also

support the joint use of community and school facilities. As well, the 2009 Budget commitment to invest in a four-year capital program should be directed towards enhancing the resources available to school divisions and reducing the reliance on municipal funding to provide recreational opportunities. If the Province is prepared to commit greater resources to the physical education curriculum and public schools infrastructure, municipalities will be in a better position to assist in the delivery of these important initiatives.

Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide additional operating funding for municipal recreation facilities as compensation for providing reduced user fees to school divisions facing new physical education requirements.

General Issues

1. Alternate Revenue 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.

Other provinces have recently made significant strides to address municipal infrastructure needs, notably in Saskatchewan. In their 2009 Provincial Budget, the Saskatchewan Government made an impressive commitment in establishing the new Municipal Operating Grants program through consultations with Saskatchewan's two municipal associations. The program provides \$167 million, including \$107 million to urban municipalities, \$48 million to rural municipalities, and \$12 million to northern communities. This is equivalent to 90 percent of one point of PST (from

2007-08 Public Accounts). In 2010-11 and subsequent years, the Saskatchewan Government has committed to allocating the equivalent of 100 percent of one point of PST to municipalities. This funding is in addition to January's announcement of the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program that provides funding to Saskatchewan municipalities to strengthen the provincial economy. This program allocates \$100 million on a per capita basis to assist municipalities in making much-needed infrastructure investments. This type of commitment stands in stark contrast to the additional \$4 million Manitoba municipalities received in the 2009 Provincial Budget.

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 22/08

Topic: Library Cards

Sponsor: RM of Morris (Central District)

Department: Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport

WHEREAS each library system in Manitoba has its own identification cards for members;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba provides major funding to all libraries;

AND WHEREAS some residents may live closer to a library in a neighbouring district;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to mandate that all library cards issued in Manitoba be valid at any library that receives Provincial funding.

AMM Resolution Number 12/06

Topic: Recreation Connections Funding

Sponsor: Town of The Pas (Northern District)

Department: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism

WHEREAS it is recognized that the Municipal Governments of Manitoba, as the closest Government to the people, are responsible for the delivery of recreation services to their residents;

AND WHEREAS Municipal Governments spend considerable financial resources to deliver recreation services to their residents on an annual basis;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has a policy outlining the provincial responsibility to support the recreation delivery system and its practitioners;

AND WHEREAS the most effective and efficient way to support and strengthen the recreation delivery system is to fund Recreation Connections Manitoba to the level outlined in the business plan developed by Recreation Connections and the Province of Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba Government takes a lead role in supporting this organization and developing and nurturing partnerships with the key stakeholders in the recreation delivery system;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to support municipalities and practitioners of the recreation delivery system by funding Recreation Connections to the level identified in their business plan in order to fulfill and fully support the recreation delivery system in accordance with their existing policy.

AMM Resolution Number 19/05

Topic: Trust Fund for Maintenance of Trans-Canada Trail

Sponsor: RM of St. Andrews (Interlake District)

Department: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Manitoba Finance, Finance Canada

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Federal and Provincial Governments to create a trust fund to provide for the maintenance of the Trans-Canada Trail in the Province of Manitoba.

AMM Resolution Number 16/04

Topic: Review of Library Funding

Sponsor: Village of McCreary (Midwestern District), RM of Blanchard (Midwestern District), RM of Shell River (Parklands District)

Department: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism

WHEREAS provincial library grants are calculated based upon population;

AND WHEREAS population in many rural areas has been declining and has resulted in decreased provincial funding for many rural public libraries;

AND WHEREAS decreased provincial funding has resulted in increased municipal funding and difficult operational challenges for rural public libraries;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to undertake a review of rural public library funding formulas in an effort to ensure the future of Manitoba's rural public libraries.

AMM Resolution Number 55/01

Topic: Funding for Community Places Program

Sponsor: Town of Neepawa (Midwestern District), Village of Elkhorn, RM of North Cypress, Town of Rivers (Western District)

Department: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism

WHEREAS the Manitoba Government has promised that 25 per cent of VLT profits would be distributed to rural Manitoba through direct grants, 10 per cent through economic development programs such as REDI, and 15 per cent through the Community Places Program;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has decreased the amount of funding to the Manitoba Community Places Program since 1987;

AND WHEREAS the maximum allowable grant under this program is \$50,000 and the average grant awarded is \$13,750 per project;

AND WHEREAS this program is one of the few to assist with the renovation, replacement, or construction of recreation facilities within the province of Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS it is a known fact that recreation facilities are aging and in need of some major capital dollars as demonstrated by the over \$10 million in annual requests for a program of \$2.6 million;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province to:

- a) Increase the amount of available funds in the Manitoba Community Places Program; and,
- b) Increase the maximum funds allowable under the grant guidelines to better reflect the true costs of major capital projects.

AMM Resolution Number 42/00

Topic: Joining Established Regional Libraries

Sponsor: City of Steinbach (Eastern District)

Department: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism

WHEREAS Section 29(4) of The Public Libraries Act states in part: the Council of a municipality "may by by-law, require the proper officers of the municipality to negotiate and execute on behalf of, and in the name of, the municipality, an agreement";

AND WHEREAS this wording implies that such an agreement is certainly to be entered into in the name of the whole municipality;

AND WHEREAS residents within certain wards of a municipality have indicated that they desire to form a regional library together with their neighbouring library member municipality;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby to have The Public Libraries Act amended to allow Council of a municipality "to pass a by-law permitting its proper officers to negotiate and execute on behalf of, and in the name of, part or all of a municipality, and agreement."

AMM Resolution Number 23 - 2008

Topic: Municipal Facilities for Physical Education

Sponsor: Town of Virden (Western District)

Departments: Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has encouraged School Divisions to increase physical education (PE) programs in their curricula;

AND WHEREAS the Province has suggested that School Divisions approach local municipal governments and request reduced rates, or free usage of municipal recreation facilities including arenas, pools, sports fields and other facilities for the PE programs;

AND WHEREAS most Manitoba municipalities are already charging facility user fees that are below actual operating costs for their recreation facilities, or at a subsidized rate;

AND WHEREAS the delivery of the PE curriculum is the responsibility of the Province of Manitoba and not the responsibility of Manitoba municipalities;

AND WHEREAS this is another example of the Government of Manitoba downloading costs to Manitoba municipalities;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba municipalities wish to encourage healthy living in their communities and schools and are prepared to work with School Divisions for this purpose;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba for additional operating funding for municipal recreation facilities to offset the costs of municipal governments providing reduced user fees to Manitoba schools for physical education curricula;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AMM partner with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees in its lobby efforts on this issue and create a Memorandum of Understanding between the organizations for the usage of municipal recreation facilities for physical education.