

Budget Day 2005

Tuesday, March 8 was a busy one for AMM as President Bell and a number of staff attended Budget Day at the Provincial Legislature. While more details will roll out in the coming months, below is a summary of how some of the issues the AMM was looking for in this year's budget were addressed.

On the AMM's top priority issue, **education funding from property**, the AMM is disappointed that budget 2005 doesn't go further than a 50% reduction in farmland property taxes and a \$30M reduction in the ESL. The AMM was hoping for a 5-year plan that would further reduce education taxation across all property classes.

With funding for the Community Places Program remaining the same as 2004 and below 2003 rates, the AMM will continue to push for an increase in **recreation centre** funding in Manitoba.

The AMM was disappointed there doesn't seem to be any major increases in funding for **enforcement officers** for new legislation, such as the Water Protection Act and any upcoming changes to the Planning Act.

While a \$2.5M increase to **Water Stewardship** initiatives and a \$60,000 increase to the Water Services Board are welcome, it isn't clear how this funding will be allocated.

On a positive note, the AMM was pleased with a number of increases in the budget. These include an overall increase of \$6.8M for the **REDI** grant program, an increase of \$80,000 to the **library** grants available, and the Province's commitment to more medical school spaces. Also encouraging was an additional \$16M in the **highways** capital budget, although the total is still below what is needed.

The AMM is also pleased to see the Province carry through on its Throne Speech commitment of 40 new **police officers**, 20 for the City of Winnipeg and 20 who will be going outside of Winnipeg. ■

AMM Meets with Justice Minister

The AMM met with the Minister of Justice and Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act, the Honourable Gord Mackintosh, on February 21/05.

The AMM began the meeting with Minister Mackintosh by reiterating the need to commit additional funds to municipal policing. The Minister suggested the upcoming budget looked promising, and he also suggested alternative ways of policing, such as the increased use of special constables.

The AMM then raised the issue of municipal by-law enforcement by stressing the need to find a more cost effective system. The Minister agreed with the AMM on this and said he would see what he can do to help the process along.

The AMM also raised the issue of hiring of outside contractors to enforce by-laws, as this is an important issue for all municipalities. The Province indicated that they will be preparing a program that will be reviewed by the RCMP.

On this subject of using RCMP for court services, the AMM urged the Province to shift responsibility to Sheriff Services. The Minister noted that the Province has looked at the cost breakdown of this and will explore it further internally.

The AMM also informed the Minister that the current rates of MPIC Compensation for motor vehicle accidents do not cover the actual costs of responding to accidents and would like to see an increase to \$750. The AMM also urged the Province to re-establish the MPIC appeals committee. The Minister indicated he will consider an increase, and that he will forward the appeals committee request on to the head of MPIC. ■

The AMM also took the opportunity to raise two additional issues, Education Funding and Land Use and Water Resource Planning, with Minister Mackintosh.

More on Budget 2005 *One of the issues that will need to be clarified further is the new 'Building Manitoba Fund.' The Province's news releases have indicated this new initiative will provide \$119 million to municipalities in 2005 by adding the equivalent of three cents per litre fuel tax (2 cents gasoline and one cent diesel) to the already existing Provincial/Municipal Tax-Sharing Agreement. The sharing of the fuel tax will replace existing flat transit and road grants which will result in a \$4.7M increase in funding to municipalities, which is an 8% increase over 2004 funding levels.*

AMM will be meeting shortly with the Province to get further details on this new initiative and will keep members informed as new details are available. ■

AMM Coming Events

Mayors, Reeves & CAO's Meetings

March 14—23, 2005

June District Meetings

June 13—23, 2005

Municipal Visits

Mid-Western—April 4-6
Parklands—April 6-8
Eastern—May 2-4
Northern—August 8-9
Western—October 12-14
Central—October 17-19

For more information, visit:
www.amm.mb.ca/events.htm



Register soon for:

Communicating When Strangling Isn't an Option May 6, 2005

Clarion Inn & Suites
Winnipeg, Manitoba

For more information, visit:
www.amm.mb.ca/education.htm

Or, call:

Donna Belbin, Events Coordinator
Phone: 204-856-2374 or
Email: dbelbin@amm.mb.ca

MTCML

Tax Envelopes

The MTCML reminds members to order your tax envelopes.

New Corporate Members

The AMM welcomes two new Corporate Members.

Strong-Coley and Associates

Guertin Equipment Ltd.

Coming Events

Manitoba Building Officials Association Annual Seminar

April 12-13, 2005—Winnipeg

This seminar will focus on the areas of life safety, alternate construction methods, and ever changing codes. The seminar presentations will be of interest to Building Officials and Inspectors, Fire Prevention Inspectors, Municipal Administrators, Architects, Engineers, students and contractors.

For more information contact:
MBOA
P.O. Box 2063, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R4
Phone: (204) 832-1512

Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council 9th Annual AGM

March 21, 2005—Brandon

The deadline of March 14th is fast approaching to RSVP for the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council's 9th Annual General Meeting. This meeting is a good chance to meet innovative contributors to the agriculture and agri-food industry in Manitoba.

For more information please contact:
Lyndsey Smith at lsmith@mrac.ca or
call 204-982-4796
Website: www.mrac.ca

Job Postings

City of Portage la Prairie Tax Clerk

Under the direction of the Manager of Finance, coordinates and maintains the City's tax records. Communicates information to the general public, the City and Provincial departments.

Closing date: March 17, 2005

Applications to be forwarded to:
Human Resources,
City of Portage la Prairie
97 Saskatchewan Ave East
Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 0L8
Phone: 204-239-8338
FAX: 204-239-1532
e-mail: HR@city-plap.com

Job Postings

R.M. of West St. Paul Municipal Clerk

Under the direction of the Assistant CAO, the Municipal Clerk is responsible for payroll, general accounting, accounts payable/receivable and general office duties.

Closing date: March 18, 2005

Applications to be forwarded to:
Ed Arnold, Chief Administrative Officer
3550 Main St.
West St. Paul, MB, R4A 5A3
Phone: 204-338-0306
Fax: 204-334-9362
E-mail: edarnold@weststpaul.com

Town of Birtle Assistant Administrator

The Town of Birtle invites applications for the position of Assistant Administrator. Salary range is dependent upon qualifications and experience. A benefit package is also provided

Closing date: March 23, 2005

Applications to be forwarded to:
Town of Birtle, P.O. Box 610
Birtle, Manitoba, R0M 0C0
Fax: 204-842-3496
Email: birtle1@mts.net

Town of Plum Coulee Chief Administrative Officer

Under the direction of Council the CAO will be responsible for the overall management of the operations of the Town.

Closing date: April 1, 2005

Applications to be forwarded to:
Town of Plum Coulee
Box 36, Plum Coulee, MB R0G 1R0
Fax: 204-829-3436
Email: pcoulee@mts.net

Complete job postings are available on the AMM website at:
www.amm.mb.ca/jobposting.htm