



ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES

**MEETING WITH**

Honourable Jennifer Howard  
Minister of Labour and Immigration

February 23, 2010

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## Executive Summary

### Departmental Issues

#### 1. 911 Issues

- Municipalities are prepared to participate in enhancing emergency response services; however the Provincial Government must ensure that province-wide structures are in place that will facilitate municipal service provision.
- At the 2008 Convention, the AMM membership passed two resolutions providing specific suggestions for improvements to the current systems.
- The first resolution suggests that mile marker signs should be installed along the Trans Canada Highways 1 and 16 to provide greater assistance in locating an incident.
- The second resolution will benefit municipalities beyond the Trans Canada Highways since it proposes an alternative telephone number for non-emergency calls.
- This service would also assist in reducing the false alarms attended by municipal fire departments, since it provides a mechanism to determine whether the municipal fire department is actually required.
- As well, ensuring that 911 service is consistently accessible throughout Manitoba continues to be a concern for municipalities, particularly in sparsely populated and remote areas.
- The AMM appreciated the Province's action to reinstate of the Provincial 911 Committee in 2007; however this committee has not met on a regular basis.

**Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide greater supports to ensure that efficient emergency response is available throughout Manitoba, including mandatory 911 and assistance in locating emergency incidents.**

#### 2. Fire Inspection Requirements for Municipalities

- While the AMM supports measures that keep Manitobans safe and prevent fires, increased inspection responsibilities must not overburden local fire departments.
- Municipalities are particularly concerned that the new Fire Safety Inspections Regulation under *The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Act* downloads responsibility for inspections on daycare facilities and other buildings to municipalities.

**Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to amend the Fire Safety Inspections Regulation such that municipalities are not required to conduct inspections on additional building types.**

### *3. Provincial Floor Construction Standards*

- The safety of firefighters entering burning homes with silent floor construction is of particular concern to municipalities.
- Firefighters have no means of identifying the type of floor system prior to entry; however they should be alerted in some manner based on the greater risk of encountering structural issues in homes with silent floor construction.
- A National Research Council study found that the times to reach structural failure for the engineered floor assemblies were 35-60 percent shorter than for the solid wood joist assembly, and that the presence of engineered floor assemblies caused structural failure in the form of complete collapse into the basement or in the form of a "V-shaped" collapse due to joint or truss failure.

**Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to respond quickly to the need for amendments to applicable acts and standards to ensure homeowners and builders clearly identify homes with silent floor construction.**

### *4. The Cost of Traffic Control at Motor Vehicle Accident Scenes*

- Municipalities fully understand their responsibility to provide fire prevention services to their communities. However at issue is the expectation that volunteer firefighters perform traffic control at accident scenes, something that is not a municipal responsibility.
- One of the major concerns is the safety of having untrained volunteers perform this duty at accident scenes. The AMM did receive a commitment from the RCMP to provide training to volunteer firefighters; however we firmly believe this responsibility should not be downloaded to municipalities.
- If the expectation is for municipal firefighters to take on this added responsibility full training and compensation must be provided.
- The AMM was pleased to hear the OFC is working on designating municipal firefighters as flagmen at accident scenes which will be helpful, but compensation for performing this responsibility is imperative.
- The AMM would also like to see greater effort made to raise public awareness of the importance of slowing down for emergency personnel at accident scenes.

**Therefore the AMM requests the Province either discontinue the practice of having municipal firefighters perform traffic control at accident scenes or provide training and financial compensation for this service. The AMM further requests greater effort be made to raising public awareness of the need to slow down for emergency personnel at accident scenes.**

### *5. Exemption of Municipal Pension Program*

- An issue that remains a concern for our members is the decision to not grant a solvency exemption to the Municipal Employee Pension Plan in Manitoba.
- Our association understands the intent of the legislation however we fail to see why our municipal program should be included as it is impossible to think of a

scenario where the 301 participating employers in our program would become bankrupt.

- Our understanding is several other jurisdictions across the country have exempted public sector multi-employer programs from solvency funding requirements, recognizing that a municipal program should fall outside the intent of the legislation.

**Therefore the AMM requests the Municipal Employees Pension Plan be exempted from provincial solvency funding requirements.**

## General Issue

### *The Core Challenges for Municipalities*

- Municipal government plays a greater role in the lives of Canadians than any other time in history and the new realities facing municipalities have serious repercussions as they diligently try to balance growing responsibilities with stagnant revenues.
- Municipal infrastructure is the very foundation of a community, yet its current state leaves communities with little hope for prosperity. Nationally the municipal infrastructure deficit is in excess of \$123 billion and provincially it is estimated at over \$11 billion, or a staggering \$10,000 per Manitoban.
- As well, municipal responsibilities continue to grow, either through the intentional or unintentional offloading of responsibilities or new unfunded mandates being forced on municipalities.
- Because of these challenges municipalities must have access to new sources of revenues. Options include the Province collecting a one cent municipal tax to be allocated to municipalities for infrastructure, a rebate of the Provincial Sales Tax paid by municipalities, or an increase to existing revenue sources such as VLTs. Manitoba municipalities are more reliant on provincial and federal grants than any other province in Canada and while in some cases these types of programs are necessary it leaves municipalities having to compete against each other for limited dollars and restricts a municipality's ability to properly plan for much needed investment. 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. This is the only way municipalities will be able to even begin to address the core challenges they face.

**Therefore the AMM would like to see:**

- 1. A greater investment in municipal infrastructure by all levels of government**
- 2. An end to the downloading of responsibilities to municipalities and a requirement that new mandates come with new funding**
- 3. A commitment to provide new alternate revenues to municipalities**

## Departmental Issues

### *1. 911 Issues*

Timely response to emergency situations is an invaluable service made possible by the joint efforts of municipalities and the Province. Even with the recent implementation of targeted Provincial initiatives such as the Medical Transportation Coordination Centre (MTCC) and automatic vehicle locators in ambulances, there are still barriers to achieving this goal. The AMM membership recently proposed actions that would minimize these barriers through resolutions passed at the 2008 AMM Convention. Municipalities are prepared to participate in enhancing emergency response services; however the Provincial Government must ensure that province-wide structures are in place that will facilitate municipal service provision.

Municipalities along Trans Canada Highway 1 and 16 currently provide emergency response services for any incidents occurring on these highways. Several of these municipalities find that a significant portion of the motor vehicle accidents they attend are located on these major routes and therefore generate considerable costs for the municipal fire department. This is a particular concern since travelers along these highways are often non-residents, meaning that the municipality will not be reimbursed for their response efforts.

As a result, municipalities are seeking Provincial support for mechanisms that will improve emergency response along the Trans Canada Highways. At the 2008 Convention, the AMM membership passed two resolutions providing specific suggestions for improvements to the current systems. The first resolution suggests that mile marker signs should be installed to provide greater assistance in locating the incident. Again, since many travelers are non-residents, they are less likely to be able to provide specific details of where an incident has occurred. Increasing the frequency of landmarks through mile markers would provide additional reference points both for drivers and emergency responders.

The second resolution will benefit municipalities beyond the Trans Canada Highways since it proposes an alternative telephone number for non-emergency calls. This system would be promoted through road signage and in the media in order to

encourage callers to consider the nature of an incident prior to placing a call. This service would also assist in reducing the false alarms attended by municipal fire departments, since it provides a mechanism to determine whether the municipal fire department is actually required. Many false alarms stem from drivers calling 911 after observing a vehicle in a ditch without assessing whether the accident has already been reported and a fire department has already responded. The AMM's resolution suggests that this alternative telephone number should be complemented by an education campaign to teach the general public when it is appropriate to place 911 calls. As a further deterrent to placing unnecessary 911 calls, municipalities support the implementation of a legislated fine for individuals making non-emergency 911 calls. Together, the actions recommended by these two resolutions will greatly improve the efficiency of Manitoba's emergency response services. The Province should therefore be prepared to commit to such innovative solutions that will reduce the long-term costs of emergency response in Manitoba.

Furthermore, ensuring that 911 service is consistently accessible throughout Manitoba continues to be a concern for municipalities, particularly in sparsely populated and remote areas. Although the Province has estimated that 90 per cent of Manitoba's population has access to emergency service through 911, this does not mean that service is available in all locations. In these sparsely populated areas, access to a reliable emergency network is especially important due to the additional time required for emergency responders to attend an incident. Prompt response should be facilitated through a user-friendly system that offers a consistent contact mechanism regardless of where an emergency occurs.

The AMM appreciated the Province's action to reinstate the Provincial 911 Committee in 2007; however this committee has not met on a regular basis. The committee was expected to be an avenue for the AMM to raise municipal concerns such as the current gaps in 911 service and any issues with MTCC service. The AMM expected this committee's recommendations to be reviewed by the Minister and appropriate action taken to resolve any service issues. There will be insufficient attention to rectifying problems if the committee does not remain active. The Province has a key role in supporting emergency response services and communication with stakeholders is critical to making the most of Provincial participation.

**Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to provide greater supports to ensure that efficient emergency response is available throughout Manitoba, including mandatory 911 and assistance in locating emergency incidents.**

## ***2. Fire Inspection Requirements for Municipalities***

Municipal fire departments provide an indispensable service and must be equipped with the financial and technical resources required to keep communities safe. Recent amendments to *The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Act* increased the inspections that must be carried out by local authorities. While the AMM supports measures that keep Manitobans safe and prevent fires, these increased responsibilities must not overburden local fire departments. Municipal budgets are under significant pressure and although fire prevention and protection are important priorities, increasing responsibilities may over-extend these budgets.

Municipalities are particularly concerned that the new Fire Safety Inspections Regulation under *The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Act* downloads responsibility for inspections on daycare facilities and other buildings to municipalities. The AMM membership passed a resolution at the 2008 Annual Convention requesting that the Province resume its prior responsibilities to conduct fire inspections. Many municipalities do not have the resources required to undertake these additional responsibilities and view this as an additional downloading of responsibilities to municipalities. As well, there are times when it is more appropriate for the Province to conduct these inspections, as it can otherwise mean one neighbour shutting down another in some smaller communities.

**Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to amend the Fire Safety Inspections Regulation such that municipalities are not required to conduct inspections on additional building types.**

## ***3. Provincial Floor Construction Standards***

As housing starts increased over the past few years, there has been an associated growth in the use of new building materials and techniques that will improve the speed of construction and the quality of the final product. This has led to the widespread use of silent floor construction and other engineered floor assemblies based on their

strength and efficient use of materials. Although there are advantages to using this type of construction, there are also significant safety concerns when emergency situations arise.

The safety of firefighters entering burning homes with silent floor construction is of particular concern to municipalities. When these homes catch fire, the floor systems burn considerably faster than traditional timber joists. During a fire, engineered wood products lose their structural integrity more rapidly since they do not have the same mass of material and therefore burn at a faster rate. Firefighters have no means of identifying the type of floor system prior to entry; however they should be alerted in some manner based on the greater risk of encountering structural issues in homes with silent floor construction. Making this critical information available prior to entry would greatly reduce the risks to firefighters and the households they assist.

The National Research Council (NRC) of Canada completed a study of fire-load tests on silent floor joists and released its report in December 2008. The study found that the times to reach structural failure for the engineered floor assemblies were 35-60 percent shorter than for the solid wood joist assembly. Furthermore, the presence of engineered floor assemblies caused structural failure in the form of complete collapse into the basement or in the form of a "V-shaped" collapse due to joint or truss failure. The testing also identified cases where the floor failed structurally before occupants were able to evacuate. Although the study states that assessing the safety of emergency responders was not within the scope of this project, the research did validate serious safety concerns regarding engineered wood floor assemblies. The NRC has identified scenarios where occupant safety is at risk, meaning it is reasonable to extrapolate that emergency responders would also be at risk in these cases.

In light of these results, the Provincial Government must be prepared to move forward to enact any changes required to Provincial legislation, in order for a consistent identification system to be created in a timely manner.

**Therefore, the AMM urges the Provincial Government to respond quickly to the need for amendments to applicable acts and standards to ensure homeowners and builders clearly identify homes with silent floor construction.**

#### *4. The Cost of Traffic Control at Motor Vehicle Accident Scenes*

An issue that is of concern to our members is the cost of providing traffic control at motor vehicle accident scenes. Municipalities fully understand their responsibility to provide fire prevention services to their communities. However at issue is the expectation that volunteer firefighters perform traffic control at accident scenes, something that is not a municipal responsibility.

One of the major concerns is the safety of having untrained volunteers perform this duty at accident scenes. The AMM did receive a commitment from the RCMP to provide training to volunteer firefighters; however we firmly believe this responsibility should not be downloaded to municipalities. Municipalities are being asked to cover the cost of providing this service when it is not a municipal responsibility. If the expectation is for municipal firefighters to take on this added responsibility full training and compensation must be provided.

The AMM has looked at other provinces and has found that in many cases municipalities bill the province for the cost of providing this service. In Manitoba, Manitoba Public Insurance has made it clear that it will not cover this cost as part of an insurance claim, which leaves municipalities to pay firefighters to do traffic control.

The AMM also met recently with the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) and was pleased to hear the OFC is working with Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation to see if this issue can be resolved in part by designated municipal firefighters as flagmen at accident scenes. While this designation would be helpful, most important is the compensation that would accompany this designation. Our association would be happy to work with your department to help find a suitable resolution to this issue.

The AMM would also like to see greater attention put toward reducing speeds when emergency personnel are at accident scenes. While section 109.1 of *The Highway Traffic Act* lays out the requirements for passing a stopped emergency vehicle it is clear this does not always happen at accident scenes. The AMM would like to see greater effort made to raise public awareness of the need to slow down at accident scenes.

**Therefore the AMM requests the Province either discontinue the practice of having municipal firefighters perform traffic control at accident scenes or provide training and financial compensation for this service. The AMM further requests greater effort be made to raising public awareness of the need to slow down for emergency personnel at accident scenes.**

### *5. Exemption of Municipal Pension Program*

An issue that remains a concern for our members is the Provincial decision to not grant a solvency exemption to the Municipal Employee Pension Plan in Manitoba. Our association understands the intent of the legislation however we fail to see why our municipal program should be included. It is impossible to think of a scenario where the 301 participating employers in our program would become bankrupt. Our understanding is several other jurisdictions across the country have exempted public sector multi-employer programs from solvency funding requirements, recognizing that a municipal program should fall outside the intent of the legislation.

**Therefore the AMM requests the Municipal Employees Pension Plan be exempted from provincial solvency funding requirements.**

## General Issue

### *The Core Challenges for Municipalities*

Today's municipal government plays a greater role in the lives of Canadians than any other time in history. Municipalities no longer simply plow the streets and pick up the garbage. Sure today's municipal corporation still cleans the streets and collects garbage (and recyclables), but it also is sustainably managing growth through everything from state of the art transit systems to environmentally conscious land use and water planning. The pioneers of municipal government would be astonished to see today's council agenda where elected officials are doing everything from recruiting doctors from around the world to providing operating funding for daycares.

These new realities are having serious repercussions for municipalities as they diligently try to balance growing responsibilities with stagnant revenues. Everyday municipalities are facing new demands from both citizens and other orders of government and must try to balance these with existing priorities and scarce revenues that remain overly reliant on the ebb and flow of grant programs. The current challenges facing municipalities are overwhelming and there must be a greater effort to address these if we want to see strong vibrant communities throughout our province.

While municipal concerns cut across every provincial department, there are two core issues that are most pressing for municipalities today - the ballooning municipal infrastructure deficit and the growing mandate of municipal government, either through intentional and unintentional offloading of responsibilities from other orders of government and unfunded mandates. These two challenges are crippling municipal government and keeping Manitoba communities behind.

### *Municipal Infrastructure Deficit*

It is no secret that municipalities are facing nearly insurmountable infrastructure challenges. We only need to take a look around our communities to see the deteriorating state of our infrastructure. Roads that are nearly impassable due to potholes and heaving, drafty libraries with crippling heating bills, recreation complexes with leaking roofs and water and sewer treatment plants that are running beyond

capacity. These are the very foundation of a community, yet their current state leaves communities with little hope for prosperity. For Manitoba communities to thrive in the future these swelling infrastructure challenges must be addressed.

In Canada the municipal infrastructure deficit is in excess of \$123 billion for current needs. Most alarming is how quickly the deficit has been compounding, as it has doubled over the last 5 years. Equally alarming, the \$123 billion is only for the upgrade and repair of current municipal infrastructure, with another \$115 billion required for new infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

These national trends hold true for Manitoba as well. The City of Winnipeg has recently calculated its infrastructure deficit at \$3.8 billion for existing infrastructure and \$3.6 billion for new strategic infrastructure.<sup>2</sup> Historically the municipal infrastructure deficit outside of Winnipeg has been double that within Winnipeg so it is fair to extrapolate that the deficit outside Winnipeg is over \$7.5 billion, putting the total municipal infrastructure deficit in Manitoba in excess of \$11 billion, or a staggering \$10,000 per Manitoban. It is certainly an insurmountable amount for municipalities to tackle on their own since the total municipal taxes levied in 2007 were just over \$730,000,000.<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt the current infrastructure deficit is crippling Manitoba's economy. Adequate infrastructure is an obvious prerequisite for economic development and unfortunately it is greatly lacking in many communities. FCM has investigated this principle in depth and 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. 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, which

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<sup>1</sup> Saeed Mirza, "Danger Ahead: The Coming Collapse of Canada's Municipal Infrastructure", November 2007 (available at [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca))

<sup>2</sup> City of Winnipeg Administrative Report, "Infrastructure and Possible Funding Options" Tabled at July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 Council Meeting (available at [www.winnipeg.ca](http://www.winnipeg.ca))

<sup>3</sup> Province of Manitoba, "Statistical Information 2007 – Municipalities of the Province of Manitoba", P.17

would be felt in industries from labour and material suppliers through to architects and engineers.<sup>4</sup>

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 there is 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.<sup>5</sup>

While the numbers are staggering, of far greater concern is the very real impact this infrastructure deficit is having on the people who live in Manitoba. Manitobans are experiencing longer commutes to work either because of impassable roads or slower speeds. We are also spending more time travelling to neighbouring communities to access recreation opportunities. Many have seen the outmigration of neighbours and friends who tire of dealing with these daily challenges.

Municipal councils want to create vibrant, welcoming communities, but this is nearly impossible with the state of infrastructure today. For example, there remain 137 boil water advisories in Manitoba, many in Manitoba municipalities.<sup>6</sup> This means in 2010 thousands of Manitobans do not have access to safe drinking water when they turn on the tap. It is unreasonable to think these communities can realistically compete with the rest of Manitoba and Canada if they do not have this essential infrastructure.

### *Ever Increasing Responsibilities*

A second core challenge for municipalities is ever increasing responsibilities. Municipalities are continually being asked to do more and more, either through the intentional or unintentional offloading of responsibilities from other orders of

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<sup>4</sup> Sonnen, Carl, "Municipal Infrastructure- Macroeconomic impacts of spending and level-of-government financing" May 31, 2008 (available at [www.fcm.ca](http://www.fcm.ca))

<sup>5</sup> Brox, James A. "Infrastructure Investment: The Foundation of Canadian Competitiveness - IRPP Policy Matters 2008" August, 2008 (available at [www.irpp.org](http://www.irpp.org))

<sup>6</sup> Province of Manitoba "Provincial Boil Water Advisories" – January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010

government or through new unfunded mandates being forced on municipalities by the provincial and federal government. These new responsibilities do not come with new revenue sources and result in municipal budgets being stretched thinner and thinner. The sad reality is that as municipalities are being forced to take on more the core municipal responsibilities suffer.

Municipal officials believe in their community. This is where they live, most often where they work and sometimes where they were born. They care greatly about their community and when they see a need they will do everything they can to address it. Many times municipal officials are their own worst enemy, as they step in and act where other orders of government have abdicated their responsibilities. Municipalities step up and do repairs on provincial roads, they recruit physicians from all corners of the world, and they help fund community health facilities. In some cases municipalities are just filling gaps in service unintentionally left by other orders of government and other times municipalities are stepping in because the provincial and federal governments have made it clear their community will not get the service or investment unless they do.

Compounding this is the growing trend of unfunded mandates being heaped on municipalities by the provincial and federal governments. Too often new rules are implemented without adequate thought to how they can possibly be implemented. These unilateral decisions leave municipalities in the untenable position of either sacrificing core programs and services or being in non-compliance of provincial rules. Unfortunately we are hearing more and more from municipalities that they are being forced to opt for the latter.

Municipalities cannot keep pace with the rapid increase in the offloading of responsibilities and unfunded mandates. These challenges are pushing municipalities further and further behind.

### *Alternate Revenues*

Now more than ever municipalities need new tools to deal with new responsibilities and new expectations. Currently Manitoba municipalities are more reliant on provincial

and federal grants than any other province in Canada<sup>7</sup>. While in some cases these types of programs are necessary (for example large-scale infrastructure projects), it leaves municipalities having to compete against each other for limited dollars and restricts a municipality's ability to properly plan for much needed investment. The amount allocated to grant programs like the recent Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund or community infrastructure funding under the Building Canada Fund is nowhere near the total demand, meaning there is no guarantee much-needed projects will ever receive funding.

Over-reliance on grants and transfers leaves municipalities without the tools required to meet demands. Many municipal issues, when stripped down to their core, are really issues of access to revenue. 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 base, 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 government contributions to municipalities are not forgotten. Federally, municipalities have benefited from a GST rebate, the sharing of the federal gas tax and the Building Canada Fund as well as Stimulus Funding. Provincially, municipalities have benefited from the sharing of provincial income tax, the Building Manitoba Fund, and supports in several other areas. We also appreciate the Province stepping up with their one-third share of recent federal programs. 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. Municipalities are struggling to deliver core services as their budgets begin to crack under increased demands.

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<sup>7</sup> Slack, Kitchen, McMillan, Vaillancourt, "Roles, Responsibilities, Resources and Relationships – Report to the Provincial and Territorial Municipal Associations" June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

A new approach is needed, and for this reason we are asking the Province of Manitoba to collect a one cent municipal tax to be allocated to municipalities for infrastructure and split equally among municipalities on a per capita basis. This will provide municipalities with in excess of \$200 million a year. For a community of 1,000 people, this means roughly an investment of \$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 this funding alone will not erase the infrastructure deficit in Manitoba, it is a positive first step.

While the AMM is not necessarily asking for a new tax, there is support among Manitobans for a new tax dedicated to municipal infrastructure. Polling done by AMM in 2008 found that 94 percent of Manitobans see infrastructure as a high priority, including a 94 percent positive response rate in Winnipeg. The poll also found that 55 percent of Manitobans think that municipalities do not have the revenue sources needed to cover infrastructure costs alone, including 50 percent in Winnipeg. Most interestingly, the poll found that 54 percent of Manitobans, including 51 percent of Winnipeggers, support an additional one percent municipal tax dedicated to infrastructure renewal projects<sup>8</sup>. As the infrastructure deficit continues to grow, support for this will only increase.

The AMM is also asking for other revenues sources for municipalities, such as a rebate of the Provincial Sales Tax as well as increases to existing sources such as VLT revenues. We would also ask that any new mandates for municipalities be accompanied with corresponding financial support.

The sad reality is that while the Province of Manitoba has been leaders in some municipal areas, it has not been enough. We have the opportunity to visit every municipality in Manitoba within the four year election cycle and it is clear our communities are struggling and we are falling behind.

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<sup>8</sup> Probe Research “Public Attitudes on Infrastructure Renewal Funding in Manitoba” September, 2008.

We understand 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. Furthermore, delaying investment in these critical infrastructure projects will have serious long-term consequences for Manitoba's economy.

Municipalities are not looking for new revenue sources to store money away for a rainy day. The storm has arrived. With a national municipal infrastructure deficit in excess of \$123 billion, and Manitoba's share in excess of \$11 billion, there is no shortage of work to be done. If municipalities are 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. This is the only way municipalities will be able to even begin to address the core challenges they face.

**Therefore the AMM would like to see:**

- 1. A greater investment in municipal infrastructure by all levels of government**
- 2. An end to the downloading of responsibilities to municipalities and a requirement that new mandates come with new funding**
- 3. A commitment to provide new alternate revenues to municipalities**

# Appendix A – Active Resolutions

## **AMM Resolution Number 47 - 2009**

### **Topic: MEPP Exemption from Provincial Solvency Requirements**

Sponsor: RM of Bifrost (Interlake District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Manitoba Local Government

WHEREAS pension plan solvency legislation was enacted to protect employee pensions in the event that an employer became bankrupt;

AND WHEREAS the legislation requires that special payments be made to the pension fund to amortize any unfunded liability over a period of five years;

AND WHEREAS the Municipal Employee Pension Plan (MEPP) is required to file a solvency evaluation every three years, the most current for the period ending December 31, 2008;

AND WHEREAS as a result of the current market conditions this evaluation will result in a solvency deficiency which requires participating employers to fund the entire deficiency, which will increase costs significantly to those employers;

AND WHEREAS the requirement to fund solvency deficiencies is intended to protect employees from the failure of the employers to fund the pension plan in the event of plan terminations;

AND WHEREAS the MEPP is a public sector, multi-employer pension plan which is highly unlikely to be terminated or that all 301 participating employers will become bankrupt;

AND WHEREAS several jurisdictions across the country have exempted public sector multi-employer from solvency funding requirements;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has exempted the Civil Service Superannuation Fund and the Teachers Retirement Allowance Fund as well as others from filing solvency valuations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to exempt the Municipal Employees Pension Plan from provincial solvency funding requirements.

## **AMM Resolution Number 46 - 2009**

### **Topic: Amend The Highway Traffic Act**

Sponsor: RM of Fisher (Interlake District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS municipal fire department personnel are required on occasion to act as a "flagman" at motor vehicle accidents on provincial roads in the interest of safety for police, ambulance attendants, fire department personnel and the general public;

AND WHEREAS under Section 77(10) of The Highway Traffic Act "flagman" means a person employed by a traffic authority or a contractor doing work on behalf of a traffic authority for the purpose of directing the movement of traffic on any portion of a highway under construction, or where repair work or other work is being carried on;

AND WHEREAS the additional duty requested by police of fire departments have a significant impact on municipal fire department budgets;

AND WHEREAS under current legislation, municipal fire department personnel are not recognized and defined as a "flagman";

AND WHEREAS municipal fire department personnel are not compensated by the Province of Manitoba for directing the movement of traffic on provincial roads which is a Provincial responsibility;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to amend The Highway Traffic Act to include municipal fire department (emergency response) personnel to be recognized and paid by the Province of Manitoba to act in an official designated capacity as a "flagman" for the purpose of directing the movement of traffic on Provincial roads, upon request of the incident commander.

#### **AMM Resolution Number 45 - 2009**

##### **Topic: Amend the National Building Code**

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

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Industry Canada

WHEREAS the design and construction of new residential homes has changed over the last number of years to include materials which are not considered conventional wood;

AND WHEREAS these new materials include engineered structural floor assemblies made of laminated materials which create a faster burn time of approximately seven minutes from the time fire penetrates the floor assembly to the time it has failed;

AND WHEREAS often by the time emergency responders arrive the floor has failed and rescue operations cannot be initiated;

AND WHEREAS the installation of a fireguard with a one hour resistance rating to the underside of engineered structural floor assemblies will enhance occupant safety, as well as provide emergency responders with an extended time period for which to initiate an offensive response;

AND WHEREAS in response to a tragedy, the Manitoba Building Code was changed to include a one hour fire resistance rating between dwelling and attached garage;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba must be proactive, and it should not take another tragedy in order to have building codes changed;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada to have the National Building Code changed to make it mandatory that a fireguard with a one hour fire resistance rating be installed to the underside of engineered structural floor assemblies.

#### **AMM Resolution Number 44 - 2009**

##### **Topic: Fire Truck Replacement**

Sponsor: RM of Harrison (Midwestern District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration

WHEREAS municipalities are facing the need to upgrade or replace firefighting equipment, including fire trucks;

AND WHEREAS the purchase price of such vehicles is a financial hardship on municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to create a Fire Truck Replacement Program similar to the handi-transit funding of 2007.

**AMM Resolution Number 74 - 2008**

**Topic: Municipal Building Inspectors**

Sponsor: City of Portage la Prairie (No District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration has refused to authorize duly certified Municipal Building Inspectors to issue building permits under Part 3 of the Manitoba Building Code;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to authorize certified Municipal Building Inspectors to issue building permits under Part 3 of the Manitoba Building Code.

**AMM Resolution Number 62 - 2008**

**Topic: Fire Inspections**

Sponsor: Village of St. Pierre-Jolys (Eastern District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration

WHEREAS the Office of the Fire Commissioner was previously responsible for conducting fire inspections of all day care facilities in the Province of Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba has now passed "The Fires Prevention and Emergency Response Act" Regulations 73/2007 which downloads the responsibility for inspections on day care facilities and some other buildings to municipalities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to resume its prior responsibilities to conduct those fire inspections.

**AMM Resolution Number 60 - 2008**

**Topic: Education Campaign for 911 Calls**

Sponsor: RM of Reynolds (Eastern District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Manitoba Emergency Measures

WHEREAS the Trans Canada Highway is a national highway;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba is eligible to receive Federal funding for improvement projects on the Trans Canada Highway and Provincial tax dollars are generated through tourist and business traffic;

AND WHEREAS the Province does not provide emergency response services nor does it provide financial assistance to municipalities that supply emergency response services on the Trans Canada Highway;

AND WHEREAS funding emergency response services for non-resident traffic incidents and false alarm calls on the Trans Canada Highway has become a heavy burden on municipal property owners who receive little, if any benefit from the traffic;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to provide a province-wide education program to teach the general public when it is appropriate to place 911 calls;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province pass legislation to create fines for making non-emergency 911 calls;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Province provide a non-emergency public information number as an alternative to 911, and promote this program through media coverage and roadside signs upon entering Manitoba.

### **AMM Resolution Number 59 - 2008**

#### **Topic: Markers to Expedite 911 Calls on Trans Canada Highway**

Sponsor: RM of Reynolds (Eastern District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Transport Canada; Emergency Measures; Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

WHEREAS the Trans Canada Highway is a national highway;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba is eligible to receive Federal funding for improvement projects on the Trans Canada Highway and Provincial tax dollars are generated through tourist and business traffic;

AND WHEREAS the Province does not provide emergency response services nor does it provide financial assistance to municipalities that supply emergency response services on the Trans Canada Highway;

AND WHEREAS funding emergency response services for non-resident traffic incidents and false alarm calls on the Trans Canada Highway has become a heavy burden on municipal property owners who receive little, if any benefit from the traffic;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada to supply and install mile marker signs on the Trans Canada Highway #1 and Trans Canada Highway #16 to expedite emergency services in locating 911 calls.

### **AMM Resolution Number 52 - 2005**

#### **Topic: Provincial Floor Construction Standards**

Sponsor: RM of St. Andrews (Interlake District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Industry Canada

WHEREAS new home construction may involve floors that do not have traditional floor joists but have silent floors;

AND WHEREAS this type of construction does not have the same structural integrity when the home is on fire;

AND WHEREAS a firefighter cannot identify this construction method in a fire situation and may be in danger without knowing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Federal and Provincial Governments to make the required amendments to applicable acts and standards to ensure homeowners and builders must clearly identify that the home has silent floor construction and that this identification be standard across the Province of Manitoba.

### **AMM Resolution Number 35 - 2003**

#### **Topic: Review of Costs for Fires Originating on Crown Land**

Sponsor: RM of Kelsey (Northern District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Manitoba Conservation

WHEREAS section 264 of The Municipal Act states that every municipality must provide fire protection services within its boundaries;

AND WHEREAS the Province has the right to take over the responsibility for fire fighting services and charge those services to municipalities;

AND WHEREAS fires on occupied or unoccupied Crown Land have the potential to create huge costs to municipalities for controlling and extinguishing fires;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Provincial Government to review the process for charging municipalities for fires, especially when these fires originate on Crown-owned lands.

**AMM Resolution Number 32 - 2003**

**Topic: Mandatory 911 Subscription**

Sponsor: City of Brandon (No District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration; Manitoba Health

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities urge the Provincial Government to legislate mandatory 911 subscription within all municipalities in the Province;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this legislation include a completion date for system implementation of June 30, 2005.

**AMM Resolution Number 82 - 2001**

**Topic: Funding for the Emergency Services College**

Sponsor: RM of De Salaberry (Eastern District); RM of St. Andrews (Interlake District)

Departments: Manitoba Labour and Immigration

WHEREAS the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) operates the Manitoba Emergency Services College (MESC);

AND WHEREAS the MESC is an educational institution providing valuable public safety training to municipal emergency response organizations;

AND WHEREAS the OFC receives only 52 per cent of its budget from the Fires Prevention Fund levy, a provincial tax on property insurance policies;

AND WHEREAS the OFC is finding it impossible to meet the increased demands of its municipal clients and balance its budget;

AND WHEREAS a recent request to raise the Fires Prevention Fund levy rate in order to provide necessary funding for public safety training for municipalities was recently rejected by the government;

AND WHEREAS the OFC will be forced to reduce services and/or charge fees for service to municipalities in order to balance its budget;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province to provide funding from general revenue to the OFC to demonstrate its commitment to continued municipal public safety training for the Province.