

Staffing REQUIREMENTS and abilities for PSAB



Ernie Epp, President, MMAA

The MMAA district meetings recently took place. At each of these meetings there is a time slot set aside for 'Round Table Discussion.' This gives the opportunity for members to outline the main issues they are dealing with in their municipalities. By far, the biggest topic is PSAB, and what needs to be done in order to be compliant. MMAA members are finding PSAB to be a huge – and I mean HUGE – project. I believe it is important to present municipal elected officials with comments from the discussions.

First and foremost, for a municipality to gain PSAB compliance is time consuming. Whether large or small, the task takes weeks to complete. Coming from Morden, the Town has staff dedicated to doing financial work and can close their doors to concentrate more on the task at hand. Smaller municipalities don't have that abil-

ity. In many cases, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is supposed to do the PSAB work, also answers the phone and looks after those that come into the office. Interruptions are frequent, and it is difficult to work on a complex item when you aren't able to stick to and concentrate on that one item. Remember, this is new for all of us. What we found is those municipalities that are meeting the proposed timelines are those municipalities that have outsourced the PSAB work at least to some extent, Morden included.

Second, yet equally important to recognize, the PSAB process is complex for those of us that don't have an accounting designation. Whether the CAO (or other employee) working on PSAB has been there 30 days or 30 years, many are realizing the PSAB process is more complex than originally thought. In many if not

most cases, MMAA members have advised they don't know how to do it. Does this mean they aren't capable municipal employees? If they are adequately fulfilling the other responsibilities of the position, I suggest they are capable. Is it reasonable for a council to think a CAO should be an expert in every area? I don't know that I've met one yet. I have however met very capable CAOs that recognize when outsourcing required work is in the best interest of the municipality for which they work.

In municipalities where there isn't an employee with an accounting designation, the councils should expect to pay someone from outside the organization to help complete the PSAB process. To think otherwise is to place too high an expectation on municipal employees, and too little on what is in the best interests of the municipality. ■

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