



Meeting with the Honourable Greg Dewar
Minister of Finance

AMM Pre-Budget Submission for Budget 2016

November 3, 2015

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INTRODUCTION

- ❖ The AMM is pleased to present its pre-budget submission document for Budget 2016, and continue a dialogue with the provincial government about the future of Manitoba.
- ❖ The AMM urges the Province of Manitoba to consider new and existing challenges facing municipalities in its upcoming budget.
- ❖ This document outlines the AMM funding priorities in three categories: Positive Funding Increases in Budget 2015; Urgent Funding Requirements in Budget 2016; and, Additional Funding Requirements in Budget 2016.

POSITIVE FUNDING INCREASES IN BUDGET 2015

✓ Building Canada – Small Communities Fund

- **Manitoba Municipal Government**

- **Manitoba Finance**

- ❖ *The AMM is very pleased to participate as a member of the local consultative committee that reviews applications for the Small Communities Fund.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Support AMM input in the decision-making process for any application-based infrastructure funding;*
- ❖ *Ensure municipalities receive a fair share of the new Building Canada Fund in consultation with the AMM;*
- ❖ *Recognize the unique needs of small communities in program design in consultation with the AMM.*

✓ Funding for Municipal Infrastructure Programs

- **Manitoba Municipal Government**

- ❖ *The AMM appreciates the doubling of funding for the Municipal Bridge Program (\$1 million to \$2 million) and additional funds for the Municipal Road Improvement Program.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to partner with municipalities to repair and replace roads and bridges in local communities;*
- ❖ *Streamline the approval and notification process to successful applicants to ensure they can take advantage of the construction season.*

✓ Manitoba Water Services Board

○ Manitoba Municipal Government

- ❖ *The AMM appreciates the \$16.8 million in available funding to assist municipalities in the development of sustainable water and wastewater works.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to provide operating and capital financial assistance to support for municipal water and wastewater infrastructure in local communities.*

✓ Partner 4 Growth Program

○ Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

- ❖ *The AMM was pleased to see a modest increase to the successful Partner 4 Growth Program in Budget 2015.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Expand the successful Partner 4 Growth program to enhance the ability of local communities to identify and pursue economic development opportunities.*

URGENT FUNDING REQUIRED IN BUDGET 2016

✓ Alternate Revenues

- **Manitoba Finance**

- ❖ *Municipalities must rely on property taxes to generate revenues while receiving only 8 cents on every tax dollar.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Identify new, additional sources of revenue for municipalities to address Manitoba's growing \$11 billion infrastructure deficit and increasing municipal responsibilities.*

✓ PST Rebate for Municipalities

- **Manitoba Finance**

- ❖ *One order of government should not tax another.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Rebate the more than \$25 million in PST paid on an annual basis by municipalities.*

✓ Amalgamation Costs

- **Manitoba Municipal Government**

- ❖ *The AMM appreciates Manitoba Municipal Government's willingness to cooperate with the AMM and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association (MMAA) to address challenges faced by newly-amalgamated municipalities.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Commit to covering the hard costs resulting from municipal amalgamations, including but not limited to upgrades or conversions to municipal offices, administrative and financial services.*

✓ **Cellular Service and Broadband Internet Access**

○ **Manitoba Jobs and the Economy**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Facilitate discussions with cell carriers and other stakeholders to explore options to expand cellular coverage and broadband Internet access;*
- ❖ *Work with municipalities to develop solutions to ensure the safety of emergency responders and the public in Manitoba through reliable communications technology.*

✓ **Modernize Education Funding**

○ **Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Provide new, sustainable long-term funding to reduce school division reliance on property taxes;*
- ❖ *Rescind the 5,000 cap on the Farmland School Tax Rebate;*
- ❖ *Eliminate school taxes on farmland and for seniors.*

✓ Health Practitioner Recruitment, Training and Retention

○ Manitoba Health

- ❖ *Local communities continue to struggle to attract and retain health practitioners.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to implement the recommendations from the Brandon Medical Education Study to ensure residents in rural and northern Manitoba have access to suitable primary care.*

✓ Community Places Program

○ Manitoba Housing and Community Development

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Increase the maximum grant amount for all recipients;*
- ❖ *Reinstate funding to the level received prior to the 2012 cuts (\$4.5 million to \$3.5 million) at a minimum.*

✓ Conservation Districts

○ Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

- ❖ *The AMM acknowledges the \$150,000 increase to core funding for Conservation Districts and appreciates the \$300,000 Small Water Retention Infrastructure Program.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Increase funding to Conservation Districts to the funding level received prior to the 2013 cuts at a minimum, and consider reevaluating the funding formula.*

✓ Provincial Planning and Assessment Services Staff

- **Manitoba Municipal Government**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Fill vacancies in regional planning and assessment offices to ensure municipalities are receiving timely and accurate services from each of these branches.*

✓ Police Overtime Costs

- **Manitoba Health**

- **Manitoba Justice**

- ❖ *The AMM appreciates the provincial government's willingness to meet and discuss rapidly increasing, unsustainable policing costs;*
- ❖ *Required police-escorted patient transfers under The Mental Health Act (MHA) contribute to reduced police coverage and response times in many local communities as well as high overtime costs.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Improve timely access to care for MHA patients to free up police resources or provide alternate options for escorting patients.*

✓ Community Capital Contributions for Health Facilities

- **Manitoba Health**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Fund all health facilities provincially or reduce the local contribution requirement from 10 per cent to a fixed 5 per cent of the project cost.*

✓ Rural Airports

○ Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Reinstate a capital assistance program for airports on a 50-50 basis with municipalities;*
- ❖ *Increase the amount of operating grants for rural paved and unpaved airports, which have remained at \$2,400 and \$1,200 respectively, for at least ten years.*

✓ Rural Veterinary Funding

○ Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

- ❖ *The AMM appreciates the opportunity to present to the 2015 Rural Veterinary Task Force.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Reinstate the Technical Enhancement Grant to assist Veterinary Service Districts with increasing equipment costs;*
- ❖ *Increase funding for operating costs to keep rural veterinarian salaries competitive and to enable rural clinics to continue providing veterinary services to their communities.*

✓ Dutch Elm Disease Management

○ Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Remove all diseased elms or provide 100% cost recovery funding to municipalities to ensure proper management.*

ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUIRED IN BUDGET 2016

✓ Affordable Housing

o Manitoba Housing and Community Development

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Partner with the AMM and other stakeholders to improve municipal knowledge about existing tools to assist them in increasing their local housing supply;*
- ❖ *Continue to hold Housing Advisory Roundtable meetings;*
- ❖ *Continue to support a federal role in housing.*

✓ Flood Mitigation

o Manitoba Emergency Measures

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to invest in flood prevention and mitigation infrastructure;*
- ❖ *Support the AMM by urging the federal government to involve municipalities in developing the National Disaster Mitigation Program;*
- ❖ *Implement improvements to existing flood forecasting, response and mitigation tools based on the 2011 flood review reports;*
- ❖ *Urge the federal government to review and improve Disaster Financial Assistance Policies;*
- ❖ *Recognize and address the economic impact of recent flooding.*

✓ Roadside Drainage and Maintenance

○ Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Ensure provincial highway drainage is maintained in order to not negatively impact municipal infrastructure;*
- ❖ *Provide additional funding for regular roadside mowing to prevent the spread of noxious weeds.*

✓ Transportation Infrastructure

○ Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Provide sufficient funding to maintain and renew provincial roads, including gravel roads, access roads and urban highways, particularly:*
 - *Highways with safety issues;*
 - *Highways important for trade and travel.*

✓ Hometown Green Teams

○ Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to support this successful program, which gives students valuable experience and benefits local communities.*

✓ Handi-Transit Services

- **Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation**
- **Manitoba Municipal Government**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Support regional and community-sponsored options for local Handi-transit services;*
- ❖ *Support affordable and sustainable transit services for all residents, including those who must travel for medical reasons, and those with mobility issues.*

✓ Palliative Care

- **Manitoba Health**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Ensure sufficient funding is provided for palliative care in every RHA to deliver good quality patient care, and avoid excessive reliance on community fundraising.*

✓ Support for Recreation Centre Operating Costs

- **Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities**
- **Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Increase funding to financial incentive programs that promote and encourage greater efficiency of recreation centres throughout Manitoba.*

✓ **Municipal By-Law Enforcement**

- **Manitoba Justice**
- **Manitoba Municipal Government**
- ❖ *The AMM appreciates the development of a new approach to municipal by-law enforcement.*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to provide support to municipalities in order to implement the new by-law enforcement process;*
- ❖ *Cover training costs for municipal officials to ensure the effective administration of municipal by-law enforcement.*

✓ **Tourism Funding and Community Museums**

- **Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Sport and Consumer Protection**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Maintain support for vibrant communities by continuing to provide funding to promote tourism in Manitoba;*
- ❖ *Increase funding to the Community Museum Grants Program and reevaluate funding for the Signature Museum Program to ensure museums remain sustainable.*

✓ Libraries

○ Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Sport and Consumer Protection

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Establish funding for a universal, province-wide library card system;*
- ❖ *Increase overall funding for libraries from \$8.50 to at least \$10.00 per capita.*

✓ Mining Issues in Northern Manitoba

○ Manitoba Mineral Resources

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Support resource-based communities and municipalities in their development of long-term sustainability plans.*

✓ Support for LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) Data Collection

○ Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Provide funding to support the acquisition of LiDAR coverage in partnership with local governments.*