



ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES

2015-16 Pre-Budget Submission

Honourable Greg Dewar, Minister of Finance

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CRITICAL ISSUES – REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ACTION

- **Alternate Revenue Sources**

- *Manitoba Finance*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Identify new sources of revenue for municipalities to address the infrastructure deficit as well as increasing municipal responsibilities.

- **Provincial Sales Tax Rebate for Municipalities**

- *Manitoba Finance*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Provide a PST exemption to all municipalities or provide a rebate of all PST revenues paid by municipalities.

- **Cell Service**

- *Manitoba Jobs and the Economy*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue facilitating discussions with cell carriers and other stakeholders to explore options to expand cellular coverage and ensure communications technology is sufficient to uphold the safety of emergency responders and the public in Manitoba.

- **Community Places Program**

- *Manitoba Housing and Community Development*

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Provide additional funding for the highly successful Community Places Program to increase the maximum funding available and the number of recipients.

- **Conservation Districts**

- ***Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Increase funding to Conservation Districts to at least the funding level received prior to the 2013 cuts to ensure they have sufficient operating funding, and consider reevaluating the funding formula.

- **Modernize Education Funding**

- ***Manitoba Advanced Education and Learning***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Provide sustainable, long-term funding to cover 80 per cent of operating costs for education to reduce school division reliance on property taxes;
 - ❖ Rescind the \$5,000 cap on the Farmland School Tax Rebate;
 - ❖ Fulfill election promises to eliminate school taxes on farmland and for seniors.

- **Policing Overtime Costs**

- ***Manitoba Justice***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Support efficiencies in the court system, through technology or otherwise, and streamline the transfer of patients under *The Mental Health Act* to help reduce municipal policing costs due to overtime.

- **Reduction of Community 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:

- ❖ Reinststate 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.

- **Support for Recreation Centre Operating Costs**

- ***Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Provide support for the implementation of a pilot project developed by Manitoba Hydro to increase the efficiency of older recreation centres.

- **Veterinary Board Funding**

- ***Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Reinststate the Technical Enhancement Grant to provide assistance with equipment costs;
- ❖ Increase funding for operating costs to keep rural veterinarian salaries competitive and to enable rural clinics to continue providing much-needed veterinary services to their communities.

ONGOING ISSUES - SOME PROGRESS, MORE ACTION NEEDED

- **Affordable Housing Shortage**

- ***Manitoba Housing and Community Development***

- ❖ The AMM appreciates recent measures to increase the supply of affordable housing options such as the Rental Housing Tax Credit.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Fulfill commitments to build additional affordable housing and personal care homes, and provide incentives to build more rental housing.

- **Amalgamation Costs**

- ***Manitoba Municipal Government***

- ❖ The AMM appreciates recent commitments to hold transition committee seminars and provide a field consultant program to support amalgamating 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.

- **By-law Enforcement**

- ***Manitoba Justice***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Allocate resources to support the implementation of new enforcement mechanisms introduced in the new *Provincial Offenses Act* and *The Municipal By-law Enforcement Act*.

- **Flood Mitigation**

- ***Manitoba Emergency Measures***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Implement improvements to flood forecasting, response and mitigation capabilities, as well as flood prevention infrastructure, in coordination with municipalities based on reviews of the 2011 flood;
 - ❖ Recognize and address the economic impact of recent flooding.

- **Ecological Goods and Services**

- ***Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to provide provincial funding through Growing Forward 2 or other means to support Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S) and provide compensation for water storage.

- **Surface Water Management Strategy**

- ***Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Provide sufficient funding to fulfill the Surface Water Management Strategy objectives and address inter-jurisdiction flooding and drainage issues.

- **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.

- **Health Practitioner Recruitment, Training and Retention**

- **Manitoba Health**

- ❖ The AMM understands this is a long-term issue; however many communities continue to struggle with local physician shortages.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to fund initiatives to help attract and retain health professionals in rural and northern Manitoba and ensure every Manitoban has a family doctor by 2015;
 - ❖ Continue with the implementation of Brandon Medical Education Study recommendations to address shortage of physicians and other health professionals in rural and northern Manitoba with long-term solutions.

- **Palliative Care Services**

- **Manitoba Health**

The AMM recommends the government:

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

- **Planning and Assessment Services Staff Positions**

- **Manitoba Municipal Government**

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Fill vacancies to ensure all areas of the province have access to land use planning support, and complete the review of municipal development plans in a timely manner;
 - ❖ Ensure municipal assessment service branches are fully staffed to keep information up to date and to avoid impacting municipal assessment revenues.

- **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.

- **Tourism Funding**

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

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Support vibrant communities by continuing to provide funding to promote tourism in Manitoba.

- **Provincial Fire Protection Plan**

- ***Manitoba Labour and Immigration***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Allocate adequate funding to achieve the goals identified to improve fire protection throughout the province.

- **Intercity Bus Service**

- ***Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Provide support to community-sponsored options for affordable and sustainable intercity bus service in rural and northern Manitoba.

- **Transportation Infrastructure**

- ***Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to allocate funding to maintain and renew provincial roads and bridges sufficiently, including gravel roads, access roads and urban highways, particularly:
 - Bridges or highways with safety issues; and
 - Bridges or highways important for trade and travel.

- **Roadside Drainage and Maintenance**

- ***Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Ensure provincial highway drainage infrastructure is maintained in order to ensure there are no negative impacts on municipal infrastructure;
 - ❖ Provide funding for regular roadside mowing to maintain visibility and prevent the spread of noxious weeds.

- **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.

- **Oil Production Issues**

- ***Manitoba Mineral Resources***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Commit to act on recommendations made by the Rural Municipality-Oil Industry Working Group to address infrastructure and resource use challenges in oil-producing and affected communities once the work is completed.

- **Dutch Elm Disease Management Program**

- ***Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Make funding available for Dutch elm disease management services for municipalities who request these services;
 - ❖ Ensure the amount of provincial funding provided to municipalities for tree removal corresponds to actual removal costs.

- **Problem Beaver Management**

- ***Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship; Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Work with the AMM to ensure the existing programs to address infrastructure damage caused by beavers meet the needs of municipalities.

SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES – MORE FUNDING NEEDED

- **Municipal Bridge Program**

- ***Manitoba Municipal Government***

- ❖ The AMM appreciates the continued funding allocated to cost-share municipal bridge renewal in Manitoba.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to support municipal bridge repair and replacement in the upcoming budget.

- **Municipal Roads Improvement Program**

- ***Manitoba Municipal Government***

- ❖ The AMM appreciated the increase in funding in 2014 from the previous year which provided \$7 million in cost-shared funding on a 50-50 basis to municipalities outside Winnipeg.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to support municipal road repair and renewal in the upcoming budget.

- **Manitoba Water Services Board**

- ***Manitoba Municipal Government***

- ❖ The AMM appreciated the top-up to provincial funding in 2013 and again in 2014 for a total of \$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 this increased level of support municipal water and wastewater infrastructure in the upcoming budget.

- **New Building Canada Plan**

- ***Manitoba Municipal Government***

- ❖ The AMM appreciates the commitment from the Province of Manitoba to provide a one-third share for projects approved under the Small Communities Fund of the New Building Canada Fund.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to support major infrastructure projects in communities throughout Manitoba.

- **Handi-Transit**

- ***Manitoba Municipal Government, Manitoba Healthy Living and Seniors***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Increase the maximum grant amount available and total funding for the program;
 - ❖ Ensure people with mobility issues have reliable and affordable transportation options within their communities, and particularly when they need to travel to medical appointments.

- **Hometown Green Team Program**

- ***Manitoba Children, and Youth Opportunities***

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Increase funding for this program to allow the approval of more applications and more summer jobs for youth in rural areas.

- **Partner 4 Growth Program**

- ***Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development***

- ❖ The AMM was pleased to participate once again on the selection committee of this program with double the funding from the first year to award to applicants.

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ Continue to provide much-needed funding for the successful Partner 4 Growth program to allow regions in Manitoba more chances to identify and pursue economic development opportunities.