



ASSOCIATION OF  
**MANITOBA**  
MUNICIPALITIES

Meeting with the Honourable Ron Schuler  
Minister of Crown Services

2017

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## Introduction

- The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Ron Schuler and representatives of the Department of Crown Services.
- The AMM encourages the Province of Manitoba to consider municipal concerns as well as the effects of funding decisions on local communities throughout the budget process.
- This document outlines the AMM's position and recommendations on a number of important municipal issues relevant to the Crown Services portfolio.

## Priority Issues

### 1) Operating Costs for Recreational Facilities

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Enhance existing and develop new energy-saving programs that decrease operating costs for community-owned public recreation facilities; and*
  - ❖ *Continue to consult with the AMM on Manitoba Hydro's Demand Side Management plan.*
- The AMM would like to reiterate its thanks to Manitoba Hydro for co-developing the “Power Smart Programs for Municipal Recreation Facilities” brochure, which aims to highlight various programs and services that improve the energy efficiency of recreational facilities.
  - Given the success of the AMM-Manitoba Hydro pilot project involving four recreation facilities, 25 additional recreation facility customers across the province have been provided no-cost building analyses complete with recommendations to reduce energy consumption.
  - However, the financial sustainability of many public recreation facilities is cause for concern due to ever-increasing operational costs, which include rising insurance premiums as well as hydro and gas costs.
  - As public recreational facilities have limited means of raising additional revenue to offset these costs, the AMM encourages the Province of Manitoba to further enhance and develop new energy-saving programs that decrease operating costs for community-owned public recreation facilities.
  - The AMM would also appreciate to be consulted on the ongoing development of Manitoba Hydro's Demand Side Management plan as Power Smart programs help facility operators reduce operating costs while the work of several employees affects operations in local communities.

## 2) Manitoba Hydro Community Development Initiative

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Revise the Community Development Initiative eligibility criteria in order to include Manitoba cities.*
- Manitoba Hydro's Community Development Initiative (CDI) is intended to provide direct benefits to communities located within the BiPole III Transmission project's vicinity.
- The expected value of the CDI is estimated at \$5 million per year over 10 years.
- As the current CDI eligibility criteria excludes cities from benefiting from this grant program, the AMM urges the Province of Manitoba to revise the eligibility criteria to ensure equitable access and benefit sharing for all Manitoba communities.
- The AMM firmly believes that Manitoba municipalities should be treated fairly rather than be subject to exclusionary criteria guidelines for grant programs.

### 3) Closure of Manitoba Hydro District Offices

The AMM recommends the government:

- ❖ *Continue to consult with the AMM on the impact of Manitoba Hydro District Offices in local communities.*
- In 2013, the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro announced the closure of 24 district offices across the province and the consolidation of customer service staff.
- At the time, this decision was extremely controversial given the lack of consultation with affected communities as well as the anticipated negative effects on local employment and response and outage duration times.
- In some cases, response times have been affected for emergency customer service calls during power outages, especially in winter.
- Full office closures could also potentially jeopardize the sustainability and economic well-being of many smaller rural communities.
- The AMM urges the new provincial government to continue to consult with the AMM on the impact of regional Manitoba Hydro offices in local communities, and immediately review any individual cases of underperforming customer service due to this consolidation.

## Appendix A – Active Resolutions

### **AMM Resolution #43-2016**

#### **Topic: Mandatory Utility Consultation**

Sponsor(s): RM of Morris (Central District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro and MTS both promote the "Call Before you Dig" program; and

WHEREAS numerous Manitoba as municipalities have installed rural water lines to provide potable water to their residents; and

WHEREAS there have been occasions where Manitoba Hydro has not contacted rural municipalities to ensure that their "digging" will not compromise such rural utility lines;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to make it mandatory for Manitoba Hydro and MTS to inquire with local municipal authorities to ensure no local utilities will be compromised by their "digging" activities.

### **AMM Resolution #26-2015**

#### **Topic: Manitoba Hydro Rate Billing**

Sponsor(s): RM of Lac du Bonnet (Eastern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS Manitoba communities are finding it increasingly more difficult to operate their ice hockey arenas for their residents because of increasing costs;

AND WHEREAS ice hockey arenas have their primary use during the winter months;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro electricity costs are based on a demand rate for power consumed which in turn adds a considerable amount to overall operational costs;

AND WHEREAS during the summer months when local arenas may only be used occasionally, much less electric power is being consumed, but the demand rate is still applicable;

AND WHEREAS the demand rate makes it inordinately expensive to operate the arena for only four or five uses per month;

AND WHEREAS lower electricity rates would allow communities to make greater use of their arenas during the summer without paying a high demand rate monthly bill;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby Manitoba Hydro to charge the affected arenas and other municipally-owned buildings, such as community centres, only for actual power used and not at the level of the demand rate.

#### **AMM Resolution #26-2014**

**Topic: Manitoba Hydro Removal of Tree Debris**

Sponsor(s): RM of Dauphin (Parkland District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro cuts and sprays trees and branches under power lines on municipal road allowances to prevent potential power outages and damage to power lines;

AND WHEREAS the cut and sprayed trees and branches are no longer being removed by Manitoba Hydro and are left to be washed away by flood waters, damaging or plugging culverts, or they remain and cause potential hazards to users of the road allowance;

AND WHEREAS municipal staff efforts in requesting Manitoba Hydro to remove the waste have not had favourable results;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to have Manitoba Hydro remove waste left under power lines.

#### **AMM Resolution #27-2014**

**Topic: BiPole III Community Development Initiative**

Sponsor(s): City of Steinbach (Eastern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro plans to begin construction of the BiPole III transmission line during the winter of 2014;

AND WHEREAS the BiPole III transmission line will have a significant impact on all neighbouring municipalities;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro has created the Community Development Initiative as a way to provide financial compensation to First Nations, community councils, rural municipalities, and incorporated towns and villages located within 40 km of the transmission line;

AND WHEREAS all cities are currently excluded from the Community Development Initiative;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro to ensure that all cities located within 40 km of the BiPole III transmission line are included in the BiPole III Community Development Initiative.

#### **AMM Resolution #28-2014**

**Topic: Manitoba Hydro Community Development Funding**

Sponsor(s): RM of Piney (Eastern District), RM of Franklin (Eastern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro constructed a number of power lines specific for export sales to jurisdictions outside the Province of Manitoba and to the benefit of Manitoba Hydro;

AND WHEREAS the municipalities that these export lines cross receive no economic benefit beyond initial construction;

AND WHEREAS these export lines are a burden on the municipalities as they require ongoing maintenance by Manitoba Hydro to the detriment of municipal infrastructure, and they have a heavy impact on the aesthetics of the municipality;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro has introduced a Community Development Initiative to benefit communities beyond the primary construction stage for BiPole III;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Hydro has other major transmission lines proposed for future development within the Province of Manitoba;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro to deliver a program that provides equality in the supply of initiatives and benefits to other major power lines and proposed future power lines, equivalent to the current Community Development Initiative.

### **AMM Resolution #26-2013**

**Topic: Manitoba Hydro LED Street Lighting**

Sponsor(s): RM of Taché (Eastern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby Manitoba Hydro to provide LED lighting options to municipalities when replacing and/or installing lighting fixtures.

### **AMM Resolution #28-2013**

**Topic: Misuse of Alcohol**

Sponsor(s): City of Thompson (Northern District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba, through the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) and The Liquor Control Act C.C.S.M. L160 is responsible for the sale of alcohol in Manitoba and for the enforcement of the regulations that have been created to control the misuse of alcohol in communities;

AND WHEREAS the misuse of alcohol causes social issues in municipalities;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission (MLCC) has a commitment to social responsibility;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba, through the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission (MLCC), should disclose the revenue from liquor sales and spending to address alcohol related problems by individual municipality, as well as their strategy to combat the misuse of alcohol, including public intoxication in communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to disclose the revenue from liquor sales and spending to address alcohol related problems by individual municipality, as well as the provincial strategy to address and mitigate the social problems created as a result of the misuse of alcohol in each community.

### **AMM Resolution #57-2011**

#### **Topic: Compensation for Responding to Motor Vehicle Accidents**

Sponsor(s): City of Winkler (Central District)

Department(s): Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS municipal fire departments are not receiving adequate funding from Manitoba Public Insurance to cover costs for responding to motor vehicle accidents;

AND WHEREAS inadequate funding from Manitoba Public Insurance for services rendered by a municipality responding to motor vehicle accidents results in an off-loading of financial responsibility to municipal taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS Manitoba Public Insurance has been found to have over-charged motorists \$320 million in fees;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to properly reimburse municipalities for services rendered for motor vehicle accidents including vehicles that are registered to people in your own municipality when the accident happened in your own municipality.

### **AMM Resolution #50-2009**

#### **Topic: Operating Costs for Recreation Facilities**

Sponsor(s): RM of South Cypress (Western District)

Department(s): Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations, Manitoba Crown Services

WHEREAS public recreation facilities such as skating arenas, swimming pools and various recreation centres are integral to the health, social connectedness and quality of life in communities;

AND WHEREAS the financial sustainability of public recreation facilities is jeopardized by overwhelming operational costs, including insurance premiums and hydro and gas costs;

AND WHEREAS public recreational facilities have limited means of raising additional revenue to offset these overwhelming costs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to develop a new rate formula and new programs in order to significantly decrease operating costs for community owned public recreation facilities.