

ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES POSITION PAPER

MINISTER OF CENTRAL SERVICES | REG HELWER | FEBRUARY 2, 2021



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MANITOBA
MUNICIPALITIES

The AMM appreciates the opportunity to meet with Minister Reg Helwer and representatives of Manitoba Central Services.

The AMM encourages the Province 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 Central Services portfolio.

PRIORITY ITEMS:

INVESTING IN
CANADA
INFRASTRUCTURE
PROGRAM – PHASE 2

PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATIONS
SERVICES (PSCS)
UPGRADE

PARTNERS IN GROWTH

The AMM looks forward to working with the Province of Manitoba to strengthen provincial-municipal growth and partnership opportunities.

Priority Item #1

Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)

The AMM recommends the government:

- ✓ ***Expedite approvals for municipal projects so that municipalities can take advantage of the short construction season; and***
- ✓ ***Ensure a 'fair share' of funding under the Green Infrastructure stream to municipalities in consultation with the AMM; and***
- ✓ ***Continue to provide municipalities a 'fair say' to more effectively respond to local infrastructure priorities and support AMM input in the decision-making process for any application-based infrastructure funding.***

- Municipalities manage 60 per cent of Canada's core public infrastructure yet collect less than 10 cents of every tax dollar. The Canadian municipal infrastructure deficit has been estimated at more than \$238 billion for maintenance of both existing and new infrastructure.
- The responsibility for local infrastructure that supports larger investments in the provincial and federal economy is falling primarily on municipalities and their ratepayers.
- For instance, water and wastewater systems and landfills are reaching capacity in some areas. The growing road and bridge infrastructure deficit are also a concern for all municipalities which translates into a heightened need for continued infrastructure investments from all orders of government.
- The AMM is very pleased to participate as a member of the Manitoba Local Consultative Committee (MBLCC) to review applications and recommend local priorities for the various streams under ICIP.
- While the AMM provided feedback at the MBLCC meeting in February 2020, the pace of approvals has been very disappointing since municipalities have remained on the front lines of the pandemic.
- Municipalities are in the best position to determine local infrastructure priorities and should be empowered to meet those priorities to ensure growth continues.
- Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that municipalities are able to take advantage of our short construction season. Therefore, we urge the Province of Manitoba work with the federal government to immediately streamline processes, increase flexibility and reduce barriers so that ICIP funds are fully utilized.

Priority Item #2:

Public Safety Communications Services (PSCS) Upgrade

The AMM recommends the government:

✓ ***Continue to consult with the AMM during the roll out of the new network.***

- As public safety is paramount for local Councils and their communities, reliable emergency equipment is essential.
- The AMM looks forward to the Public Safety Communications Service (PSCS) coming online soon as it is replacing the decades-old FleetNet system which experienced many problems and service disruptions.
- We commend the Province for committing to fully fund the PSCS annual operating costs on behalf of municipalities. As municipalities will not be charged monthly subscriber fees once the PSCS becomes fully operational, these investments will result in considerable savings and reduce administrative burdens for municipalities.
- Commitments such as these grant municipalities greater autonomy to make decisions regarding more efficient use of taxpayer dollars for the benefit of all.
- As PSCS will become fully online in the Spring of 2021, we encourage the department to continue to consult and provide regular updates to our organization throughout the PSCS transition process to help mitigate further communication challenges.
- We look forward to working collaboratively and continuing to identify and develop solutions that ensure the safety of emergency responders and the public.

Appendix – AMM Active Resolutions

AMM Resolution #07-2019

Topic: No Unilateral Downloading

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

Department(s): Manitoba Infrastructure; Manitoba Municipal Relations; Manitoba Central Services

WHEREAS in 2018 AMM passed Resolution #25-2018 which resolved that Manitoba Infrastructure (MI) remove a clause from The Highways Act that permitted the unilateral offloading of provincial roads and highways to rural municipalities; and

WHEREAS the response to a similar resolution in 2018 resulted in an answer that suggested the present Act clause allowing unilateral downloading/closure was appropriate; and

WHEREAS in many cases the ongoing operation/repair by a RM of such a PR or PTH would not be possible without severe financial hardship for RM residents, or even bankrupting the affected municipality;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba so that any/all downloading of responsibilities to municipal governments be accompanied by commensurate funding from present provincial revenue streams, that this funding never decrease, and that incremental contributions to this funding as directed by established asset management practices be tied to the annual Manitoba Construction Cost increase.

AMM Resolution #28-2015

Topic: Water and Wastewater Fund

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

Department(s): Infrastructure Canada; Manitoba Municipal Relations; Manitoba Central Services

WHEREAS the continuing legislative changes to waste water and water infrastructure have continued to place high burdens onto the rate payers of the municipality; and

WHEREAS there is no dedicated mechanism apart from burdening both the current and future rate payers by borrowing funds to undertake required infrastructure to meet ever changing legislative regulations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the provincial and federal governments to establish a water and wastewater fund that provides for an as-of-right 66% of the infrastructure costs for projects that are necessary because of legislative and regulatory requirements of the provincial and federal governments.

AMM Resolution #25-2011

Topic: Implement Infrastructure Funding Council Report

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

Department(s): Finance Canada; Manitoba Finance; Manitoba Municipal Relations; Manitoba Central Services

WHEREAS Manitoba has configured its funding formula for municipalities by combining a number of municipal support programs to create a municipal funding initiative equal to 1 percentage point of the existing provincial sales tax;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba municipal infrastructure deficit is a significant challenge faced by every municipal corporation in the Province of Manitoba;

AND WHEREAS the Infrastructure Funding Council has released its final report regarding the development of an overall funding strategy to address the municipal infrastructure deficit;

AND WHEREAS the report makes a number of specific recommendations including the allocation of 1 percentage point of the existing provincial sales tax dedicated to municipal infrastructure improvements; a provincial sales tax rebate program for municipalities; and permanent and indexed transfers to municipalities of the Federal Gas Tax Fund;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada to implement the recommendations of the Infrastructure Funding Council report.

AMM Resolution #26-2010

Topic: Strategy to Address Municipal Infrastructure Deficit

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

Department(s): Manitoba Finance; Manitoba Infrastructure; Manitoba Municipal Relations; Manitoba Central Services

WHEREAS the national municipal infrastructure deficit totals more than \$123 billion;

AND WHEREAS the Manitoba municipal infrastructure deficit totals more than \$11 billion;

AND WHEREAS this deficit only includes the upgrades and retrofitting of existing municipal infrastructure with no new construction;

AND WHEREAS the Province has been increasing the regulatory requirements on municipal infrastructure such as water, wastewater and solid waste disposal to a point where many projects are unaffordable without provincial funding;

AND WHEREAS the Province does not have a strategy to address this growing infrastructure deficit;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to work with municipalities to start developing a strategy which will address the current municipal infrastructure deficit;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to provide stable long-term funding commitments which will allow municipalities to better plan for future infrastructure projects.



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