

# Councillor Doug Dobrowolski, President AMM Speaking Notes

## 1. New Building Canada Fund

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- I'd like to begin today by talking about the New Building Canada Plan, as infrastructure is a top priority for municipalities.
- To provide some context, the \$14-billion Building Canada Fund is a component of the overall federal government's \$53-billion New Building Canada Plan (NBCP), which aims to foster economic growth and job creation across Canada.
- Moreover, the Building Canada Fund is divided into 3 components; a national infrastructure component worth \$4 billion, and also a \$10-billion provincial infrastructure component, which includes a \$1-billion Small Communities Fund.
- This fund is directed to communities with fewer than 100,000 people, yet municipal projects are eligible under either of these components, as long as they meet the submission criteria.
- In total, Manitoba will be receiving \$467 million over 10 years, and 10% of this amount - or \$4.6 million per year - will be set aside for small communities.
- I would like to remind you all that this allotment is only one third of the funding necessary for an infrastructure project to move forward.
- The AMM was very pleased to receive a formal invitation to take an active role in the delivery of the Small Communities Fund and to participate in the Manitoba Local Consultative Committee (MBLCC).
- This Committee is tasked with reviewing and recommending Manitoba local priorities for submission to the Province and ultimately to the federal government for approval, and its work is progressing well.

## 2. Provincial Infrastructure Funding Programs

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- Remaining on the topic of infrastructure, in its November 2014 Speech from the Throne the Province of Manitoba indicated provincial funding was provided to support the renewal of over 400 kilometers of municipal roads and 13 bridges outside of Winnipeg.

- In the coming year, the Province also noted Manitoba's municipal road budget will be increased and funding for municipal bridges will be doubled.
- The AMM welcomes these commitments, as increased funding should help municipalities with the costs of bridge renewal, replacement and major rehabilitation projects.
- Under the Municipal Bridge Renewal Program, matching funds are also available for municipalities to undertake the preliminary and detailed design/engineering phases of their projects.
- As the AMM sits on this program's selection committee to ensure the best projects are selected, we encourage everyone in need to apply.
- In addition, all municipalities outside of Winnipeg, including cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities and local government districts are eligible to apply for funding under the Municipal Road Improvement Program.
- This program provides up to 50% cost-shared funding for the renewal of existing roads and the construction of new roads in communities outside Winnipeg.
- Maximum annual grants per municipality range from \$25,000 to \$300,000 depending on population size.
- The AMM is also pleased to be on the selection committee, however we are actively working with the Province to possibly make changes to eligibility thresholds to better suit our members.

### 3. Amalgamation Costs

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- Next, the AMM understands that many of you and your communities continue to face significant challenges and unresolved issues as a result of amalgamation.
- I would like to reiterate the AMM's role has always been to support our members, and not oppose community-driven amalgamations.
- As of January 1, 2015, newly amalgamated municipalities are now officially legal entities, yet it is evidently clear the Province needs to provide additional support and resources to complete the amalgamation and integration process.

- Several municipalities are facing many hard costs, which include, but are not limited to legal and auditing costs, software conversions, human resources, and additional office space and other office-related expenses.
- In fact, the AMM recently surveyed affected municipalities and found that costs total more than \$1.5 million.
- On average, each municipality has incurred costs of roughly \$55,000 to date.
- However, these figures reflect the responses from only 28 out of 54 newly amalgamated municipalities. Thus, the true overall cost of amalgamation is in reality much higher.
- We cannot stress enough the importance of being able to accurately calculate amalgamation costs, as this directly impacts AMM's ability to lobby on your behalf and work with the Province to help you address your needs.
- Minister Caldwell has agreed to sit down with us and review hard costs, but that undoubtedly also requires us to provide his department with current and accurate information.
- Field consultant services are also available at no cost to municipalities until March 31, 2015.
- These areas cover areas of finance, accounting, human resources, and other integration issues you may face during your period of transition.

## 4. Disaster Financial Assistance Changes

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- We are actively expressing our concerns regarding the federal government's recent decision to change the cost-sharing threshold for Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).
- As many Manitoba communities are situated in flood prone areas, this change could significantly and negatively affect municipalities.
- It is important to note, however, this is not simply an issue that concerns some municipalities; this will affect **all** Manitobans in the event of flooding.
- I will also remind you that Manitoba is one of the biggest users of DFAA.
- Thus, raising the eligibility threshold would undoubtedly affect the capacity of cities and communities to respond to and rebuild from natural and man-made disasters.

- Changes to the DFAA cost-sharing formula came into effect last month, therefore this could result in major downloading of financial costs onto municipalities in the near future.
- The AMM has expressed its strong opposition to these changes, in addition to the lack of consultation in the lead up to this announcement.
- We have since met with Shelly Glover, Senior Federal Minister for Manitoba, and requested more funding for flood mitigation and preventative work to decrease the impact of future flooding.
- Moreover, we have met on several occasions with the Province of Manitoba, and with the leaders of the opposition parties to brief them on our position.
- I encourage you to reserve your ideas about how to best raise further awareness of this matter, and we can discuss them during the open discussion concerning the upcoming provincial election following this session.
- Potentially, this may become a front and centre election issue.

## 5. PST Rebate

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- The AMM firmly believes one order of government should not tax another, as this is counterintuitive and restricts the ability of municipalities to provide services and programming.
- Increasing municipal responsibilities and constrained resources continue to underscore the need to identify alternate revenue streams and better ways to fund infrastructure.
- While currently receiving only 8 cents from every tax dollar collected, providing an exemption from paying PST or a rebate to municipalities would significantly help address the growing list of infrastructure challenges facing Manitoba communities.
- Simply, we need to vocalize our concerns to a greater degree and take action to ensure these proposals are incorporated into provincial party election platforms.

## 6. Recycling Strategy

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- Naturally, the AMM strongly encourages sustainable waste management practices and supports ongoing and expanded recycling programs, as a cleaner and greener Manitoba impacts all of our members and communities.
- Although, we are concerned about potential changes to recycling practices as outlined in the recently released *Recycling and Waste Reduction: A Discussion Paper*.
- In particular, communities that are currently facing significant financial constraints or other barriers such as transportation costs may see their ability to make improvements to their recycling programs reduced as a result of changes to the Waste Reduction and Recycling Support (WRARS) levy.
- Another issue that will affect all municipalities is the Province's proposal to repeal existing regulations and implement a new Waste Management Facilities (WMF) regulation.
- This regulation will require many municipalities to re-classify their waste management facilities, which will potentially result in significant costs to municipalities.
- As such, the AMM met with the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship to express our concerns and we are attending ongoing consultations with CWS departmental staff about these changes.
- We will certainly continue to monitor this recent development and provide more information as it comes available.

## 7. Economic Development Strategy

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- Two weeks ago, the AMM Executive and staff met with the Minister of Jobs and the Economy.
- During the meeting, we strongly urged the Province of Manitoba to proactively develop and implement a comprehensive province-wide economic development strategy.

- We believe this strategy is needed now more than ever in order to remain competitive and to foster business growth, as well as to stimulate economic activity in rural and northern Manitoba.
- The Minister acknowledged AMM's appeal, and agreed to take the proposal under consideration.
- It is important to note such a strategy would require significant inter-departmental collective action and communication to promote economic development across the province.

## 8. Cosmetic Pesticide Ban

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- Also over the past couple weeks, this policy file has rapidly moved in a more positive direction as we have been encouraged by recent announcements made by CWS officials regarding the use of cosmetic pesticides.
- For instance, during recent consultation sessions the Province indicated road rights-of-way, hard-surface sidewalks, side and centre median boulevards, and ditches will now be exempted from the current regulation.
- AMM staff is currently in the process of acquiring formal written confirmation of these changes, and will send out a communiqué to your offices as soon as they receive such information.
- If confirmed, this change will not affect public safety and should allow municipalities to more effectively administer their weed control programs.
- We view this announcement as a practical step forward, but we remain committed to addressing your needs and concerns while working with the Province of Manitoba, and CWS in particular, to modify this regulation.

## 9. Rail Safety

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- The AMM continues to participate in the National Municipal Rail Safety Working Group facilitated by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).
- The group's discussions have been focused on emergency planning, real-time information sharing, railway risk assessments, oversight and enforcement, tank car standards, and insurance issues.

- New regulations and standards are intended to ensure public safety and clarify responsibilities of the railways and road authorities.
- In addition, revisions are being discussed to Protective Direction No. 32, which focuses on the type of information provided to stakeholders – for instance, the nature of the freight, volume, frequency – and mechanisms for receiving information in a confidential manner.
- The AMM is working with FCM to determine the implications for municipalities, and is helping to develop a safety and communication strategy.

## 10. Treaty Land Entitlement

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- Tomorrow, March 17, 2015, the AMM will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) and the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee of Manitoba (TLEC).
- By signing this agreement, the parties commit themselves to participate in an on-going dialogue to establish a more open and effective Treaty Land Entitlement process in Manitoba.
- In addition, the parties will review established TLE-related municipal service agreements and draft template agreements to assist municipalities.
- As a lack of effective communication is often identified as a main barrier to economic partnerships, the AMM is urging the Province to devote additional resources to initiatives that create a better understanding among stakeholders regarding differing governance and taxation systems.

## 11. 2016 Provincial Election

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- As mentioned earlier, I encourage you all to think of ways we can get municipal issues incorporated into provincial party platforms during the upcoming election.
- I am looking forward to our discussion, but in the mean time I will turn it over to Ralph Groening, AMM's Vice-President.

# Reeve Ralph Groening, Vice-President AMM Speaking Notes

## 1. Housing

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- I would like to begin today by talking about the AMM's continued participation in the Housing Advisory Roundtable (HAR), formerly known as the Rental Housing Supply Roundtable (RHSR).
- Similar to its predecessor, HAR is a consultative and collaborative group of housing stakeholders that provides the Minister of Housing and Community Development with professional expertise and specialized knowledge relevant to housing-related issues in Manitoba.
- Discussions have focused on a variety of topics, such as residential construction, maintenance of the current housing stock, the homeownership market, the rental market, housing-related public policies and legislation, housing affordability, government-assisted programs, housing for seniors and vulnerable populations, and the housing tax environment.
- It is important to recognize the Province of Manitoba has acted on recommendations from this Roundtable - for instance, the Rental Housing Construction Tax Credit.
- The AMM was also pleased that the Province recently reached its five-year goal to provide funding commitments to create 1,500 new units of affordable housing throughout the province, which was with the help of a joint provincial-federal investment of an additional \$104 million over five years to help create more affordable housing.
- We are encouraged by these steps, and we are continuing to meet as a consultative group to focus on advancing solutions to provide quality affordable housing in Manitoba.
- As we all know, solutions are badly needed, particularly for areas that are growing, and especially in rural, remote and northern communities across the province.



- The need is substantially growing for supportive housing for seniors, immigrants, and for attracting and retaining skilled labour in areas outside of Winnipeg.
- Undoubtedly, the public and private sector as well as individuals and community organizations will need to partner in devising solutions, and the AMM remains committed to fostering relationships between stakeholders.
- For those interested, the 47<sup>th</sup> National Congress on Housing and Homelessness will be taking place right here in Winnipeg from April 28 to May 1.

## 2. Provincial Fire Strategy

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- In November 2014, the 2015-2018 Provincial Fire Strategy was officially released.
- This document was the result of a consultative working group, whose members include delegates from the AMM, Office of the Fire Commissioner, Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs, and Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service.
- I am pleased to report that this document is not collecting dust on a library shelf, but is being actively consulted to guide the working group in our ongoing review of challenges facing the Manitoba Fire Service and municipalities.
- The AMM also continues to emphasize its willingness to facilitate effective communication between the Province, local governments, the Manitoba Fire Service, and the general public.
- We know there is lack of standardization and duplication efforts, which often undermines service delivery in many parts of the province.
- I assure you the AMM is working toward assisting stakeholders in streamlining service delivery, as well as helping promote recruitment and retention efforts.

## 3. MPI Claim Rates for Motor Vehicle Accidents

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- As a friendly reminder, I would like to next make a brief note regarding MPI claim rates for motor vehicle accidents.
- Back in 2009, the AMM reached an agreement with MPI to index rates to the Manitoba Consumer Price Index.
- Rates are now increased by the CPI plus 1% on March 1 of each year.

- For this year, the basic rate increased from \$749 to \$771, and the complex rate increased from \$999 to \$1,028 – a 2.9% increase.
- Following our annual meeting with MPI representatives in October 2014, they indicated there is no backlog in claims, the overall quality of claims has improved, and the number of questions from CAOs has been reduced.
- We certainly encourage all of you to continue submitting claims to MPI, as municipalities have the ability to submit firefighting/rescue cost reimbursement and funds are available.
- Funds are also available under MPI's *Securing the Site* program.

## 4. Accessibility Legislation and Standards

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- As many of you are aware, the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA) became law in December 2013.
- Under this legislation, the Province of Manitoba is developing mandatory standards to address accessibility barriers for Manitobans.
- These standards focus on 5 key areas: customer service, information and communications, 'Built' environment – a point I will talk more about in a moment – employment accessibility, and accessible transportation.
- The 'Built' Environment standard addresses access into and within buildings and outdoor spaces, and is expected to build on Manitoba's Building Code.
- The standard includes things like counter height, aisle and door width, parking, and signage.
- Naturally, the AMM supports improved accessibility for Manitobans, but we believe the implementation process should be reasonable.
- I am continuing to represent municipalities on the Accessibility Advisory Council, which has the responsibility under the *Act* to make recommendations to the Minister regarding the development of accessibility standards.
- To date, the customer service standard has been developed and we will be proposing recommendations for the *Act's* other focus areas in due time.
- The AMM will continue to represent your interests, and will communicate any proposed changes in a timely manner.

## 5. Building Inspector Training

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- Moving on to Building Inspector training, we recently received notification that the Manitoba Emergency Services College (MESC) is planning to offer courses again in September 2015.
- Course materials are currently being revised in order to comply with Manitoba's needs.
- The AMM has been encouraged by MESC to let you know about these upcoming course offerings, and if you have any questions please feel free to contact them directly and they will respond.

## 6. Growing Forward 2

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- *Growing Forward 2* is a five-year, \$3-billion agricultural policy framework agreement among federal-provincial-territorial governments.
- Overall, the GF2 initiative aims to foster greater profitability, competitiveness and innovation within the agriculture and agrifood sectors.
- For Manitoba's sake, \$176-million will be invested over five years, which is roughly \$35-million per year.
- Approximately \$66-million has been invested thus far within the province.
- During AMM's recent Ministerial meeting with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD), we made our concerns known about the Rural Water Development Program, which is funded through the Manitoba Water Services Board.
- The Minister acknowledged he is aware of the problems, and stated he is working the federal government to adjust the program.
- Although all municipal water pipeline projects will not meet the funding criteria under this program, we encourage those with these projects to contact MAFRD for more information.
- Additionally, the AMM supports the provision of incentives to landowners that encourage ecologically beneficial practices and reduce the depletion of natural capital, and as such we continue to support *Growing Assurance*, which provides

funding to Conservation Districts (CDs) to work with producers to conserve and enhance ecological goods and services on the agricultural landscape.

- We have been actively lobbying the Province to implement more incentives to support ecological goods and services on the landscape, so we appreciate this program.
- We also continue to see positive developments resulting from the Farmland Beaver Damage Control Program, which addresses potential damage to local infrastructure resulting from beaver dams.
- We are hopeful for renewed funding for this program in the upcoming budget.

## 7. Surface Water Management Strategy and Drainage Regulation Submissions

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- Clearly, water management affects all municipalities and is therefore a very important issue for AMM members.
- The AMM appreciated efforts by Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship to ensure thorough consultation was undertaken for both the *New Approach to Drainage Regulation* and Manitoba's *Surface Water Management Strategy*, and we were pleased to provide comments on these consultation documents in December 2014.
- During our meeting with Minister Mackintosh a couple weeks ago, we also reiterated our appreciation to his Department for leading a break-out session at the Annual AMM Convention last November on these topics.
- Since making our official submissions, a formalized provincial committee or working group with stakeholders has yet to be established, however we are prepared to participate in the near future.

## 8. Conservation Districts

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- In regard to Conservation Districts, we remain concerned about recent cuts to provincial operating funding.
- Many CDs are struggling to fulfill their current mandates with existing funding, particularly after funding cuts in the 2013 budget.

- These cuts have had a significant negative impact at the local level due to staff and programming challenges.
- During our meeting with Minister Mackintosh, we raised these concerns again and appealed for additional funding.
- We firmly believe there is significant value, both financial and environmental, in the work done by CDs, and we have appealed to the provincial government to recognize that every attempt must be made to maximize resources.
- While the AMM appreciates that additional funding was made available to CDs through the GF2 initiative, the reliance on application-based funding makes long-term planning and staff retention extremely difficult for CDs.
- Simply, if CDs are expected to fulfill new responsibilities, as part of Manitoba's *Surface Water Management Strategy* for instance, provincial operating funding should be reinstated and/or significantly increased.
- It is vital you vocalize your problems, so we can more effectively lobby on your behalf.

## 9. Education Tax on Property

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- Given the growing demands on municipalities and limited resources at your disposal, we know you are continuing to struggle to provide a wide range of services that your community members expect.
- Relying heavily on property taxes to generate revenue at the local level often opens municipalities to criticism, even though they do not have access to revenues associated with school taxes on property.
- Since all of society benefits from public education, including citizens without children currently attending school, our position remains education should be funded through provincial revenues.
- In our annual meeting with Minister Bjornson, he indicated major changes to the current taxation system are unlikely, yet he is willing to sit down and review how the system works with the AMM and Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA).
- We believe a long-term strategy requiring a 80:20 funding ratio on operating expenses for education could be considered.

- We also welcome the government's commitment to eliminate school taxes for seniors and farmers to make their taxes more affordable, but we believe the process of funding education through property taxes should be reviewed and modernized.
- Lastly, as AMM members raised the recent \$5,000 cap on the Farmland School Tax Rebate again at the 2014 Convention, we are urging the Province to lift it entirely.

## 10. Oil Production Issues (Western District only)

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- Lastly, AMM continues to support the RM-Oil Industry working group on oil production issues, but meetings have been infrequent.
- This can be attributed to the fact that many members were defeated in the last election, yet we are trying to reconvene and build capacity to facilitate strong and respectful relationships between stakeholders.
- Given the significant economic benefits for Manitoba and for southwestern Manitoba in particular, it is imperative the needs of municipalities are effectively addressed and oil revenues are re-invested back into local communities to support growth.
- In several circumstances, infrastructure challenges have been created while additional demands on communities have yet to be offset by increased oil-related economic activity.
- We will be meeting with Minister Chomiak and Manitoba Mineral Resources departmental staff next week to discuss these matters, and we will be appealing for additional resources to ensure the completion of the working group's report.
- In addition, we believe the Province of Manitoba should develop an overall strategy to help guide the industry and affected local communities toward sustainable production.
- Thank you very much for your attention, and I'll now pass it over to Chris Goertzen.

## Mayor Chris Goertzen, Vice-President AMM Speaking Notes

### 1. Subdivision Review Technical Advisory Committee

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- As I am the Co-Chair, I would like to begin by discussing AMM's ongoing involvement with the Subdivision Review Technical Advisory Committee.
- The purpose of this TAC is to identify and recommend strategies to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of common conditions of subdivision approval.
- Our role and mandate is to provide advice and recommendations to the Interdepartmental Planning Board of Deputy Ministers and AMM's Executive.
- Having already completed the necessary preparatory work, I am pleased we are now ready to activate the workings of the TAC Committee.
- Monthly meetings have been scheduled, and they will be starting later this month.
- As this Committee involves the participation of high-ranking public servants, the AMM is anticipating significant action as inefficiencies and opportunities will be identified to streamline the approval process in Manitoba.
- I am looking forward to sharing the Committee's recommendations once they are finalized.

### 2. Handi-Transit and Active Transportation

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- Next, I would like to touch on Handi-Transit and active transportation.
- Handi-Transit services are very important for Manitoba communities, particularly where there is no other low cost public transit option available.
- Mobility can also be particularly challenging for seniors and for those who experience disabilities.
- Hence, Handi-Transit and active transportation services are vital for allowing individuals to continue living independently and remaining socially engaged in our communities.

- Although the AMM was pleased funding for Handi-Transit services was slightly increased in the 2014 budget, many local Handi-van services are struggling to provide dependable and affordable services to residents due to insufficient financial and human resources.
- As well, current guidelines under the Mobility Disadvantaged Program and the Motor Transport Board are restrictive, creating additional challenges to local transportation services.
- When we met with Minister Crothers in mid-February, we asked the Province to financially support Transportation Options Networks for Seniors (TONS), who conduct vital research for municipalities on transportation, and to review Handi-van services' guidelines to enhance the use of the program in Manitoba.
- The Minister committed to discussing the Handi-van guidelines with Minister Caldwell, and agreed to keep us informed on the outcome.

### 3. By-law Enforcement

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- As *The Municipal By-law Enforcement Act* aims to simplify the process for issuing penalty notices and allows for local screening officers to hear by-law disputes, the AMM believes the *Act* will help municipalities enforce their by-laws more effectively.
- However, the AMM remains concerned about features of the *Act* regarding the adjudication process as adjudicator authority outlined in the *Act* differs from the British Columbian provincial model and decisions are not subject to appeal.
- We believe training costs for municipal staff should be covered by the Province of Manitoba, while the impact of adjudication costs on municipal budgets should be assessed.
- The AMM also believes Planning Boards should have the ability to enforce by-laws using the new administrative scheme, as they are responsible for enforcing zoning, building, maintenance and occupancy standards.
- It is imperative the new administrative scheme is communicated in a clear, accurate and consistent manner across the province.
- The Province needs to do more to assist municipalities, and we will be raising these concerns in our meeting with Minister Allum next week.



## 4. Policing Costs

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- All orders of government have a role in public safety, yet municipalities continue to pay roughly 60 per cent of all policing costs in Canada, including costs for federally mandated responsibilities.
- These costs are rapidly increasing, and are simply unsustainable.
- Without predictable long-term funding and a re-distribution of roles and responsibilities, municipal budgets will continue to be severely strained while depriving other essential services and programming.
- The AMM continues to support FCM's position and its lobbying efforts with the federal government.
- The national policing system must be reformed, and the federal government must commit to a plan that makes the most of every dollar invested in fighting and deterring crime.
- Even though this is an overall national issue, all orders of government need to work together to effectively address the current unsustainable path and burdens facing local communities.
- Additional costs can no longer be downloaded to municipal taxpayers.

## 5. Police Escorts under *The Mental Health Act*

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- According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, 20 per cent of all Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
- This is very complex issue that touches us all in some form.
- With that said, the AMM remains concerned about the time incurred by peace officers when supervising and transporting patients under *The Mental Health Act* due to public safety issues and financial burdens placed on municipalities.
- Escorting patients not only reduces police service coverage and response times, particularly in small rural communities, but it can also contribute substantially to overtime costs and competing demands on police resources while frustrating officers.
- Next week, we will be meeting with Minister Allum and Manitoba Justice officials to reiterate the importance of properly funding police services, and to urge the

Province to consider legislative changes and alternate arrangements that ensure police are not always the default responders.

- We will also encourage the Department of Justice to collaborate with Manitoba Health whenever possible to promote innovative, sustainable solutions for Manitoba communities.
- The AMM is committed to working with police and health stakeholders to promote an appropriate way forward to help tackle this complex issue affecting all Canadians.

## 6. Dutch Elm Disease Program

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- During our recent meeting with Minister Mackintosh and Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship officials, we underscored our appreciation for the Province's commitment to continue annual surveillance and marking of trees, as well as the work of the Forestry Branch to share information with us about future implications for DED management in Manitoba.
- We also made the case for long-term sustainable funding, as many of you are feeling financial pressures while maintaining elm tree populations in your communities and trying to manage the disease.
- While reimbursement from the Province totals \$180.32 per tree, some municipalities have incurred costs of up to \$1,000 per tree while removing diseased elms.
- If this issue is left unresolved, simple math indicates this clear disconnect will continue to negatively impact municipal budgets while restricting your ability to deliver other programs and services to your communities.
- As we are committed to help ease the financial burdens associated with this program, AMM staff followed up with CWS officials by attending a meeting this past Friday to discuss municipal concerns in greater detail.
- We are hopeful these ongoing discussions will result in a revised allocation of funding, which is currently \$1.05 million, to tackle Dutch elm disease more effectively within our province.

## 7. Community Places Program

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- A long standing issue for our organization has been the need to boost funding for the Community Places Program (CPP).
- CPP is a great program because most projects are directed toward municipal or community infrastructure, and it leverages funding from local sources.
- Unfortunately, the maximum grant allowable from the program does not provide enough support, especially as construction costs continue to rise.
- The AMM was pleased to see over \$2.5 million in total grants awarded in 2014-2015, in addition to over \$650,000 for CPP-North.
- Although the AMM appreciates the increase in maximum funding to \$75,000 for northern and remote communities (excluding Thompson, The Pas and Flin Flon), the current funding limits remain the same for all other applicants: 50% of the first \$15,000 of a project and up to one-third of the cost after that, up to a maximum of \$50,000.
- In some cases the costs of achieving the requirements for receiving this funding, such as LEED certification, exceed the funding received.
- Lack of sufficient funding can affect the ability of communities to complete major capital projects, and the declining purchasing power of \$50,000 means that the CPP contributes a diminishing proportion of the total project costs.
- CPP is a valuable program; however, it is in need of greater funding in order to make a more positive impact in communities.
- Minister Irvin-Ross reassured us during our meeting in February the program will not be cut.

## 8. Palliative Care

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- In regard to palliative care, we will soon be meeting with Minister Blady and Manitoba Health representatives to express our recommendations.
- We will call on the Province to ensure sufficient funding is provided for local palliative care services in every RHA to avoid reliance on community fundraising, require a separate budget item for palliative care funding in RHA budgets, and

include funding for a full-time Palliative Care Coordinator for communities that require one.

- The AMM understands funding decisions regarding local services are made at the RHA level; however it is important that the needs of individual communities receive adequate consideration.
- RHA funding decisions must also be transparent, and Palliative Care Coordinators must be able to carry out their important work without substantially reducing their time spent on patient care to worry about fundraising for their own position.

## 9. Capital Contributions to Health Facilities

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- We are aware municipalities are continuing to struggle to contribute funding to health capital projects whose design and cost are determined by the Province of Manitoba.
- The policy requiring communities to fund at least 10 per cent of all local health capital projects is one of several ways municipalities are becoming increasingly involved in health care, which is a provincial responsibility.
- Although the AMM appreciates provincial flexibility towards communities who must fulfill this requirement, we will urge Minister Blady in our upcoming meeting to reduce the required contribution to a fixed 5 per cent of the project's cost, regardless of the payment schedule.
- We are asking for 5 percent as per Resolution 25/13, which was approved by AMM's members.
- We will also encourage the Province to continue to consider in-kind contributions, and examine alternative ways to build new health facilities by working with not-for-profit community groups and providing support through leasing agreements.
- This type of approach does not require a large upfront investment from the Province and it creates flexibility for the future.

## 10. Manitoba Hydro Recreation Centre Pilot Program

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- Lastly, I would like to inform you all Manitoba Hydro has recently released its Energy Efficient Guide for Municipal Recreation Facilities.
- This publication was the result of AMM working together with Manitoba Hydro, after it consistently rejected proposals to introduce a special rate for recreational centres.
- As this new program was specifically designed for AMM members based on municipal survey responses over the past year or so, we will be actively monitoring the effectiveness of this program.
- By participating in this Power Smart program, you can receive incentives and financing to upgrade your recreation facilities and lower your energy usage, which will, in turn, lower your energy bills.
- For instance, the program provides incentives for boilers, commercial kitchen appliances and refrigeration, geothermal heat pumps, insulation, and other custom-designed measures for your facility.
- As you all know, recreation centres are important assets for quality of life and healthy living, and particularly for retaining families and attracting newcomers to your community.
- The struggle with high operating costs can be eased through participating in this program.
- I encourage you all to visit Manitoba Hydro's booth at AMM's Municipal Officials Seminar and grab a program brochure.
- The brochure can also be downloaded from AMM's website.
- Thank you very much for your attention.