

Lac du Bonnet by-election in May

RM council accepts reeve resignation, hears opposition to letter

By Keith Burkowski

RM of Lac du Bonnet council approved a resolution to set a municipal by-election date in May, likely on or just after the Victoria Day long weekend, to fill the vacant position of reeve.

Council officially accepted the resignation of former Reeve Cathie Brereton on Oct. 13. Brereton resigned her post Oct. 6 due to what was noted as ongoing health concerns and a "toxic environment" on council.

Coun. Frank Terra, who served as chair for the meeting, said a May by-election date will allow those who winter elsewhere, as well as cottagers and permanent residents, to have greater participation in the process.

"Election day must be as soon as reasonably practical, but in setting the date, the senior election official must consider voter participation and the availability of people to act as elections officials and the availability of facilities to be used as voting places," Terra said.

Coun. Rob McLachlan and Coun. Cindy Kellendonk voted to accept the resignation and to set a by-election date in May. Acting Reeve Doug Marks was not

present for the vote. Council had previously approved his absence.

However, council also voted to object to references in Brereton's resignation letter towards specific councillors and ratepayers. The objection was raised at the request of ratepayer Ken Hill, who was named in Brereton's resignation letter and appeared before council as a delegation to voice his displeasure.

"I am rather angry and disgusted," Hill said in his delegation. "I'm very disturbed by the way this administration has dragged my name and the names of others into the muck that council has created. I refer specifically to Reeve Cathie Brereton's letter (of resignation)."

Hill said Brereton's resignation letter should have been a private communication to council and administration.

"Had the reeve simply decided to tender her resignation, I wouldn't be here now," Hill said. "Unfortunately she decided to make her letter a public statement of defence of her actions and decision to resign. In justifying herself, she willfully chose to find fault with others and criticize people

in ways that can only be described as slanderous and libelous. She clearly vilifies two of her councillors and then she names five private individuals, myself included, as their followers and voices."

Hill admitted the people named in Brereton's resignation letter are friends and acquaintances, but also noted most of them had campaigned for and supported her bid to become reeve.

"I think we all need to ask ourselves what's wrong with this picture," Hill said.

Hill sought council's objection to the content of Brereton's letter, and requested council renounce the allegations.

Kellendonk amended the resolution to object to Brereton's statements, a move supported quickly by McLachlan.

"I think Mr. Hill is correct," McLachlan said. "We should want to distance ourselves from such a vile document. It singles out two council members and it doesn't shine a very nice light on the remaining council members either. I think we need to distance ourselves from this."

Kellendonk said council could not accept the letter in its entirety without affirming the letter's contents as true. She added the allegations were not true.

As a result of Brereton's resignation, McLachlan did not proceed with a motion of censure against Brereton. There was also an abandoned resolution intended to seek reimbursement from Brereton for a special meeting called after a sudden regular meeting adjournment on Sept. 8.

"This was my cause and

it was with regard to the reeve's waste of municipal money on a superfluous meeting we had on Sept. 15," McLachlan said. "With regards to what's occurred, I think we all agree we'd like sleeping dogs to remain sleeping. While it is \$600, I'd like to withdraw myself from this particular position."

Terra said one of the things that came out of that controversy is all councillors should pay closer attention to their expense claims and justify them as they are submitted. He noted extra care should be taken to avoid errors such as placing the wrong date on forms.



Ken Hill appeared before council to object to the content of former Reeve Cathie Brereton's letter of resignation.

More bang for your buck

Foundation donations to earn extra 20 cents on dollar

By Arlene Davidson

Individuals interested in contributing to the Lac du Bonnet & District Charitable Foundation will have the opportunity to get a little more bang for their buck early next month.

On Nov. 14, all donations made to the local foundation will receive an additional boost from the Winnipeg Foundation, which will contribute 20 cents on every dollar donated – one dollar for each five dollars – as part of their annual 24-Hour Giving Challenge. Contributors can maximize donations and help raise funds to assist local charities and organizations.

"For one day only, Endow Manitoba holds a 24-hour giving challenge. Gifts made online through www.endowmanitoba.ca to the Lac du Bonnet & District Charitable Foundation's unrestricted fund on Nov. 14 will be stretched by The Winnipeg Foundation up to a maximum of \$2,000 per foundation," said Laverne Wojciechowski, Lac du Bonnet foundation treasurer.

Wojciechowski explains that an unrestricted fund, sometimes called a community fund, is a general fund that provides widespread granting to the entire community and is not tied to a specific field of interest or charity.

People wishing to make a contribution can log onto the website on Nov. 14 between 12:01 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. Simply click on the endow Manitoba icon in the upper right and then go to "Make an Online Gift Now". For those without access to



Photo by Arlene Davidson
Laverne Wojciechowski

Internet services, please call 204-345-2118 and ask for instructions on how to participate in the giving challenge.

"The Board of the Lac du Bonnet & District Charitable Foundation urges citizens to take advantage of this opportunity to leverage your giving in the community and help them support worthy projects in our community, like the Wildlife Association's Wildlife Ponds Development and the Lion's Accessible Play Park," said Wojciechowski.

Remember, when you donate to a registered charity, you will receive a tax receipt that will provide an income tax advantage.

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