

HH council rejects proposal to move fire department headquarters

CHRISTINE HUDDER
Managing Editor

MAYNOOTH – A decision to move the Hastings Highlands Fire Department headquarters from Maynooth to Birds Creek left council divided at the April 3 regular meeting.

There, a motion was on the floor to move the fire department administration to the Birds Creek Community Centre. The motion proposed that the \$8,500 relocation costs would be paid for by the fire department's operations budget.

The motion comes directly from the recommendations of the municipality's fire chief, Danny Koroscil.

Currently, the fire department administration is housed in the Maynooth municipal building, in what should be the committee room. The room is too small for the fire department administration to function properly, the fire chief said. There is also no place to meet and deal with confidential issues. Koroscil suggested that the Birds Creek Community Centre could not only be used for administration, but for emergency purposes and also a training area.

Councillor Dorothy Gerrow said she was not in favour of the move.

"Personally, I feel that all administration should be under one roof," she said.

She said the Birds Creek Community Centre is not accessibility-friendly, and will be up for discussion after council completes its tour of municipal facilities.

"I just don't feel that additional funds should be put into that building at this time," Gerrow added.

She added there are other options, including freeing up

space at the front of the municipal office for more room.

Councillor Tony Fitzgerald disagreed, saying that the move is necessary.

"This is still a temporary move in my view; until we can get a permanent solution for this. But at a cost of \$8,500, and that building is good until 2025 before we have to have it accessible," Fitzgerald noted. "That's a cost of about \$1,400 per year. I think it's manageable in our budget... This buys us six years of better administration for our fire department under controlled circumstances with the training room at an affordable cost."

Councillor Alex Walder agreed with Fitzgerald.

"It has come to my attention through the emergency measures seminars that we have, that the Birds Creek Community Centre is our alternate emergency facility," Walder said. "I am in favour of the move."

Most of the cost of relocation would facilitate internet hook-up – something that is needed if the building were to be used as an alternate emergency facility.

Councillor Nancy Matheson asked if the library could be used as a meeting space. CAO Pat Pilgrim explained the fire department uses the program room whenever possible.

Deputy Mayor Tracy Hagar reminded council that in 2018, the municipality was in a joint service agreement with Bancroft.

"We have invested a lot of time up to this point and a lot of money so far to get to where we are," Hagar said. "This amount does seem very low, but I do not feel now is the time to move. Nor do I feel this is the best location. We have some very serious decisions to make on the Bird's Creek facility."

Councillor Tammy Davis agreed that municipal

administrators should be in the same building.

"I have not made a decision about the hall," Davis said. "I totally respect that it's supposed to be our alternate operations centre. But at this time, I would not support the move."

Mayor Vic Bodnar voiced his support for the relocation, calling the current location "cramped."

"We have to have a comfortable environment for people to work in. That is not comfortable," Bodnar explained. "The concern right now is that we moved so far ahead to where we were previously. That momentum needs to be continued. I do not see how we can continue that momentum in a cramped facility."

Fire Chief Koroscil, who was in attendance, said there isn't anywhere else that could adequately house 22 firefighters for training purposes.

"What's the purpose of the delay? I am not getting this," Koroscil said. "We could be in there for a couple of years and we move forward with another station. In the meantime, we would have a workable facility instead of being jammed in this room next door. It makes no sense. There is nothing going on in the [Birds Creek] building. The building is heated anyways. You are not going to get rid of it in the snap of a finger because the Euchre Club meets in there. The Beavers meet in there. The PAL instruction for guns is in there. It's not just going to be closed at the drop of a hat. I understand that it's ideal to have everyone in the same building, make no mistake about it. However, at the end of the day, there is no room in this building. We are just trying to function in a reasonable fashion."

Mayor Bodnar then stepped in and asked for a recorded vote. Councillors Davis, Gerrow, Hagar, and Matheson were against the motion, while Councillors Fitzgerald and Walder, and Mayor Bodnar were in favour. The motion for the Hastings Highlands Fire Department to relocate to the Birds Creek Community Centre was defeated, and the fire chief left the table without further comment.

Catch the Ace comes to Barry's Bay

CHRISTINE HUDDER
Managing Editor

BARRY'S BAY – It's a lottery that, if the jackpot gets big enough, can potentially change lives.

Catch the Ace is coming to Barry's Bay. Spearheaded by the St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation, the lottery will begin selling tickets on April 12.

It has been a successful lottery in many parts of Ontario, including Deep River. In February, that progressive jackpot ballooned to \$574,000 and was won by a Douglas family. It also raised \$780,000 for the Deep River Hospital Foundation.

The lottery starts with 52 playing cards individually sealed in envelopes numbered 1 through 52. Nobody knows which envelope contains the Ace of Spades, until the lucky winner chooses it. When tickets are purchased, supporters will be asked to pre-select an envelope number on their ticket stub. Tickets will be sold at key locations in Barry's Bay and outlying areas.

Every week, one ticket is chosen by a random ticket draw. The lucky weekly winner takes home 20 per cent of that week's ticket revenues and the envelope number selected on the ticket will be opened to reveal a playing card. If the card is not the Ace of Spades, the card will be destroyed and the lottery continued for another week, with ticket sales starting again the next day (on Fridays).

If the card is the Ace of Spades, the weekly winner also wins the progressive jackpot. The progressive jackpot grows each week with 30 per cent of weekly

tickets sales revenue being added in. Fifty per cent of ticket sales, less expenses, will be directed to the foundation in support of Valley Manor Redevelopment.

Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased with cash only. They will be available in Barry's Bay at Charlie D's, Barry's Bay Esso, Pharmasave, St. Francis Valley Healthcare Foundation, Valley Manor (on Tuesdays

from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.); AJ's Convenience in Killaloe and Killaloe Hardware; Algonquin Bound Outfitters in Madawaska, CO Country Market in Combermere, Round Lake Centre Food Market, and Wilno Building Supply.

Draws will be held weekly on Thursdays at 4 p.m. at Ash Grove Inn.



Volunteers Lorraine Coulter, Maxine Smaglinski, Melanie Coulas, Christine Hudder and Toni Lavigne-Conway try to "Catch the Ace" (Erin Gienow). Tickets go on sale April 12 in Barry's Bay and surrounding communities.

Photo Christine Hudder

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