



VILLE DE - TOWN OF
Gravelbourg

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Since my last report in this newspaper, the Town has continued to work diligently to reduce water “slippage”. The Town crew is working relentlessly to uncover leaks and get them fixed in a timely manner. We thank the citizens of this community for their patience with the water shut-off – a necessary evil while we do repairs.

On the issue of water and water rates, contrary to opinions regarding the inclusion of capital assets in the calculation of rates, the Province of Saskatchewan in *The Municipalities Act* Sec. 23 (3) reads:

The following are subject to the approval of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board:

- (a) the rates, charges, tolls or rents set by a council for the use of water or sewer services;*
- (b) any discounts or additional amounts or percentages to be charged for arrears relating to the rates, charges, tolls or rents mentioned in clause (a).*

In the Municipal Board guidelines

2. Guidance

A Municipality or corporation that provides a public utility service may set:

- Utility rates*
- Discounts, or additional charges on overdue amounts.*

These items must be approved by the LGC (Municipal Board – Local Government Committee)

The LGC’s approval is based on the following criteria:

- That rates are equitable to all users; and*
- Revenue generated by the utility is sufficient to offset expenses including maintenance and debt retirement resulting from borrowing for capital utility projects.*

The intent is to have a self-sustaining utility and create a reserve for maintenance and future capital projects.

I trust this will answer one of the questions the Editor posed to me in the last issue of the paper.

We are moving forward. I would challenge members of this community to read a book called “Thirteen Ways to Kill Your Community” written by Doug Griffiths with

Kelly Clemmer. Mr. Griffiths did an amazing presentation at the 2018 SUMA Annual Conference. The talk was so interesting, I had to read the book. In his dedication of the book he says” *I dedicate this book to all those community builders who work to make their community stronger. I know why you do it. It is why I do it. We will find a way.*”

I am confident we have the right people at the Municipal table to be considered community builders that will make this community stronger.

Mr. Griffiths discusses water- not just quantity, but quality as being an essential component of a healthy community. There is no doubt we have excellent water as a selling point for the community. It is Chapter 1 in the book.

He goes on to discuss attracting business. Engaging youth is also a very important component. Our EDO is working with youth on a Junior Achievement project and also looking at establishing a Youth Council- one that would mirror Town Council.

Knowing who we are- this is an interesting read with some very tangible solutions that I hope we will be able to implement in the near future.

Leakage- not water this time but residents leaving the community for shopping. This is probably one of the quickest ways to slow a community down. We have all the goods and services needed here in Gravelbourg. Leakage can also refer to online shopping- a trend that is reducing large stores to warehouses which includes job losses as well as store fronts.

Cooperation with your neighbors- this includes the Town of Gravelbourg, the Town of Lafleche and the surrounding RMS who have an agreement to work together to seek pathways for regional economic development.

Attitude- A favourite quote “The beginning and end of every community is its people and the collective attitude they have about how they define success and whether or not they want to achieve it.

Attitudes is what communities live and die by,....”

Mr. Griffiths goes on to discuss Seniors, new technology, welcoming communities, complacency, and finally responsibility. This last piece he discusses as being the killer of communities. He talks about the coffee shop banter, the negativity within conversations, the finger pointing and blaming. An excellent quote from that chapter is “The truth is its often the people doing the blame who are themselves part of the problem, but none will ever admit it. Passing on responsibility to others at every opportunity is such an exciting and powerful way to kill your community.”

We need, as a community, to place emphasis on the good in the community and not broadcast the negative. Every community has negative aspects

I hope I have intrigued enough people to read this book and see the stark truths that are brought out. It may be an eye-opener for some and a motivator for others. It certainly has motivated me.

Robert Bowler, Mayor