

# **Council Response to questions originating from the Regular Council Meeting of Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

## **Re: Closure of Municipal Satellite office in the Hamlet of Roseneath**

### **1. Who initiated the closing of the Satellite Office in Roseneath?**

There was no specific principal staff employee or an individual Councillor or a combination thereof who initiated the process in closing the administration satellite office in the Hamlet of Roseneath. The main two variables that generated Council discussion and ultimately the formal decision to close the satellite office in Roseneath was the retirement of the Administrative Assistant in June 2013 in the main administrative office in Grafton, Ontario resulting in the requirement to fulfill this position.

Municipal staff have undertaken a comprehensive analysis illustrating the benefits of operational administrative efficiencies and the short-term and long-term implications to the whole municipality having knowledge of future financial implications to the municipality due to significant cost increases for policing (Ontario Provincial Police – OPP), the significant reduction of the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF), the reduction of the Federal Gas Tax Rebate, inflation and the downloading to small rural municipalities such as ours to implement, administrate and oversee provincially legislated services and programs.

Municipal Council is also contending with the burden of health care in that the municipality has received formal requests for the fiscal year 2014 and commitment for subsequent years a financial contribution towards offsetting the increasing operational expenditures and medical equipment upgrades concerning the Northumberland Health Care Centre and Campbellford Hospital. There is also the financial request to assist with the County of Northumberland Physician Recruitment Program on an on-going financial basis to encourage and promote physicians to practice in our County due to present, critical situation of the shortage of physicians in our community, namely those that practice family medicine.

### **2. Why were there “secret” meetings pertaining to this decision?**

There were no municipal Council/“secret” meetings in fact, the Municipal Council Agenda’s and approved Minutes of all Council meetings are illustrated on the Municipal Website – [www.alnwickhaldimand.ca](http://www.alnwickhaldimand.ca) in respect to the discussions with the closure of the satellite office in Roseneath these meetings were held in-camera as Municipal Councils are allowed under the Municipal Act under stipulations. One of the stipulations is in reference to human resource matters pertaining to personal matters (municipal employees). The reason for the in-camera sessions was Council’s paramount objective was to address the requirements, legal obligations and opinions as provided by the municipality’s human resource solicitor concerning our employee. The Municipal Council was not at liberty to divulge the legal opinions on this human resource matter to the general public. The interest of most importance was to ensure compliance to provincial legislation and the obligations of our employee.

### **3. When was the decision rendered to close the satellite office and who on Council made the decision?**

The formal decision was rendered at the Municipal Planning meeting of Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The following in the text as to this part of the meeting in relation to the satellite office:

Moved by Councillor Walls, seconded by Councillor Stover;

“Be it resolved that the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand, in its’ continued effort to sustain, enhance, and achieve efficiencies and be fiscally responsible to their

ratepayers as previously illustrated with the reduction of Council composition to be effective for the 2014 Municipal Election, have directed, in an unanimous decision, to close the Municipal Satellite Office located at 9059 County Road #45, Alnwick Civic Centre, effective Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013; and further that realignment and reorganization of existing personnel to be completed prior to December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 in order to address the Municipal Office Holiday closures.

Deputy Mayor Bennis requested a Recorded Vote:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Councillor James Fell	Yea	
Councillor Gail Latchford	Yea	
Mayor Dalton McDonald	Yea	
Councillor Joan Stover	Yea	
Councillor Sandra Walls	Yea	
Deputy Mayor Ray Bennis	Yea	

MOTION CARRIED BY A VOTE OF 6 TO ZERO.”

**4. What is going to happen to this office space at the Alnwick Civic Centre?**

In response to this inquiry is that Council has not had the opportunity at a Council meeting to assess and evaluate the options of utilizing this office space. This office space may be utilized internally for a municipal use or may be utilized by an external organization. The Municipal Council will also consult with the Alnwick Civic Centre Board of Management as to the utilization of the office space to ensure the generation of revenue to offset expenditures for the public facility. The Mayor had stated to those in attendance at the Regular Council Meeting in Roseneath on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 that this Municipal Council is open to all thoughts, ideas and suggestions put forward by the general public to utilize this office space.

**5. What is the status of the existing library board of the ACC?**

To allay any fears or misinformation or misconceptions in respect to rumours is that the Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand state and formally confirm that there is no interest in closing the Alnwick Civic Centre (ACC) or is it their interest to sale this community facility. There have been no discussions or interest to close the library branch at the Alnwick Civic Centre nor Fire Station #3 which serves the Hamlet of Roseneath and the surrounding area.

It is the commitment and obligation of the Council that this community facility sustains and achieves its full potential in hosting organizations and having several functions at the Alnwick Civic Centre.

**6. How are we in Ward 2 going to pay our property taxes if the satellite office in Roseneath is closed?**

The Municipal Treasury department is presently undertaking to provide extensive information to all the ratepayers in Ward 2 which is included in this envelope which illustrate the various options to ratepayers in respect to payment of property taxes in the fiscal year 2014 and beyond.

**7. How is the matter of acquiring cemetery plots going to be dealt with knowing the satellite office is closed in Roseneath?**

The administrative component concerning the acquisition of cemetery plots under the care and control of the municipality will not change with the closing of the satellite office. A program will be in place for the general public to physically attend the existing cemeteries that are presently under the jurisdiction of the municipality to address their needs and interests concerning these cemeteries.

**8. There was a legal Agreement to create and sustain an administrative satellite office in the Hamlet of Roseneath as part of the amalgamation process that created, “The Township of Alnwick/Haldimand.”**

There was no Legal/Formal Agreement to sustain a municipal administrative satellite office for the Hamlet of Roseneath. In the Minister’s Restructuring Filing Notice dated June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999 (Mr. Al Leach) (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing – MMAH) at the time directing the creation and sustaining a municipal administrative satellite office in the Hamlet of Roseneath any other Hamlets in the amalgamated municipality. This decision to retain a satellite office in the Hamlet of Roseneath or was generated in the discussion at the time with the Councillors of the former Township of Haldimand and the former Township of Alnwick in the amalgamation meetings.

**Communication**

It is the intent and commitment of this Municipal Council to advise and correspond by Regular Mail information the early part of December, 2013 to all ratepayers in Ward 2 of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand in providing a covering letter advising all ratepayers the reasoning and justification for the closure of the administrative satellite office in the Hamlet of Roseneath, formal response to the inquiries of the delegations originating from the Regular Council Meeting of Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 and also providing in detail information and direction to illustrate the various options in respect to payment of property taxes for this municipality.

**In Closing,**

The Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand have not taken this decision lightly and have discussed and deliberated the merits of the closure of the administrative satellite office in Roseneath. This has been one of the hardest, most difficult decisions that have been rendered during this term of Council. Each of us have personally reflected on the ramifications of this decision and are of the opinion that there are significant benefits in the short-term and in the long-term in sustaining the municipality as a whole financially and operationally by our decision.

We are committed to all the ratepayers in the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand as to the continuous objective of upgrading our public infrastructure (Community Centres, Public Highways, Bridges); sustaining our present services and programs; addressing and enacting the various Programs and legislative requirements from the other upper-tier levels of government with the sole objective of sustaining and enhancing the quality of life for all those that reside in the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand.

We truly appreciate your cooperation and understanding concerning this decision.

The Council of the Township of Alnwick/Haldimand  
Dated: December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013