

Jack's Recap

November 16, 2015: The long and winding roads.

Mr. Dexter Wheeler was before council again last night asking whether or not his road would be plowed by the city, the roads in question are Charland and Bertrand both privately owned cottage roads. Wheeler argued that he pays city taxes but receives very little services in return. Apparently someone has been doing this in the past but he is uncertain if it was the city. Due to the fact that the roads in question are owned privately, CAO Joe Torlone advises council of possible legalities involved in sending in our city workers to maintain the roads. For the city to maintain such a road it first has to comply with our municipal roads standards, a very expensive proposition. Should the city help pay to bring the roads up to municipal standards, just so it can then maintain it? Apparently in the past there were back door agreements made with city hall to plow and maintain some of these cottage roads. Time has come to end this practice. A defiant councillor Doody spoke up and stated that the core services review was not gospel and that council was not bound to accept or even act on the recommendations identified in the \$105k review. I think we should all remember this statement when next election rolls around. After all was said and done it was agreed to wait for the report that councillor Dubeau said he and Mr. Wheeler were promised last February As a taxpayer I have to ask the obvious question, why should the taxpayer be paying to plow and maintain privately owned cottage roads? Oscar Piloni from KPMG spoke about this more than once stating that Timmins plows category 6 roads where other cities in the comparative group does not. His opportunities recommends that the city cease this activity, not adopt new roads! Let's hope that this council does not cave into every demand made of them, let's hope that this council has the backbone to utter the two letter word that has escaped them in the past. That two letter word is "NO". For this council this is only the beginning of making some very difficult policy decisions and then enforcing these policies. We can only watch and hope that councillors do not adopt the same attitude as councillor Doody, the taxpayer will again be left to wonder what the core services review was all about.

Winter Preparedness for Frozen Services - Public Utilities.

Although winter has been delayed I think it is safe to assume that it will be with us very soon. As councillor Rinaldo points out we cannot have a repeat performance of last year's frozen water lines saga, people in certain instances were left without water for weeks at a time. In today's society that is totally unacceptable. Councillor Rinaldo is an outspoken advocate on this issue and wants a more detailed plan activated to prevent this from happening again this year. Norm Bruce our public utilities supervisor explained to council that those homes advised to run their water this winter and do not but experience a frozen water line will be charged \$675.00. For a first time unique occurrence there would be no charge. No one mentions the past where good natured citizens agreed without hesitation to a \$50.00 one time water tax to help defray the cost of the many frozen water lines that winter. That one time \$50.00 water tax was never rescinded, as a matter of fact our water bills have increased every year. Let's hope that those asked to run their water do so because a single repair can cost upwards of \$5k. most single home water bills are in the neighbourhood of \$1000.

That's a rap on this week's recap!