

2007: A YEAR OF CHANGES, REFLECTION & LEARNING

2007, looking back was a year of change for our municipality. After the passing of our long time Mayor Jack Graham in March, I agreed to have my name put forward for the position of Mayor. It was a year of reflection for a community, of past accomplishments and a great sense of loss for a gentleman and a leader who guided Bristol for the past twenty one plus years. It has been a year of learning. Although I served as a municipal Councillor for eight years, a steep learning curve was ahead. Upon taking this new position, I set an agenda to build upon lessons learned as a councillor under Jack's leadership, but at the same time to do some things differently and ultimately lead by my set of values. It would be unattainable to try and fill his shoes directly and in the same manner as he. This being said the value of respect, community service and the upholding of Bristol's interests goes without saying and is without compromise. Holding true to this belief, I write this year end review in a little different format. Instead of a condensed budget recap, I will talk about the state of Bristol's affairs, events we are dealing with in our community and future vision for our municipality.

Complete budget details are available on the Municipalities' web site at www.bristolmunicipality.com or by calling our municipal office @ 819-647-5555. Mona and Marleen would be more than happy to fax or mail it to you. I felt a condensed budget recap in which items are grouped for simplicity does not give a true and accurate message.

Bristol's financial position remains on a very sound footing for 2008, as it has been for many years. We are debt free and have an accumulated surplus of \$ 387,512.00. I am very proud to announce that for the 2008 year budget, we have decreed a 9.5% decrease in taxation, or to be exact a \$0.05 cent decrease per \$ 100.00 of evaluation, yet increased spending slightly. In 2007 our expenditures, through careful oversight from our employees and Council, came in less than what was actually budgeted. Comments were made that, why lower taxes when we could find many areas to spend this surplus money? Although this may be accurate, I truly believe we need a plan or a project first, and then commit to responsible spending.

Major Expenditures in 2007 and Future Considerations:

-Reconstruction of 1.6 Km. of the Ragged Chute Road

Council had been planning and saving for this project for 3 years. In June we tendered for the reconstruction of the area known as the "The Black Pond Rd." We accepted the lowest tender of \$699,000.00 from R.H. Nugent Equipment Ltd. Extensive widening, straightening and grade elevation correction was completed by mid October. Five hydro poles still need to be relocated. We hope to have this accomplished by spring. We chose not to proceed with the repaving last fall, in order to assess the road condition after one winters season and spring thaw. Upon evaluation of the work completed, and the completion of any corrective measures needed, we will call for tenders in April for the repaving to be finished by early June. The expected budgetary cost for this is \$ 275,000.00. The financial portion of this project has been accomplished by utilizing monies from the Ryan Reform Road Grants, the monies we receive every year from the Quebec Government for municipal roads, and assigning our portion of the newly released Federal Gas Tax Rebate Program, in which we received for the first time from the Federal Conservative Government. I am proud to say that this project will have realized without spending a \$ 1.00 from our general tax revenue, the monies we collect from you, our ratepayers. A project such as this with an estimated cost of just under one million dollars, is a considerable investment for a small municipality and was a decision not taken lightly.

-Rehabilitation of a Culvert on the Elmside View Rd.:

Council accepted a tender of \$ 95,000.00 from Tom Orr Cartage and Construction for the relining of this culvert. Our engineering firm advised, that because this culvert is located at 30 feet below the road grade, this would be the cheapest option. Unfortunately, as with the Ragged Chute Rd., today's construction costs are considerably high, and Council decided as a group to proceed in such a manner that which would allow us to obtain the best possible outcome for our road network. Half measures would ultimately lead to problems in the future.

-Future Road Repaving:

For 2008, we hope to repave a section of the Elmside Rd. from the Trudeau Line, south to the railway tracks in Norway Bay, and the Wharf Rd. from River Rd. north to the railway tracks. Sections of the Cemetery Rd., Ragged Chute Rd. and major portions of the Aylmer Rd. still need

to be repaved. These are a considerable budgetary expenses and will not be able to be completed in the short term. Nonetheless, we must start planning and budgeting for the future.

-Fire Safety Cover Plan:

The Quebec Government has mandated us to evaluate our fire service protection. Updated training for our Firemen and Firewomen is compulsory and is underway. Evaluation of high risk buildings in our municipality must be completed and a new fire truck with a Class A pump must be purchased. Our Cover Plan has yet to be accepted by the government and until then, we are waiting to purchase the new truck. This being said, we have accumulated a budget of \$220,000.00 for this equipment upgrade upon acceptance. This will be in late 2008 or early 2009. A well funded and well equipped Fire Department has always been a priority for our municipality and as such we will continue to invest in our future. We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteer firemen and firewomen and we greatly appreciate the time and energy they devote to our community.

-Closure of the Intrench Disposal Site:

The Quebec Ministry of Environment has unilaterally decided to close all of the Intrench Garbage Disposal Sites by January 2009. A new privately owned landfill has been proposed in the Danford Lake area to handle our MRC's needs. No approval of this site has been granted yet, so we are awaiting the outcome for this decision. Regardless, this is going to be a considerable increase financially for our waste disposal requirements. Until a decision is made by the Quebec Government, we have no clear guideline for what the future costs will be.

We have many other projects underway. I only chose to highlight some of the immediate ones. Flood zone identification, new septic system requirements, upgrades to the pier at Norway Bay, commuter rail service to the Ottawa area, high speed internet service and the continued maintenance of our municipal assets are constantly being looked at and worked on. Bristol's future is very promising. We have many superior assets and qualities in our community. Vision, guidance and dedication are needed to continue to advance Bristol as a true leader in the Pontiac. While attending the monthly MRC meetings in Campbell's Bay, I am reminded by the other Mayors that they strive to be more like Bristol. I take this as a huge compliment to our past leaders and volunteers who have shaped this municipality. I can say that under my leadership, I will strive to carry on and build upon the momentum and the foundation laid in the past by our community forefathers.

I welcome any questions, concerns and ideas. I can be reached at scott@bristolmunicipality.com or by calling the municipal office. In the future we hope to expand our website to be more interactive and ultimately help the Council communicate better to our residents.

Sincerely and expecting a great 2008.

Scott Wilson
Mayor, Municipality of Bristol