

Potton in brief, February 2012

This issue focuses on three topics that are the subject of heated debate in the community:

- the decision to not exercise the optional year (2012-2013) for snow clearing contracts
- the questioning of the purchase of a grader in 2011
- consideration by the council of the purchase of equipment to perform winter snow clearing on part of the municipal gravel roads and, thereby, some summer maintenance, especially ditching

1. Snow clearing contracts, 2008-2013, gravel roads

	Sector 1, 74.45 km	Sector 2, 71.56 km
2008-2009	\$230 000-\$3089/km	\$221 836-\$3106/km
2009-2010	\$240 000-\$3223/km	\$232 927-\$3254/km
2010-2011	\$252 500-\$3391/km	\$244 574-\$3417/km
2011-2012	\$265 000-\$3559/km	\$256 802-\$3588/km
2012-2013 (optional year)	\$285 000-\$3828/km	\$269 643-\$3768/km

Pre-tax amounts but sanding included.

Price per km in other municipalities with similar road network

	2011-2012	2012-2013
St-Étienne-de-Bolton	\$3 100	Same price
Bolton-Est	\$2 745	Call for tenders
Austin	\$3 730	Same price
Stanstead Township	\$2 786	\$2 855
Ogden, Sector 1	\$2 709	Call for tenders
Ogden, Sector 2	\$3 034	Call for tenders

Pre-tax amounts but sanding included. 2011-2012 average= \$3 017

These numbers brought council to decide to return to market for 2012-2013 and subsequent years.

2. Financial data on the grading of roads.

Year	Hours of grading	Cost	Hourly rate (taxes included)
2008	805	\$84 637	\$105.10
2009	851	\$89 701	\$105.47
2010	716	\$75 967	\$106.12
2011	By the municipality 948	\$67 689	\$71.44

Based on current data and lower costs, the grader will be fully paid after 5 years and the years following will allow substantial savings for taxpayers.

3. Purchase of equipment by the municipality.

The municipality could buy two heavy duty plow trucks, a shovel and a flatbed to plow a 50 km section of its road network, leaving 104 km to private enterprise. In summer, it could use the same equipment for digging ditches. The cost of snow removal would stand at \$ 3 135 per km, taxes included. These figures are disputed and the municipality will request a check of these by credible individuals. Finally, savings would also be realized in ditch digging.

A loan would be necessary for the purchase of the aforesaid equipment. Such a loan, although proposed at the special meeting held on Friday, February 17, was not adopted by council. Some councillors have stated their intention not to proceed, while others simply wished that the numbers be validated before deciding on the course of action.

Going forward in this matter is as follows: the council could decide to abandon this idea or, upon verification of the numbers, submit a new notice of motion for the adoption of a borrowing bylaw which if adopted, would necessarily be subject to public consultation, the holding of a register and, if necessary, a referendum.

The municipality soon will call for tenders for snow removal for 2012-2013 and subsequent years, for its entire network. Tenders, numbering 5, will include gravel roads, paved roads and municipal public spaces. This should allow for greater competition and, hopefully, will lead us to lower prices.

The municipality is not obliged to accept the offers if it considers that prices are too high. The early call for tenders, should council reject the offers, will allow for other courses of action.

Finally, the contract award for the area that the municipality could maintain, if a borrowing bylaw was adopted for the purchase of equipment, could be delayed until that issue is completely resolved.

Interested persons can obtain more complete financial information at the Town Hall.

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