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NEWS LOCAL

Cancelled: FCM membership fees

By Elaine Della-Mattia, Sault Star
Tuesday, January 13, 2015 8:55:56 EST PM

FCM

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Fédération canadienne des municipalités

Federation of Canadian Municipalities logo

City council has decided to withdraw its membership from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The membership fees for 2014 were \$10,604.29.

The move was opposed by Ward 1 Coun. Steve Butland who moved a counter motion requesting that the membership continue because the rationale for discontinuance can be applied to any other membership or organization to which the city belongs.

Butland argued that it is a federal election year and municipalities put issues on the table that are raised at election time and some become part of the political parties' platform.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities bills itself as the national voice of municipal government since 1901.

The organization has more than 2,000 members and represents the interests of municipalities on policy and programs that fall under federal jurisdictions.

Butland noted that the federal gas tax rebate and the HST refund to municipalities were the results of FCM lobbying.

"I believe we should remain a part of (FCM) and ... host the conference in 2017 and determine our spend level then," he said. "This is not a big amount of savings when you consider our budget in its whole." But Ward 3's Matthew Shoemaker countered that's the wrong way to look at the issue.

"We need to look at savings anywhere we can find it," he said.

Shoemaker argued that the municipality will still reap the benefits of any FCM lobby efforts the federal government imposes.

Ward 6 Coun. Ross Romano said that if the membership is retained, then the city should participate in its events and conferences.


That argument was backed up by Ward 1 Coun. Paul Christian, who said the municipality should try to utilize FCM to the city's benefit.

Mayor Christian Provenzano said he doesn't believe FCM membership is important to the city.

"Our direct link is our member of Parliament to the federal government, not FCM," Provenzano said. "I've lived and worked in Ottawa and I want my focus to be on Sault Ste. Marie and Northern Ontario and that's the spirit in which to (cancel) the membership."

The city has agreed to renew its membership in all other organizations it currently belongs to, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Canadian Institute of Forestry, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and Ontario Good Roads Association.

For 2015, corporate membership costs are estimated to ring in at just over \$25,000.

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Way to go Matt. Proud of what you are doing at the start of your mandate.

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