



RATEPAYERS CALL ON RM 220 COUNCIL TO STOP SECRET MEETINGS AND STONEWALLING

BULYEA, SK: The RM 220 Ratepayers Association (220 RPA) is calling on the RM of McKillop No. 220 Council to stop their secret meetings and stonewalling on issues of importance to ratepayers.

“This RM Council continues to blatantly ignore the concerns of the ratepayers by continuing to hold many of their decision-making meetings in secret and restricting access to municipal documents, both of which impede our rights to public accountability provisions in the Municipalities Act and other legislation,” says Garry Dixon, RM220 RPA. “These accusations are not arrived at lightly and without proof. The ratepayers are very concerned that these poor practices will only worsen if not corrected immediately.”



According to the Municipalities Act, ratepayers are entitled to inspect municipal documents such as: approved contracts, bylaws, resolutions, monthly accounting reports, contractor reports, employee reports, consultant reports, committee reports, public disclosure statements, oaths of office, municipality financial statements, and council meeting minutes. Copies of these documents are to be made available after paying reasonable costs and waiting a reasonable time.

The Municipality Act also states council meetings and committees meetings are required to be conducted in public, except when they concern long-range planning or are within the exemption of Part III of the Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy.

The RM 220 Council meeting minutes do eventually appear on the RM website, but they are usually lacking in detail and completeness. There have been no committee meeting minutes since last year and there is no notice of these meetings even taking place. The various reports that are approved at council meetings, for the most part, are never made available to the ratepayers. From a regular observer’s point of view, the overall grade for the RM Council in this area of transparency would be F—fail.

“If Council continues to hold secret and closed meetings, without proper authority to do so and without creating a appropriate and accurate record, it is as if these meetings never took place,” added Dixon. “But since decisions seem to be just popping out of thin air, we are left to believe that this improper and disrespectful activity is taking place to obstruct ratepayers’ ability to get the truth of what is happening.”

The 220 RPA believes that the only way we can assure that the RM Council is transparent and accountable is to press for a Management and Financial Audit to get to the bottom of this stonewalling behavior from our publicly elected representatives.

BACKGROUND: The Rural Municipality of McKillop No. 220 lies along the east shore of Last Mountain Lake, north of Lumsden, south of Strasbourg with Hwy #20 on its east boundary. There are 732 permanent residents and approximately 2,000 ratepayers in the RM.

If you have any questions please contact us at rm220rpa@gmail.com

Thank you.