

STATUS OF RM 220 RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

The RM 220 Ratepayers Association (RPA) hasn't been asked too often about the organizational structure of our association. In fact the only two written inquiries we have received are from:

- Reeve Arndt, who has publicly referred to our Association as a small group of people causing trouble, and
- Mr. Brent Johnson, McKillop Taxpayers Network & signatory on Referendum question #2 which asks ratepayers to leave the 108-year old electoral boundaries the same.

So we will provide clarity on the RPA to set the record straight.

The RPA was formed in the spring of 2017 by a group of ratepayers that felt this current RM Reeve and Council were ignoring ratepayers concerns expressed via January 2017 petitions for meetings concerning the following issues: Interim Development Control Bylaw (stopping all development in RM), Fox Point (giving away 17 acres of RM lakefront property to another organization) and the Garbage Bylaw (which for the first time saw the RM assess fees for residential garbage on tax notices).

After discussions on several occasions with the [Canadian Taxpayers Federation](#), and modeled after the national federation, we decided the RPA would be a **citizen's group dedicated to ensuring fair taxes, minimizing waste, reducing spending, and holding RM Council accountable** (This statement has appeared on all our publications along with our contact information—email and more recently thanks to our wonderful volunteers: a website, Facebook page and referendum signage).

In the spring of 2017 we had an email distribution list of over 100 supporters (and other household readers) interested in our press releases and newsletters regarding the RM of McKillop Council activities. We had over 400 RM ratepayers sign our petitions for both a financial and management audit of the RM in the summer of 2017 and almost 200 ratepayers sign the petition requesting a referendum to change the 108-year old electoral boundaries in the RM of McKillop. We stopped collecting signatures once we were well over the minimum required.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has 9 '[fundamental freedoms](#)' namely freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and of other media of communication, freedom of peaceful assembly, and [freedom of association](#).

Freedom of association is manifested through the right to join a trade union, to engage in free speech or to participate in debating societies, political parties, or any other club or [association](#), including religious denominations and organizations, fraternities, and sport clubs. Freedom of assembly is typically associated with political contexts. There is no requirement to define what [association](#) is.

The power of ratepayers collectively enables us to hold our publicly elected officials accountable to those that elected them.

It would be absurd to suggest that publicly elected officials can ignore ratepayers because the ratepayers don't belong to a registered, legal entity or don't have a Board of Directors that charge a fee to be part of a membership list.

The RPA has a volunteer leadership group of many experienced, knowledgeable people which is expanding. Not all choose to be publicly identified—which is their right of association. And now, after the 2018 tax mess that this RM Council has created, our email distribution list has exploded—with many more contacts inside and outside the RM of McKillop.

The RPA's ultimate goal? To not have a ratepayers association in the RM of McKillop. We know this won't happen with the current Reeve and bloc vote on Council. They are not interested in fair taxes, minimizing waste or reducing spending. They have evaded responsibility for their actions over the past 2 years with increased reliance on non-public legal opinions and closed meetings which cost all ratepayers in the RM.

But the ratepayers are getting closer to holding this Council accountable with the recent Class Action Court Application regarding the outrageous and unjustifiable 2018 tax increases and with the referendum for the fair revision of the 108-year old electoral boundaries. Surgite! (Latin for *Push On!*).

The Rural Municipality of McKillop No. 220 lies along the east shore of Last Mountain Lake, north of Lumsden. There are 732 permanent residents and approximately 2,000 ratepayers in the RM. The RM 220 RPA is a citizen's group dedicated to ensuring fair taxes, minimizing waste, reducing spending, and holding RM Council accountable.

If you have any questions or can help please contact us at rm220rpa@gmail.com, www.rpa220.ca or visit us on Facebook