

The Glengarry News

South Glengarry to re-consider museum funding

September 11 2019 BY TARA MACDONALD News Staff

The Glengarry Nor'Westers and Loyalists Museum (GNLM) was dismayed to discover that a large portion of their funding had been pulled earlier this year.

“We found out that we were not being given what we thought was the agreed upon annual funding in July,” said museum President Joyce Lewis. “It caused us serious concerns in regards to our financial stability.”

While funding from the Township of South Glengarry totalled \$35,000 in 2018; funding was cut to \$15,000 for 2019. According to sources, while there was never an official agreement in place, board members and some former council members such as current mayor Frank Prevost were under the impression that the funding was to be ongoing. “I thought it was an annual basis back in 2018, but it seems that it was only a one-time,” confirmed Mayor Prevost.

The issue was raised with the Township of South Glengarry at their bi-weekly Council meeting on September 3rd. “Our plea was that we must have sustainable funding that we can rely on each year,” explained President Lewis. “Our fundraising efforts all go towards keeping the museum open. We would really like to update the Loyalist exhibit as it is seriously in need of some TLC.”

Established by the Glengarry Historical Society in 1967 as a centennial project, the museum changed hands in 2015 and is now run by a board of directors. While the original intent was to honour and preserve the humble beginnings of Charlottenburgh for future generations; the museum has grown to include the history and social impact of the United Empire Loyalists and the Era of the Nor'Westers with Early Canadian Exploration thereby encompassing all of Glengarry's history and culture.

Over the years, the township has been very supportive of the GNLM and generously provided use of the former Williamstown schoolhouse which closed in 1962. Built in the 1860s, the building features Georgian-style architecture with original brickwork etched with the names of children who attended the school so many years ago.

The museum's current historical collection is valued at more than \$150,000, however there is no funding for new acquisitions that would be of cultural and historical value to the region. “Rather than every penny going to museum operations, we would like to be in the position to upgrade and renovate the Loyalist room which has remained static for many years,” explained the President. In addition, the museum would like to provide options for staff training and other needs.

Certain members of council – such as Martin Lang and Sam McDonnell – wished to learn more about how other municipalities were supporting their local museums and there was talk of the

possibility of reducing insurance costs through a partnership agreement. However, the general consensus was that an attempt be made to restore full funding in the 2020 budget.

“Heritage is very important to South Glengarry,” closed Mayor Prevost, “and I personally believe that we need to continue being partners into the future to make sure that we don’t lose it.”