

Meeting with MP Leona Alleslev - Dec. 8, 2020

Present: ASA Executive: Dave LeGallais (President)
Cheryl Rines (Treasurer), Jim Abram (Vice President)
& John Scherrer (Secretary)
MP: Leona Alleslev
Recording for ASA: Lydia Schuster

1. Update on current status of Centre including number of activities and members using the facilities at present.

- Dave provided an update/comparison of the current (reduced) number of activities and member attendance for October & November 2019 vs. October & November 2020.
- Reasons for the reductions:
 - Provincial and York Region Public Health requirements re. social distancing
 - Decision to only offer activities considered “safe” - which exclude the most popular activities that were available in 2019
 - Maximum of 10 people in any one area
 - Members not comfortable returning to the Centre under current conditions
- On closure of Srs.Ctre., ASA established a Reopening Committee that works with Karie and Andrew to determine what is safe to reintroduce at the centre and other programs and activities that can be offered virtually - e.g. Computer Club, Book Clubs, Seniors Centre Without Walls
- Biggest issue for seniors is social isolation - exacerbated by COVID-19.

2. Discussion on Financial situation

- Cheryl summarized ASA’s estimated financial losses for 2021:
 - Board decisions re extension of 2020 Memberships through 2021 and
 - Suspension of Activity Fees - **which combined amount to \$72,000.**

- Loss of 2 major fundraising events (\$20,000.) and other revenue could amount to a **total revenue loss of \$106,000. for 2021**
- Expenses for 2021 are estimated at **\$83,000.** which includes Town user fees
- John & Jim clarified that membership fees are earmarked for payment of Town's user fees and that all ASA activities are totally volunteer driven/delivered on a break-even premise.

3. Discussion re. Possible Federal Grants.

- Leona noted the availability of the New Horizons Grant for Seniors and possible Arts, Culture & Sports Grants that may be helpful - noting as well that they are mostly based on specific projects and do not provide funds for operating expenses.
- Jim noted that grants have been reviewed in terms of viability for ASA, but decided not to pursue given existing, uncertain conditions. Will consider for 2021.
- ASA is negotiating with Town re. possible reduction of user fees - outcome of which is unknown at this time since Town is in similar position (loss of revenue)
- ASA has considered option of converting some programs/activities to virtual - not viable at this time without access to set-up and program delivery support.
- Leona suggested she'd be willing to look into the possibility of a one-time Federal assistance option
- Dave noted Federal emergency provisions have been good for small businesses -suggested a similar program for non-profit agencies would help.
- Leona offered to check into this - to see if non-profits could access program.
- Leona suggested looking into the possibility of doing on-line fundraisers since society has moved to on-line purchasing.
- Jim noted challenges of virtual marketing and program delivery:
- 70% of members have & use internet; other 30% do not.

- Reopening Committee has investigated viable programs
- **Cost of internet service** is prohibitive for seniors that are dependent on Government pensions -
- **needs Government recognition and assistance** - Leona agreed today's society cannot function without computers and access to internet should be an essential service.
- Jim noted that beyond internet - seniors need better regulations/protection re. e.g. car & house insurance
- Leona agreed there has been a decrease in protection & oversight of regulators of monopolies and that as a result of COVID-19 which has brought these things into focus, the Federal Gov't. will need to address.
- Jim also raised the issue of CPP & OAS - noting that as Income tax on these contributions has been paid at time of earnings, CPP & OAS should be tax-exempt. This would help all seniors across the board.
- Leona noted this is a Federal decision - will see what can be done.

4. Covid situation as it stands now, where the Federal Government envisions it going in the next several months and any current information they have regarding vaccines and their distribution.

- Leona noted that Gov't. does not have a comprehensive plan for delivery of vaccine - current information is that the most vulnerable will be first to receive the vaccine
- Gov't has contracted with 6-8 vaccine suppliers - small quantities from each - & shortage of cold storage facilities
- Everyone needs to have a plan, but lack of information is the problem
- Dave estimates that seniors might get the vaccine in the spring
- Jim noted that 429 Million of the Pfizer vaccine have been ordered - Territories will get it later
- Leona: vaccination of the biggest percentage of the population may not happen until late 2021.

5. How is the Federal Government working in conjunction with the Provincial and Municipal Governments?

Is the Federal Government taking any action on reported sub standard conditions in Long Care Facilities?

- Leona noted Long Term Care is an area of great concern:
- How should LTC be delivered - Private vs. Universal health care - part of Canada Health Act with standards of of delivery like National Health Care; regulated and inspected
- Jim - Provinces have regulations that don't get enforced. PSW's should not have to hold multiple jobs in order to earn a living. Federal Gov't. needs to ensure LTC is equal across the country.
- Federal Transfer Payments to provinces need to be looked at
- Delivery of LTC is a Provincial responsibility
- Provinces are sitting on money
- Leona - Parliamentary Budget Office needs to pursue accountability
- Leona - Major challenges have surfaced and need to be addressed.

6. Seek any input they may have for improving our reopening strategies over the next few months.