

May 16, 2019

Municipality of Oakland-Wawanesa
54 Main Street, PO Box 28
Nesbitt MB R0K 1P0

ATTN: CAO Joni Swidnicki and members of council

I am writing to request a public apology from head of council Dave Kreklewich and ask that council consider censuring Mr. Kreklewich under the Council Members' Code of Conduct.

The Code states: "Public confidence and public trust are essential to good governance." Under penalty of censure, council members are obliged to "govern in a fair, objective and transparent manner and in the best interests of the municipality at all times."

However, recent actions suggest Mr. Kreklewich tried to conceal the increased municipal tax burden placed on Oakland residents since amalgamation with Wawanesa in 2015. In public and private exchanges, Mr. Kreklewich rejected information culled from government reports, promoted a dubious claim of tax savings and operated in a hostile, secretive manner benefitting a particular interest group.

On April 15, Mr. Kreklewich publicly denounced provincial data indicating rural residents contribute 86% towards shared services costs with Wawanesa as "incorrect." During a May 3 council meeting, he dismissed budget figures showing a 39.9% increase in municipal taxes paid by Oakland landowners between 2015 and 2018 as "untruthful."

Instead, Mr. Kreklewich volunteered the name of one Oakland resident who will pay less property tax in 2019 than 2013. Asked to explain his example, given rising property values and higher municipal mill rates impacting over 1,000 rural residents, Mr. Kreklewich refused several requests to provide details.

Public documents on the lone Oakland property cited by Mr. Kreklewich show municipal taxes increased from \$1,372 to \$1,749 between 2013 and 2019. While a provincial school tax refund does reduce the overall tax bill, the resident will still pay 27% higher municipal taxes this year compared to 2013. These figures have been confirmed by Oakland-Wawanesa staff.

Council Members' Code of Conduct is intended to protect the municipality from behaviour by elected officials that damages public confidence and public trust.

Did Mr. Kreklewich purposely try to hide the truth about rural taxation? Did he not know the facts? Was he unaware that local council sets municipal taxes but does not control school taxes or provincial school tax rebates? Whichever the case, misinformation is unbecoming to the office Mr. Kreklewich holds.

I invite Mr. Krelewich to apologize for his specious attacks and correct the public record. I also solicit council to enforce its policy for fair, open and honest debate within Oakland-Wawanesa.

Sincerely,


Glen Kirby
SE 24-8-19 W