

# HCMVotes 2018

## All Candidates Meeting Questions Answered

### Important to Know Before You Vote

There have been a number of questions asked by candidates and answered by staff and posted on the municipal website under “**Elections – Q & A**”.

There were also a number of issues identified at the All Candidates meeting that contain incorrect information and should be made clear for appropriate and accurate discussion prior to voting. Please review to find accurate responses based on legislation and municipal documents.



The Municipality has had a **Strategic Plan** which was created in 2013 and reviewed and updated every year since. It has helped to form Council's and employee priorities for the year, set the municipal budget and provide direction to staff.

When people ask, why did they do xyz? The answer in part is because Council created this list of priorities to follow.

Top 5 2014		Comments
<b>Complete application for expansion of Bissett Creek waste site</b>	6	Completed
<b>Update website</b>	5	Ongoing
<b>Review recycling program</b>	4	Completed
<b>Review/add staff pension/benefits</b>	4	Completed
<b>Investigate municipal composting</b>	3	Outstanding
<b>Maintain fiscal responsibility</b>	3	Ongoing
Top 5 2015		
<b>Investigate municipal composting</b>	4	Outstanding
<b>Review staffing needs &amp; opportunities</b>	4	Ongoing
<b>Review recycling program</b>	3	Completed
<b>Examine alternate sources of revenue (including grants, user fees etc.)</b>	3	Ongoing
<b>Lobby for changes to Municipal Elections Act – re: election of head of council.</b>	3	Participated in MMAH review
<b>Review Boat Launch Infrastructure</b>	3	Partially – Stonecliffe Break wall Outstanding
<b>Look into improved archival storage</b>	3	Completed
Top 5 2016		
<b>Improve signage on buildings and parks</b>	5	Completed
<b>Look into improved archival storage</b>	4	Completed
<b>Develop a communications strategy</b>	4	Completed
<b>Beautification Program</b>	4	Completed
<b>Review Boat Launch Infrastructure</b>	3	See above
<b>Look at expanding wellness clinics – lobby the county</b>	3	? Not certain there is really a need.
<b>Investigating more community recreation/social programs</b>	3	Ongoing – Healthy Kids, Senior Programming, Lending hub
Top 5 2017 – unable to		
<b>Mackey Park upgrades (walking trail)</b>	5	?
<b>Develop a communications strategy</b>	4	Completed
<b>Economic Development Strategy</b>	4	Stakeholder Consultations Required
<b>Examine alternate sources of revenue</b>	4	Ongoing
<b>Municipal Marketing Strategy</b>	3	Stakeholder Consultations Required

This is the chart created in 2014 when the Plan was last reviewed in detail through public consultation. Members of the public were invited, surveys were circulated, and there was little response. The response that was received was considered by Council and helped to form the following list which was then voted on by Council and staff as per direction of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs who assisted with the process.

Overall Ranking	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total Votes (out of 10)	Rank
Review recycling program	4	3	1	2	10	1
Complete application for expansion of Bissett Creek waste site	6	2	0	1	9	2
Investigate municipal composting	3	4	2	0	9	3
Examine alternate sources of revenue	2	3	0	4	9	4
Mackey Park upgrades (walking trail)	1	2	1	5	9	5
Develop a communications strategy	1	0	4	4	9	6
Review staffing needs & opportunities	1	4	2	1	8	7
Review Boat Launch Infrastructure	1	3	3	1	8	8
Look into improved archival storage	0	3	4	1	8	9
Improve signage on buildings and parks	0	2	5	1	8	10
Update website	5	2	0	0	7	11
Review/add staff pension/benefits	4	0	2	1	7	12
Look at expanding wellness clinics – lobby the county	1	1	3	2	7	13
Lobby for changes to Municipal Elections Act – re: election of head of council.	2	3	1	0	6	14
Look into the erosion at Mackey Park	2	2	0	2	6	15
Economic Development Strategy	1	0	1	4	6	16
Municipal Marketing Strategy	0	2	1	3	6	17
Maintain fiscal responsibility	3	1	0	1	5	18
Reviewing equipment needs of roads department/disposal sites	2	0	1	2	5	19
Investigating more community recreation/social programs	0	1	3	1	5	20
Beautification Program	0	0	4	1	5	21
Develop list of drivers/persons in need for transportation	0	1	2	0	3	22
By-law review (for enforcement purposes)	0	1	0	2	3	23
Settle ORNGE Contract	1	0	0	1	2	24

## Other Questions – a bit of clarification

1. **Office Closure Thursdays** – there are few reasons that people come to the municipal office and few people do. The reasons are generally taxes, tipping tickets, fire permits and occasionally to book the facility. How is it inconvenient to have one day a week where you are unable to attend the office?
  - Even with the office closed on Thursday, it is very rare that we ever have more than one person in the office at any time, or where anyone ever has to wait behind someone else for service.

- When the municipal offices were re-opened after renovations, staff stopped the process of closing on Thursdays. When Noella began her leave, the remaining staff were working not only their own jobs but filling in, not just doing but learning a job that none of us were ever trained in.
- Crystal, who has stepped up to learn on the job and help us through this, was also responsible for training the individual hired to help her.
- Stephany was the only person who bothered to apply for the job when it became vacant – in fact that was the case for both jobs that she is now performing.
- Closing the office on Thursdays was requested of Council again in March of 2018 to assist staff is learning the Treasurer's job in an uninterrupted environment.
- Although many believe that there is little done at the municipal office, the duties, responsibilities and demands are endless.
- We have done this before and are willing to do so again. If anyone feels that they are not getting value for their taxes, please, feel free to come into the office and job shadow any of us on any given day. You may just wish to call ahead to ensure that we are not out of the office.

## 2. Advance notice of meetings.

- Head, Clara & Maria provides notice for all decisions requiring notice as per the Municipal Notice By-Law which may be located on our website and as per specific and appropriate legislation.
- The Council meeting agenda is posted at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. For decades it was not posted at all, until last year, it was posted Friday morning for a Friday afternoon meeting. This is the norm and there are good reasons for it.
- A municipality would never get work done if it consulted with the electorate every time it had a decision to make; that is why representatives are elected.
- No lawyer or municipal expert in Ontario would recommend an open Q & A at a council meeting; especially at the beginning in order to discuss items on the agenda. Decisions are to be made based on fact, representation and not emotion and the loudest lobby group.
- Residents do not have time to investigate every decision and find accurate information; that is why they elect representatives who rely on staff and other experts at staff's disposal to inform council and make recommendations.
- The fact that Head, Clara & Maria does not have a Q&A is based on a decision of Council made after training and consultation with legal representatives in 2009. Council may reconsider this situation if it so chooses.
- Council makes decisions. Stakeholder consultation is important however; Council is elected to make decisions on behalf of the electorate based on the laws and regulations passed by the province and policy and by-laws passed by the municipality.



**IMPORTANT**

**NOTICE**

**.....PLEASE READ**

## 3. Referendum and questions on the ballot.

- Referendum are required to be held according to specific instructions and in Ontario only allowed as a question on a ballot – run similar to an election and are expensive.
- The challenge with referendum is the same as with elections – people make decisions without knowing all the facts.
- A perfect example is how in the past weeks, council's decision to brush along the road allowance at Harvey Creek Road to allow access to residents to the Ottawa River became the installation of a park, playground equipment and a boat launch. People don't bother to find out the truth, and then make assumptions. The "telephone" game changes the story every time it is retold.

- It is likely that many people have not read this document to this point; and that's OK because it is not their job to make decisions on behalf of the municipality. That job belongs to Council and staff.
- The one important job that the electorate has though is to make an informed voting decision.

4. **General Government** budget increases year over year – if you look on the budget working document for the municipality, an excerpt below, you can see the budget items which are included under general government. A similar document is created for every year, during budget time, and those from 2012 on may be located on our website under Administration and Finance.

- Detailed comparisons and explanations are located in the Reports to Council – Budget for each year which point out anomalies, special projects etc. which will skew an annual budget.
- For each of the years where there were significant jumps in any budget category, the explanation is provided in those documents.
- The answer to the question, why has General Government increased so much is fully explained in those documents.

The categories which support the operations of the entire municipality include:

61-1121	Salaries/Wage	303,849	309,309	292,576	\$5,000 - OT and vacation buy out; \$5,000 - increased hours for rec/caretaker position to permanent 3 days per week. \$17,000 New part time BLE Officer position.
61-1131	Payroll Taxes	19,600	17,512	18,000	
61-1132	Employment Benefits	15,000	13,890	15,000	
61-1133	WSIB Employer	8,500	6,564	8,500	
61-1134	EHT	5,000	5,037	5,250	
61-1135	Vacation Pay Employer	5,000	3,325	6,000	
61-1136	Employee Pension/RRSP Contributions	19,600	17,835	17,000	
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 376,549</b>	<b>\$ 373,472</b>	<b>\$ 362,326</b>	

And

61-1311	Uncollectable Revenue - Admin	200	-	200	
61-1312	Penny Rounding	-	0	-	
61-1313	Bank Charges	2,500	2,106	2,500	
61-1314	Convenience Fee	-	243	275	
61-1315	Surplus Land Sale Expense	-	-	-	
61-1316	Accessibility - Admin	-	-	1,000	
61-1317	Resource Materials - Admin	250	278	250	
61-1318	Education & Training - Admin	6,500	5,836	6,500	
61-1319	Miscellaneous - Admin	750	1,077	1,250	\$500 - Employee Christmas party
61-1323	Mileage - Admin	2,000	1,341	2,000	
61-1341	Promotion - Admin	1,000	-	1,500	pens, t-shirts, brochures
61-1342	Supplies - Office	2,000	3,312	2,000	
61-1343	Signage - MTO	1,200	-	1,200	
61-1344	Permits & Fees - Admin	-	19	25	
61-1345	Postage & Courier	2,500	1,256	2,000	
61-1353	Audit Fees	26,500	12,588	38,000	Normal plus extra work required to assist with year end.
61-1354	Legal Fees	2,500	11,691	70,000	Owing from 2017. \$6,000 retainer plus.
61-1355	Internet	840	960	1,000	
61-1356	Insurance	22,500	21,521	25,000	increase liability from 25 mil to 50
61-1357	IT Services	1,350	1,287	1,350	web hosting and upgrades to website
61-1358	Advertising	250	-	250	
61-1361	Computer Software	1,000	526	1,000	
61-1362	Computer Hardware	1,500	2,713	1,500	
61-1363	Taxation & Accounting Software	16,000	19,178	5,000	annual software licensing - assistance with changes
61-1366	Membership Fees - Admin	2,000	2,485	2,500	
61-1379	Contingency - Admin	-	-	-	
61-1391	Special Projects - Admin	-	-	-	
61-1411	Property/Office Maintenance & Repair	2,000	3,878	2,000	
61-1412	Furniture & Equipment - Office	2,000	2,640	1,200	
61-1413	Repair - Office	-	-	-	
61-1458	Telephone - Office	1,800	1,299	1,800	
61-1611	Library Expenses	-	2,738	-	
61-1711	HST	8,500	-	-	Will not be used for 2018
	<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 107,640</b>	<b>\$ 98,934</b>	<b>\$ 171,300</b>	

- The explanations for increases are provided each year in the budget reports to Council. They are always posted on the municipal website and are available for public review and

comment prior to Council passing its budget. Any unusual, new or discontinued expense or revenue normally has an explanation in the comments section as above. You can see that for 2018 – legal fees increased the budget by nearly 100%. Other one off expenses includes extra costs of audit services to assist with year end as our Treasurer has been on leave. This quickly explains the increase of nearly \$100,000 for 2018.

- Some of the expenses in General Government include wages and wage expenses, for all employees. Due to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (MFIPPA) legislation, the amount an individual is paid is a protected amount – even if that person is a municipal employee.

- As HCM only has one person in some departments – by showing wages by department – we are violating the requirements of MFIPPA.



- The wages you see reflect increases provided across the pay grid in 2016 after a thorough review of comparative salaries from similarly sized municipalities. HCM is still near the lowest paid work force in municipal service in Ontario. We are not the smallest municipality.

- Wage expenses including Employer Health Tax, Employment Insurance Premiums, and WSIB etc. all continue to increase.

- Other increases simply reflect the annual cost of living for all operative expenses. Postage increases, courier costs increase, purchase of supplies increases.
- If you compare HCM to other municipalities, you have to consider that our administrative staff completes administrative tasks for ALL departments. We do not have the luxury of secretaries for each department, or staff members in those departments who perform their own administrative tasks. They all fall under General Government.
- Past Council thought that having an educated and knowledgeable workforce was also important. This too comes with a price tag although less than \$10,000 per year for all departments and all employees.

## 5. Recreation

- Since 2014, Council created a Recreation committee which has since its inception, raised funds that have been put back into the municipality through special projects, improvements to facilities, special events and equipment purchases.

- Every year it makes a profit, some of which is spent, some of which is used to fund activities the next year.

- Funds raised also amount to the cost of the salaried support position Council has just approved to fill 3 days per week, in conjunction with cleaning services.



## 6. Grants

- Annually for some time, staff have been applying for and receiving grants to make improvements to your community. There are many different grants from programming to infrastructure to equipment. We have funded playground equipment, the pavilion at Old Mackey Park, Canada Day Celebrations, Homecoming, the addition to the hall, the new kitchen, new hall washrooms, new hall flooring, ball diamond improvements, children's, seniors and intergenerational

programming, air conditioning for the community centre, docks for the boat launches, upgraded outhouses, waste and recycling at the boat launches and much more.

- Some grants fall under Recreation and provide intergenerational, children's and senior's programming including exercise classes; most fall under capital, infrastructure etc.

### 7. Grants and taxpayer money

- The fact that all grants are made up of taxpayer money is true however; as one of our past Mayors was fond of saying – the funds have been committed by the province or the federal government – let's make sure we get our share of it. If we don't, someone else will.



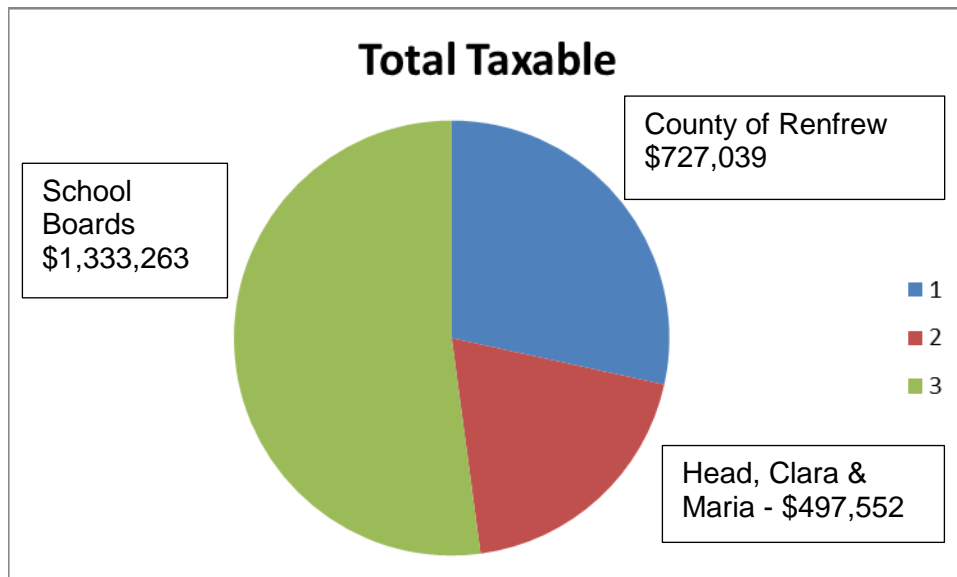
- Staff have been mandated by Council through direction such as that above by our previous council as well as via the Strategic Planning document above.

### 8. Recreation – grants and Homecoming – profit

- Again, Council approved a Recreation Committee and provided staffing to support it. The Recreation committee to date has continued to earn profits each year, far in excess of the costs of the staff person allocated to them.
- Although Homecoming took a considerable amount of staff time, the event funded itself, realizing a profit by event end.
- Again, directed by Council via the Strategic Planning Document above.

9. **Taxation** - The amount of money received for municipal purposes from taxation is a small portion of what we collect and forward to the County and the province for education. The County takes more than we do. The School boards receive the majority.

This graph shows the breakdown of taxes collected from all classes and either kept or forwarded.



- The last column of the following chart shows the amount of funds HCM keeps to run operations from the residential taxes received per year.
- More than that is going to the County, for limited services to residents. Because of proportional representation based on population, HCM has minimal influence at the County table.
- We don't get much for what we forward.

Year	General Government Costs	Recreation Committee Budget	Council Contribution to Rec Committee (Canada Day)	Grants Received Per year	Rec Committee Annual Profit after all expenses and projects	\$ Received from Residential Taxes Annually
2018	444,626	33,300	2,500	52,809	8,550	\$129,000
2017	471,389	36,781	4,000	130,619	14,600	\$126,156
2016	432,607	32,164	1,000	43,627	19,851	\$119,860
2015	383,679	25,550	1,000	34,096	7,889	\$112,193
2014	370,000			16,700	4,300	
2013	333,914			99,550		

#### 10. Attracting Families

- Head, Clara & Maria has more kids now than it has had in years. We have two new families move in just this past year (or more) alone. They are moving here, bringing their kids and building new homes.
- **ALL** of the money spent on kids programing this summer has come from the County of Renfrew through their Healthy Kids program. For those of you who disapprove, rest assured not one dime of your money from HCM coffers was spent on this programming – including nearly ALL of the staffing costs which were paid for through the program. (Reports are prepared by staff.)
- Staff have focused on seniors funding and due to our location and demographics, ensured that our funding was considered “intergenerational” so that we could provide benefits for all age groups. Seniors funding also provides a salary for extra staffing to manage this programming.

#### 11. ATV and Snowmobile By-laws – It is thought that this was explained Wednesday night however; it bears repeating.

- In Ontario, if a municipality does not have an ATV By-law, ATVs are NOT ALLOWED on your roads. We are fixing this issue. Nothing more.
- As for the Snowmobile By-Law – without one, any enforcement is limited. The OPP can come to our community but technically are not able to lay fines for speeding even without this.
  - Stakeholder talks including those with MLSC included numerous mentions of signs to slow people down. About marking Community Safety Zones. Without a by-law to go with the signs, they are useless. A by-law again is required.



## 12. Harvey Creek Road

- It is possible that this entire situation is misunderstanding based on inaccurate information? A resident requested that Council consider opening the end of either Harvey Creek Road or Boudreau Road to allow access to the river for residents.
- Boudreau Road has a cliff – not possible.
- Harvey Creek Road has a road allowance which goes directly to the water. That is why municipalities retain them and do not sell them to adjacent property owners. Council made a decision to approve brushing – a little gravel so that people could park there and access the river. There is not going to be a park. There is not going to be a boat launch or dock. There is not going to be signage or anything to even resemble a park. If the residents would like a picnic table we could add one.
- When making their recommendation to Council staff reviewed a historic file and found a petition from members of Harvey Creek Road who were upset that Council blocked their access to the river at the end of the road back in 2006 and requested that Council restore it. Some of those same people signed the new petition?

## 13. **Plowing** from the end of Jennings Road through **Old Mackey Park** to the river for access for ice fishing.

- What seems like a simple request is much more complicated than most people would expect. The simplest explanation for not blocking access in 2017 would be that it was trespass on municipal property closed for the season. The reasons behind it are much more involved and are outlined below. It may seem at first glance that you are “saving some taxpayer bucks” but as usual, there is much more to consider. Councillor Chartrand asked staff to look into this issue months ago and a legal opinion was obtained.



- The municipality has a policy which prevents people not employed by or contracted with the municipality from working on municipal property. This is due in part to legislation such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Occupier’s Liability Act, the Municipal Act and the Negligence Act. It also involves the potential for damages and liability under the Highway Traffic Act for roads not properly maintained to legislated Minimum Maintenance Standards.
- Staff in 2017-2018 were responding to the situation as per existing Council policy. People are not allowed to work on municipal property AND Jennings Road is only to be plowed to the turnaround at the graveyard. We did not have the authority to ask our contractor to extend his plowing. We were concerned with the issues as per legislation above.
- People are concerned with staff making decisions not authorized by Council or spending too much money. People complain when employees follow council policy and direction. We did not have the authority to do anything different. Charges could have been laid for people working on municipal roads without permission. They weren’t.

- In the past, there was considerable discussion about the costs of plowing Jennings Road from Mrs. Condie's driveway to the graveyard to allow access for Mr. VanderHorn and/or the Boy Scouts. Ratepayers did not want council spending their money for things that didn't benefit them.
- If the access was not plowed back in by staff in January, and left accessible, and someone became injured or damaged their vehicle while on municipal property, the municipality would be liable. If the roads were not maintained appropriately, the municipality could be sued and we would lose.
- In order to correct the situation for the 2018-2019 winter season, staff followed council direction and consulted with the municipal counsel and obtained a legal opinion which has been provided to candidates and council for their information. This was to be brought to the new Council in December for decision – and will be.

14. **Marking your Ballot** - Not from the all Candidates meeting – but something that was asked about how to mark your ballot. There will be **two separate ballots** – one for councillors, one for mayor.

- When completing your ballot, it is OK to mark fewer than the maximum number of candidates allowed but not to go over.
- The ballot for councillor will say “You may vote for up to 4 candidates” or something quite similar.
  - This means you may to choose to vote for 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 candidates. Your ballot will be good and your vote will be counted.
  - If however, you vote for 5 or 6 or more candidates – your entire ballot will be void and none of the votes for councillor will be counted.
- The ballot for mayor will say “you may vote for 1 candidate” or something quite similar.
  - This means you can only mark your ballot beside one candidate's name.
  - If you make marks beside both, you entire ballot will be void and your vote for mayor will not be counted.

Councillor	Mayor
<input type="checkbox"/> Joe Smith	<input type="checkbox"/> Jane Doe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Citizen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mary Hill
<input type="checkbox"/> Jane Doe	
<input type="checkbox"/> Fred Rubble	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mary Hill	

15. **Nepotism**

- The municipality has a Hiring By-Law which is followed faithfully upon hiring new staff. There are no, nor have there ever been any contraventions of that by-law in any hiring practises within Head, Clara & Maria at least since 2005. We can't speak to before that time, as we were not here.
- An objective grading system is created for each job before the job is advertised. It is graded by two people with an average calculated to make the hiring decision.
- The by-law may be located at <http://www.townshipsofheadclaramaria.ca/download.php?dl=YToyOntzOjI6ImkljtzOjI6Ijc0IjtzOjM6ImtleSI7aTo0O30=>
- Some of the people on Council or on staff today are there because no one else wanted the job.