

County may bid for former hospital

By WES KELLER
Freelance Reporter

Dufferin County council is supporting a bid to retain long-term hospital beds, and could end up seeking ownership of the former Shelburne District Hospital, now the "Shelburne campus" of Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC).

In any event, said Mayor Ed Crewson, there's a need to sit with HHCC and ministry officials in an effort to find a way to keep the long-term beds where they are.

The hospital board at its next meeting will consider CEO Cholly Boland's recommendation to close all 22 beds at Shelburne and move 13 of them to

Orangeville. In recent interviews, Mr. Boland has suggested the X-ray facility would remain at Shelburne although it might be moved to a different location.

But later, he told this newspaper that his recommendation was only "under study."

At county council last week, Mayor Crewson said there is "an overwhelming groundswell of opposition to closing long-term beds in Shelburne." He said the care for patients at Shelburne is "dramatically different from that of acute care in Orangeville."

He cited an instance of the family of a palliative care patient feeling so good about the level of

care that they wondered if they shouldn't be paying.

The mayor said the hospital CEO is taking his recommendation to the board "in response to what he believes is a frozen budget. His one course of action is to close the beds at Shelburne and move 13 to Orangeville."

A specific breakdown of estimated budgetary savings was not immediately available but Mr. Boland has said there would be layoffs.

Shelburne council had already resolved to form a sub committee to "address the impact and best practices for health care in Town of Shelburne as a public strategy meeting approach."

"All we're asking for is

the minister to be open to considering alternatives," Mayor Crewson said last week.

"One the county should consider, I would suggest, the level of care provided there is (similar to) Dufferin Oaks. If a hip replacement, you go there to convalesce. It is a place friendly, supportive. We're all going to have to die one day. The palliative level of care there is terrific."

He said he did broach the topic of the county taking over the Shelburne campus.

"They didn't say no," he said, and added that it would matter not whether HHCC or The Oaks administered the facility, so long as the level of care continued.

Town facing tough 2010 budget challenge

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province, which show the reserve fund usages meet the criteria of which they are intended.

Currently, the obligatory reserves in Orangeville are \$4.8 million for development charges (slated for growth-related infrastructure projects such as road widening), \$4.2 million for wastewater management and \$660,000 for parks and recreation.

Deputy Mayor Warren Maycock advocated resorting to reserves to keep the local town-only tax increase to zero in 2009. Mr. Maycock, who

also serves on county council, pointed out that the county used about 17 per cent of the county's gas tax revenue from the federal government to help keep the county levy increase at less than one per cent.

If ever there was a time to rely on reserves, Mr. Maycock says, 2010 is it. "Hopefully, the majority of council will see fit to do that."

In 2009, the town passed a budget that included a 2.5-per cent town-only tax increase. Because of actual decreases at county and no increase in the education levy, Orangeville home-

owners saw their overall tax bills go up just .25 per cent.

The town-only increase was to raise funds to allow Orangeville to have money to match federal and provincial infrastructure stimulus funds and go ahead with major capital projects.

Councillor Mary Rose, who supported this measure in 2009, said that this year "is going to be a very difficult time for the town. Even to maintain the services we already have is going to be a stretch."

She doubts, however, that there will be a total consensus on the budget committee, since each

member has the inclination and innate obligation to get as much as she or he can for whatever municipal cause they oversee on the committees on which they serve.

"Everyone has their projects they will want to fight for," said Ms. Rose. "If we can come away with an increase close to the cost of living, or less, we will be doing well."

In summation, she cited a variation of a common Chinese saying. "We are living in an interesting time."

And some of the councillors' interest might relate to the fact 2010 is an election year.

Arts Festival gala a success

The gourmet food was pronounced fantastic, the juried art work by 35 of the region's artists wonderful and the music by Russell Scott and Lisa Watson added up to a memorable Headwaters Arts Festival gala at the Alton Mill.

Features included an outdoor sculpture exhibit and two curated exhibitions in partnership with the Alton Mill and Headwaters Arts plus works from more than 30 artists' studios.

The fifth annual

Armchairs, Authors and Art featured authors Margaret Wente, John Bemrose, Robert Rotenberg and Catherine Gildiner, and as usual, Nancy Frater at BookLore served up a great evening of literature and laughs.

There was also a Kids' Fest with fun-filled activities for all kids of all ages, and a Rik Emmett music workshop where aspiring musicians came out to learn key steps to becoming a more accomplished performer.



Contributed Photo

FAMILY TRANSITION PLACE saw its first-ever Hole-in-One winner at this year's golf tournament. Here, Jack Angle receives his \$10,000 prize from Douglas Wall of Sun Life Financial and Jessica Bevenborn of KW Insurance Brokers. Also congratulating Jack is Norah Kennedy, Executive Director of Family Transition Place.

RBC announces first Olympic torchbearer

Jason Ruby has been selected by RBC as a 2010 Olympic Torchbearer for making a pledge to create a better Canada by donating to his local foodbank and helping those in need.

"I am excited and honoured to be part of something so extraordinary as the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay and I want to thank RBC for this opportunity," said Mr. Ruby.

"We are pleased to announce Jason Ruby as a 2010 Olympic Torchbearer and to recog-

nize that their commitment will help build a lasting legacy for Orangeville and for Canada," said Bruce Gehlen, RBC's regional vice president.

"Jason is an inspiration to us all and demonstrates how each of us can make a difference. To be part of the Olympic Torch Relay is a unique and exciting opportunity and RBC is proud to offer Canadians a chance to participate in the Olympic celebrations and share in the Olympic Spirit."

Residents of

Orangeville are encouraged to come out and cheer on torchbearers as they make their way across Canada in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay. The Olympic Flame will stop in Orangeville on December 28 for a large community celebration that afternoon.

Approximately 12,000 Canadians will carry the flame across the country with millions more cheering and supporting them. The 2010 Olympic Torch Relay began on October 30, 2009 with the arrival

of the flame in Victoria following a traditional lighting ceremony in Greece. The Olympic Flame will now travel from coast to coast to coast through every province and territory in Canada - spanning 45,000 kilometers and over 1,000 communities over the course of 106 days. It will end at B.C. Place on February 12, 2010, with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron, signaling the start of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

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