

## RM says it's not at fault for tipping confusion

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The RM of Tache says it's not to blame for confusion on fees being added for septic tipping.

The municipality sent a 22-page PDF received from the Public Utilities Board (PUB) to the private septic hauling companies. But the RM failed to highlight in the document or in the email a new fee of \$75 per load for dumps between Oct. 16 and May 31 of each year.



SUPPLIED The RM of Tache says it's not at fault for confusion on septic tipping fees at the Landmark lagoon.

The fee was mentioned near the end of the document on page 21.

According to CAO Ken Allen, the RM brought the issue back to council last week to try and communicate and clarify the issue to the public.

According to the RM during a council meeting, dumping in Landmark's lagoon used to be free for haulers. But the municipality still had to pay for the treatment of the waste, through Landmark tax dollars. The new fee is aimed to address that cost.

Mayor Armand Poirier suggested the companies can build and maintain their own lagoons if they don't want to pay the extra fees.

"The lagoon was built by the town, they can just as easily haul out of the RM with no extra fee," Poirier said.

Allen says that because the lagoon is close to the end of its life, it's important to start saving up money so the RM can pay for reconstruction.

"They're only complaining now because it was free before," said Allen.

Allen acknowledged that the municipality needs to be clearer about why the fees were added, and highlight the changes better.

Stephane Massicotte of Rolly's Septic Service said that he hasn't been reimbursed for the around \$1,000 he lost since Jan. 1. Now he wants the RM to try and lower the \$75 fee.

"Just make the tipping fees a little more fair, just a more reasonable price," said Massicotte in a phone call.

He said that an even bigger problem is for residents with septic tanks, he fears their property value will go down, because now they have an extra expense in the colder months.

Coun. Steven Bowker (Ward 1) said the fees being added was self-inflicted by the hauling companies. After they complained to the PUB about a proposed bylaw by the RM in 2016, and that it's the PUB that enforced the new change, not the RM. Although PUB documents from April 2022 show the RM requested a revision of water and wastewater rates and that the PUB's optional \$75 fee was approved by the RM.

Poirier said that it would be unwise for the RM to go against what the PUB recommends.

Currently, haulers are paying \$60 for large loads, and \$30 for small loads, along with the seasonal \$75 fee.

Coun. Natasha Lapeire (Ward 6) said she has heard from residents with holding tanks who feel the hauling companies are double dipping on charging them. She wants people to know that the true cost of the service is more expensive than what they had been charged for over 25 years.