

## Billings requests meeting with District Services officials on budget

**Tom Sasvari**  
The Recorder

KAGAWONG—Billings Township council is requesting a meeting with Manitoulin Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) representatives concerning budget increases for 2013.

“The DSB has been returning surplus funds back to the municipalities for the last few years, so why is it in this most recent budget they are asking for more?” asked Councillor Brian Parker, noting that the 2013 DSB budget has been set with an overall increase of 2.21 percent, during a council meeting last week.

“They have said they lost one government grant this year that has contributed toward the increase,” said Mayor Austin Hunt, who noted the increase in budget, “is not for just our board, DSB budgets went up throughout Northern Ontario.”

Mr. Parker suggested, “the DSB

administration costs are very high. You have to question where all this money is going. It is time to start looking at all of this and getting some answers to questions.”

“They are not asking us (as municipalities) to increase our share of the budget, they are telling us,” said Councillor Tom Imrie, who attended the most recent DSB annual general meeting. “This was only the second annual general meeting they have held in over 10 years of existence. There wasn’t a lot provided as to where all the money is going. It seems there is a lot of duplication and effort, with programs that are provided by DSB which we contribute to, but are also provided by other Island agencies. And monies are being spent without adequate input from municipalities.”

Mr. Imrie said, “we receive bills as our share of costs, but we don’t know where all the money is going

and why there is an increase this year. It is just another demand being placed on municipalities that we can’t afford. We aren’t really getting much in the way of services from the DSB except for ambulance services.”

“DSB’s were created to provide an economic way of delivering services but this hasn’t been the case,” said Mr. Parker.

It was pointed out by township clerk Kathy McDonald that the province of Ontario has cut funding it provides to municipalities for its share of DSB budget costs.

Council agreed it should invite its representative on the DSB board, Lou Addison, and DSB CAO Fern Dominelli to attend a future council meeting to discuss their concerns.

“If the province is cutting back our funding for DSB, it means taxpayers are on the cuff to come up with more funds,” said Mr. Imrie.

Mr. Parker said he would like an

overview of the programs DSB provides presented to council.

“We did previously, and this is where we are seeing a lot of overlap in programs and funding we are putting out for them,” said Mr. Imrie.

“I would like to know what the percentage is of funding the Island municipalities are contributing to programs being provided by DSB, and what is coming back to the Island in terms of services,” said Mr. Imrie. “The issue is value for the dollar, and what is coming back to Island municipalities. I see a lot of programs we are contributing to that contribute and benefit off-Island municipalities that don’t necessarily benefit Island municipalities.”

“I feel the same as Tom—there are a lot of questions that need to be answered,” said Mr. Parker.