

DSB raises concerns over provincial funding for paramedic services during the pandemic

By
Tom Sasvari

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ESPANOLA – After the first quarter of the year the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) is looking at a substantial surplus. It was pointed out at a board meeting last week, however that DSB's paramedic services has not received any provincial funding news thus far for its work as part of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The second quarter report provides some positive news," said DSB CAO Fern Dominelli during a board meeting last week.

Connie Morphet, director of finance and administration, told the board the DSB 2020 first quarter (unaudited) financial report projects a year-end municipal surplus of \$536,773. This surplus includes Ontario Works forecasted to come in under budget and Childrens Services forecasted to be on budget. Social housing is forecasted to also be under budget by \$300,328, while Paramedic Services is forecasted to be under budget by \$231,421."

Mr. Dominelli noted of the paramedic services budget, "\$77 million in funding had been announced by the province previously for paramedic services throughout the province (for their work and personal protective equipment supplies). We had originally applied for \$700,000 then we reviewed our costs and applied for \$500,000. We still haven't heard anything on this funding support from the province." It is costing the DSB, and in turn its participating municipalities, \$5,000 per week for services for COVID-19 needs (specifically the COVID-19 testing teams) has carried out since March.

"So far the ministry has not been forthcoming with funding," said Mr. Dominelli. He said any announcement on funding will probably not be provided until the end of this year.

"So that \$200,000-plus over budget for paramedic services is COVID-19 related?" asked Ned Whynott, which Mr. Dominelli confirmed.