



Waterford and District Minor Hockey Association

“Providing Recreational and Competitive Hockey Programming
to the local community for over 50 Years”

March 5, 2020

Mayor Chopp and Councillors
Norfolk County
50 Colborne Street South
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4H3

Waterford and District Minor Hockey Association - Community Arenas

Dear Mayor Chopp & Councillors:

Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association (“WDMHA”) has been apprised of Norfolk County’s 2020 Tax Budget and the intention/desire to close one or more arena’s within Norfolk and to examine the privatization of our hockey arena operations.

WDMHA has serious concerns with these intentions/desires as such considerations have proceeded without discussion with user groups who are ultimately impacted by these decisions.

We understand what it takes to move in new directions.

You are aware of our participation and involvement in the creation of the newly founded and OMHA (Ontario Minor Hockey Association) approved Norfolk Minor Hockey Association. This association will deliver competitive hockey programming for the areas of Waterford, Port Dover and Simcoe starting this fall. Our recreational hockey leagues within the local neighborhoods of Waterford, Port Dover and Simcoe will remain present and operational as this was important to our members.

Creating the new Norfolk Minor Hockey Association required the combined efforts of Waterford, Simcoe, and Port Dover Minor Hockey Associations and its hundreds of members/constituents of Norfolk County. Moving in a new direction took strong communication efforts, hours of membership discussions and a willingness to listen, understand and respond to the concerns of our members. The creation of the Norfolk Minor Hockey Association would not have been successful without taking these meaningful and key steps prior to making any change.

The impact of NOT communicating, discussing, engaging.

WDMHA and the NMHA are now tasked with delivering on the expectations of its members/community constituents and (it is fair to say) these members now feel challenged by the decisions of Norfolk County; decisions that will undoubtedly negatively impact the operations



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of our area hockey associations. Of particular concern is ice availability. Our collective hockey associations and planned operations forecast an increase demand for ice time moving forward. Norfolk's decision to remove one (1) arena from its inventory and the threat to close another should privatization of the all Norfolk arena operations not be successful is clearly a direction that is counter to that of the area hockey associations. WDMHA and its associate members of the NMHA are working to enhance Norfolk's hockey opportunities through improved programming and its new hockey operations structure. The budget decisions of Norfolk County are clearly at odds with this objective and serve to challenge our efforts in moving forward.

The untimely consideration of privatization poses another challenge for us as we are actively developing our Association budget for the upcoming 2020/2021 season. We now find ourselves at a loss for reliable information regarding what ice will be available and on what terms.

We feel that the current situation could have been avoided had we been afforded the opportunity for collaborative decision making.

It's not too late in our opinion.

Our Board would like to engage Norfolk staff and/or Council members in discussions on possible solutions to the Norfolk Budget challenges. We believe there are solutions that could help maintain Norfolk's existing compliment of arenas in a more fiscally sustainable fashion. Furthermore, if our collective discussions resolve that changes to arenas and/or arena operations are appropriate and necessary, we (the community users) be afforded the opportunity to participate in the creation of a 'transition plan' that allows us to 'collectively' move forward 'together'. While it is unfortunate that such an opportunity was not provided earlier and prior to making dramatic budget decisions, we feel you still have an opportunity to work with us (not against us) and to find a better path forward.

We respectfully request your (re)consideration of your decisions and/or current plan of action regarding our community arenas and to take us up on our offer to work with you to find solutions which will better serve our community's recreation needs.

Shelley Miles,
President
Waterford Minor Hockey Association