

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

THE PASQUIA TRUST

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The Rural Municipality of Moose Range No. 486 is one of the largest geographic rural municipalities in the Province of Saskatchewan. The Town of Carrot River is the only urban municipality in the Rural Municipality. Consequently, several beneficial partnerships exist between the two local governments. The latest joint venture, The Pasquia Trust, is a municipal agency through which citizens may donate to the present and future well-being of our shared communities. The community has enjoyed overwhelming success over the years to calls for financial aid for specific projects and infrastructure needs. These projects were created in spur of the moment or ad-hoc campaigns. The development of the unique Pasquia Trust provided the community with a visible, legitimate and sustainable agency where the public can contribute monies to community priorities with confidence and piece of mind in terms of both the necessity of any project and the safe use of their donation. The Pasquia Trust employs standard accounting principles and is subject to the scrutiny of the annual municipal audit. The Trust is the first of its kind in Saskatchewan and probably Canada.

THE PROCESS

The two municipal Councils conducted a number of joint meetings when it was determined that someone with experience in this area was needed. The former director of The Nipawin Region Health Foundation was contacted and was immediately interested in aiding the Councils. Advice from solicitors and accounting firms was sought. Municipal Affairs and Canada Revenue Agency were consulted. Councils' aide drafted bylaw and regulation samples for the Councils to consider, ensuring their objectives would be met. He worked with two council members of each Council throughout the research period and attended the joint meeting of the two Councils to present their final report. Eventually, each Council passed a bylaw to establish the Pasquia Trust, its board of directors and the regulations governing the operation of the agency.

THE RESULTS

The creation of The Pasquia Trust (TPT) has established a new source of community spirit and pride. The Community Hall has hosted two donor appreciation concerts with nearly 1000 people attending each event. There is no question that this agency of the two Councils is well received by residents of Carrot River and area. Over \$60 000 has been generated by TPT in two years of operation, and grant application intakes have begun. TPT now distributes a semi annual newsletter to residents as it continues to promote "Local Legacies." The immediate benefit of The Pasquia Trust was that the process provided yet another opportunity for the Town of Carrot River and

Rural Municipality of Moose Range No. 486 to work together to enhance community service. The partnership remains as strong as ever.

LESSONS LEARNED

The biggest lesson was to take enough time to develop the exact model that will meet the aspirations of the community. There were several details that the Councils discussed during the investigation and research phase for TPT that, in fact, are not included in the final regulations adopted in the enacting bylaw. Creating the TPT demanded precise detail of how the agency would operate without limiting the flexibility of the board of directors to manage the agency at arms length from the municipalities. It took about 20 months to get to ratification of the bylaws and regulations, and to get the inaugural board of directors in place. Any community that is considering the formation of a similar agency should do the following: meet face to face with your legal advisor and your accountant to make certain that they understand what your community is trying to create.