

Mark Tijssen officially resigns from Amaranth Council

Written By PAULA BROWN

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Amaranth Council is down one councillor and one vote after Coun. Mark Tijssen made his resignation from municipal government official last week.

The acting clerk of the Township of Amaranth has received written notification from Coun. Mark Tijssen of his resignation from Council, wrote Amaranth Township in a news release last Thursday (Sept. 17).

The news release from the Township went on to say, "Council and staff would like to thank Mr. Tijssen for his contributions to the Township of Amaranth and wish him well in the future endeavours."

With the resignation of Coun. Tijssen officially received, the next step that is expected is for Amaranth Council to declare the seat vacant, which is anticipated to happen at the next council meeting. At the meeting Amaranth councillors will have to make a choice on how to fill the now vacant seat.

According to acting Amaranth CAO Nicole Martin, under the Municipal Act there are two choices for Council to fill the seat "appointing a person who has consented to accept the office or hold a by-election

"If Council chooses option one (to appoint) there are a few ways to appoint that are not outlined in the Municipal Act," wrote Martin in an email to the Free Press. "Runner up from the last election is one of the ways or (put out a) call for nominations. Council will have to make a determination at the next council meeting on how to proceed."

Council seats in municipalities within Dufferin County have been declared vacant in the past. In 2019, a Council seat was declared vacant in Grand Valley with the resignation of then Coun. Sam Pringle, who was succeeded by now Coun. Stephen Miles.

Shelburne Town Council has also declared a Council seat vacant following the death of Coun. Tom Egan in August of 2017. Shelburne Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson was appointed to the position for the remainder of the Council term.

Tijssen informally resigned from his position during a council meeting on Sept. 2, as Council prepared to enter closed session to discuss a workplace report and possible consequences regarding Mayor Bob Currie. In the meeting, Coun. Tijssen walked out and announced his resignation from Council.

In his resignation letter to the CAO Tijssen wrote, "While much remains to be done during this term of office, I can no longer participate in what is to me, a negative and toxic work environment created by Deputy Mayor Chris Gerrits and Coun. Gail Little."

Speaking with the Free Press on Wednesday (Sept. 23) Tijssen said Amaranth Council is worried about "harassment and flags" but is not concerned with "important issues" relating to infrastructures, and municipal finances.

Describing the Township's Council as a "canoe paddling in different directions", Tijssen also said, "We can't make headway and if I can't make headway, I can't be there because it is too frustrating for me. I can't do it. I cannot work in an environment where we cannot make headway," Tijssen said.

He added, "I cannot work in an environment like that. It is nasty. It is unproductive. It is toxic."

Amaranth Council will have their next regular meeting on Oct. 7.