



Memorandum

To: Mayor Steele and Members of Council
From: Councillor Bruno and Councillor Bodner
Date: May 25, 2021
**Re: Niagara Central Dorothy Rungeling Airport (NCDRA)
Commission**

Currently and over the past 45 yrs (1976) Port Colborne, along with its 3 other partner municipalities, has been annually thru its property tax levy (taxes) been subsidizing the operations of the Niagara Central Dorothy Rungeling Airport (NCDRA). That subsidy is based on an annual per capita financial contribution that has varied over time from an original one dollar (\$1.00) per capita to a range somewhere closer to \$1.60 (+/-) based on the municipality (a formula combining the annual census and the annual operating deficit of the NCDRA). The current contribution paid by Port Colborne is \$29,406 annually in both 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Previous councils of the four municipal owners of the NCDRA (Welland, Port Colborne, Pelham and Wainfleet) and its then Commission, voted along with the Niagara District Airport owners (St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, NOTL) and its previous commission passed resolutions requesting that the Niagara Region assume the operation and control of its airports (to upload).

This upload would result in all 7 of these municipalities also offloading their individual municipal contributions (subsidy) to operate the airports and transferring them to the Region where the subsidy would now be a part of the regional tax levy and be spread over the entire 12 Niagara Region municipalities (in the Regional tax levy).

The current Commission (this term of councils) has been actively engaged in an ongoing intense exercise of examining all revenue and expense opportunities in order to ultimately eliminate the subsidy. To date we have been able to stabilize the current subsidy (zero subsidy increase in the last 2 years and believe we can maintain that while at the same time invest in the business and over time substantially reduce the subsidy).

In the bigger picture we view the consolidation in the number of airports in Ontario as an opportunity with respect to hangar rentals, fuel sales and commercial enterprises at the airport, all of which we have been positioning ourselves for over the last 3 years. It is also important to note that small airports also provide pilot training, and indirect benefits that leverage economic growth for current and future industry, the developing drone

applications, tourism and its importance as a critical health care asset for air ambulance.

Finally, given the 40 plus years of investment by the city, the asset value of the current property and the current climate of upper tier levels of government to invest in all forms of transportation we believe now is a perfect opportunity to capitalize on this embedded asset.

With all of this in mind we are requesting that council approve the following motion:

Whereas Port Colborne Council approved a motion on May 14, 2018, supporting the common position resolution regarding the uptake of governance and the transfer of operating authority of the Niagara Central Dorothy Rungeling Airport (NCDRA) and Niagara District Airport (NDA); and

Whereas the NCDRA Commission can be self sustaining under the new strategic direction and plan;

Therefore it be resolved that the City of Port Colborne rescinds the approved motion of council regarding the uptake of governance for the transfer and operating authority of the NCDRA and NDA to the Niagara Region; and

That Port Colborne Council approves retaining the governance and ownership NCDRA; and

That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Town of Pelham, Town of Wainfleet, and City of Welland for consideration and support, and further

That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Niagara Region and Niagara Region Municipalities for support.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Gary Bruno
Ron Bodner
City Councillor representatives on the NCDRA Commission