



**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Merrickville-Wolford Enters 5-year Recreation Cost Sharing Agreement
with the Town of Smiths Falls**

Merrickville-Wolford, ON (January 26, 2022) – During its January 10, 2022 Council meeting, Village of Merrickville-Wolford Council voted unanimously to enter a 5-year Recreation Cost Sharing Agreement with the Town of Smiths Falls so that Merrickville-Wolford residents will be able to enjoy the extensive recreation facilities at the Smiths Falls Memorial Community Centre.

“As part of the Agreement, our local residents will be able to enjoy the indoor ice pad or the walking track above, safely right close to home” said Merrickville-Wolford Mayor Doug Struthers. “The continued collaborative dialogue between the Village and the Town of Smiths Falls has helped to forge a strong partnership between neighbouring communities and provide enhanced services for residents to have access to this top-notch recreational facility” Mayor Struthers further noted.

The new partnership, also approved by Town of Smiths Falls Council on January 24, 2022, is a welcome change and the timing is just right for residents of all ages who are looking to take part in physical and social activities as the pandemic begins to ease. Merrickville-Wolford Council’s decision to enter into the Agreement is a shift from the last time Village Council fully reviewed the issue in 2017 when Village Council declined the opportunity.

The Agreement, based on a weighted cost-sharing assessment model, will result in collective benefits for the Village of Merrickville-Wolford, the Town of Smiths Falls, and for the four (4) other neighbouring municipalities committed to the partnership, including Drummond/North Elmsley, Elizabethtown-Kitley, Montague, and Rideau Lakes.

During staff discussions leading up to the Agreement, the group of municipalities uniformly agreed that the weighted assessment model in the agreement works well to equitably distribute the net costs of operating the \$11.9M Memorial Community Centre and Youth Arena facility. The Village’s annual costs as part of the Agreement are anticipated to be approximately \$18,000.

“The agreement represents extremely good value for Village residents”, noted a report to Council by Merrickville-Wolford CAO/Clerk, Director, Economic Development, Doug Robertson. “The fiscal realities facing municipalities, especially smaller communities, make inter-municipal partnerships absolutely critical for providing efficient, effective services to our ratepayers”, he concluded. Links to the Village’s Strategic Plan 2017-2025 highlighted in the report include:

- Promoting Healthy Living;
- Building a Progressive, Growing Economy; and,
- Ensuring, Efficient, Effective Services & Civic Engagement.

The Smiths Falls Memorial Community Centre will re-open on Monday, January 31st with the lifting of Provincial COVID-19 restrictions. Hours of operation can be found on the Town of Smiths Falls website at www.smithsfalls.ca. Please note that hours of operation may change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information, please contact:

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