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Grey Highlands council considers Talisman options

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Grey Highlands councillors are going to spend the next two weeks mulling over how to move forward on the Talisman Mountain Resort situation.

Grey Highlands CAO Dan Best presented council with a list of options for the Talisman property at council's regular meeting on Monday, March 25. Talisman owes millions to the municipality in back taxes and has been sitting empty for several years in bankruptcy proceedings. A tax sale of the main resort property drew no bids.

Best presented a list of complicated options to council as information, which will be debated at the committee of the whole session on April 8.

The report essentially

boiled the municipality's options down to three real choices: do nothing, vesting (the municipality taking ownership of the property itself in order to sell it off via a more standard real estate transaction) or conduct another tax sale of the property after gathering more information. Best's report also said another option would be for the municipality to write-off the Talisman back taxes as uncollectible, which would allow Grey Highlands to recover tax money it paid to Grey County and the Bluewater School Board while Talisman was in arrears.

Best said staff would not recommend a "do nothing" approach to the file.

The two options that came to the forefront at the meeting were: vesting (taking ownership) or conducting a second tax sale. Best said

under both options Grey Highlands must do extensive due diligence and find out more information about the property.

"It's a challenge for council to make a decision without knowing what the state of the property is," noted Best. "We have the ability, under the Act, go in with a professional and do an assessment on the property," the CAO explained to council.

Councillor Lynn Silverton said she believes Grey Highlands must take control of the property in order to find a buyer for the property. "The lack of knowledge about the condition of the buildings is what is stopping (a sale)," said Silverton.

Deputy Mayor Paul McQueen said the status quo could not continue. "We're in no man's land right now," he noted.

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