

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF  
**ANTIGONISH**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

A Committee of the Whole Meeting was held Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administrative Centre, 285 Beech Hill Road, Antigonish NS.

Present were:           Warden Russell Boucher  
                              Deputy Warden Owen McCarron, Chair  
                              Councillor Mary MacLellan  
                              Councillor Donnie MacDonald  
                              Councillor Hughie Stewart  
                              Councillor Vaughan Chisholm  
                              Councillor Rémi Deveau  
                              Councillor John Dunbar  
                              Councillor Gary Mattie  
                              Councillor Bill MacFarlane  
                              Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer  
                              Beth Schumacher, Deputy Municipal Clerk  
                              Allison Duggan, Director of Finance  
                              Daryl Myers, Director of Public Works  
                              Sonny MacDougall, MGM & Associates Chartered Accountants

Regrets:                 None

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden Boucher, at 5:33pm.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The following items were added to the agenda:

14(a) Bus Shelter Request District 1 (Councillor MacLellan)

14(b) Letter of Support / Congrats for Josie Chisholm (Deputy Warden McCarron)

14(c) Recognition of Long-Term Volunteer Service of John Barter (Councillor Stewart)

*Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor MacFarlane that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Deputy Warden McCarron that the Committee of the Whole minutes of September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 be approved as presented. Motion carried.*

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Councillor MacLellan requested an update regarding the funding request that had been received from the Hallowe'en Harvest Bash. Mr. Horne noted that the Municipality had matched the Town's \$250 donation, and that the event had taken place on the 28<sup>th</sup> and was reported to have an excellent turnout.

**PRESENTATION & APPROVAL OF THE FRINGE & LOWER SOUTH RIVER WATER UTILITY BUDGETS**

Mrs. Duggan introduced the budgets for the Fringe and Lower South River Water Utilities, reviewing in detail the Water Utility Statements of Revenue and Expenditure with the Committee. She explained how modifications are being made to how expenses for the Water Utilities are being reported; instead of being included with the general administrative operating expenses for the Municipality, they are being set up to be reported as stand-alone entities to better identify the true cost of operating these utilities. This is being done to better inform future rate studies.

A question was raised regarding a significant jump in the amount paid to the Town for water when compared to the year previous. Mrs. Duggan noted that this was mostly due to a water main break on Post Road, which contributed to over \$12,000.00 of this cost alone. Mrs. Duggan further noted that the use of water meters in the utilities would help to identify future breaks faster in the future.

Mrs. Duggan noted that the office costs of running the utilities would be phased in over the period to which the current rates are applied, recouping some of the costs that the Municipality incurs from resources and staff dedicated to the maintenance and administration of the utility. Capital-out-of-revenue expenses were identified to include a Fire Flow Study, as well as the purchase of a meter reading clip that would facilitate the remote reading of the new meters.

Deputy Warden McCarron asked when the next UARB rate study was expected to take place. Mrs. Duggan responded that the new meters had to run for a minimum of one year prior to the study taking place. As their installation is nearly complete, she is hoping to start the process of preparing for the study next fall, to allow new rates to be determined for April 1, 2018.

Councillor MacDonald asked for clarification on where any surplus in the Water Utility Budget would go. Mrs. Duggan noted that the reserves collected from water billing could go into the operating or capital component of the budget for the specific water utility (Fringe or Lower South River) that it was collected from. Deputy Warden McCarron asked whether the merger of the utilities would be considered. The response was that it would be ideal if possible, but must be discussed and evaluated further, possibly informed by the next rate study in 18 months.

Councillor MacFarlane asked whether there was an accumulated surplus in the Fringe Utility budget. While Mrs. Duggan didn't have the exact amount on hand, she replied that there was, but that surplus was in its assets.

Overall, Mrs. Duggan noted that there has been a lot of work by staff to rejig the whole water utility system, to bring in the new organizational structure and water meters. Further work is anticipated as billing systems a modified to reflect the structural changes (meter readings, e-billing).

Deputy Warden McCarron asked whether people will see a decrease in their water bills with the meter system. Mrs. Duggan stipulated that any changes in individual utility bills would depend on the base charge for their utility (Fringe or Lower South River), which would be based on the revenue and capital of that specific utility and set by the UARB. Further, their bill amount would be dependent on their water usage and the number of taps that they have that would have had their water billing based on in advance of the metering system coming online.

*Moved by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Councillor MacFarlane that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the Fringe and Lower South River Water Utility Budgets as presented. Motion carried.*

### **APPROVAL OF APPLICATION TO COST-SHARE SUBDIVISION STREET IMPROVEMENTS**

Mrs. Duggan and Mr. Horne noted that this was a request for permission from the Committee to apply for cost-sharing for subdivision street improvements for Heritage and Ponderosa Drive, as per the Municipality's 2015/2016 capital plan. Councillor Chisholm asked for clarification about classification of roads and contribution expectations of residential contributions, timing of construction with regards to the service exchange, and TIR maintenance.

*Moved by Councillor MacFarlane and seconded by Councillor Stewart that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the application to cost-share subdivision street improvements. Motion carried.*

### **PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE 2015/2016 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Mr. MacDougall provided members of the Committee with copies of the Audit Findings Report and the Non-Consolidated Financial Statements, and provided a very high-level overview of the results of the audit. Overall, there was nothing identified in the audit that posed any concern.

Deputy Warden McCarron asked how the County fared when compared to other units. Mr. MacDougall responded that the County was in a good position, as there was a net balance instead of debt.

*Moved by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Councillor MacFarlane that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the 2015/2016 Audited Financial Statements. Motion carried.*

### **PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE 2015/2016 FINANCIAL INFORMATION RETURN**

Mrs. Duggan noted that the document provided for the Committee's review was a template data entry form that is completed and sent to the Province each year, populated with the Municipality's most recent fiscal year audited Financial Statements.

*Moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Deputy Warden McCarron that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the 2015/2016 Financial Information Return. Motion carried.*

### **PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE 2016/2017 STATEMENT OF ESTIMATES**

Mrs. Duggan outlined that the 2016/2017 Statement of Estimates would be compiled and sent to the Province to satisfy report requirements, using the operating budget as previously approved, along with the water budget that had been approved by the Committee earlier this evening.

*Moved by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Deveau that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the 2016/2017 Statement of Estimates. Motion carried.*

### **CONSIDERATION OF TAX WRITE-OFFS**

Mr. Horne introduced a summary provided by the Finance Department regarding accounts that have been deemed uncollectable, either because of their status with PVSC or Land Registry, double-assessments, or removal/disappearance of a mini-home. A recommendation was made to write off the taxes owing on these accounts, with a total amount of \$7,312.17.

An additional request for a write-off was made by the owners of a home that was destroyed by a fire earlier in the year. PVSC has provided the Municipality with the required documentation, and a write-off of \$1,405.80 in taxes is recommended by staff.

*Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor Chisholm that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council write-off the following outstanding taxes:*

<b>Roll #</b>	<b>Uncollectable balance</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
00384925	\$151.13	PVSC Double Assessed
00536466	\$155.51	Trailer unfound
00748269	\$105.12	Land taken for Highway
02626217	\$828.65	PVSC Double Assessed
04537343	\$24.98	PVSC Double Assessed
06178154	\$201.52	Trailer gone since 2012
06300685	\$2,496.73	Trailer unfound
06301037	\$113.12	PVSC Double Assessed
07126506	\$107.70	Trailer unfound
07130139	\$58.74	Trailer unfound
07134088	\$501.06	Trailer unfound
07134169	\$136.64	Trailer unfound
07134177	\$158.20	Trailer unfound
07144210	\$442.73	Trailer unfound
07144660	\$107.50	Trailer unfound
07144806	\$689.71	Trailer unfound
07203810	\$477.35	Trailer unfound
07205066	\$350.66	Trailer unfound
07205732	\$221.94	Trailer unfound
09102302	\$17.87	PVSC Double Assessed
09690573	\$17.19	PVSC Double Assessed
10299081	\$2.53	Trailer moved, interest on account
10524921	\$3.95	PVSC Double Assessed
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,370.53</b>	

*Motion carried.*

*Moved by Councillor Deveau and seconded by Deputy Warden McCarron that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council write off \$1,405.80 in taxes for AAN 10030625, due to damage from a fire. Motion carried.*

#### **REVIEW OF COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE & SOLICITATION OF PUBLIC MEMBERS**

Mr. Horne introduced the packaged of draft Terms of Reference for four advisory committees; Active Transportation, Economic Development, Planning Advisory, and Sustainable Communities. Further, a draft Terms of Reference was also before the Committee for a Joint Council committee.

Mr. Horne outlined how the Municipality would be publically advertising for members of the four advisory committees, with the application process open until early December, and Municipal Council making appointments of recommended members shortly after. There were some general questions from the Committee regarding how the public was to be informed of these opportunities and the expectations of the roles, as well as how the draft Terms of Reference expanded the mandate of some of the advisory committees from how they operated in the past. Mr. Horne noted that standardized application forms for the public, as well as a write-up of each committee on the Municipal website.

With respect to the Joint Council Terms of References, Mr. Horne outlined where he was looking for feedback from the Committee, specifically with respect to the membership composition of the Joint Council committee. Members of the Committee indicated that their preference was to have all of the members of Municipal Council participate as members of the Joint Council committee. There was a question regarding the weighting of votes from members of Joint Council committee. Mr. Horne indicated that any recommendations made by this new committee would need to be considered by each council separately. Quorum for the Joint Council committee is proposed to be 50% + 1 of each participating Council, and the agenda timing is structured to not permit day-of-meeting additions, so as to avoid any surprises for members. The Committee was in consensus that this Terms of Reference document was good.

#### **FIRST NATIONS – MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Horne provided a brief overview of the First Nations – Municipal Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) that Antigonish County has been invited to participate in with Paqtnkek. Mr. Horne noted that there will be an assessment and validation visit for Municipal Council and senior staff with FCM/Cando officials on Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30pm. This will be followed by a joint meet among FCM/Cando officials, Paqtnkek Band Council, Municipal Council and senior staff on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at Paqtnkek at a time yet to be announced.

#### **APPROVAL OF CORPORATE PLAN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Mr. Horne provided a brief overview of the request for proposals that has been prepared to solicit consultants to facilitate and prepare a Corporate Plan for the Municipality. The deadline for expressions of interest will be Friday, November 25, 2016 at 4:30pm. Mr. Horne asked whether there were members of the Committee who were interested in sitting on a steering committee to evaluate the submission received. Councillors MacLellan and Chisholm indicated that they would be interested. Warden Boucher noted that he would sit on the committee if Councillor MacLellan was unable to attend due to travel schedules.

Deputy Warden McCarron requested clarification on how this exercise differed from the Strategic Plan prepared in 2014. Mr. Horne provided a brief background on that project, and described the differences in timelines, involvement, and focus. Deputy Warden McCarron further asked whether there was a ballpark price tag on the project. Mr. Horne noted that he was waiting to see what numbers came in with the proposals, but that a placeholder amount had been included in the budget. There was a further question regarding the timing of the project. Mr. Horne noted that it was staffs' desire to see the plan finalized by late spring, in order to allow time for the implementation of recommendations into work plans before the end of the next fiscal period. A final question was asked about the distribution of the RFP. Mr. Horne noted that it was being posted on the provincial procurement page, the local paper, the municipal website, and direct contact to firms and individuals.

*Moved by Councillor Deveau and Seconded by Councillor Chisholm that the Committee recommend that Municipal Council approves the issuance of the Corporate Plan Request for Proposal (RFP). Motion carried.*

### **WEST RIVER BANK EROSION**

Councillor MacFarlane raised a concern that had been discussed earlier in the spring with respect to the erosion along the rear yards of properties abutting the West River in Greenwold. With the most recent storm event in October, residents in this area are concerned with the amount of erosion happening. He wondered if a request for bank rehabilitation could be possible through emergency measures, like what had been accessed for properties damaged by flooding in the same storm event in Cape Breton. There was also a question as to whether any work on this bank had been done in the past, and if so, what level of government had done so. The Committee agreed by consensus to draft a letter to the office of the local members of the Provincial and Federal governments to see if any funding assistance was possible to rehabilitate the eroding river bank.

### **BUS SHELTER REQUEST – DISTRICT 1**

Councillor MacLellan noted that she had been contacted by a constituent looking for a bus shelter for at least five (5) children on Pleasant Valley Road. In the past, the Municipality had provided and/or built shelters in locations where they are required. A general call had been put out to Councilors by email to see if anyone was aware of a suitable shelter not in use that could be relocated. Members of the Committee would enquire further to see if there are any existing available and suitable shelters, and if not, one will be purchased and/or built for the children in question.

*Moved by Councillor MacLellan and Seconded by Councillor Deveau that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the purchase of a bus shelter for Pleasant Valley Road, if a suitable one cannot be found and relocated from elsewhere in the County. Motion carried.*

### **LETTER OF SUPPORT / CONGRATS FOR JOSIE CHISHOLM**

Deputy Warden McCarron brought forward a request to have a letter of support and congratulations sent to Josie Chisholm, a resident of District 6, who is one of eight Nova Scotians selected to represent Team Atlantic at the Women's Under 18 National Hockey Tournament in Regina, Saskatchewan. Ms. Chisholm is a local hockey player and AMHA alumnus, and most

recently won Gold with the Hockey Nova Scotia Under 18 team at the Atlantic Challenge Cup in Moncton on Thanksgiving Weekend. A letter will be prepared and sent to her directly at her school.

**RECOGNITION OF LONG-TERM VOLUNTEER SERVICE OF JOHN BARTER**

Councillor Stewart requested that consideration of a plaque and/or other form of recognition is given for the long-term volunteer service of Mr. John Barter on the Building for Youth Commission (Arena Commission). Mr. Horne noted that staff would look to make arrangements for something to occur in the next few months.

**CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS (IN-CAMERA)**

This subject matter falls within Section 22(2) of the Municipal Government Act as a matter that a committee may discuss in a closed session. It is recommended a motion be made to initiate an in-camera session.

*Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor MacLellan that the Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned to an In-Camera Session to discuss contract negotiations at 7:39pm. Motion carried.*

*Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor MacLellan that the In-Camera session be adjourned at 7:48pm. Motion carried.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Moved by Councillor Deveau and seconded by Councillor Dunbar that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 7:49pm. Motion carried.*

---

Warden Russell Boucher

---

Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer