
MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 5:30 pm
Council Chambers
Municipal Administration Building
285 Beech Hill Road
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

Present were: Warden Owen McCarron
Deputy Warden Hugh Stewart
Councillor Mary MacLellan
Councillor Donnie MacDonald
Councillor Remi Deveau
Councillor John Dunbar
Councillor Gary Mattie
Councillor Bill MacFarlane
Councillor Harris McNamara
Councillor Shawn Brophy

Staff Present: Glenn Horne, CAO
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk
Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Marlene Melanson, Director of Recreation

Call to Order – Chairman, Warden Owen McCarron

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden McCarron, at 5:30pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden McCarron called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. The following additions were made:

- Minister of Municipal Affairs Mandate Letter
- Update regarding the Oyster Farm at Town Point
- In-Camera Item: Acquisition, Sale, Lease and Security of Municipal Property

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Approval of September 28, 2021 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden McCarron called for any errors or omissions in the minutes.

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole minutes of September 28, 2021 be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Councillor MacLellan asked for an update regarding the Senior Safety Coordinator Position. Mr. Horne provided an update on the follow-up done by staff after the last Committee meeting.

Delegations

There were no delegations.

Continuing Business

Strategic Priorities Update

Mr. Horne started with an introduction of the documents that were included in the agenda package. For every meeting, a copy of the priorities summary will be attached to the agenda package, with updates on the priorities being provided on a quarterly bases or as required. A review was then done of the listed priorities, with updates being provided for each of the items and the work either underway or planned.

Mrs. Donovan then provided an update regarding housing concerns in the community, and discussions with local stakeholders regarding opportunities for advocacy and the report from the Housing Commission of Nova Scotia. A copy of the report was provided to each Councillors. A forum was being planned but deferred due to the provincial and federal elections; now that those are completed, forum planning can resume. Staff is looking for guidance from the Committee regarding hosting partnerships, and what community groups to invite to the table for the event.

Discussion followed. Councillor MacDonald spoke to the Affordable Housing Society's work with its latest round of tenant applications, and what support might help that organization. The impact of short-term accommodations on the local rental markets, as well and recent trends in home affordable due to national real estate markets, was also discussed. Staff was provided with direction to proceed with a partnership with the Town of Antigonish to host the forum.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends That Municipal Council approves the 2021 Strategic Priorities document as presented.

Motion Carried

Virtual Meetings Policy

Mrs. Schumacher welcomed any questions that had come up since members of the Committee last reviewed the draft policy in September. Councillor MacFarlane asked a question of clarification regarding the clause about secret ballots. Mrs. Schumacher noted that should that scenario arise, the matter under consideration would need to wait until all parties could be present to allow for the vote to be anonymous.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the Virtual Meetings Policy as proposed.

Motion Carried

New Business

Consolidation Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Mr. Horne reviewed the draft terms of reference that have been prepared for the Consolidation Steering Committee. A question was asked about the role of the steering committee in preparing answers to the questions that Councillors are receiving from the public. Mr. Horne noted that they will play a role in providing direction to the staff who will be preparing the responses to the questions raised and will report back to Council on those matters. Councillors were encouraged to continue to send their questions in to staff as they come up from the public or during/following the information sessions being arranged.

Further discussion about logistics and questions raised since the last meeting with the Committee took place. Staff noted that the publication of the latest issue of the County Connect is being held for publication as information pages about the potential for consolidation are being prepared to be included. Mr. Horne noted that meetings have been arranged with representatives from West Hants and Queens in the upcoming weeks to provide Councillors with the feedback of their experiences and to provide an opportunity for Q&A. A session with Guysborough representatives will follow later.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the Consolidation Steering Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

Motion Carried

Mini-Trails Community Centre Request for Funding Support

A request from the Mini Trails Community Centre for assistance with repairs that have been identified at the building, which they feel could affect the building being able to operate during the winter months. Assistance with those costs is being requested of the Municipality. Mr. Horne noted that typically these types of requests are held for the Community Partnership Grants process.

Councillor MacDonald spoke to the role of the community centre as a comfort centre during the winter months, and the concern of that role being compromised if either the heat or ability to have an accessible door was not functioning. He noted that he would be willing to provide up to 50% of the requested funds from his own Special District Grant. Several other Councillors also offered to make a contribution from their grant accounts.

Active Transportation - Mount Cameron Trail Connector Update

Ms. Melanson provided an update on the financial aspects of the Active Transportation projects that have been proceeding through the design process over the past several months. A map showing the different components of the Active Transportation network was reviewed:

- Trail work that was anticipated to take place this past summer was held up due to design work that was completed last week, which came in over budget due to an unanticipated culvert replacement.
- Maintenance work to the Landing Trail was done earlier in the month and was reviewed for the benefit of the Committee.
- Crossing of Highway 337 and Mount Cameron - currently waiting for approvals from the Department of Public Works, which required further design work
- Multi-purpose Trail - design and cost estimate completed, but funding application to Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative was not approved. Looking at other funding opportunities via ACOA

Ms. Melanson reviewed the investment made to date on the design work and maintenance upgrades. The proposed figures and potential funding opportunities were reviewed. Discussion followed. A question was asked about the possibility of having existing staff undertake the trail building being proposed as a means to reduce costs. A question was also asked about winter maintenance of the trails.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council allocate an additional \$17,000 in the current fiscal year for the completion on the Mount Cameron Active Transportation Trail.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council commit \$35,322 for the 2022/23 fiscal year to support an application to ACOA's Community Revitalization Fund for future projects of the Community Active Transportation Network, contingent on receiving funds from ACOA.

Motion Carried

Community Events

Councillor McNamara thanked Recreation staff for the assistance that they provided to the Havre Boucher Veterans Society with making flyers. Discussion followed about Remembrance Day wreath ceremonies in the community being planned this year.

Warden McCarron shared that the Town and County were awarded the 2021 Friend of St. FX Award by the St. FX Alumni, and a filmed response was shared with the community last week. A painting will be commissioned and hung at the municipal offices.

Staff Reports

Mr. Horne highlighted some of the items noted in the staff reports memo provided.

Additions to the Agenda

Minister of Municipal Affairs Mandate Letter

Mr. Horne reviewed the mandate letter that was provided to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, highlighting several lines that were a topic of discussion at the recent AMANS conference that appears to be making reference to service exchange between the province and municipalities. Staff is following up with staff at the Department of Municipal Affairs for further information and clarification.

Oyster Farm - Town Point

Deputy Warden Stewart provided an update from their attendance at the liaison committee for the proposed oyster farm at Town Point. A summary was given of the public meeting held over the summer. The Municipality has been asked for a letter of support, as they move their process to the level of provincial review. A decision on the request was reserved for consideration at a future meeting.

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 7:30pm, and was called back to order at 8:14pm.

In Camera Items

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned to an In-Camera Session to discuss the Acquisition, Sale, Lease, and Security of Municipal Property and Contract Negotiations at 8.15pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting return to open session at 8:29pm.

Motion Carried

Adjournment

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 8:30pm.

Motion Carried



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, CAO