
MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF

ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 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
Tammy Feltmate, Director of Sustainable Communities

Also Present: Anne Marie Long
Drake Lowthers, The Reporter
Matt Draper, XFM
Gallery in room and on Zoom

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 5:31pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden McCarron called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. An addition was requested:

- Signage at Sullivan's River

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Approval of April 19, 2022 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 April 19, 2022 be approved as presented

Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Councillor MacFarlane asked for an update regarding the follow-up with the NS Department of Public Works regarding the request for a sidewalk on the West River Bridge.

Delegations

Anne Marie Long - Consolidation Concerns

Warden McCarron welcomed Anne Marie Long to the meeting. Ms. Long reviewed a summary that she had prepared, which provided a timeline of discussions about consolidation that Council has had since September. Questions were asked regarding the guiding principles that were prepared, the communication materials that have been issued to date, and the information shared regarding the previous annexation/amalgamation in 2001/2006. Questions were also asked about the examples provided from Windsor/West Hants and Queens consolidations that were provided in the fact sheets as well.

Council was encouraged to look at the County's strengths when considering consolidation, including: What are we doing well, what makes us stronger and how will the Town benefit from the merger? What does the County have that is valuable, and what makes it desirable for business to establish here? Commercial tax rate, garbage and recycling financial advantage, current age of infrastructure and asset management review, including the projected cost to maintain/upgrade were also mentioned.

Council was also encouraged to look at the County's weaknesses, such as: What do we struggle with, like resources etc. Using third party contractors for public infrastructure design and build projects, and what savings could there be if municipal

crews did this work? What is the cost of having unionized wage parity with the Town? Regarding water shortage concerns, the question was asked of why the County doesn't develop their own system instead of having Fringe residents on the Town system. What government regulations prevents the County from using their land? The summary also spoke to the water utilities of the Town and County. Town sewer treatment plant and storm water diversion needs. Policing costs, and other emergency services coverage, was raised as well.

A review was provided of the articles that have covered the issue over the last few months, with the example of voter turnout in the last plebiscite, discussions about plebiscite in the minutes, and voter turnout at the last municipal election being included. Ms. Long raised a concern with media coverage regarding councillor positions on the matter. Overall, she asked that more work be done before the matter goes to a vote. Those whom she has spoken to are not against consolidation but want the opportunity to learn more about the issue and have an opportunity to provide their say on the matter.

The floor was opened for questions and comments.

Councillor MacLellan shared a request from her constituents requesting additional information and an extension to the timeline for consideration of the matter, with a request to hold a special council meeting to discuss the matter further.

Councillor Mattie asked a question of Ms. Long, for clarification on what was missing from the information that was sent that would have helped to better express information about the question of consolidation. Ms. Long noted that she believed that residents are looking for more information about how consolidation will benefit the County and more information about how businesses in the County will be affected by the proposed consolidation.

Warden McCarron thanked Ms. Long for the concerns that were raised and will look to answer the questions raised. He noted that Council is in the process of collecting information and exploring consolidation and will take the feedback provided in consideration as part of that process. Ms. Long provided a suggestion that more minutes from the consolidation committee be provided on the website for the public.

Terry Penny - Consolidation Concerns

Mr. Horne noted that Ms. Penny was not able to attend the meeting, but the contents of her presentation were provided to Council for consideration.

Continuing Business

Approval of Tender Bid for Bulky Waste Collection

Mr. Horne reviewed the recommendation to award the tender for the 2022 Bulky Waste Pickup to GFL.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve a bid from GFL for the 2022 Bulky Waste Pickup for Spring 2022 for the bid price of \$74,438.24 (HST incl).

Motion Carried

Discussion of Proposed Federal Electoral Boundary Changes

Mr. Horne reviewed the materials that were provided by the federal government regarding the proposed boundary changes for the federal riding and the impact on Antigonish County. Warden McCarron shared some feedback received from constituents received since the proposed boundaries were released. The floor was opened for comment from Council regarding the issue. Concerns were raised about the distance of the community from the constituency offices in Cape Breton, the desire to be grouped with communities with geographical ties and similar issues/concerns, and how population distribution is affecting the proposed boundaries as HRM grows. Information about the timelines for the review were shared. Warden McCarron encouraged the public to be involved in the boundary consultations as well.

Follow-Up on Transfer of RCMP Traffic Unit and District Office

Mr. Horne provided an update on the notification from the RCMP to move the Traffic Unit and District Office to Stellarton. Correspondence provided to the RCMP to ask that this move be reconsidered by the Town and County, however, the RCMP has indicated that they will proceed with the move, which is expected to be three years away. The floor was opened for Council to discuss the matter further. Concern was expressed with having the detachment move. Questions were asked about what next steps could be taken, including additional letters to representatives and communications with the local MPs, and what impacts the move could have on service levels in the community.

Mr. Horne noted follow-up would take place with Department of Justice, the Nova Scotia Police Advisory Board, and by engaging the local MLAs and MPs.

New Business

Consideration of RK MacDonald Nursing Home Bylaw Amendments

Mrs. Schumacher provided a summary of the proposed changes by the RK MacDonald Board to their by-laws. The amended by-laws are before the Committee for consideration and approval.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the R.K. MacDonald Board by-law amendments as presented.

Motion Carried

Road Name Change Petition - Whales Pass

Mrs. Schumacher provided an overview of the petition submitted for the renaming of a private road in Arisaig to Whales Pass.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the renaming of a private road in Arisaig to Whales Pass.

Motion Carried

Discussion of a NS Sports Hall of Fame Nomination

Councillor MacFarlane spoke about Hugh Thompson from West River, who is now an actor but boxed for several years. Part of his boxing career included a KO of Lennox Lewis at an amateur match. Councillor MacFarlane is working with Mr. Hugh Thompson to document dates and highlights to include in a nomination form to put forward to the Nova Scotia Sports Hall of Fame. Consensus was provided by the Committee to continue with the nomination process for the Sports Hall of Fame.

National Indigenous Peoples' Day Event at Keppoch Mountain

Councillor Dunbar spoke to a request that has been made to the municipality for funding to assist with a National Indigenous Peoples Day event that is being planned to take place at the Keppoch on June 18th. Support in the amount of \$2500 is being requested. A suggestion was made to have Councillors utilize their district grants to provide the requested funding.

Discussion about Rising Diesel Prices

Councillor Dunbar raised the topic after being contacted by several residents. The impact of the increase in fuel prices on the supply chain and local industries including

forestry, construction, and the fishery was discussed by the Committee. The impact on home heating fuels was raised as well. A suggestion was made to write a letter to the Province to request that consideration be given to reducing the tax on fuel. Staff will draft a letter to distribute.

Reports from Inter-Municipal Boards, Committees and Commissions

Antigonish Heritage Museum Board

There was nothing to report for this month, and the next meeting is in June.

Antigonish Arena Association

A meeting is upcoming in the next few weeks. Mr. Horne acknowledged the retirement of Bud McInnis, who has served as the arena manager for 26 years. Members of the Committee provided thanks to Mr. McInnis for all of his work at the arena.

Antigonish Crime Prevention

There was nothing to report.

Eastern District Planning Commission

Councillor McNamara provided an update on the Eastern Antigonish Plan Review process. Councillor MacFarlane provided an overview of the Eastern District Planning Commission for the benefit of the gallery.

Eastern Regional Solid Waste Management Committee

Councillor MacDonald provided a summary of activities covered by the Committee, including correspondence to the Fishing Gear Coalition, correspondence sent to the province regarding Extended Producer Responsibility for Printed Paper and Packaging as well as regarding black garbage bags, summer hiring, and shoreline cleanup projects.

Pictou Antigonish Regional Library

Councillor MacLellan provided an update about the new program launched by the library for a province-wide lending program.

RK MacDonald Nursing Home

An update on the addition being built onto the facility was provided by Councillor MacLellan.

County Paqtnkek Joint Steering Committee

Warden McCarron noted that while no formal meetings have been held, the Warden, Mayor, and the CAOs were invited to a Band Council meeting earlier in the day. Last week marked the fourth anniversary of the friendship accord that was signed by the County and Paqtnkek as part of participation in the CEDI program.

Consolidation Steering Committee

Mr. Horne noted that the agendas and meeting notes for the meetings held were shared in the agenda package.

Community Navigation & Physician Retention Services Association

Mr. Horne provided a summary of the last meeting, where the Board approved the strategic priorities and received a presentation from the Recruiter that is stationed at St. Martha's. The recruiter shared some statistics, noting that 17 physicians have been recruited to the area since April 2021. Of those, 11 of those individuals have started their practice, with the others in the process of coming to the community. Approval has also been granted to recruit additional specialist positions to the facility. Warden McCarron shared his experiences with joining the recruitment team to welcome those considering the area to the community prior to Covid restrictions.

Community Events

- Councillor Dunbar shared that the 100th anniversary of the founding of 4H in Nova Scotia is planned to take place in Heatherton on Saturday, May 14th.
- Councillor MacLellan shared that the annual Mothers Day Lobster dinner could not be held, but a ticket sale fundraiser is taking place. She also shared that the Arisaig community dev plant sale June 4th.
- Councillor MacDonald attended the St. FX convocation and spoke highly of those receiving their diplomas and certificates.
- Councillor Deveau shared that preparations are underway for Acadian Days in Pomquet on Aug 13th. Also, St. Croix Farmer's Market / craft sale planned. Chez Deslauriers hopes to be open for Friday meals this summer.
- Councillor McNamara shared that the blessing of the boats in Aulds Cove and HB took place. Pickleball and darts are back at the Community Centre.

Additions to the Agenda

Signage Concerns on the Highway

Councillor MacLellan has been requested to explore the possibility of additional signage at Sutherlands River for businesses on Highway 245. Information from Brian Storrie from the NS Department of Public Works was shared with the Committee. Scenic route signage would have to be discussed jointly with the Town. As a next step, staff can investigate the connections suggested.

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 7:00pm.

Motion Carried

The meeting was called back to order at 8:26pm.

In Camera Items

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned to an In-Camera Session to discuss Advice Eligible for Solicitor Client Privilege at 8:26pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the in-camera session be adjourned at 8:54pm.

Motion Carried

Adjournment

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 8:55pm.

Motion Carried



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, CAO