

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 14, 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
Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator (by Zoom)
Alisha Bowie, Administrative Assistant

Others Present Isabel Boulet, Senior Manager for Government Affairs, Bell
Aliant (by Zoom)
Gallery (by 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 5:33pm

Approval of Agenda

Warden McCarron called for any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Approval of May 24, 2022 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden McCarron called for any errors or omissions in the minutes. An error in the spelling of Van der Linden was identified and will be corrected.

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole minutes of May 24, 2022 be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

Councillor McNamara asked for updates regarding the response to Mrs. Longs questions that were asked during her presentation, the concerns raised about the Deputy Mayor's comments at their Council meeting in May. Mr. Horne noted that Mrs. Long's questions will be addressed with the draft timeline. A question was asked regarding whether a response has been received to the letter to the RCMP. Staff noted that the letter has not yet finalized and sent.

Delegations

Bell Aliant Virtual Discussion with Councillors

Councillors were joined by Isabelle Boulet, Senior Manager for Government Affairs, Atlantic Region with Bell Aliant. Mrs. Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, had reached out to Council earlier in the month and had passed on concerns and questions about Bell Aliant projects.

Ms. Boulet spoke about her main objective to open up a line of communication, to know any of our issues and answer questions. Councillors raised concerns with cellular service along Highways 337, 245, and from Lochaber to Loch Katrine, as well as parts of Havre Boucher. Ms. Boulet confirmed with the Bell Aliant team that there is no expansion plans for Antigonish for cellular service. Some information was shared about the Newfoundland cellular service pilot project, they have expanded service in rural communities across Newfoundland. It was noted that Fiber extension doesn't have an immediate impact on cellular service, but down the road it will help with the expansion of cellular service.

Councillor McNamara identified concerns in his district, specifically noting that for three weeks in January he did not have phone land line or Internet because of technical issues with Bell infrastructure. Bell technicians noted to him that that time that physical assets were outdated for 20 years. He also shared that on the Havre Boucher Hill when there are accidents, people are having to drive to Aulds Cove to get cell service

to call 911. Ms. Boulet offered to follow up with more details but noted that in terms of infrastructure she can't speak to it.

Deputy Warden Stewart identified areas with service concerns in district 3, including St. Josephs, James River, and Pinevale. Ms Boulet had no specific details on district 3 that she could share but offered to follow up with Mrs. Donovan. She noted that work requires some very specific engineering designs.

Councillor MacLellan noted that there are areas with no cellular service in her district, including along Highways 245 and 337. She was very disappointed that there are no plans for cellular service expansions in Antigonish County and asked what the solution is to get improvements to coverage in the community. Ms. Boulet noted that partnerships would help network expansions, and Bell Aliant requires a business case to go into those areas.

Councillor Dunbar raised that the Heatherton broadband project is now not scheduled for completion until next year. Ms. Boulet received an update from the team the other day and identified that special engineering requests are delaying the project. Delays are with some of the partners they are working with. She will continue to share updates

Councillor Mattie provided the district 8 areas of concern, and Ms. Boulet noted that she will share any updates she receives.

Continuing Business

Update on Exploration of Consolidation with the Town of Antigonish

Mr. Horne referred to the memo included in the agenda, which outlined the timeline for the next steps for the discussion about consolidation. He noted that there may have to be a Municipal Council meeting in early July. No public meetings are planned for the "what we heard" report.

There was a discussion about the transition funding provided by the provincial government. Councillor MacFarlane asked about the transitional funding announced in the process of the decision making, not at the end. It was felt to be a key piece of information for the people of Pictou; will we expect the same courtesy from the province? Councillor MacDonald asked questions about financial condition and capacity. A question was also asked about whether there would be an opportunity for the two councils to come together to review the report.

New Business

Building Permits Policy Amendment

John Bain to make a presentation regarding a proposed Building Permit Policy, which is being considered to allow for an adjustment to the building permit fees that are charged by the municipality through EDPC. A majority of the EDPC partners would need to be in agreement to the permit fee changes for the EDPC to implement an adjustment to what permit applicants are charged. Fees have not been changed for ten years, and are based on square footage.

Discussion followed regarding the models that fees could be structured on, including charge per square footage, charge for cost of construction, or using Altus Group Canadian cost guide. A question was asked about where the proposed fee adjustment sets the municipality when compared to units across the province. Mr. Bain noted that fees in Halifax Regional Municipality are significantly higher. The adjustment as proposed would put the municipality in the middle of the range of fees charged.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council adopts the Building Permits Policy as presented.

Motion Carried

Review of Draft NSFM Membership Survey Feedback

Mr. Horne went through the NSFM Membership Survey to Support the Service Exchange Renegotiation and MGA Review Committee question by question, to review the responses that Council would like to provide on the topics raised. Staff will take the information collected from the discussion and finalize the survey response to send to the NSFM.

Community Events

- Councillor McNamara noted that work has started on Havre Boucher Park playground. He also noted that the seniors complex has replaced their siding and windows and has constructed a new entrance. Resident Beatrice Bennett is 102 years old.
- Councillor Dunbar attended the platinum jubilee event with Councillor MacDonald at the Heritage Museum
- Councillor MacLellan shared information about a community event held in Arisaig on Sunday June 12th, which included the mural unveiling

- Councillor Mattie shared that Rita Delorey would have turned 100 this weekend but passed this past week
- Warden McCarron attended the Governor general leadership conference discussion and attended NSCC graduation in Port Hawkesbury.
- Mr. Horne provided Councillors with the update that the Community partnership grant approval letters are being sent out this week.

Staff Reports

Mr. Horne noted that there are two RCMP reports in package for the Committee's review. Staff Sgt Kimberly Hillier is coming to the community from Cold Lake.

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at this point, with the plan to resume for the in-camera items following the Council meeting.

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting adjourn at 7:13pm.

Motion Carried

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called back to order at 8:19pm.

In Camera Items

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned to an In-Camera Session to discuss the Personnel Matters and Matters Eligible for Solicitor/Client Privilege at 8:20

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the In-Camera session adjourns at 8:38pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee recommend to Municipal Council that the position of Administrative Assistant in the Public Works Department be created.

Motion Carried

Adjournment

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 8:40pm.

Motion Carried



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, CAO