

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF  
**ANTIGONISH**

**Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, October 4, 2022, 6:30 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 John Dunbar  
Councillor Gary Mattie  
Councillor Bill MacFarlane  
Councillor Harris McNamara  
Councillor Shawn Brophy

Regrets: Councillor Remi Deveau

Staff Present: Glenn Horne, CAO  
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk  
Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator  
Allison Duggan, Director of Finance

Also Present: Gallery

**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 6:29pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

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- To include discussion about cellular and telephone access in the agenda item about the hurricane response
  - The Introduction of the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator will be rescheduled.

Moved and Seconded

*That the agenda be approved as amended.*

**Motion Carried**

**Approval of September 13, 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 September 13, 2022 be approved as presented*

**Motion Carried**

**Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

**Delegations**

There were no delegations.

**Continuing Business**

**2020-2024 Strategic Priorities Update**

Mr. Horne referred to the Strategic Priorities Chart that is included in the agenda packages. A more detailed summary of the strategic priorities was reviewed in detailed with the Committee, which included:

- A detailed summary of advocacy measures and updates on connectivity in the community
- An update of the housing forum held earlier in the year, where the municipality brought together different organizations to discuss affordable housing in the community
- An update on the steps taken to help the Dunmore Development housing project
- A note regarding the provincial Department of Public Works (transportation) - the municipality will continue to advocate for services in the community

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- For Events and Tourism, Mr. Horne noted that the municipality has worked with a number of groups and organizations in the sector, community grants have provided support, and work continues on this priority as part of a partnership with other community groups. A question was asked about events or groups out in the County, and how they're being incorporated into the efforts included in the summary
  - An explanation of how the long-term IT solution is considered to be in place with the establishment and staffing of the Strait-IT partnership, which includes the County, the Town of Antigonish, the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and counties of Inverness and Victoria
  - A review of ICIP funding, providing a summary of Net Zero and AT corridor projects, paving for Pottery Lane, money in municipal innovation program for Strait IT, funds to support considering consolidation, and the Plan Eastern Nova project. Funding that has been secured for waterlines was outlined, as well as J-class roads cost-sharing received in past years.
  - An update on water utility upgrades was provided, which noted progress in consolidating utilities, collaborating with Town for future water sources, trunk mains construction, local improvement processes for extensions, and an application for additional expansions to receive funding through ICIP. The Municipality is looking to continue to work with Town on source water planning. Discussion about water conservation requirements in the summer months followed.
  - A brief review of projects that are lined up for "next", including asset management and waste management
  - A note that the Active Transportation project update was given in detail at the Asset Management Committee meeting
  - For the Community Hubs Project, an explanation of the impact of Covid on concept was provided.
  - Brief summaries were shared about the hiring of the Project Manager for Net Zero building project, working with Paqtneke on energy manager, and the solar field sustained some damage during the hurricane and processes are underway to have it repaired.

Mr. Horne noted that recommendations will be provided at a future meeting to update the list of priorities to add or remove any items. A request for an update on wind projects that were presented to Council earlier in the year was requested, and Mr. Horne provided a brief update on the provincial program and the projects that he thought might be proceeding.

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Inter-Municipal Advocacy for Provincial Cellular Initiative

Mr. Horne spoke to the lack of progress that appears to have been made in the area of cellular connectivity, particularly in light of the progress that has been made in broadband across the province. Together with several municipal neighbours, a letter has been drafted to send to the province to encourage that Build NS look to try to address the cellular connectivity issues that are being experienced in the area. A suggestion was made to include a mention about the impact of Hurricane Fiona on cellular connectivity in the province as well. A concern was raised about giving cellular to Build NS where the broadband projects in the area have been delayed several times. Staff noted that the delays in the broadband has been with Bell and their installation timeline, and not the work done by the team at Build NS. The importance of continuing to build a relationship with the province and Build NS for cellular connectivity.

Moved and Seconded

*The Committee recommends that Municipal Council sign a joint letter with municipal neighbours to the Honourable Susan Corkum-Greek, Minister Economic Development, outlining concerns regarding caps in cellular connectivity in the province.*

**Motion Carried**  
*8 in favour, 1 against*

Request for a Letter of Support - Town Point Oysters

Councillor MacDonald spoke to a request received for the Municipality to provide a letter of support for Town Point Oysters. Councillor McNamara spoke to a proposal in Havre Boucher and feels that the letter of support would not be something that should be supported.

Moved and Seconded

*The Committee recommends that Municipal Council provides a letter of support to Town Point Oysters.*

**Motion Carried**  
*3 nays*

New Business

Consideration of the 2022/23 Antigonish County Water Utility Budget

Mrs. Duggan spoke to the water utility budget that has been prepared and provided to the Committee for consideration. A line-by-line review of the budget was undertaken

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for the benefit of the Committee. Questions and comments that came forward were regarding the cost of equipment, and the rising costs of fuel and insurance.

Moved and Seconded

*The Committee recommends that Municipal Council pass the 2022/2023 Water Utility Budget, as proposed.*

**Motion Carried**

Moved and Seconded

*The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves the Fiscal Year 2022/23 Statement of Estimates A & B.*

**Motion Carried**

Consideration of Funding Partnership with the Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia

Mr. Horne noted that direction from the Committee is being sought, regarding a request that has come forward from Fireloch. The Municipality has been asked to consider a "Partnership Agreement" with LifeSchoolHouse so that funds can be donated to a (yet to be established) fund at the Community Foundations of Nova Scotia (CFNS). Under this arrangement, CFNS would be able to flow funds to the Qualified Donee (the Municipality) and assist the municipality to ensure there is a satisfactory method for ensuring "direction, control and oversight" under CRA rules. Mr. Horne noted that the appropriate agreements would need to be in place for this to happen.

A question was asked about whether any consultation with the municipal auditors has taken place. Staff noted that legal would be consulted, and the municipality would be looking to have Fireloch vetted to ensure that they satisfy the eligibility requirements. Additional administrative work is anticipated.

Deputy Warden Stewart spoke in favour of Fireloch and encouraged members of Council to visit the site to see what their programming offerings are like. A question was asked about whether neighbouring municipalities have entered these kinds of arrangements. Mr. Horne reviewed a list of municipalities that do participate in these kinds of arrangements. A question was asked about whether additional requests from other non-profits could be expected if the municipality entered the arrangement, and a suggestion was made to check on whether there is a cap in the amount of funds that can travel through such an arrangement. Staff was directed to investigate the issue more.

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**Crosswalk Request - Brierly Brook Road & Highway 245**

Councillor Brophy requested that a letter be written to NSDPW for the consideration of crosswalks at the intersection of Brierly Brook Road and Highway 245, to assist residents wanting to connect to the sidewalks that run down only one side of Hawthorne Street.

Moved and Seconded

*The Committee recommends that Municipal Council write a letter to the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works requesting consideration of crosswalks at the intersection of Brierly Brook Road and Highway 245.*

**Motion Carried**

**Atlantic Salmon Dinner & Auction Request**

It was noted that the dinner was scheduled for October 1st. Staff was asked to follow-up to see if the event took place in light of the disruption caused by the storm.

**Sponsorship Request - Antigonish Jazz Fest**

Mrs. Donovan spoke to a sponsorship request received by the Antigonish Jazz Fest for support of their inaugural festival. Mr. Horne noted that this type of request would typically go through the Community Partnership Grants program; however, the festival was not yet planned at the time of this year's funding intake. Staff noted that the Town has been asked for funding in the same amount as the County.

Moved and Seconded

*The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approves providing a sponsorship in the amount of \$6,000 to the Antigonish Jazz Festival, with a requirement that they provide the same post-event financial reporting as a party receiving a community partnership grant.*

**Motion Carried**

**Hurricane Fiona Restoration Activities**

Mr. Horne noted that a full debrief would be provided in a few weeks once everything has wrapped up. A summary of the emergency operations was given, noting that the focus of the emergency response from the Municipal Emergency Command Centre was municipal operations and town electrical utility, as well as the support of comfort centres throughout the community. As the storm event progressed, the focus of the response changed to supporting access to properties being re-established by working with volunteer groups to identified locations where clearing trees that had fallen. The debris clearing part of the response is winding down, and Councillors were asked to

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report back to staff about any requests or enquiries about debris removal in the community. In response to an enquiry about power outages, Mr. Horne noted that there are still Nova Scotia Power (NSP) customers without power at this time, and NSP is reaching out to those customers to provide direct updates and support. The municipal office and library are still being offered as a warming centre in the community.

The floor was opened up for comments and questions from the Committee. Several Councillors noted that the elimination of tipping fees for storm debris would be helpful for residents, and a mobile chipping truck to help areas in the fringe might be useful. Municipal and Town staff were thanked for their work in the response and their assistance with questions. Some questions were asked about the funding programs being offered by the province for support in storm recovery.

Warden McCarron shared his thanks to Town and County staff for their coordinated response and provided some information about the meals prepared and provided throughout the community in conjunction with a charity and local restaurant. The community groups and centres that provided spaces for warming centres and meals for residents were thanked as well. Examples of generosity from community members who have shared meals with the line crews who are helping with local efforts were shared as well. A suggestion was made to ensure to formally acknowledge the volunteers in the community who stepped up during the storm.

#### Discussion of the WWHR Feedback Deadline

Mr. Horne noted that the What We Heard Report was slated for a two-week feedback period starting on September 15th, for residents to review the report and relay their comments back to the municipalities. Hurricane Fiona interrupted that consultation period, and an additional week of review was provided.

Councillor McNamara raised a concern with the review timeline given the ongoing stresses being experienced by residents due to their own ongoing responses to the damage and impacts of Hurricane Fiona. He suggested that an additional three weeks be provided to give residents a chance to review and comment on the report. Councillor Dunbar suggested a two-week extension of the feedback timeline, to October 20th. Staff noted that, to date, eight submissions about the report have been received. Several other Councillors felt that an extension considering the hurricane would be appropriate. The consultation period was extended to October 18th.

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**Reports from Inter-Municipal Boards, Committees and Commissions**

**Antigonish Heritage Museum Board**

The Board postponed their meeting due to the hurricane, and the next meeting will be in early November.

**Antigonish Arena Association**

The Board met with the new manager a month ago. The tender for the new chiller closed last week and will be awarded next week. Due to the power outage, the ice in the arenas in the community were lost but will be replaced for later this week.

**Eastern District Planning Commission**

The Board met last week and has a number of applications. Councillor McNamara provided an update about a dangerous and unsightly premises complaint being investigated in his district.

**Eastern Regional Solid Waste Management Committee**

The meeting was delayed due to the storm response and will be rescheduled to a later date. Councillor McNamara asked a question of clarification about the impact of the sale of the Guysborough waste management site to GFL.

**Pictou Antigonish Regional Library**

The Antigonish Library operated as a warming centre as soon as they had power restored. Warden McCarron noted that Antigonish Community Transit was also utilized to help to move residents to warming centres as needed.

**RK MacDonald Nursing Home**

The building fared well during the storm.

**County Paqtnkek Joint Steering Committee**

Nothing to report.

**Consolidation Steering Committee**

Mr. Horne noted that the agenda from the last meeting in August can be found in the agenda package.

Councillor McNamara spoke to a petition that he has received from a group of residents requesting a plebiscite, which they have asked Councillor McNamara to present to Council. He noted that 1582 county residents have signed the petition. A motion requesting a plebiscite that accompanied the petition was shared and read out loud.



Councillor McNamara asked that the petition be added to the next Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Community Navigation & Physician Retention Services Association

Mr. Horne noted that the Community Navigation and Physician Retention Services Association are hosting a forum on the 13th, at the Legion, starting at 9am.

Community Events

- Councillor Dunbar shared that Paqtnkek has a new Chief - Corey Julian. A letter of congratulations will be sent.
- Councillor MacLellan noted that the Arisaig community's Christmas Bazaar is being planned
- Councillor McNamara noted that the Havre Boucher Community Association is planning a Christmas Parade for this year. He also attended a meeting with the Havre Boucher Veterans Association, where they are planning improvements to the cenotaph.

Staff Reports

Staff reports will be presented at the next meeting.

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

In Camera Items

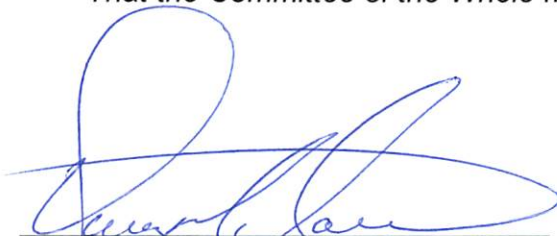
There were no in-camera items.

Adjournment

Moved

*That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 8:10pm.*

**Motion Carried**



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, CAO