

**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Tuesday January 26th, 2021
Tusket 6:30 p.m.**

Present: Warden Danny Muise; Deputy Warden Nicole Albright; Councillors Glenn Diggdon, Guy Surette, Gordon Boudreau, Richard Donaldson, Ted Saulnier and Kathy Bourque, Chief Administrative Officer Alain Muise, and Municipal Clerk/Recorder Lori Murphy.

Regrets: Calvin d'Entremont

The meeting was called to order at 6:34p.m. by Deputy Warden Nicole Albright.

Agenda:

On a motion by Danny Muise and seconded by Ted Saulnier the agenda was approved as circulated.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Deputy Warden Nicole Albright asked for any declarations of conflict of interest from the floor.

None declared.

Adoption of Minutes

Regular Council Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2021

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Guy Surette that the January 12, 2021 minutes of the Regular Council Meeting be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Business Arising from the Minutes

Sidewalks

Deputy Warden Albright explained the history of the request. In the past, the amount quoted was 1 million per km. If councillors want sidewalks, then it should be on the long-term capital plan. It could be put on the priority setting plan. We currently have no policy for sidewalks. Policy needs to be equitable for all areas.

All in agreement that sidewalks should be on the priority setting plan for discussion and a sidewalk policy needs to be developed before it is added to the capital plan. Due to COVID, more people are out walking, and they should feel safe. Staff should bring some dollar figures to the table and see what other municipal units are doing as far as policy and criteria. We should look at the Active transportation plan to review the recommendations.

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Kathy Bourque that staff look into what other units are doing and what criteria is being used to determine where sidewalks are and bring information back to Council.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

CAO Muise asked for clarification about motion. Staff to look at how other areas make a decision on putting in a sidewalk or not. Criteria could include who pays and where funds come from to pay for sidewalks. Funding sidewalks may be through Federal gas tax, user fees or increase tax rate across the board. A policy would clarify uncertainties. Criteria should also include how communities apply for a sidewalk.

Quarterly Financial Statement – December 2020

CAO Muise gave an overview of the financial statements. Provided Council with more information on the reserves balance sheet and operations. Explained the operational surplus. This is due to major savings in solid waste and major revenue increases in deed transfer tax. We have strong cash flow right now. It does include short term Safe restart loan. The cash flow will continue to be affected negatively by the admin building until the FCM loan is in place. Tax collection is comparable to 2019-20 but water lending loans are way up.

Capitol projects include admin building. The gas tax has not been allocated to this project yet.

CAO Muise is projecting a surplus at year end due to the state of operations at December 31, 2020, the expected projected operation to March 31, 2021, and the inclusion of safe restart funds not yet reflected in operations. Some of the expenditures budgeted as COVID costs will be covered with this fund, where at the time of budget, we expected to pay for it ourselves.

Admin building is on schedule. The East Pubnico water utility project will be on time. The West Pubnico dewatering unit will be mostly complete by March. Rails to trails, Fire pond, comfit solar projects delayed or off schedule, although none are expected to exceed budget. A detailed update on the Fire Ponds will be coming to council. Wedgeport Septic project delayed due to COVID and participation targets.

Question regarding water infrastructure and what the plan is to address water shortage. There hasn't been any expense this year yet for potential of what the solution might be. In upcoming budget there will be an amount for water solution. Actively working on issue. Asking provincial government how we can further bolster or improve our water lending program. Third party experts coming in to provide recommendations. Best solution is a resident solution meaning drilling new wells. CAO understands that not everyone can drill a well so will be looking into ways to assist further. These recommendations are likely to have a regional impact.

Conversation regarding bulk water station like Yarmouth currently has. The issue is the water source and it's not for drinking. Such an addition is not considered possible in our Municipality when not on a utility, both for water volume and regulatory reasons.

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Richard Donaldson to accept the financial report as presented.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Documents attached (012601)

Notice Period-Municipal Policy

ARTICLE P-Code of Conduct staff

ARTICLE P-Progressive Discipline Staff

ARTICLE C-Emergency Fund

Deputy Warden Albright explained that these policies are just for notice. The code of conduct does include the CAO. Language will be changed to reflect that.

Progressive discipline may not apply to CAO. We will look at third party to confirm if it includes CAO or make changes as required. There would be other accountabilities for the CAO.

Deputy Warden Albright briefly explained the history of the Emergency Fund policy. Suggestion to amend 3.5 to include that the councillor can make the written request in regard to the emergency.

These policies will be amended as instructed and be on a future agenda for decision.

For Decision and discussion

ARTICLE C4- Grants to Organizations

Deputy Warden Albright explained the attached policy additions are in relation to pandemic and other extraordinary events.

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Danny Muise that Council approve the Grants to Organizations policy as presented.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Temporary Borrowing Resolution-Operating Reserve

Deputy Warden Albright gave a brief overview of the request for decision provided. CAO Muise explained that he is being cautious. It is temporary because we will be receiving a loan from FCM. Each fund has a purpose and if we don't use it for the intended purpose we need the resolution.

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Ted Saulnier that Council approve that the CAO be authorized to lend \$800,000 from the operating reserve to the capital reserve, with interest at 2.45%, under the following terms: interest only payments monthly until August 31, 2021, with full principal repayment on August 31, 2021.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Strategic Priorities - Process

Deputy Warden Albright explained the attached strategic plan.

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Danny Muise that Council approve the strategic process as presented.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Fire Inspection Designation

Deputy Warden Albright explained the request for decision. CAO Muise explained that there is a plan in place to cover her current workload.

It is moved by Danny Muise and seconded by Glenn Diggdon that Council approve that the fire inspector designation for Tara Owen be endorsed by council.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Volunteer & Certificate of Appreciation

Councillor Surette explained that he would like to acknowledge local fisherman who went on their own to search for missing person on Morris Island. He would like a certificate of appreciation for those volunteers.

Councillor Saulnier spoke about the importance of volunteers. Suggest that we acknowledge volunteers on a yearly basis. Maybe in our newsletter.

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Kathy Bourque that Council approve certificates of appreciations for the 5 volunteers that helped with search for missing people on Morris Island.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

It is moved by Ted Saulnier and seconded by Guy Surette that Council instruct staff to add a section acknowledging volunteers in our local news bulletin or have a volunteer corner added

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Ground Search & Rescue

Councillor Saulnier spoke about meeting GSAR in Meteghan. Facility that they use is an old service station that is owned by their municipality and is tax free. It is heated by the municipality. They also do fund raising. Very little maintenance on building.

Councillor Surette wanted to pass along thanks to Carl's store and La Shoppe à Carl for fund raising event they recently completed.

Vandalism

Councillor Bourque explained that her community has been having quite a bit of vandalism happening. Meeting set up for February with Police advisory committee.

Correspondence and for Information

Minister Suzanne Lohnes Croft-Thank you letter

No action, for information

Municipal owned land

No action, for information.

Deputy Warden Albright explained that there is potential growth in the land behind the new building. Suggestion that this plan should be brought to the PAC so we can form a plan on how land should be used.

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Danny Muise that Council assign this work to the Planning Advisory Committee.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Financial Requests

None

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting/Notice of Motion

Councillor Boudreau commented on issues his residents have on snow removal. There are TIR protocols on snow removal. CAO Muise will send link to all Councillors.

Question Period

Question about what we are doing about mosquitos. CAO Muise explained that the suggested solution from government is very expensive. We don't have a funded solution as this time. We are still in the process of gathering information.

CAO Muise clarified that residents have never paid a surcharge or user fee on sidewalks because they were funded by the province at that time.

In Camera

None

There being no further business, it is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded Richard Donaldson by to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 8:40p.m.

Recorder

Lori Murphy

Date Approved: _____

Chairman/Warden _____

Alain Muise, Chief Administrative Officer _____