

**PORT HAWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Held Virtually

**Minutes of Meeting
May 19, 2020**

Present

Mayor, Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Deputy Mayor, Blaine MacQuarrie
Councilor, Hughie MacDougall
Councilor, Mark MacIver
Chief Administrative Officer, Terry Doyle
Director of Finance, Erin MacEachen
Director of Marketing, Recreation, Tourism & Culture, Paula Davis
General Manager, Facilities and Operations, Gordie Snook
Manager, Engineering and Public Works, Jason MacMillan
Town Solicitor, Patrick Lamey

Guests

Dorothy Barnard and Dr. Trevor Boudreau, Co-Chair – Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health Committee

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Committee of the Whole was held virtually Tuesday, May 19, 2020 and called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton.

2. Additions to Agenda

- Municipal Election – Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton

3. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Councilor H. MacDougall and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor B. MacQuarrie “to approve the agenda with one addition”. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Presentations

Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health

The presentation from Drs. Dorothy Barnard and Trevor Boudreau addressed the committee’s membership and the strengths and challenges for the Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health Committee to recruit health care professionals. The added impact of COVID-19 has altered the committee’s approach to recruitment. Dr. Barnard stated community support was an important factor in those areas that were successful with recruitment. Dr. Boudreau provided a budget summary and potential funding sources. Council was asked to consider a funding request of \$30,000 from the Town of Port Hawkesbury. A question period followed addressing the frequency of funding requests and home care/continuing care workers as part of the health care professional complement. Council will consider the funding request during budget deliberations.

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public a funding request of \$30,000 to the Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health Committee to assist with recruitment of health care professionals.”

5. Council Reports on Assigned Committees

Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton

Emergency Measures – Chair and EMC, Curtis Doucet

The February meeting was cancelled. An alternate date has not been confirmed.

Raising the Villages – Chair, Port Hawkesbury Branch, Janelle Loader-Keough

The next virtual meeting is May 29 and will include all branches across Western Cape Breton (Inverness and Victoria Counties, Port Hawkesbury, We'koqma'q, and Wagmatcook).

One Cape Breton – 3rd Annual event – Host 2020 -Baddeck, NS – Upcoming Chair, Warden Bruce Morrison

Plans for the event are on hold due to COVID-19. Island-wide meetings have occurred with leaders from 10 communities (First Nation/Municipalities) of Cape Breton/Unama'ki hosted by the Cape Breton Partnership. The meetings will continue for the short term on a biweekly basis and will discuss regional issues, challenges, and opportunities. The last few meetings were attended by the local MLAs and our MPs.

Festival of the Strait – Chairs, Danna Ferguson and Kevin MacEachern

The 2020 Festival of the Strait is officially cancelled. Work is still ongoing to determine funding and deferrals for Summer 2021.

Ceilidh Market – Chair, Kevin MacEachern

The 2020 Market Season plans are postponed for the summer, possibly until summer 2021. Council will be updated in the event things change for the fall.

Housing – Joint Richmond/Port Hawkesbury Group – Chairs, Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton and Kalen Long

The next meeting is scheduled for June and will be held virtually. The May meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. The group will continue to meet via conference calls/virtual meetings for the foreseeable future until it is safe to meet in person.

Mayors, Wardens and Chiefs of the Strait – Chair, Mayor L. Boucher, Town of Antigonish

There have been some conversations to hold a virtual meeting in June. Council will be informed should a June meeting takes place.

Cape Breton Local Immigration Pilot – Chairs, Trina Samson and Perla MacLeod

The group continues to discuss Island-wide topics important to the attraction and retention of new-comers to Cape Breton. More recent discussions involve offering extra support and information sharing to newcomers in the midst of the Pandemic.

Strait Area Transit (SAT) – Interim Chair, Jim Mustard

The meetings continue to be held virtually due to COVID-19. The SAT services have only three vehicles and still offer emergency medical appointment services. Council will be updated on the status of the new Manager. In the interim, the Board is handling the internal management and finances and is working with an accountant to complete year end and other items.

One Nova Scotia – Ivany Report (Next steps) – Chair, Don Bureaux

The project is on hold due to COVID-19. A virtual meeting was held in May and a June meeting is scheduled. The group is looking at a tentative January launch date. Council will be updated accordingly.

Allan J. MacEachen Regional Airport – Chair (TBD)

A virtual meeting is planned for June to determine a new Chair and to receive an update on airport operations.

Accessibility Committee – Chair (TBD)

An inaugural meeting has not yet been held due to COVID-19. The Mayor will work with staff to determine a go forward plan for the committee. The Province stated it will create some flexibility around the deadlines for Municipalities regarding completion of their Accessibility Plan/Municipal document.

Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health Committee (Co-chairs Dr. T. Boudreau and Juanita Mombourquette)

Meetings continue to be held virtually. The Cape Breton South Recruiting for Health Committee presented a synopsis of their work and requested a financial commitment from the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities – Chair, Pam Mood

The NSFM Board meets weekly and includes a separate Province-wide call with Mayors, Wardens, CAOs as well as separate Executive Board meetings. The decision by the Department of Municipal Affairs to not change the October date for the Fall 2020 election was discussed. The Mayor will attend the May virtual meeting as Town Caucus Chair.

Cape Breton Richmond Constituency Meetings – Chair, MLA Alana Paon

The weekly meetings provide an opportunity for information sharing and community updates. It is chaired and hosted by MLA Alana Paon with the communities in her constituency.

Leadership School for Women – Chairs, Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton and Karen Bernard)

The members of Government Focus have decided to transition this project to a virtual program in which girls and women can participate. The group would tentatively like to hold the virtual school in August 2020 in advance of the fall Municipal Election and the First Nation Elections. Council will be updated on this project.

Councilor H. MacDougall

Audit Committee

A report and recommendation to approve the audit plan will be made to Council when the audit is completed.

Deputy Mayor B. MacQuarrie

Housing – Joint Richmond/Port Hawkesbury Group

A joint update was provided by Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton and the Deputy Mayor B. MacQuarrie

Waterfront Development Advisory Committee

A meeting of the Waterfront Development Committee is scheduled May 27.

Eastern Counties Regional Library Board

An ECRL Board meeting is being organized.

Councilor M. MacIver

Eastern District Planning Commission

No Meetings have been scheduled.

Police Advisory Committee

No meetings have been scheduled.

6. CAO REPORTS

i. MARKETING, RECREATION, TOURISM & CULTURE

The following report was presented by Director, Paula Davis:

Connect 2

The Department of Energy and Mines is reviewing the Town's proposal for Phase 3 of the Destination Reeves Street Project. As part of this project, the Town will complete a strategy to improve the street's potential for pedestrian access renewal and revitalization. It will focus on creating a better connection to the urban core from high density and low rental properties that will decrease the dependency on vehicle travel, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and make possible a safer and more equitable way to connect the community. A bike share program between NSCC Strait Campus and the Town will be introduced that will provide an alternate mode of transportation for short distances for residents, students, and staff. This project will also present a framework for capitalizing on improvements that have been achieved over time that have increased the street's active transportation appeal for residents, businesses and tourists.

This project will design and develop three AT connector trail options that will provide a safe link between residential and commercial locations. It will be suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists of all ages, and will integrate a safe buffered distance from the main thoroughway. It will be fully accessible, and will be developed with a "complete street lens", placing the pedestrian in the forefront for AT consideration. Stakeholders are supportive of looking for a safe and accessible active transportation option that will link the community and decrease dependency on personal vehicles by improving transportation hubs and integrated mobility.

Strait Area Trails

Updated signs have been developed and installed at the Trail Heads indicating the importance of social distancing. There has been a great increase in use of the trails and it is anticipated that more individuals will use the trails as the weather improves.

Two students were assigned to the Strait Area Trails for maintenance work this summer. Both students worked on the trails last year gaining the experience to work independently. The students attended a power saw workshop providing the safety education when clearing takes place. The required oversight will be provided on a daily basis.

Pool and Multi Sport

As Provincial health restrictions are still in place, the Town is unable to provide the balance of the aquatic sessions and the multi-sport programs. As a result, both programs will be cancelled and refunds will be processed and mailed next week.

Funding for Community Initiatives

The Recreation Department will make sports equipment available on a loan basis beginning May 25. Equipment has been made possible through the generosity of Canadian Tire and Dora Construction. Staff is providing assistance to the Schools Plus Program. Funding was received from United Way regarding goodwill packages and from Community Links for food security and transportation access for seniors.

A question period followed. P. Davis and E. MacEachen addressed questions from Deputy Mayor B. MacQuarrie regarding paving and funding for the Active Transportation Trail.

ii. **FINANCE**

The following report was presented by Director, Erin MacEachen.

Budget Process

An updated draft budget will be provided to Council after decisions are made regarding funding based on presentations at the Committee of the Whole meeting. A virtual meeting will be scheduled after the draft budget distribution.

Audit Fieldwork

Grant Thornton will be completing their audit fieldwork remotely over the next two weeks. The Town anticipates being able to stay within typical timelines despite of the added complication of completing this work virtually.

Municipal Tax Financing

Two versions of the AMA draft Municipal Tax Financing policy were provided to Council (an application-based process based on need, and a policy focussing on broad interest rate reduction as a relief mechanism). Collections to date have been going well. E. MacEachen presented the draft COVID-19 Tax Financing Policy that if approved by Council, would offer a payment plan at a low rate of interest for residents and businesses impacted by COVID-19. She stated other options and relief mechanisms are being considered by local municipalities and municipal units are monitoring collections and feedback on their interim bills before determining if and when relief will be provided.

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public Meeting approval to defer interest on overdue tax accounts to the end of June 2020 while the draft AMA Municipal Tax Financing policy is being considered.”

iv. **ENGINEERING and PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

The following report was presented by Manager, Engineering & Public Works, Jason MacMillan:

Pandemic Preparedness Planning

Staff has been participating in regular pandemic preparedness planning committee video meetings and a COVID-19 Safe Work Practice plan was developed. Council continues to be updated on the status of staff, control measures in place, and plans for maintaining essential services for residents. Town residents have seen no interruption to essential municipal services throughout the pandemic.

Staff Training

The Landrie Lake facility operator participated in a two day power saw operation and safety course. This course will be beneficial for staff conducting annual dam maintenance which includes brush cutting and vegetation removal.

Town Infrastructure Record Drawings

The scanning of all the old Town record drawings continues. This project will ensure that the information on the deteriorating paper copies is kept in perpetuity making it easier for access to and distribution of the records to consultants and developers.

Landrie Lake Record Drawing Project

A project to create an up to date set of record drawings for the Landrie Lake distribution system continues. A survey on the system was completed and all relevant existing drawings are being reviewed and used to complete a current set of plans including the past several upgrades and changes to the distribution system, and the pump house over the years.

Water / Wastewater Operations

The setup for the WaterTrax data management platform is ongoing. The building of the sample point and analyte hierarchy for both the water and sewer systems will soon be completed. The staff training and lab data input will be conducted in the following weeks with a goal of going live in early June.

Provincial Capital Assistance Program Applications

Staff submitted two applications for funding under the PCAP program. The applications are prioritized as follows: Priority #1 - Detailed Engineering Services Water Distribution System Upgrades and Priority #2 - Re coating of Flocculation Tank at Water Treatment Plant.

Clean Leadership Intern

Zachery Clow is employed with the Town in a summer position with Engineering and Public Works. This position is fully funded through Clean Foundation Nova Scotia and Divert Nova Scotia. He will be assisting in a variety of areas including the Solid Waste Program, attending the leaf and yard waste site, digitizing of operations and safety manuals, and light maintenance as required.

Traffic Sign Report

Information from the Town-owned radar speed sign and graphs were provided to Council showing the total vehicles per day and 85th percentile speed in one direction. The traffic volume decreased around the time of the NS Declaration of the Provincial State of Emergency, March 22, 2020.

A question period followed that included the status of Dexter Construction, the prioritization for sidewalk repairs, and plans for asphaltting. An update on the timeframe for the installation of wayfinding signage will be provided at the June Committee of the Whole Meeting. J. MacMillan will reach out to NSTIR to coordinate a committee meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS

Council's agenda package included the April 2020 report from the Public Works Department which provides a breakdown of the department's work for the month.

FACILITIES, OPERATIONS AND PARKS

The following report was presented by Manager, Facilities, Operations and Parks, Gordie Snook:

Civic Centre

The Civic Centre remains closed to the public. Safety glass shields were installed at the box office and maintenance, painting and grounds work continues. Three maintenance staff work regularly and rotate shifts. Finance and Administration staff are at work and the Eastern District Planning Commission and Strait Area Transit staff have access to their offices. A safety protocol was implemented for courier drivers making deliveries to the Civic Centre.

Oceans Innovation Centre (Creamery Building)

The Oceans Innovation Centre renovations continue and the power service has been upgraded. The NSCC expect completion and occupancy in mid to late May.

Food Bank

The Food Bank receives support from Facilities Staff with weekly pickups and deliveries as well as the supply of sanitizers and PPE to its volunteers.

Pools

The pools are now shut down mechanically. The Town is entering into a partnership with Strait Regional Centre for Education to carry out and cost share the mechanical and safety upgrades. Access to service and balancing water is limited to once per week.

Fields and Parks

The Town fields and parks are now open in accordance with the Province but currently closed for spring maintenance. The playground, tennis courts, multi-court, and Splash Pad remain closed. Signage at fields and trails has been changed to reflect the change in restrictions and has been added at fields, the playground, fountain park, and the boardwalk encouraging owners to pick up after their pets. Summer programs and staffing will be determined.

Fire Hall

Maintenance to the roof, main entrance and installation of gyproc has begun. Some mechanical repairs have been completed.

Allan J. MacEachen Regional Airport

Celtic Air Services (CAS) completed the installation of new runway lights and is awaiting bulbs on backorder to bring them up to medium intensity. Canada Customs advised CAS that the airport is closed to entry until further notice. Celtic Air Services remain optimistic that the border and customs will be open for VIP travel into Canada before July 15, 2020.

A question period followed regarding the status of the multi-sport courts.

v. **BY-LAWS and POLICIES**

Policy Discussion – Draft Council Procedural Policy

- i. Elected Officials Code of Conduct
- ii. Procedural Motions

The *Elected Official Code of Conduct* and *Procedural Motions* policies are components of a draft Council Procedural Policy that were reviewed at the April 21 Committee of the Whole Meeting. Town Solicitor P. Lamey will review the draft policies and bring forward any revisions to the June Public Meeting. In the event there are no significant changes, the recommendation of staff will be to move both policies forward for consideration of approval. CAO, T. Doyle stated that as the overarching Council Procedural Policy is a lengthy and complex document, his wish is to approve the Elected Officials Code of Conduct Policy (it was noted this policy can be a stand alone policy) and Procedural Motions Policy (it was noted this could be an appendix to the overarching Council Procedural Policy and that it adheres to the rules of parliamentary law as contained in Roberts Rules of Order [11th Edition]).

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public Meeting discussion and consideration to approve separately the Elected Official Code of Conduct Policy and Procedural Motions Policy.”

Flag policy

The draft Flag Policy was reviewed and will be amended to address specific issues regarding the application process and requests from groups and organizations to fly their flags. The policy will be brought forward for discussion at the June Public Meeting. Council discussed the potential for a fourth flag pole to fly the Mi'kmaq flag, to have a Town flag, and to liaise accordingly with the Nova Scotia Protocol Office.

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public Meeting discussion and consideration to approve the draft Flag Policy.”

Council was asked to email staff regarding their questions and comments on the draft Elected Officials Code of Conduct Policy, the Procedural Motions Policy, and the Flag Policy.

7. Other Business

i. NS Municipalities Joint Application for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding

Council was in support of staff moving forward with an application to the NS Municipalities Joint Application for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding Program to install two charging stations in the Town. The program will cover up to 50% of the infrastructure costs. The Town would be responsible for approximately \$7,000 - \$8,000 for each station. Staff proposed the Civic Centre and the waterfront as the locations for the charging stations. Discussion included the timeframe for installation and alternate locations for the stations.

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public Meeting approval for staff to submit an application to the NS Municipalities Joint Application for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding Program for two electric charging stations in the Town.”

ii. Sobeys – Pre-order Service for Customers

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public Meeting approval for staff to send a letter to Sobeys expressing interest on behalf of Town resident to provide a preorder call in service and curbside grocery pickup service for customers in the Town of Port Hawkesbury.”

iii. Policing Priorities

CAO, T. Doyle provided Council with a suggested list of policing activities for focus in 2020-2021 as part of the RCMP Port Hawkesbury Detachment Annual Performance Plan. Council discussed each issue and prioritized the areas for the detachment to concentrate their efforts.

The consensus of Council was “to bring forward to the June Public Meeting approval of the following policing priorities for the RCMP Port Hawkesbury Detachment to concentrate their efforts: 1. Substance Abuse (Illegal drugs/prescription pills); 2. Community Policing; and, 3. Traffic Enforcement.”

iv. COVID-19 Update

CAO, T. Doyle provided Council with an update from the Town’s COVID-19 (May 19) Situation Report that included the opening of the Town tennis courts, interviews for summer students, a draft AMA tax financing policy, initiatives from the Recreation Department, sidewalk cleaning and repair of settlement issues on Pitt Street.

Town Dinner for Persons Experiencing Hardship During the Pandemic

The Town will provide a dinner in recognition of residents experiencing hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic. Deputy Mayor B. MacQuarrie stated the Knights of Columbus offered food items as well as assistance with the dinner. Discussion included determining the list of names to receive the dinner, logistics, and assistance required to prepare and deliver the dinners.

Staff Wellness Day – Friday, May 22, 2020

On behalf of Council, Mayor B. Chisholm-Beaton extended thanks and gratitude to senior staff and all departments for a job well done on the Town's operations and service delivery to residents during the pandemic.

8. Approved Additions

Municipal Election

Council will give consideration to electronic and telephone voting in addition to the use of paper ballots at the October Municipal Election.

The consensus of Council was "to bring forward to the June Public Meeting discussion on electronic and telephone voting in addition to paper ballot voting at the October Municipal Election."

9. Future Meetings (Held Virtually)

- Pandemic Preparedness Plan Meeting May 25, 2020
- Public Meeting June 2, 2020
- Committee of the Whole June 16, 2020

10. Adjournment

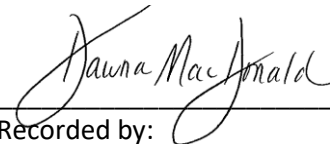
MOVED by Councilor M. MacIver and SECONDED by Deputy Mayor B. MacQuarrie to adjourn the May 19, 2020 meeting of the Committee of the Whole at 9:32 p.m. MOTION CARRIED.

June 3, 2020

Date



Approved by:
Terry Doyle, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer



Recorded by:
Dawna MacDonald