

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

A Committee of the Whole meeting was held at the North Shore Fire Hall in Indian Brook on April 3, 2023, at 2:00pm with Deputy Warden Dauphinee in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Paul MacNeil
District #3- Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4- Barbara Longva
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7- Jackie Organ
District #8- Norman MacDonald

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Allan Bragg, Manager of Finance
Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder
Dan Coffin, Tourism and Recreation Manager
Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications and Marketing Coordinator
Kelly Brett, Manager of Public Works
Cassandra Yonder, Senior Safety Officer

ABSENT

District #2- Perla MacLeod
District #5- Fraser Patterson

Councillor Longva asked Warden Morrison for the difference between Committee of the Whole and Council meetings and Warden Morrison explained the difference.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Deputy Warden Dauphinee welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting is being held in Unama'ki, one of seven traditional districts of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw People.

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Warden Dauphinee called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

On Motion of Councillor Organ seconded by Councillor Longva that the Agenda for April 4, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the Minutes for March 17, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

DEPARMTENT UPDATES

CAO REPORT

- Washroom in North Shore - Septic/water in mid-spring
- Strategic plan - getting prettied up, will be sending a draft in the near future...
- EMO Rehab ambulance - Fire chiefs all agreed this is the approach to take with the new unit. All will be covering the cost to insure it
- Councillor MacNeil and myself had a meeting with Wagmatcook. We are looking to build strong relationships on a go forward, and we gave them their rent cheque back to 2018.
- Municipal grant applications have closed. Council were reminded to remind their organizations that application is needed for Property Tax exemption. Grants will be given out same as last year, in the near future.
- Ecology Action Centre are scheduled for April 24 Council.

OTHER

- Successfully purchased one property at tax sale. 125 acres Big Baddeck.
- We have added the Village on to our Smart Meter contract at their request. It doesn't affect our meters or project whatsoever.
- All of our buildings are getting an efficiency audit from Efficiency NS. We will be seeing if there are any updates/upgrades come out of this.
- Waste collection changes for Easter weekend - will be promoted.
- CUPE Bargaining starting this week.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

- RCMP Retro Costs are being passed on to Municipalities - unsure of the effects, at this point. NSFM is asking all Councils to send a letter and do a resolution against this.
- Travel form for Council.

TOURISM

- Ingonish Step project ongoing, contractor has been hired. Wreck Cove is also part of this process.
- Working on a cluster mapping pilot project, identifying data points, employment numbers, cell usage, trail head usage, beaches, restaurants, etc. We are one of two locations in Canada.
- Cabot Trail 100th Anniversary plans underway.
- Embarked on a regional advocacy alignment initiative for signage and websites updates.
- Started a tourism strategic package.

Recreation:

- Great response from the multisport program
- Planning community programming, potential for student hires

Trails:

- Got to spend Friday attending a photoshoot for groomers for three different snow groomers at the Pig and Whistle.
- Multi use trail work will continue throughout the summer
- Placemaking initiative here in Indian Brook, will take on more communities this year.
- Beacon Baddeck will be a launching community day in June.

Councillor MacNeil asked Mr. Coffin about the first aid program and confirmed that residents have until the end of April to sign up.

FINANCE

- The initial tax sale listing had 24 properties and total arrears \$147,952.28.
- Prior to the day of the sale 5 properties were deferred (arrears of \$59,458.50) and 9 paid (arrears of \$24,518.86).
- On the day of the sale, there were 10 properties (arrears \$63,974.92) – There were approximately 85 people in attendance.
- During the sale, 2 properties did not sell (arrears \$15,822.89) and 8 properties were sold (arrears \$48,152.03)
- Of the 8 properties sold, the successful bids totalled \$236,100 for a surplus of \$187,947.97. Preparing for the next tax sale.

Tax Collection:

- Year-over-year current taxes owing are up slightly at \$30,073.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

- Year-over-year arrears are down by \$143,696.
- So overall collections when comparing year-over-year are \$113,623 “to the good” as we continue to focus collection efforts with reminders.
- Starting to look at a Municipal Fee Policy. Looking to increase our tax arrears from 10% to 18%, this will be brought to Council April 24, 2023.
- Expected to present the budget on April 24, 2023
- Preparing for year end budget
- VCT: have been doing dispatch for SAT until the 13th of April.

PUBLIC WORKS

- Changes to waste collection for the Easter holiday.
- All applicants have been chosen for the ReUse Centre, open April 29
- Heavy Garbage will begin in May.
- Province wide meeting regarding C&D regulations, it will now be a phased approach.
- Work is ongoing for the north shore washroom project, an RFP will be put out for septic.
- Water meter reads are being conducted and the bills should be out within the next couple of weeks. This round of billing will contain information related to the water rate increases which came into effect April 1, 2023. Water customers will see the increase on the bill that comes out in July.
- Meter read replacement will begin in May, should take about 6-8 weeks and Communications will be going out soon for this.

SENIOR SAFETY

- Emphasis will be on community engagement with seniors groups and programs
- Exciting project coming up with Seniors Cook at the Food Hub would like to have 2 from each district.
- Working with the library putting together a resource binder for seniors.
- Resource data base, will hire a marketing company to populate this database.
- ACTing Collectively project, we need more participation for that, anyone over 65 please contact me for a telephone survey.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Meeting with each councillor.
- Looking at ways to improve communications and engagement as part of the strategic planning.
- Getting familiar with the website and Facebook and looking at ways to enhance those.
- Research into the budget to see what the County is able to do with communications, like website, mailouts, etc.

EDO

- Looking into the Tourism Economic Study on the Cabot Trail, looking at starting the study next Monday. I'll be looking for involvement from other key stakeholders. If there are people in your district I should be talking to, let me know.
- April 14, 2023, job fair at the Inverary Inn, at 11am. Tried to have one North but didn't have enough interest.
- Fishing industry study – looking at technology to support the onshore fishery. A presentation will be coming to Council in the near future.
- Running a lien program, training program, one VC company received this training.
- Working with EngageNS – quality of life study.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT CHARGE (LIC) BYLAW DISCUSSION

At the last Budget meeting, Council decided to move forward with an LIC Bylaw.

Now, we are in the process of deciding how the Bylaw is going to look.

With this particular By-Law, the overall theme is to pass on the capital costs of implementing it, to those that benefit.

Without the By-law, as we have been doing, the capital costs are absorbed by all residents of the County.

Water capital is different. We don't need a Bylaw; those capital costs must be passed on to new users.

CAO MacEachen went over each of the following scenarios with Council:

Examples of an LIC once implemented:

A new subdivision has been developed. Quotes have come in for \$200,000 to pave. There are 15 residents living on the street. There are 20 lots in total, 5 not sold yet.

SCENARIO 1A

- The residents want their street paved. They know there is an LIC passed and think this is a great way to get their street paved.
- They do up a petition for their neighbors to sign. They get all 15 that live there to sign in favor of having the street paved.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

- 15/20= 75% (more than 2/3)
- They take it to Council. Council vote, and pass it, as it has more than 2/3 in favour.
- Council agrees to put \$20,000 towards the project.
- It is decided to spread the remaining cost uniformly among the rest of the lots.
- \$200,000 - \$20,000 = \$180,000 shared amongst 20 lots.
- \$180,000/20 lots = \$9,000 per lot. Each new lots that is sold (5 remaining) will have this built onto their tax rate.
- Council decided that residents can pay it off over 10 years, adding it on their tax bill.
- Tax bill goes up approx \$900 per year, for 10 years.
- Residents have their street paved.

SCENARIO 1B

- The residents want their street paved. They know there is an LIC passed and think this is a great way to get their street paved.
- They do up a petition for their neighbors to sign. They get all 15 that live there to sign in favor of having the street paved
- 15/20= 75% (more than 2/3)
- They take it to Council. Council vote, and pass it, as it has more than 2/3 in favour. Council agrees to put \$20,000 towards the project.
- \$200,000 - \$20,000 = \$180,000 shared amongst 20 lots.
- Council have decided to charge it based on frontage to the paved road. Each resident has different frontage

Total frontage (km of the road) is 2 km. Billed based on frontage:

- Lot 1 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 2 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 3 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 4 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 5 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 6 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 7 0.3 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.3 \text{ km} = 27000$
- Lot 8 0.3km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.3 \text{ km} = 27000$
- Lot 9 0.3km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.3 \text{ km} = 27000$
- Lot 10 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 11 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 12 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 13 0.1km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.1 \text{ km} = 9000$
- Lot 14 0.1km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.1 \text{ km} = 9000$
- Lot 15 0.1km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.1 \text{ km} = 9000$
- Lot 16 0.1km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.1 \text{ km} = 9000$

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

- Lot 17 0.1km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.1 \text{ km} = 9000$
- Lot 18 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 19 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
- Lot 20 0.05 km $\$180000/2\text{km} \cdot 0.05 \text{ km} = 4500$
180000

SCENARIO 2

- Council has decided that this new subdivision should be paved. The residents have not asked for it.
- Council agrees to put \$20,000 towards the project.
- It is decided to spread the remaining cost uniformly among the rest of the lots.
- $200,000 - 20,000 = \$180,000$ shared amongst 20 lots.
- $\$180,000/20 \text{ lots} = \$9,000$ per lot. Each new lots that is sold (5 remaining) will have this built onto their tax rate.
- Council decided that residents can pay it off over 10 years, adding it on their tax bill.
- Tax bill goes up approx \$900 per year, for 10 years.
- Residents have their street paved.

SCENARIO 3

- The residents want their street paved. They know there is an LIC passed and think this is a great way to get their street paved. They do up a petition for their neighbors to sign. They get all 15 that live there to sign in favor of having the street paved.
- $15/20 = 75\%$ (more than $2/3$)
- They take it to Council. Council vote, and don't pass it. Street does not get paved.

SCENARIO 4

- Council has decided that this new subdivision should be paved. The residents have not asked for it.
- It is decided to not use the LIC, and have all the County pay for it.
- $\$200,000/11,000 \text{ tax bills} = \18.18 per bill (VERY SIMPLE CALC), (normally based on assessment, not uniform)

SCENARIO 5

Council has decided that this new subdivision should be paved. The residents have not asked for it.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Council instructs staff to do a petition, for affected residents. Staff do up a petition, and deliver to the 20 properties on the street

10 of the 20 properties send in their documents, opposed to the petition (street paving). The other 10 do not send anything back

The 10 that send back are against. The 10 that do not are considered for. $10/20 = 50\%$ agreement.

Petition gets taken to Council

Council sees 50% are against, 50% considered for.

Council then votes, to go ahead, or vote it down.

If it is a Vote for, we then proceed with calculating a charge to implement.

If the Vote is against, then the street does not get paved.

SCENARIO 6

Council has decided that this new subdivision should be paved. The residents have not asked for it.

Council instructs staff to do a petition, for affected residents. Staff do up a petition, and deliver to the 20 properties on the street

18 of the 20 properties send in their documents, opposed to the petition (street paving). The other 2 do not send anything back

The 18 that send back are against. The 2 that do not are considered for. $2/20 = 10\%$ agreement.

Council sees 90% are against, 10% considered for.

Council then votes, to go ahead, or vote it down.

If it is a Vote for, we then proceed with calculating a charge to implement.

If the Vote is against, then the street does not get paved.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said the LIC will affect seniors in my area and that is my concern, I suggest putting a cap on it, no more than 50% a year.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked how would the County bill organizations that have grants in lieu of taxes? CAO said those are separate from tax exempt properties because it is a charge, not a tax.

Warden Morrison mentioned that he pays a Village tax that is supposed to be for sidewalks and maintenance in town, so this LIC is very similar to what the Village tax is.

Council would advise the residents on each of these scenarios every time.

Councillor Longva said any improvements in one part of the county is a benefit for all the County but added that she also heard if whoever is benefiting from the improvement should have to pay for it so I think there should be a vote per project. It should be written in the bylaw.

If you don't vote, than it is counted as a yes vote. Councillor Longva doesn't agree with this. CAO said if you want it to count as a no vote then you have to tell staff if that's the wording you want.

Councillor MacNeil agreed that it should be a no vote.

Councillor Longva went over her list of changes with the proposed bylaw.

CAO said we will add the suggestions and send them to communications for wording and will have another discussion on it.

Public Comments:

How is the vote defined? Deputy Warden Dauphinee said each property would have one vote.

Communications was brought up and how hard the St. Ann's Timebank is working to get things done.

There was a comment that said the Local Improvement Charge is a tool for democracy and it's a good way for council to reach out to their residents and another way of providing good governance.

Comments on cell issues and asked who is responsible for getting us cellular? Deputy Warden Dauphinee said it is the federal government, but Council does and can advocate and Council is willing to work with any level of government to do this.

Better communications and engagement are needed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

NEXT MEETING

Next Committee of the Whole meeting is May 8, 2023, at 2pm.

ADJOURN

Councillor MacNeil made a motion to adjourn at 4:17pm.

DRAFT