

December 16, 2024

The Financial Services Committee for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building by videoconference and teleconference on Monday, December 16, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

- 1 Clr. Joe MacDonald
- 2 Clr. Deborah Wadden
- 3 Clr. Darla MacKeil
- 4 Clr. Ronald Baillie
- 5 Deputy Warden Wayne Murray
- 6 Warden Robert Parker
- 7 Clr. Donald Parker
- 8 Clr. Larry Turner
- 9 Clr. Peter Boyles
- 10 Clr. Randy Palmer
- 11 Clr. Andy Thompson
- 12 Clr. Chester Dewar

IN ATTENDANCE

Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipal Clerk-Treasurer
Sueann Musick, Director of Corporate Services/Deputy Clerk
Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development
Rhiannon McNair, Director of Business Operations, Broadband Initiative
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Clr. MacKeil, Chair of the Financial Services Committee called the meeting to order and acknowledged that we are on the ancestral territorial lands of the Mikmaq people.

AGENDA

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Baillie that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion Carried**

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

Clr. Baillie requested a discussion regarding a funding request for the New Year Levy at the River John Fire Hall for the Year 2000 Reboot. This was added to the agenda as item 9H.

Clr. Wadden requested that a streetlight request at 5065 Little Harbour Road be added to the agenda. This request was added as item 9B.

MINUTES

Clr. MacKeil asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the November 18, 2024, and November 18, 2024 In-Camera minutes. The members of the Committee entered no errors, omissions, or corrections. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of the meetings on November 18, 2024, as the official record of the meetings.

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Letter from J. van Vulpen regarding the Municipal Elections.
- b. Thank you letter from Middle River Birch Hill Cemetery for the Municipal Service Grant.

Warden Parker said a discussion should be held early in the new year to review the November election and suggested the letter from J. van Vulpen be included in that discussion.

REPORTS NOT REQUIRING A MOTION

COMMUNICATION REPORT

The Communication Report for the month of November 2024 was received as presented.

Mr. MacInnis requested any Christmas greetings from Councillors be received this week for social media posts.

RECREATION REPORT

The Recreation Report for the month of November 2024 was received as presented.

WARDEN'S REPORT

The Warden's Report for the month of November 2024 was received as presented.

Warden Parker, along with Deputy Warden Murray, Clr. Palmer and CAO Cullen attended the sod turning for the new RCMP District Office in the Stellarton Industrial Park. The Warden said information sheets about the 1,785 square meter, net zero carbon detachment were handed out. The Warden said the location will now be closer to the highway, but the Warden said there must be improved service along with the new building.

TAXES RECEIVABLE REPORT

The Taxes Receivable Report for the month of November 2024 was received for information purposes.

DEED TRANSFER TAX

The Deed Transfer Tax for the month of November 2024 was received as presented.

REPORTS REQUIRING A MOTION

ACCOUNTS PAID – NOVEMBER 2024

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Dewar that the Accounts Paid Report for the month of November 2024 be received as presented. **Motion Carried**

Nay Vote: Clr. Larry Turner

BUSINESS ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

2025 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

MOTION

It was moved by Warden Parker and seconded by Clr. Palmer is to keep the Property Tax Exemption at \$250.00 for a total income of \$30,000.00. **Motion Carried**

DISTRICT 12 STREETLIGHT

The request for a streetlight was made for 754 Centredale Road, and Mr. McDowell said this request was reviewed internally, and discussions were held with Clr. Dewar. The intention of this streetlight is to improve the visibility and maneuverability of school buses in the area. This is not an area that currently has an area rate so it doesn't fill the municipality's conditions for an in-fill area. This would require an assessment and confirmation that the affected nearby residents would be willing to take on an area rate.

Mr. McDowell said if Council approval is favourable, then a formal survey would be completed, and unanimous support from the two adjacent properties would be required.

Clr. Dewar has already spoken to one resident who favours this and will contact the other property owner. Clr. Dewar said there is no decent place for school buses to turn in this area. CAO Cullen noted this could be placed on the agenda as deferred business for next month's meeting.

DISTRICT 2 STREETLIGHT

Mr. McDowell said the request for a light for a new home is within a streetlight area but would require a new pole to be installed. The cost would be in the range of \$2,500 to \$4,000 to complete this work. Mr. McDowell said if Council favours this installation, there would be no reason for this not to be done.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Baillie to approve the streetlight request at 5065 Little Harbour Road. **Motion Carried**

MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Dewar and seconded by Clr. Turner to approve the Municipal Service Grant for the Eureka Fire Department in the amount of \$3,000.00 for ongoing projects at the fire hall. **Motion Carried**

NOMINATION TO THE MOPC GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Clr. MacKeil invited nominations for a new member to the Grant Review Committee. Clr. Randy Palmer nominated Clr. Ronald Baillie and Deputy Warden Wayne Murray nominated Clr. Larry Turner; both Councillors accepted the nominations.

Following a tabulation of votes, Clr. MacKeil announced that Clr. Larry Turner was nominated to the Grant Review Committee.

MOTION

It was moved by Warden Parker and seconded by Clr. Randy Palmer to destroy the ballots. **Motion Carried**

NOMINATIONS TO THE ANTI-LITTER AWARENESS AD HOC COMMITTEE

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Thompson and seconded by Clr. Turner to recommend that Council approve the nominations of Monica Rivers and Larry Tyldsley to the Anti-Litter Awareness Ad Hoc Committee. **Motion Carried**

Warden Parker said upon reading the applicant's background, the quality of these people and what they bring to the table on this matter is apparent. The Warden said that Ms. Deborah Searle with Pictou County Solid Waste has agreed to be the staff member of this committee. The hope of this committee is to help people do better.

MOPC NETWORK AFFORDABLE ACCESS PLAN POLICY

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Turner to recommend to Council to adopt the affordability plan for the MOPC Internet Project. **Motion Carried**

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR CLEAN FOUNDATION

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Wadden to include a letter of support with the application to be submitted by The Clean Foundation with the funding application to the FCM for Climate Ready Plans. **Motion Carried**

YEAR 2000 REBOOT

Clr. Baillie said this group raised \$4,000.00 within four months and is now short \$500.00 for the event. Clr. Baillie does not want to see this group end up in a deficit.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Wadden that Council help fund the New Year's Levy for the Year 2000 Reboot event through a Recreation Council Sponsorship grant for \$500.00. **Motion Carried**

Clr. Thompson questioned if any funding was available through the Community Connectivity Event Fund. Clr. Baillie said that these funds had previously been used. Clr. Baillie said this is the only New Year's Levy held in the municipality, and the request would not have been made if the group was not in a deficit.

Warden Parker said this would set a precedent and did not feel this should be done. When a group is short of money, it should come from either a Municipal Service Grant or the Community Connectivity Event Fund.

Deputy Warden Murray asked if any funds were available through a recreation grant and expressed support for this event as it is the only levy held in the county. CAO Cullen said there is money left for a Recreation Council Sponsorship. Deputy Warden Murray asked if the mover and seconder would amend the motion for sponsorship through a Recreation Grant.

DEFERRED BUSINESS

PICTOU LIBRARY FUNDING

CAO Cullen said there was no update on the library funding. The meeting was postponed until the New Year.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Community announcements were given.

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

Deputy Warden Murray requested reconsideration of the motion to approve the River John Community Support Services Internet Program.

Deputy Warden Murray said that there are so many halls and organizations in the county that could come in through this policy, and it could be costly. The Deputy Warden said this is a good gesture, but the project should be up and running and have its feet on the ground. Deputy Warden Murray felt strongly that this motion should be reconsidered.

Clr. MacKeil asked what the policy stated, and CAO Cullen said that the policy is for comfort centres to receive internet service. If it is not a comfort centre, then approval from the Financial Services Committee is required. Mr. Cullen said the River John Community Support Services does not meet the base criteria for a comfort centre.

Warden Parker said it comes down to either following the policy or not and voiced that once that gate is opened and an exception is made, it is difficult to say no to others.

Clr. Baillie asked if the service would fall under section 2b within the Community Hall Internet Program Policy. Clr. Baillie said the request was made to provide an opportunity to offer more services that may come if there is high-speed internet. Clr. Baillie said that each application should be voted on for its own merits, and this should be looked at as a food bank. Clr. Baillie said this could be looked at doing it for a year to see if it establishes and allows the possibility of offering more services, which will bring in more income and allow it to better stand on its own feet.

Clr. Thompson said this group should be supported. This organization helps the most vulnerable people in the community and felt this would fall under the 2b section of the policy. Clr. Wadden said that Council should be supporting this and is aware of what food banks are currently going through. Clr. Wadden said the internet service would help

with providing service to clients. Clr. Parker said there should be an exception in this case, whereas it is a food bank and felt it should be covered in the policy under the 2b section. Clr. Turner supported this motion as it serves the broader community and aims to benefit the people served. Clr. Turner said the spirit of this Council should speak to that need and would be best served as a Council and a community if this request was honoured.

Warden Parker said that most community halls serve many purposes and serve them, and said others should be treated the same. Clr. Baillie noted that this facility is different from a community hall. This facility is used approximately four days each week, and Clr. Baillie believes that this facility is at a different level than most community halls.

Deputy Warden Murray said the discussion was required and a good one, and at this time, Deputy Warden withdrew the motion to reconsider this.

Clr. MacKeil said the policy should be tightened and that other businesses are within that building. Clr. MacKeil said that the Food Bank is one thing, but this is a multi-use building and that needs to be separated. CAO Cullen said the policy does work, but more information needs to be captured to determine if it meets the requirements of section 2b and serves a broad purpose for the community.

Clr. Baillie said this could be done for a year and then have a reassessment but felt this would help the facility move forward.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business before the meeting, so the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

MUNICIPAL CLERK