

March 17, 2025

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, March 17, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

- 1 Clr. Joe MacDonald
- 2 Clr. Deborah Wadden
- 3 Clr. Darla MacKeil
- 4 Clr. Ronald Baillie
- 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
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development
Rhiannon McNair, Director of Business Operations, Broadband Initiative
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT

5 Deputy Warden Wayne Murray
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services

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.

Clr. MacKeil acknowledged Warden Robert Parker and his wife Colleen's 50th wedding anniversary and, on behalf of Council, presented a certificate to commemorate the special occasion.

AGENDA

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

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

There were no emergency resolutions.

MINUTES

Clr. MacKeil asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the February 18, 2025 minutes. The members of the Committee entered no errors, omissions, or corrections. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of the meetings on February 18, 2025, as the official record of the meetings. **Motion Carried**

REPORTS NOT REQUIRING A MOTION

COMMUNICATION REPORT

The Communication Report for the month of February 2025 was received as presented.

Clr. Turner asked what the accessibility feature purchased for the MOPC's website would do. Mr. MacInnis said the program had not yet been uploaded and was awaiting this from the developers of the program. Mr. MacInnis said this would make the MOPC website accessible for users. Mr. MacInnis said this feature would be available soon.

RECREATION REPORT

The Recreation Report for the month of February 2025 was received as presented.

WARDEN'S REPORT

The Warden's Report for the month of February 2025 was received as presented.

INTERNET REPORT

The MOPC Network Sales and Marketing Report for the month of February 2025 was received as presented.

Clr. Turner stated that it was good to see the included report but said there are still questions on the uptake. Clr. Turner requested a legend at the bottom to allow for better interpretation. Ms. McNair said adding a legend to the report would be possible.

RIVERVIEW HOME CORPORATION

Clr. Parker provided an update regarding the Riverview Home Corporation and said that progress is being made and things are on the way to the remedy. Clr. Parker said that ongoing discussions are occurring about what will be done with the building when the residents' transition is completed. Clr. Parker stated that things are well run in the facility, and it is felt that the transition team is ahead on the plans.

Clr. Boyles asked when the transition is to be completed. Clr. Parker said that the remedy calls for this process to be completed by the end of 2026. Homes are being purchased, and tenders are being put out for medical homes. Three medical homes, specially built for 15 residents' needs, are required.

Clr. Dewar said that everything was done up to code at the time of the last refit, and now residents will be in houses and require 24-hour care, each home with different shifts. Clr. Dewar stated that it feels like a waste of taxpayer money. Clr. Dewar stated that many residents from District 12 work at the home and are unsure what will happen once the facility closes.

Warden Parker stated that the transitions are taking place in the province's direction because a court decided this would be done. Warden Parker agreed this would be done at a tremendous cost.

Clr. Parker said a meeting with the provincial government will be held on March 29, 2025.

Clr. MacDonald asked who would own the building once the transition process was completed. CAO Cullen said it belongs to the six municipalities.

STREETLIGHT REPORT

The MOPC Streetlight Report for March 2025 was received for information purposes.

TAXES RECEIVABLE REPORT

The Taxes Receivable Report for the month of February 2025 was received for information purposes.

DEED TRANSFER TAX

The Deed Transfer Tax for the month of February 2025 was received as presented.

REPORTS REQUIRING A MOTION

ACCOUNTS PAID – FEBRUARY 2025

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Wadden that the Accounts Paid Report for the month of February 2025 be received as presented.

Motion Carried

Clr. Turner questioned invoice 23918 for Staples for an OWL camera that was purchased. Ms. Musick stated that the camera was initially purchased for the Accessibility Advisory Committee but can be used for any committee meeting to make the meetings more accessible.

BUSINESS ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT EXTENSION

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Wadden to approve River John Recreation's extension request for the Municipal Service Grant.

Motion Carried

RECREATION START-UP GRANTS

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Thompson and seconded by Clr. Dewar to approve the following Recreation Start-Up Grant:

Motion Carried

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| 1. Bridgeville Community Club | \$350.00 | Community Programming |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|

COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Parker to approve the following appointments to the Climate Change Advisory Committee:

1. Ian MacKay
2. Rick Williams
3. David Parker
4. Alan Best

Motion Carried

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Baillie to approve the following appointments to the Litter Awareness Committee:

1. Bernice Langille
2. Robbie MacInnis
3. David Hutchings

Motion Carried

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Turner to approve the following appointment to the Planning Advisory Committee:

1. Earle Cameron

Motion Carried

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Dewar to approve the following appointments to the Police Advisory Committee:

1. Gwen Savage
2. Gordon Gillis

Motion Carried

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Baillie to approve the following appointment to the River Guest Home Board:

1. Mary Rochon

Motion Carried

FIRE DEPARTMENT LEVY CHANGE REQUESTS

Clr. MacKeil said that the Alma Fire Department and the Scotsburn Fire Department have requested changes to the sharing of their fire levy funds, and the West River Fire Department has asked for an increase in their fire levy. Alma and Scotsburn will no longer be sharing levy with WRFD.

Warden Parker noted that the fire departments wished to end the sharing agreement; however, when this was looked further into, nobody knew about the sharing arrangement or where it originated. The Warden said this demonstrates the inequity of how fire departments are funded. Warden Parker stated that, at some point, a study should be conducted by Mr. Hale to find a fairer way to fund the departments.

MOTION

It was moved by Warden Parker and seconded by Clr. MacDonald to approve West River Fire Department's request to increase the fire levy from 12.4 to 14.0.

Motion Carried

Clr. Turner noted that two of the fire departments involved are in District 8, and if there are changes to be negotiated, Clr. Turner would like to quantify how much this change will affect each department.

Clr. MacKeil questioned if the fund sharing came to Council and if it came to Council for approval for distribution, and how Council could vote to cease participation if they never voted for the participation. CAO Cullen said that an acknowledgment is required that this is what it will be going forward. Ms. Cornish said it is a practice that has been going on for over 48 years, and Ms. Cornish cannot find any written approval for this. Clr. Thompson stated it had historically been done this way.

Ms. Cornish said the fire departments have requested that the distribution sharing be stopped when the payment is sent out. Ms. Cornish would like the Council's direction to stop the fund-sharing payment.

Clr. Thompson asked if the decision had to be made at the meeting or if it could wait until the numbers were received, as Clr Turner requested, and said that this would impact the Abercrombie department. Ms. Cornish said that the Abercrombie department was advised, and the information had been provided.

Clr. Thompson asked if sharing area rates is allowed under the MGA, and this will need to be addressed. CAO Cullen said that the MGA states that 100% of the levy collected should be given to the department for which it is collected, and currently, the way it is distributed is non-compliant to the MGA. Clr. Thompson said it has to happen if it is against the MGA.

Clr. Turner did not want the affected departments to be blindsided by a change in the funding. Ms. Cornish said that the affected departments received the information, and Abercrombie was the only fire department that did not respond. Clr. Turner asked who the information was sent to and was the information given that if the agreement was suspended, were the amounts given. Ms. Cornish provided the calculations for the impact of non-sharing. Ms. Cornish said that Mr. Hale also spoke to someone regarding this.

Clr. Palmer said it must be realized that these fire-fighters are not-for-profit and are all volunteers who put in a lot of time. Clr. Palmer said these firefighters are doing a tremendous job and going to more accidents and medical calls and feels that Council should stay away from this and let fire departments decide for themselves. Clr. Wadden agreed with Clr. Palmer and said that Council does not have any place in this and they are their own entities. Clr. Wadden does not want to see the departments analyzed and said they all work together. Clr. Wadden will not support a study.

Clr. MacKeil questioned if there were other departments in this situation. CAO Cullen stated that there are two other departments.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Baillie and seconded by Clr. Palmer to acknowledge the request to cease participation in the distribution sharing of the fire levy funds for the Alma and Scotsburn Fire Departments.

Motion Carried
Nay Warden Parker
Clr. MacDonald
Clr. Turner (Conflict of Interest)

PLYMOUTH FIRE DEPARTMENT LOAN GUARANTEE

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Thompson and seconded by Clr. Dewar to approve the Plymouth Fire Department's request for a letter of guarantee from the MOPC for \$200,000 to purchase a truck and equipment.

Motion Carried

STELLARTON WATER SOURCE PROTECTION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Palmer to appoint Clr. Chester Dewar to the Stellarton Water Source Protection Committee.

Motion Carried

DEFERRED BUSINESS

PICTOU LIBRARY FUNDING

CAO Cullen stated that no new information regarding the Pictou Library funding was available.

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

There were no motions of reconsideration.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business before the meeting, so the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

MUNICIPAL CLERK