

May 11, 2020

The Committee of Council as a Whole for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met by videoconference/teleconference on Monday, May 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Wayne Murray, Deputy Warden

Robert Parker, Warden, Vice-Chair

Don Butler

Deborah Wadden

Darla MacKeil

Ronald Baillie

David Parker

Larry Turner

Peter Boyles

Randy Palmer

Andy Thompson

Chester Dewar

IN ATTENDANCE

Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipal Clerk-Treasurer

Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer

Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk

Sueann Musick, Communications Officer

Jane Johnson, Recording Secretary

MINUTES – AUGUST 26, 2019

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that the minutes of August 26, 2019 be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

MINUTES – APRIL 27, 2020

It was moved by Clr. Butler and seconded by Clr. MacKeil that the minutes of April 27, 2020 be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

COVID-19 – UPDATE

The CAO reported in the last week we are starting to see a trend moving in the direction that we want to see. Currently we have a 79.9% recovery rate which is growing more rapidly than the rate of infection. On the REMO side he expected that discussions will begin on the recovery and re-opening phase and what that will look like in terms of how offices and other workplaces will operate and when public access will be granted and the degree of access permitted with social distancing measures in place. The current State of Emergency is in effect until May 17th so we may know by mid-week if an extension is being considered. The Tax Financing Policy is presently being fine-tuned by finance staff and he hoped to have the text to Council next week. There is a proposal before the Department of Business to assist businesses with a municipal program but there was no level of confidence that it will be acted upon. They have identified a few issues with different agencies that REMO provides support to. One was a concern around domestic violence. Police agencies are reporting status quo on call volumes and yet Tearmann House has been vacant but staff is still there to offer support. We have assisted them with messaging to that effect. The

food banks do not require any assistance at this time and suggested that efforts to implement food drives be delayed to a later time when inventory warrants those measures. There was some discussion on the social side regarding the Red Cross and what they do in case of fire. Most festivals and events have been cancelled but there are some events that may be delaying decisions and relying on insurance coverage for unforeseen costs. The CAO also pointed out that no municipal resources require assistance.

Warden R. Parker commented that the issue with Tearmann House is certainly an anomaly and then the current crisis is over there may be a need to provide some support. He also advised that he has some concerns with potential issues around the taxation policy and the metrics for determining eligibility since not all potential applicants have qualified for federal funding programs and he felt there would be a need for an appeal process to assess individual circumstances.

The CAO explained that there will be criteria established to determine eligibility and applicants will need to prove they have been negatively impacted by the COVID crisis because the overarching principle is the loss of income due to the pandemic response.

Clr. Thompson asked what is going to happen with summer recreation programs and what other community groups are doing, adding that if decisions have been reached then we should be making an official announcement so that community groups, parents, and the general public are aware of what to expect.

The CAO pointed out that Administration has had internal discussion and determined that there will be no direct programming offered by the Municipality because we are not insured for infectious diseases. He recommended that any community association considering summer programming should look at their insurance policy for COVID exclusions. We have been told the Federal Government would provide 100% funding for students in 2020 but there has been no decisions rendered on individual applications. If we are successful in receiving 100% it will be used for internal administrative tasks and not for programming. In summary, there will be no programs for swimming, LARK, or special events during the summer of 2020.

Clr. Thompson asked about communities such as River John, Thorburn and Scotsburn and what their plan are for this year.

Clr. Palmer reported that Thorburn will not be providing any direct programming because of insurance issues but will use government funding to carry out maintenance projects with social distancing protocols.

Clr. Baillie confirmed that River John has 3 provincially funded students who will be completing maintenance in their parks rather than programming.

Clr. Butler advised that District 1 is exploring some type of virtual programming.

Clr. MacKeil informed the Committee that this was to be Caribou's first year to offer programming however they will not be declining a student as there are no facilities or fields to maintain in the absence of providing programming.

Deputy Warden Murray emphasized that the community groups should be encouraged to check their insurance policies for COVID exclusions.

RURAL INTERNET UPDATE

The CAO reported the Pole Attachment Agreements have been returned to Bell and NSP for review and execution. Once that is done, they can start filings for the make-ready process. Work on the CRTC application continues.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES GRANT – DIST. 2

Clr. Wadden informed the Committee that the Little Harbour Walking & Bicycling Trial Society would like to purchase a Viewer and have it installed on Roy's Island. The cost to purchase and install the viewing machine is \$4,635.40.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Warden R. Parker that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve a Municipal Services Grant for District #2 in the amount of \$4,635.40 for the Little Harbour Walking & Bicycling Trail Society.

Motion carried.

GARBAGE & ILLEGAL DUMPING

Clr. Boyles reported receiving a number of complaints about garbage on our roadsides and asked that this topic be placed on a future agenda.

The CAO pointed out that illegal dump sites should continue to be reported to the Landfill Site. Logging and investigations continue to be done until resources are in place to complete clean-ups. Solid Waste now has student resources in place that can assist with clean-up and litter programs. This year the "Go Clean Get Green" program was cancelled due to the pandemic. This program relies heavily on student participation and with the isolation restrictions that was not possible.

WEEKLY MEETINGS

Warden R. Parker reported that our weekly meetings have been focusing on COVID-19 response measures and the internet project and with those initiatives relatively stable he will be discussing with the CAO and Deputy Warden a resumption to a more standard agenda to include other matters.

Clr. D. Parker reported that he received 2 calls today about unsightly properties and he asked the protocol to be followed.

The CAO advised that complaint forms and/or information should be forwarded directly to him.

Clr. Butler asked that Council receive an up-date on unsightly properties at a future meeting so we will know the status of each complaint.

STREET LIGHTS

Clr. Wadden reported that street lights were supposed to be installed in her area last May and she asked if there was something Council could do to expedite that process as she is no longer comfortable using delays with NSP and Black & MacDonald as excuses when the residents are paying for lights and are still waiting for them to be installed one year later.

The CAO reported receiving an e-mail from the GIS Technician today confirming that a new light on the Pictou Landing Road had recently been installed. He reported that a number of new installations were recently scoped and all repairs have been completed.

The Deputy Municipal Treasurer informed the Committee that she recently issued a work order to Black & Mac for the installation of 12 lights but could not recall all of the locations.

The CAO reported that there may be a delay from NSP to scope because of the COVID pandemic. Additionally, Black & MacDonald could be experiencing inventory shortages that would cause installation delays.

Clr. Wadden pointed out it was very frustrating waiting a year for streetlights to be installed and that was not what Council thought was going to happen when we moved to owning our own lighting system.

Deputy Warden Murray asked that Black & MacDonald give us a time frame and the CAO replied he will have the GIS Technician follow up on that issue.

FIRE STUDY

Clr. Wadden asked if there was an update on the fire study and the CAO responded he has been pushing the consultant for Phase II of the report. They have lost some staff due to COVID but they are still working on the study. He will be sending out Phase I of the study to the Fire Chiefs in the very near future.

Warden R. Parker commented that we never thought the street light process would take this long and he also had concerns with the unsightly properties process. He reported that we should make them more efficient.

The CAO referred to the street light process and indicated that until NSP scopes and signs off we cannot do anything.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Wadden that the meeting adjourn.

Motion carried (8:05 p.m.)


CHAIR
MUNICIPAL CLERK