

June 29, 2020

The Committee of Council as a Whole for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met by teleconference/videoconference on Monday, June 29, 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

AGENDA

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. MacKeil that the agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

MINUTES

It was moved by Clr. Butler and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that the minutes of June 8th and June 15, 2020 be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

COVID 19 – UPDATE

The CAO reported on a non-COVID related issue and informed the Committee that sharps are washing up on beaches around the County. They were out to do another search and they did find 27 near Pictou Landing so anyone that finds sharps are to notify the RCMP and arrangements will be made to have them safely removed.

The not-for-profit sector continues to work on their recovery plans. Currently Viola's Place is at capacity. Seniors Outreach is working on a Grab & Go kits project that were funded through the United Way. These kits include essential items in the event that seniors had to leave their homes due to a natural disaster. The Aberdeen Health Foundation is looking into a program to provide masks for vulnerable sectors. There was an order placed for PPE to the Province but there has been no indication when that will be delivered. REMO has prepared a mock video on safe graduation and some municipalities are getting back to regular hours. There have been no resource challenges identified in the units. There has been some discussion around common signage, particularly with regard to recreation, which may be cost-shared

with the Province. There have also been discussions around the impact of heat on individuals in a COVID environment. Experts advise that heat affects people more than any other natural disaster so REMO are going to focus on that this week. In regard to the Tax Financing Policy, there has been only one application to date (for a residential property) and that seems to be the experience across the province.

Clr. D. Parker referred to the sharps and asked if there was a way of tracing them and the CAO replied that REMO has not been given any information on that, noting that the needles washing ashore are not those typically used by insulin dependent individuals.

Warden R. Parker reported that the Wellness Centre Board Authority met earlier today to deal with some pressures to re-open the facility to some degree. They are going to open on August 2nd with some precautions and the YMCA will be opening earlier. He received a memo from NSFM about resuming meetings and asked the CAO to address that issue.

The CAO reported that there was specific directive from the Minister on in-person meetings and it remains in effect; however, we are being told it could be updated this week.

Warden R. Parker asked if social distancing could be achieved in our Chambers for future meetings and the CAO commented that it would be very difficult to do that in the Council Chambers with 6 ft. social distancing.

Clr. Wadden asked how far long along the shoreline those needles are being found and the CAO replied the RCMP only had 2 sites reported (one at the beach along Lower Road in Pictou Landing, and one on Pictou Landing First Nations property). The CAO reported that there is a lack of understanding of who is responsible to deal with this issue.

Clr. Wadden asked if the fire departments were notified and the CAO responded that from a REMO perspective it is not our jurisdiction, although some time was devoted to messaging to inform the public.

Clr. Wadden expressed concern with the timeliness of getting this type of information out to the public and the importance of informing local fire departments who provide water rescue.

RURAL INTERNET UPDATE

The CAO reported that he has been advised that the Bell process has been approved for make ready and he had a discussion with Joe Hickey on Friday to try and resolve any issues around Ring 8 so that construction can move forward. He also reported having been contacted by YorkNet in Ontario seeking information on our project. He advised that over the next weeks arrangements will be made to brief Council on what is included in the project, what the network is capable of, and what has been going on behind the scenes regarding commercial opportunities, marketing and a sales plan.

MOTION - BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT – MAY

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that the By-Law Enforcement Report for the month of May be approved as circulated.

Clr. Butler referred to the Lismore Variety Store and pointed out that it appears from the report that the owner has not been approached as yet.

The CAO reported that he will get more information from the By-Law Officer and get back to Clr. Butler on the issue.

Clr. D. Parker commented that the report is providing more detail, however, there still needs to be some follow up to move these complaints along.

Clr. Wadden reported that she was concerned that we are not getting updates as a Councillor on complaints from in their respective districts, adding that constituents are approaching them for an update on what is taking place.

The CAO reported that there are issues with privacy and advised that over time the report may need to be modified to provide the information Council feels is required.

Clr. Palmer suggested the color coded should be removed from the report as it obscures the data. He also commented that the property at 446 Thorburn Road should be cleaned up.

Motion carried.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES GRANTS

The Committee reviewed a summary of Municipal Services Grant applications as follows:

D02	Little Harbour Community Center	<u>\$15,000.00</u>	Flooring/Sound System/Repairs/Pavilion
		\$15,000.00	
D08	Abercrombie Cemetery	\$ 6,100.00	Operating Expenses
	Abercrombie Community Center	\$ 3,000.00	Operating Expenses
	Abercrombie Volunteer Fire Dept.	\$ 5,000.00	Fire Pond/Dry Hydrant/Gravel
	Mount William Cemetery	<u>\$ 6,695.00</u>	Operating Expenses/Fencing
		\$15,695.00	
D11	Springville Church Hall	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>	Operating Expenses & Equipment
		\$ 1,000.00	
D12	East Riv. Valley Comm. Dev. Assoc.	\$ 3,000.00	Newsletter/Riverton Hall Oper. Exp.
	East Riv. Valley Recreation Assoc.	\$ 1,000.00	Field Maintenance
	Elgin Pioneer Cemetery	\$ 1,000.00	Operating Expenses
	Eureka Recreation Committee	\$ 1,000.00	Park Improvements
	Eureka & Dist. Vol. Fire Dept.	\$10,000.00	Truck Purchase
	1 st Presbyterian Church	\$ 500.00	Hopewell War Memorial Mtnce.
	Friends of Iona Park	\$ 1,000.00	Operating Expenses
	Hopewell & Area Park & Footbridge	\$ 2,500.00	Operating Expenses & Electrical Exp.
	Hopewell 4-H Club	\$ 750.00	Registration Expenses & Cenotaph Mtnce.
	Lorne Community Hall	\$ 3,000.00	Window Replacements
	MacLeod Cemetery	\$ 1,000.00	Operating Expenses
	Real Canadian Recreation	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>	Floor Repairs & Doors
		\$25,750.00	

MOTION – DIST. 12

It was moved by Clr. Dewar and seconded by Clr. Thompson that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve Municipal Services Grants for District 12 in the amount of \$25,750.00.

Motion carried.

MOTION – DIST. 11

It was moved by Clr. Thompson and seconded by Clr. Dewar that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve a Municipal Services Grant for District 11 in the amount of \$1,000.00.

Motion carried.

MOTION – DIST. 8

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Boyles that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve Municipal Services Grants for District 8 in the amount of \$15,695.00.

Motion carried.

MOTION – DIST. 2

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Boyles that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve a Municipal Services Grant for District 2 in the amount of \$15,000.00.

Motion carried.

2020/21 GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET & TAX RATES

The CAO informed the Committee the General Operating Budget is a very tight budget and he gave credit to the Deputy Municipal Treasurer for putting this budget together. They reviewed the budget last week and at that time the draft document showed a deficit position that would have impacted tax rates. Since the directive from Council in January was to maintain the rates, the subsidy in the Hydrant Budget from the General Operating budget was reduced to balance the budget. The CAO also noted that 100% of the anticipated taxation from Northern Pulp has been reserved while we wait for a decision on the assessment appeal. That has had a noticeable impact on the budget.

Deputy Warden Murray also thanked the Deputy Municipal Treasurer for working so hard on this budget.

The Deputy Municipal Treasurer went through the 4 page summary of the General Operating Budget for 2020/21. The amount of total General Revenue is \$3,130,266.00, excluding revenue from taxation. The expenditures include General Government Services for a total of \$3,405,645.00, Protective Services in the amount of \$4,618,709.00, Transportation Services of \$427,180.00, Environmental Health Services of \$1,992,935.00, Public Health & Welfare expenses of \$120,000.00, Environmental Development expenses of \$439,096.00, Recreation Services of \$632,729.00, Cultural Services of \$235,112.00, Education costs of \$5,142,715.00, Special Items totaling \$750,000.00, and Financing & Transfers of \$494,045.00 giving a total General Expenditure of \$18,258,166.00. Excess revenue over expenditure is (\$15,127,900.00) which is the amount to be raised by taxation.

The Deputy Municipal Treasurer reviewed an itemized listing of Capital Expenditures proposed to be paid from in the amount of \$494,045.00. Copies of the more detailed General Operating Budget for 2020/21 was included in the package provided to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

There was some discussion around the less affluent fire departments and the one-time allocation of funding they received in 2019/20 which has not been included in this budget.

The CAO advised that to include that additional funding in the proposed budget would have an impact on tax rates.

MOTION – TAX RATES

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and Clr. MacKeil that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to maintain the residential tax rate of \$0.81/\$100 of assessment and the commercial tax rate of \$1.82/\$100 of assessment.

Clr. Wadden reported that she has great reservation on some of the items they are cutting back on and expressed her opinion that this was certainly an “election year budget”.

Warden R. Parker reported that both Karen and Brian worked very hard to balance this budget but there are a lot of uncontrolled costs and he personally felt that it was very good news that we are able to hold our tax rate in very challenging times so he is proud of the budget.

Motion Carried.

MOTION – GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

It was moved by Clr. Butler and seconded by Clr. Boyles that a recommendation be forwarded to Council that the 2020/21 budget be approved.

Motion carried.

REFERRALS

Clr. Turner reported that the Abercrombie Fire Department had a meeting recently and the question of liability around coverage to the closed Northern Pulp facility was raised. It was noted that the fire hydrant on that site has been shut off which would have a significant impairment on the Department’s ability to effectively respond to a fire at that location. The CAO agreed to look into the matter.

Clr. Wadden reported she was disappointed that Council misses out on issues through the NSFM and we are not meeting enough with our local MLAs. Clr. Wadden asked for an update on the streetlight issue and the CAO replied Black & MacDonald are coming this week to do some installations but there was a delay on sourcing fixtures.

Clr. Dewar reported that he is disappointed with the timeline for Black & MacDonald to get streetlights repaired or installed.

The CAO reported if we had our own inventory then we would have parts on hand and if we had our own installer to access, we could get these repairs done earlier.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Warden R. Parker and seconded by Clr. Butler that the meeting adjourn.

Motion carried. (9:07 p.m.)

CHAIR

MUNICIPAL CLERK