

July 20, 2020

The Committee of Council as a Whole for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met by teleconference/videoconference on Monday, July 20, 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

**BY APPOINTMENT**

Sarah Wiseman, CEO, Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network

**AGENDA**

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

Motion carried.

**MINUTES**

It was moved by Warden R. Parker and seconded by Clr. Thompson that the minutes of June 29, 2020 be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

**REN STRATEGIC PLAN (7:06 P.M.)**

Ms. Sarah Wiseman, CEO of the Pictou County Regional Enterprise Network, gave a brief overview on the REN's Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2023. They had weather related delays and then COVID struck and affected their ability to meet in person but they had a series of meetings virtually. They had circulated a survey prior to the pandemic and they were pleased they had 187 responses. The Board considered the results of the survey and they purposely did not make the strategy COVID specific. The REN is going to be focusing on 5 areas of work as well as short and long term goals because they want to show what steps are being taken. They also did a survey of the other RENs to get a good sense of what has worked and what challenges have been encountered by others. She gave a brief up-date on the 5 top priorities that include business retention and expansion, business attraction, support innovative economic development

projects, foster collaboration between municipal units and workforce attraction. They are going to try and accomplish their short term goals in the next 12 months and where do they want to be at the end of 2023 with respect to each of the categories. There will be a delayed AGM for 2020 and they will be sharing the annual progress report with the Liaison Oversight Committee in advance of the AGM. It will probably be July or August when the AGM is held this year and in future years it will be held in June. Copies of the full Strategic Plan were circulated to all members of Council in advance of this meeting.

Warden R. Parker informed the Committee that we have to work on what we want to be known as here in Pictou County but he has concern with primary industries such as forestry and agriculture. He asked what was done on forestry up to this point and Ms. Wiseman replied that on the communication piece they now have a Director of Communications on their team. They recently did a newsletter they will be put out on a monthly basis. She touched briefly on forestry in the newsletter and they have someone from the team working with businesses in the forestry sector.

Warden R. Parker asked if a survey was sent out forestry specific and Ms. Wiseman replied not at first but the process is underway now.

Clr. D. Parker asked her knowledge of the rural internet project and her opinion and Ms. Wiseman replied that she attended several meetings with the CAO, Warden and Deputy Warden. It was her opinion that the internet project is vitally important to our highly valued affordability of lifestyle to offer especially in this time of pandemic. She told them she would help in anyway and she was also in Ottawa early February and met with Government staff regarding Pictou County.

Warden R. Parker asked questioned the RENs in trying to get new businesses in our communities.

Ms. Wiseman replied: "send them our way and we can try to advocate for businesses". They will not be using core funding to provide grants but if there is an understanding of circumstances, then efforts can be made to lobby for business funding. They have an application in to ACOA for support services to be provided by the REN.

Deputy Warden Murray thanked Ms. Wiseman for the presentation and she was excused from the balance of the meeting. (7:32 p.m.)

#### **UP-DATE – COVID-19**

The CAO reported that from a REMO perspective there has been a return to normal in the County and are continuing to work with the not-for-profit sector on some of their projects. Meetings have been scaled back to every 3 weeks and the next meeting is scheduled for August. Situation Reports continue to be received but contain little to no new information so they are not being circulated to Council. The reports will resume as the situation warrants.

#### **UP-DATE – RURAL INTERNET PROJECT**

The CAO reported that they are in the final stages confirming the scope of work so they can move forward and hopefully later this week we can start the media campaign around the project. They are meeting every 2 weeks on a roll-out behind the scenes and identifying some of the issues that need to be resolved. Interlinking at the Halifax Exchange is in the works and we are exploring different options such

as rental of space. They are putting together a strategic sales package and pricing model behind the scenes as well.

Clr. Dewar asked if a second ring will be constructed in 2020 and the CAO replied that while they are looking at other possibilities on the wireless side, the only fiber component that will occur in 2020 is Ring 8. Moving forward the construction of other Rings will depend on the availability of funding. He reminded Council that the entire project could be built in 18 – 24 months, however funding will dictate the actual construction schedule.

Clr. Dewar asked what the Project Managers think will happen by 2021 and the CAO replied that we could have 25% of the project completed by the end of 2021.

Warden R. Parker reported that he is getting a lot of questions on whether or not we are still moving forward with the project and suggested that we have to focus on the communications side so that the public can better manage timeline expectations. He asked if there is any date for Ring 8 and the CAO replied the project itself is going to move along and pointed out that our project takes us from Pictou to Truro so we are working on that as well. The connection from Truro to our office has to be put in place before we do anything else.

Warden R. Parker asked if we could have a presentation from i-Valley on retail packaging and what the offerings are going to be.

The CAO replied they that are working on that now so hopefully they will have more information after next week.

Clr. Wadden asked if we are still on budget and the CAO advised that there has been no change to the budget. The CRTC application was submitted on June 1<sup>st</sup> and we are waiting for the Universal Broadband Fund application window to open.

Clr. Thompson commented that the engineering work on this project was completed some time ago and it is frustrating to see the number of delays that haven taken place. He asked for the amount of money actually approved for Phase I.

The CAO explained that the engineering study gave a number of options and Council identified “fiber rich” as its preferred model. Work done since that time was to ensure that the network and Ring 8 supports that model and identify a bill of materials. It is essentially ensuring that what is being presented to us through design-built gives us what we want. The amount of funds committed for Phase I is \$11.2 million.

#### **MOTION – BUILDING INSPECTION REPORT**

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Wadden that the report of the Building Inspector for the month of June be received for information purposes.

Motion carried.

#### **MOTION – BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT/DOG CONTROL**

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Warden R. Parker that the report of the By-Law Enforcement/Dog Control Officer for the month of June be received for information purposes.

Clr. Wadden asked what “dump days” are and the CAO explained that they are the number of days the landfill site is open during the 14-day cleanup period and is a way of encouraging property owners to use their landfill vouchers.

Clr. Wadden referred to title searches that were “discussed” and the CAO explained that they would be discussed with Management.

Warden R. Parker asked if we are making progress cleaning up the backlog of complaints.

The CAO replied that some of the cases are being addressed by the owner and we are expecting that we will be moving to the hearing stage on a couple of structures that require demolition.

Clr. D. Parker asked how long owners have to get cleanup quotes and the CAO replied the maximum is 30 days (including quotes & cleanup).

Clr. Dewar reported last month there was discussion on tearing down the property on Little Harbour Road and he also referred to the Lismore Variety property and asked if anything was done at that location.

The CAO replied that a demolition order was issued for the Little Harbour Road site and a contract for demolition was awarded but not completed. He has not had an update on that location recently. The deadline for the property owner to clean up the Lismore location was today.

Clr. Butler reported that nothing has been done with Lismore Variety.

The CAO reported that it will be moved to the next step of a title search and then a hearing on potential demolition will be scheduled with Council.

Clr. Wadden asked about the title search to be “discussed” and if there will be a delay.

The CAO replied that there is now a new owner for that property so an opportunity will be given for that individual to comply with a cleanup order.

Motion carried.

#### **MOTION - COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Butler that the Communications Report for the month of June be received for information purposes.

Motion carried.

#### **MOTION - RECREATION REPORT**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Palmer that the Recreation Report for the month of June be received for information purposes.

Motion carried.

#### **MOTION – ACCOUNTS PAID**

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Dewar that the Accounts Paid for June, 2020 be received for information purposes.

Motion carried.

#### **MOTION – WARDEN’S REPORT**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Dewar that the report of the Warden for the month of June be received for information purposes.

Motion carried.

### **BEACH ACCESSIBILITY**

Clr. Wadden updated Council on the current status concerning accessibility at our local beaches and in particular, Melmerby Beach. She reported receiving a call recently from a concerned mom with a disabled son who is confined to a wheelchair. Her concern was no accessibility at Melmerby Beach for her son to be able to enjoy park. Contact was made with the Department of Natural Resources who advised that this issue is being looked at by their department. A hippocampe chair which is more for a child or small adult has been received by DNR but was not equipped with beach tires. They have been ordered but until received the chair is not available. The Department is also in the process of building a mobi-mat for beach access. In the meantime, they had a lady rent a mobi-chair for her 89-year old mother to help her get out to the water. It was the first time in years she had been able to get there and was excited to be able to enjoy that opportunity. There has been interest from a few people to perhaps fundraise to buy another chair for Melmerby Beach. On a sadder note, one Mom had to carry her 13-year old across the beach to the water which Clr. Wadden emphasized is not acceptable at this point in time. Clr. Wadden advised that she then became aware of an initiative between Antigonish Town and the County working together to purchase chairs and mats to be able to loan out this equipment for their residents. Our own Recreation Coordinator advises that a hippocampe chair had been purchased by Active Pictou County for loaning out and was housed at Summer Street, however but because of COVID-19 a new storage location is being sought. Active Coordinator, Sally O'Neill, has been working with Natural Resources to see about the mobi-mats idea for Melmerby Beach. According to our Recreation Coordinator Antigonish Town and County have been a lead in this region for an accessible loan program and our recreation department has been following them closely. At present our Active Communities Coordinator, Clare Steele, is working on an equipment loan program both on local and regional levels and this issue would be part of that program. Clr. Wadden advised that she wanted to up-date Council on what is taking place so that we can keep it on our radar and work with recreation groups to make more equipment of this nature available for our residents with mobility issues.

### **MOTION – DISTRICT 1 ROAD REPAIRS**

It was moved by Clr Butler and seconded by Clr. Dewar that a letter be sent to the Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal, with copies sent to the Area Manager and MLA, in support of the people of Bailey's Brook and Ardness in their quest to have the New Road and the Bailey's Brook – Ardness Road repaired and paved.

Motion carried.

### **MOTION – UN GEOPARK SITE**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Warden R. Parker that Council sent letters of congratulations to the Councils of Colchester and Cumberland Counties recognizing their efforts to have the "Cliffs of Fundy" designated as a UN Geopark site.

Motion Carried.

**REFERRALS TO COUNCIL & COMMITTEES**

Clr. Wadden asked if Councillors are going to get a copy of the Fire Study and the CAO replied that it will be uploaded to Microsoft Teams for anyone who wishes to read it; paper copies will be provided upon request.

The Chair advised that information on the Northeast Nova Correctional Facility was sent to Clr. Boyles and he has requested that someone from Justice meet with Council for a discussion on that facility.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Committee met in closed session at 8:34 p.m. to discuss matters relating to the acquisition, sale, lease, and security of municipal property.

**OPEN SESSION**

The Committee resumed in open session at 9:06 p.m.

**ADJOURN**

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

Motion carried. (9:06 p.m.)

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CHAIR

  
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MUNICIPAL CLERK