

July 15, 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, July 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

- 1 Clr. Don Butler
- 2 Clr. Deborah Wadden
- 3 Clr. Darla MacKeil
- 4 Clr. Mary Elliott
- 6 Warden Robert Parker
- 7 Clr. David Parker
- 8 Clr. Larry Turner
- 9 Clr. Peter Boyles
- 10 Clr. Randy Palmer
- 11 Clr. Andy Thompson
- 12 Clr. Chester Dewar

ABSENT

Deputy Warden Wayne Murray
Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipal Clerk-Treasurer
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development

IN ATTENDANCE

Sueann Musick, Director of Corporate Services (Videoconference)
Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services
Rhiannon McNair, Dir. of Business Operations, Rural Broadband Project
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. Elliott that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion Carried**

Clr. Wadden made the request to have the Fire Levy Discussion, item 8C moved to the August Property & Finance meeting to allow time for review of the printed documents.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

There were no emergency resolutions.

MINUTES

Clr. MacKeil asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for June 17, 2024, June 17, 2024, In-Camera, and June 24, 2024. The members of the Committee entered no errors, omissions, or corrections. The Chair proclaimed the minutes of the meeting on June 17, 2024, June 17, 2024, In-Camera, and June 24, 2024, as the official record of the meeting. **Motion Carried**

Warden Parker said in the community announcements on June 17, 2024, that the West River Fire Hall open house should have been dated June 20, 2024, and not July, as stated in the minutes.

Warden Parker said that in a discussion in Camera, Mr. Stewart's name was spelled incorrectly as Stuart.

REPORTS

COMMUNICATION REPORT

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

RECREATION REPORT

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

Warden Parker said that a lot of good stuff is happening in the Recreation Department. The two staff have been helping a lot in communities and should be acknowledged.

Clr. Wadden thanked the Recreation staff for starting the program again in Little Harbour and said lots of children have registered, and they are really enjoying themselves.

Clr. MacKeil said there have been so many positive comments that staff go above and beyond at the facility and that the kids are having a ball. Clr. MacKeil said that staff are knocking it out of the park this year.

WARDEN'S REPORT

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

Clr. Wadden asked Warden Parker for an update on the panel discussion in Tatamagouche concerning the Coastal Protection Act. Warden Parker said that things seem to have gone quiet surrounding this. There has not been feedback from other municipalities at this point. The Warden was asked to be part of the panel, but the other attendants could not come, and the Warden, representatives from Green Shores and a concerned resident attended this session. The province is advertising the importance of the shores, yet it has backed away from this. A request was put to other Councils on the North Shore to see if they wanted to work together, but nothing has been heard back from them at this time.

Clr. Turner asked when the launch of the high-speed internet film would be, what the content would be, and who the audience would be. Warden Parker said that this is important for historical purposes. It was then realized that it could be used as an advertising tool as well. The Warden said that the documentary will be marketed to CBC, and that is where the audience will be if there is success with this.

Ms. McNair said that this is a documentary-style film. It can be broken apart, and excerpts can be taken from it and used for advertising on the appropriate platforms. This is a showcase piece of the entire project. The project is now completed and has been presented to CBC. It will not go public until CBC responds. If they choose not to air it, then it will be up to staff to choose what to do with it.

Clr. Turner asked what the discussion was concerning the upcoming hurricane season. Warden Parker said NSFM is organizing online sessions with the province regarding different subjects. At this one, someone attended from the Department of Environment. The summary was that it would be a high hurricane season due to the temperature of the water. A lot was discussed about what is being seen in the news. They talked about being better prepared for these situations.

Warden Parker said that June was a very busy month. It was challenging to get to all the things that were going on. The Warden attended the Sea Cadets end of year ceremony in Pictou and was quite impressed. The Warden said what they were learning and doing there was amazing. This is an excellent training program for young people.

INTERNET SALES AND MARKETING REPORT

Clr. Butler asked how the numbers stack up against the projected numbers. Ms. McNair said that the project is on track. The take-up in each of the areas is right where it should be. The Warden said that the wireless is flattening off some as the fibre becomes available in those areas.

Clr. Palmer asked what the charge to providers for fibre is monthly. Ms. McNair said there is a combination of charges, including the access fees, and for each subscriber, there is a different rate based on the package. The average rate between both programs is averaging around \$42.00 per unit.

Clr. Turner said an attempt was made to install the wireless service at the Abercrombie Community Centre. This was unsuccessful, and it was determined that fibre would have to be installed to provide service in this area. Clr. Turner asked who is on the governance committee and who makes the decisions for the fibre service route. Warden Parker said that the governance committee consists of Mr. Cullen, Warden Parker, Deputy Warden Murray and two members from the outside conglomerate. The Warden said any decisions would be brought back to Council for discussion. Clr. Turner asked if there was any way to accelerate this and bring service to the centre. Warden Parker said that funding requires that unserved areas be completed first. The Warden said new technology is being looked at that would greatly increase the reach.

Clr. Boyles said that Hillside residents were told they may never get the service. When the project was started, it was advertised that everyone in Pictou County would be able to get it, and this is very concerning. The Warden is still holding that everyone will get it, but the underserved areas will be served first.

TAXES RECEIVABLE REPORT

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

DEED TRANSFER TAX

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

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Clr. Wadden said that the first batch of the tax collection letters is moving slower than anticipated. The second batch has not yet gone out due to a lack of resources. The committee was again assured that staffing resources would be available after the budget was passed, but up to this point, it is not aware that it has happened. Delinquent accounts are a major concern to the audit committee.

The Audit Committee has requested that staff bring a detailed plan for handling these accounts. Clr. Wadden said the plan must show the delinquent accounts that the municipality is serious about collecting the taxes owed.

Clr. Wadden said that a huge concern of the committee is the lack of staff resources, especially in the finance department, to complete this job. The other huge concern is succession planning for the finance department. It is important to keep our tax rate at 81.5 cents even though the assessments have climbed, and at the end of the day,

the need to get the job done is being sacrificed over having the ability to get the job done. Clr. Wadden wants Councillors to consider this issue and work with the Audit Committee to see good results.

Clr. Wadden said that on the litigation issue, Rock Networks has hired its own legal Counsel and is awaiting the next step.

The 2022/2023 financials are now posted on the website. Councillors and CAO expenses for 2024 have still not been posted, but they should be done quarterly.

Clr. Wadden said that the Audit Committee hopes to have the Council's support in hiring another citizen representative.

REPORTS REQUIRING A MOTION

ACCOUNTS PAID – MARCH 2024

It was moved by Clr. Parker and seconded by Clr. Palmer that the Accounts Paid Report for the month of June 2024 be received as presented.

Motion Carried
Clr. David Parker
Clr. Randy Palmer

BUSINESS ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION:

RECREATION GRANT SPONSORSHIP: RIVER JOHN FESTIVAL DAYS

It was moved by Warden Parker and seconded by Clr. Palmer to approve \$1,000.00 sponsorship for the River John Festival Days.

Motion Denied

Warden Parker asked if the MOPC Internet project was sponsoring this festival and, if so, if that would be doubling the sponsorship. Ms. McNair stated that the advertising is with the MOPC Network and would not include the MOPC logo.

Clr. Elliott said the festival is a wonderful event that does great things, but the advertisements and brochures have already gone out.

COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL POLICY UPDATE

The Audit Committee has requested that a third non-elected member be added to the Committee. The policy must be updated to reflect this change.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Turner to change the Committee of Council Policy to allow a third non-elected member to be added to the Audit Committee.

Motion Carried
Clr. Deborah Wadden
Clr. Larry Turner
Nay Vote: Clr. Peter Boyles

MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANTS

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Elliott to approve the following Municipal Service Grants for District 2:

Motion Carried
Clr. Deborah Wadden
Clr. Mary Elliott

District 2

Little Harbour Community Centre	\$10,000.00	Community Centre Improvements
Total	\$10,000.00	

It was moved by Clr. Turner and seconded by Clr. Parker to approve the following Municipal Service Grants for District 8:

Motion Carried
Clr. Larry Turner
Clr. David Parker

District 8

Abercrombie Community Centre	\$8,233.00	Cost of Plan for Grant Application
Abercrombie Cemetery	\$7,000.00	Construct Stairway at Cemetery
Mount William Cemetery	\$3,049.00	Maintenance
Alma Cemetery	\$1,700.00	Maintenance
Alma United Church	\$5,700.00	Heat Pump (Purchase/Installation)
Total	\$25,682.00	

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Warden Parker to approve the following Municipal Service Grants for District 9:

Motion Carried
Clr. Peter Boyles
Warden Robert Parker

District 9

Linacy Fire Department	\$10,000.00	Bunker Gear/Breathing Apparatus
Hillside Cemetery	\$2,000.00	Cemetery Expansion
Total	\$12,000.00	

It was moved by Clr. Dewar and seconded by Clr. Thompson to approve the following Municipal Service Grants for District 12:

Motion Carried
Clr. Chester Dewar

Clr. Andy Thompson

District 12

Lorne Hall	\$6,000.00	Hall Maintenance
Hopewell First Presbyterian	\$1,275.00	Maintenance of War Memorial/ Replace Battery Church Defibillator
MacLeod Cemetery	\$1,000.00	Cemetery Maintenance
Elgin Pioneer Cemetery	\$1,000.00	Cemetery Maintenance
ERV. Comm Development Assn	\$6,000.00	Assist with Newsletter/Riverton Hall
ERV Recreation	\$2,000.00	Maint. of field/Program Support
Total	\$17,275.00	

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 8:05 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

MUNICIPAL CLERK