

FEBRUARY 13, 2023
STELLARTON, NOVA SCOTIA

MEETING

A meeting of the Stellarton Town Council was held on Monday, February 13, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

PRESENT

Mayor D. MacGillivray, Couns. S. Lawand, B. Knight, S. Campbell, and G. Pentz. Also present was the Chief Administrative Officer S. Higdon.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved as amended; move #8 and #11 to #4 and #5; and remove #10; and add #3 Presentation, on motion by Coun. S. Lawand, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz. **Motion Carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from January 9, 2023 Regular Council meeting were approved on motion by Coun. B. Knight, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

3. Presentation

Mayor D. MacGillivray presented Steve Goodwin with an “Honorary Citizen of the Town of Stellarton” certificate for his support and media coverage over the years.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

a. Fire Bylaw Re: Residents of Stellarton – CAO S. Higdon commented that at previous meeting, Deputy Mayor B. Knight had brought forward amending the bylaw regarding the fire department and having to be a resident of Stellarton to be a member; this is not a Town Bylaw, but a Department Bylaw; the Fire Chief M. O’Sullivan is looking to amend that.

5. Temporary Borrowing Resolution

CAO S. Higdon re budget for paving from the Reserves; upon recommendation from the Town Accountant B. MacKay, she recommends that the Town borrows for this expenditure.

Questions/Comments:

Mayor D. MacGillivray re affecting the Town’s ratio (Financial Condition Indicators). B. MacKay commented that the borrowing will preserve the reserves, and there is room within the debt service to borrow for the curbs and paving.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve Temporary Borrowing Resolution, seconded by Coun. B. Knight.

On the Question:

Mayor D. MacGillivray read Temporary Borrowing Resolution in the amount of \$495,000.00 for the record (attached).

Motion Carried.

6. Application to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board – Water Rates

CAO S. Higdon reported that the Town is recommending to go the NS Utility and Review Board for a Water Rate Study; the last time was in 2006, and the last rate increase was in 2009; Council discussed this at the Committee of the Whole meeting in January. Mayor D. MacGillivray read reasons why this needs to be done, highlighting:

- Losses in the last two fiscal years, in excess of \$600,000.00
- Using surplus
- Operations not sustainable with current rates

- Rates have not increased in 15 years
- The proposed increases are equivalent to \$4.85 per month in year one, and additional \$5.43 per month in year two
- Raising rates now will lessen increases once meters are installed
- Best for the residents
- Water Utility will remain financially solvent; and invest in capital if needed

Questions/Comments:

Coun. S. Lawand re proposed increases.

CAO S. Higdon read motion for the record:

“The Town of Stellarton apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board for changes in its rates for water and water service, fire protection to the Town, and changes to its rules and regulations for customers served by the Town of Stellarton Water Utility, as set out in the Water Rates Study prepared by G. A. Isenor Consulting Ltd. in association with Blaine S. Rooney Consulting Ltd.”

Motion approved by Coun. B. Knight, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz.

On the Question:

Coun. G. Pentz commented that it would be irresponsible of today’s Council if this decision was not made; it is a difficult decision, but if let go, it will get much harder later.

Coun. B. Knight agreed and commented that past Councils should have implemented some small changes in the Utility, preventing the current deficits.

Motion Carried.

7. Reports from Staff - for information; reports attached.

a. Chief Mark Hobeck – Stellarton Police Service

Mayor D. MacGillivray asked about the speed report. Coun. B. Knight replied that the police are monitoring the area.

Coun. B. Knight made motion to accept Police Service Report, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

b. Fire Chief Mike O’Sullivan – Fire Department

Coun. B. Knight motioned to accept Fire Department’s report for January 2023, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz. **Motion Carried.**

c. Paige Clarke – Marketing and Communications

Coun. S. Lawand re the Deans Project “selfie-station”; CAO S. Higdon replied that the Committee is looking into ideas such as “pizza” as a common theme.

Coun. S. Lawand recommends having a Stellarton “miner” selfie.

Coun. B. Knight made motion to approve the Marketing and Communications report, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

d. Blaine Murray – Town Engineer

Coun. B. Knight asked CAO to look into the storm drain combination on Claremont and Kirk. CAO S. Higdon replied that work will commence on those streets and the lines will be separated.

Coun. S. Lawand re trees in the Olympic Park that need attention.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve Town Engineer’s Reports, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

e. Noah Delorey – Active Community Living Coordinator Report

Coun. B. Knight made motion to approve Active Community Living Coordinator Report, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz. **Motion Carried.**

8. Correspondence

- ### **a. Municipal of Pictou County** Re: Contribution to sidewalk in Blue Acres – CAO S. Higdon reported that letter was received from Warden Robert Parker, read for the record, asking for a financial commitment from the Town to help with new sidewalk project stretching from the bridge over the East River in Stellarton to the bridge across from the Irving Station. Discussion

commenced. Coun. S. Lawand re shared assets and designated joint projects; commitment from all municipal units; would like to see a better scope for future planning and shared costs. Coun. G. Pentz and Coun. B. Knight agrees. Coun. B. Knight made motion to deny their request for a financial commitment on this project, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz.

On the Question:

Mayor D. MacGillivray will bring forward determining shared assets to the next Mayors and Warden meeting.

Coun. G. Pentz commented that a sidewalk on MacGregor Avenue would be a better use of Town's resources.

Motion Carried.

- b. **Ava Gennoe** Re: Thank you for Oulton Award; information for Council
- c. **Town of New Glasgow** Re: Water Filling for Fire Trucks – CAO S. Higdon stated that letter was received from the Town of New Glasgow, sent to Fire Chief Mike O'Sullivan, copied to Stellarton Council; read for the record; that starting January 30, 2023, there will be no more water filling of outside fire departments trucks at the New Glasgow Fire Station. CAO S. Higdon noted that the Town of Stellarton does not use the water filling station from the Town of New Glasgow; the CAO of New Glasgow will be sending out a clarification letter saying that Stellarton does not use the filling station.
- d. **Town of New Glasgow** Email Re: Ladder Truck – CAO S. Higdon re letter from New Glasgow CAO concerning the use of the New Glasgow Fire Department ladder truck; future use will be charged; this should not affect the Town of Stellarton since we have not used their ladder truck in decades. Coun. S. Lawand re the Mutual Aid agreement. CAO S. Higdon replied that the Mutual Aid Agreement is still in effect, not sure how other towns will work around it. Coun. G. Pentz referred to the existing Mutual Aid Agreement, read two sections regarding responsibility for damages done to any equipment; furthermore, the agreement was signed in January 1989 and was to be reviewed yearly; unsure if reviews were completed; but any changes would be done by way of amendments during such reviews. He feels this item will be an amendment to the Mutual Agreement which shall become part of the agreement upon ratification of all parties; if New Glasgow wants to start charging for use of the ladder truck, then they should make such changes to the mutual agreement. Coun. G. Pentz suggested bringing this issue to the Mayors and Warden meeting, and the fire chiefs should meet to settle any concerns.

9. **Committee of the Whole Report**

The following recommendation is for Council's consideration from correspondence received at the Committee of the Whole meeting held on January 23, 2023:

Recommendation #1

On the recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council approve \$200.00 to the Pictou County United Way.

Coun. S. Lawand made motion to approve Committee of the Whole recommendation, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

10. **Adoption of Public Engagement Program**

CAO S. Higdon reported that the Province of Nova Scotia has mandated that all municipalities in the province have a "Public Engagement Policy" in place to ensure that abutting or nearby municipalities are engaged in the planning or plan amendment process in the future. This was recently adopted by the province and resulted in the adoption of a new section 204 A of the Municipal Government Act.

Previously, section 204 only required the adoption of a public participation program which all municipalities had in place. Town Planner Roland Burek is recommending that the policy the province is proposing be adopted, deadline is May 31, 2023 as a requirement set out by Minister John Lohr. Details are in Council's package. Coun. B. Knight made motion to approve the adoption of a public engagement program, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz. **Motion Carried.**

11. Amendment to Tax Exemption Bylaw #57 First Reading

CAO S. Higdon re First Reading of an amendment to our Tax Exemption Bylaw, currently under the Tax Exemption Bylaw which gives a full tax exemption to Riverview Home Corporation – 43 Birch Hill Drive and 31 St. Bernard Street – the First Reading is to remove them from the Tax Exemption Bylaw which would require them to become fully taxable April 1, 2023. Also, adding to Schedule A, the Stellar Curling Club which will give them a full tax exemption beginning April 1, 2023.

Coun. S. Lawand made to motion to approve the First Reading, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

12. Open Forum

No one spoke at the Open Forum.

13. Next Council Meeting: Monday, March 13, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

14. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned on motion by Coun. G. Pentz.

MAYOR

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER