

JUNE 12, 2023
STELLARTON, NOVA SCOTIA

MEETING

A meeting of the Stellarton Town Council was held on Monday, June 12, 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, Town Accountant B. MacKay and Chief of Police Mark Hobeck.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved as amended to include #5. Traffic Authority Report, and under Correspondence b. Concerned Citizens Re Dangerous and Unsightly, and c. Pictou County Affordable and Supportive Housing Association Re: Letter of Support, and #12 Bylaws, on motion by Coun. B. Knight, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from May 8, 2023 Regular Council meeting were approved on motion by Coun. B. Knight, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Presentation – 2023-2024 Operations Budget
2023-2024 Capital Budget
Tax Rates for 2023-2024

Town Accountant B. MacKay, in follow-up to Special Council Meeting held on June 6, 2023; Reviewed proposed Budgets (attached); the General Operating Fund, proposing a six cent Residential and Resource Tax Increase from \$1.82 to \$1.88; and on Commercial a .15 cent increase from \$4.15 to \$4.30. General Operating Budget and General Fund Capital Budget attached; Summary: Residential & Resource Tax Rate Assessment = \$214,615,900; Commercial Tax Rate Assessment = \$86,191,800; Total Tax Revenue = \$7,741,026.

Comments:

Mayor D. MacGillivray re provincial requirements for Towns to have a balanced budget; tried to avoid tax increases; looked for all efficiencies from staff; even with the increase, Stellarton is still the lowest consolidated residential tax rate in Pictou County, along with competitive commercial tax rate; the last increase to tax rates was 1997.

Town Accountant B. MacKay reviewed the Water Utility Operating Budget (attached); Town awaiting decision from the NS Utility and Review Board regarding the new rates; the budget is using 50% of the old rates, and 50% of the new rates; Overall Revenue = \$1,957,358; Overall Operating Expenditures = \$1,928,370; Interest & Principal on debt charges = \$438,680. Transfer from Surplus \$409,700 for deficit.

Comments:

Mayor D. MacGillivray re water rate increases of \$5 per month for the next two years; these increases will put Stellarton in the provincial average for water prices.

Town Accountant B. MacKay reviewed the General Fund Capital Budget (attached); total Capital = \$1,493,700.

Comments:

Mayor D. MacGillivray re previously approved capital work on Claremont and Kirk; not able to do both projects; awaiting approval from government to use funding to only do one project.

Coun. S. Lawand re water quality improvement.

Coun. B. Knight made motion to approve budgets, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz.

On the Question:

Mayor D. MacGillivray read Resolution (attached) for the record.

Motion Carried.

B. MacKay left the meeting.

5. Traffic Authority Report

Police Chief Mark Hobeck reported that on April 25, 2023 the Town Engineer and himself were contacted by John Bourque, the General Manager of Cape Breton and Central NS Railway; informing them that the Stop Line from Manhattan Avenue (as it approaches the Foord Street crossing) is in non-compliance with Transport Canada (as the vehicles coming to a stop are on railway tracks); Chief Hobeck is proposing to make Manhattan a One-Way Street to best rectify this issue.

Coun. B. Knight spoke with residents on the street; they had no concerns about making the street One-Way.

Coun. B. Knight made motion to make Manhattan Avenue a One-Way Street, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

Coun. B. Knight brought forward concern from the residents re traffic turning up Manhattan to avoid red light at Foord/Acadia. Coun. B. Knight made a motion that the Traffic Authority/Police Chief and Town Engineer do a Study on this and come back with recommendations for Council's consideration, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz.

On the Question:

Coun. S. Lawand comments; hesitant on putting another Stop Sign on Foord Street.

Motion Carried.

Chief M. Hobeck left the meeting.

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

a. Chief Mark Hobeck – Stellarton Police Service

Mayor D. MacGillivray highlighted some of the community policing activities.

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

c. Paige Draper – Marketing and Communications

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

e. Noah Delorey – Active Community Living Coordinator Report

Coun. G. Pentz asked about the new signage for the fields, parks, etc. CAO S. Higdon replied that the signs have arrived and waiting for the Public Works to erect them – 17 signs total.

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

7. Correspondence

a. **Northern Pulp – Re: Retirement of Bruce Chapman** CAO S. Higdon reported that letter was received on May 30, from Dale Patterson, Acting General

Manager of Norther Pulp NS informing the Mayor and Council that Bruce Chapman, General Manager of Northern Pulp NS is retiring after 26 years of service; for Council's information. Coun. B. Knight made motion to send a letter of congratulations, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz. **Motion Carried.**

b. Concerned Citizens re Dangerous and Unsightly – CAO S. Higdon read letter received this today signed by 17 (out of the 47 affected) concerned citizens, re request to clean up property following Hurricane Fiona; areas adjacent to Poplar, Cambey and High Streets; feels the property is now in an unsightly condition and may become dangerous from the mulch debris. CAO S. Higdon reported that the brush will be cleaned up and some stumps will be removed; Council will be meeting with Norten Resource Solutions who did the Vegetation Plan; the first step in deciding what should be done; once Council has decided on the plan of action, she will respond in writing to the letter. Coun. S. Lawand comments; agrees with the concerns; timelines are frustrating. Coun. B. Knight comments on situation; doing our best to address issue.

c. Pictou County Affordable and Supportive Housing Association – Mayor D. MacGillivray updated Council; the Association was formed as a non-profit entity in 2023; they are applying to the province Community Housing Growth Fund for a Consultant to develop a Strategic Plan; asking the Towns for a letter of support. CAO S. Higdon read letter to Council. Coun. G. Pentz made motion to send letter of support from the Town of Stellarton, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

8. Committee of the Whole Report

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

Recommendation #1

On recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council approve the purchase of an ad for \$300 in the Stellarton and Area Lions Club 2024 Calendar.

G. Pentz made motion to approve recommendation from Committee of the Whole, seconded Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

9. Pool Permit Request Fence Height Variance 12 Kensington – CAO S. Higdon received request from the resident at 12 Kensington; a variance from the Bylaw for a fence height; typically the fence height is 6 feet; he is requesting 8 feet; this is recommended by Planner Roland Burek; and received a letter of authorization from every abutting neighbour; the Motion would read:

“Be it resolved that Stellarton Town Council approves the construction of a fence to a maximum height of 8 feet to enclose the new swimming pool being constructed by permit at 12 Kensington Avenue as the owner has provided written confirmation that all abutting owners have no objections. All other requirements under section 21.7 and 21.8 of the Common Land Use Bylaw shall apply.”

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve the above motion, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

10. Tourism Marketing Levy Bylaw (1st Reading) – CAO S. Higdon re brought forward from DEANS Tourism Association; Legislation has been passed giving the Town authority that accommodations can charge a Marketing Levy; this will be managed by DEANS; similar to the Deed Transfer Tax where the Town would collect money then pass it on to DEANS for management; this is the first reading of the required bylaw; effective in January 2024. Mayor D. MacGillivray comments that all monies collected in Pictou County will be stay in Pictou County.

Coun. S. Lawand made motion to approve the 1st Ready of the Tourism Marketing Levy Bylaw, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

11. Vendor Bylaw Amendment – CAO S. Higdon was asked by Police Department Admin for Council to consider an amendment to the Vendor Bylaw; it was last done in 1989; needs some updating; asking for Council's permission to go ahead to create amendment for 1st Reading in July. Coun. B. Knight made motion to create a Vendor Bylaw Amendment, seconded by Coun. S. Lawand. **Motion Carried.**

12. Bylaws – Coun. B. Knight commented on the Town's bylaws; some of which are very old and should be revisited and modernized. CAO S. Higdon will look into bylaws to determine what needs updating.

13. Open Forum

No one spoke at the Open Forum.

14. Next Council Meeting: Monday, July 10, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.

15. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned on motion by Coun. G. Pentz.

MAYOR

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER