

APRIL 8, 2024
STELLARTON, NOVA SCOTIA

MEETING

A meeting of the Stellarton Town Council was held on Monday, April 8, 2024, 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 and Town Accountant Brenda MacKay.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was approved as amended to include under Correspondence d. Thank You from the Stellarton/Westville Police Youth Corps, on motion by Coun. G. Pentz, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from March 11, 2024 Regular Council meeting were approved on motion by Coun. S. Lawand, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

4. Presentation - 2024-2025 Operations Budget
2024-2025 Capital Budget
Tax Rates for 2024-2025

Town Accountant B. MacKay reviewed budgets with Council, highlighting: General Operating Budget – balanced budget as required, proposing no increase in tax rates; the Assessments for 2024 Residential and Resource at \$229,365,700.00; Commercial Assessment at \$94,596,200.00; maintaining the rates at \$1.88 for Residential and Resource, and \$4.30 for Commercial per \$100 of Assessment. Total taxes at \$8,379,712.00; an increase of \$285,000.00 Residential and \$359,000.00 Commercial. Budgets attached.

Mayor D. MacGillivray comments re tax rates remain stable; no user fees; Municipal Capacity Grants; capital projects.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve 2024-2025 budgets, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

Mayor D. MacGillivray read Resolution:

Therefore be it resolved by the Council of the Town of Stellarton that the assessment for 2024-2025 is confirmed at \$94,596,200 for commercial;

Further be it resolved that the assessment for residential and resource is confirmed at \$229,365,700;

Further be it resolved that the tax rates for 2024-2025 be approved at \$1.88 per \$100 of residential assessment and \$4.30 per \$100 commercial assessment;

Further be it resolved that the Operating Budget for 2024-2025 is approved at \$9,742,575;

Further be it resolved that the Capital Budget for 2024-2025 is approved at \$3,850,000.

Signed Resolution attached.

Resolution approved on motion by Coun. G. Pentz, seconded by Coun. B. Knight.

Motion Carried.

Town Account B. MacKay reviewed the Water Utility Operating Budget, attached; total revenue for 2024-2025 is \$2,133,674.00; operating expenditures is \$2,009,344.00; interest and principal on debt charges at \$435,707.00; transfer from Surplus

\$311,373.00. B. MacKay reviewed the Water Utility Capital Budget (attached); total Capital at \$1,445,000.00; funded by Water Depreciation Fund and ICIP Federal / Provincial Funding.

Coun. S. Lawand made motion to approve the Water Utility Budgets, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

5. Proclamation – Lyme Disease Awareness Month – May

Mayor D. MacGillivray read Proclamation, raising Lyme Disease awareness, attached.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to proclaim May 2024 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Stellarton, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

6. Proclamation – Gaelic Nova Scotia Month – Mayor D. MacGillivray read Proclamation, attached.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to proclaim May 2024 as “Gaelic Nova Scotia Month”, in the Town of Stellarton, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell.

On the Question:

Coun. G. Pentz asked if there will be a flag raising.

Council decided to raise the flag on May 3, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

Motion Carried.

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

a. Chief Mark Hobeck – Stellarton Police Service

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

b. Fire Chief Mike O’Sullivan – Fire Department

Coun. G. Pentz motioned to accept Fire Department’s report for March 2024, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

c. Paige Draper – Marketing and Communications

Mayor D. MacGillivray commented that the Volunteer Reception will occur on April 18, at the Stellarton Fire Hall; Homecoming Festival is July 24 to 28; and employment opportunities listed on our website.

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

d. Blaine Murray – Town Engineer

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

On the Question:

Mayor D MacGillivray highlighted the Kirk Avenue Infrastructure Upgrade; Public Works capital purchases; repairs on equipment by staff.

Coun. B. Knight thanked the Public Works for the work done on the Heritage Room.

Coun. G. Pentz commented on the versatility of skill-set of our employees.

Motion Carried.

8. Correspondence

a. Province of Nova Scotia - Re: Department of Emergency Management – CAO S. Higdon received correspondence from John Lorh, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, read for the record; the provincial government tabled legislation that will establish a new Provincial Department of Emergency Management. They are also launching the Nova Scotia Guard which will be a group of individuals and organizations from across the province who will help communities during and after emergencies.

b. Province of Nova Scotia – Re: Service Exchange Agreement – CAO S. Higdon received correspondence from Minister John Lorh, stating that a new

Service Exchange Agreement has been signed; where the province will be making a historical annual investment of \$82 million; CAO S. Higdon commented that Housing and Corrections are no longer expenditures for the municipality.

c. GFL Re: Request for Exemption from Noise Bylaw – CAO S. Higdon received request from GFL Environmental for a Noise Bylaw Exemption; read for the record. CAO S. Higdon reported that if Council is considering an exemption, there would have to be a First Reading for an Amendment to the Bylaw in May, then in June, there would be a Public Hearing, followed by a Second and Final Reading. Discussion commenced. Coun. S. Lawand made motion to go forward with a First Reading to amend the bylaw, seconded by Coun. G. Pentz. **Motion Carried.**

d. Thank you from Stellarton / Westville Police Youth Corps – CAO S. Higdon received “thank you” note from the Stellarton / Westville Police Youth Corps for donation from the Town.

**9. Committee of the Whole Report
No Report**

10. Inter-Municipal Amended Agreement – Pictou County Partnership – Coun. S. Lawand stated that this was discussed amongst the six municipalities present and voted on; he referred to the Amendments; new partnership being developed with the Province; no additions to the funding unless agreed to by all parties; due dates changed from January 31 to April 1; the previous contribution was \$250,000 from all 6 municipalities which will remain the same this year but will be \$250,000 plus 2% cost of living increase next year. Coun. B. Knight asked how the Partnership was working. Coun. S. Lawand responded that things are working very good, multiple projects on the go; their CAO will present to Council bi-annually. Coun. S. Lawand made motion to approve the Inter-Municipal Amended Agreement, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

11. Audited Financial Statements March 31, 2023 – Pictou County Wellness Centre – For Council’s information.

12. Municipal Election Update – CAO S. Higdon presented a Staff Report to Council; there are three recommendations:

1. Council approve the date of the Advance Poll to be Saturday, October 12, from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., this will be in addition to the mandatory Advance Polling Station of Tuesday, October 15, from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. as per the Elections Act. Coun. S. Lawand made motion to accept Advance Poll date, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

2. Council agree to a full electronic method, internet and phone from intelavote for the 2024 municipal election.

Discussion: Coun. G. Pentz recommends that there should be somewhere for people to vote who need assistance voting these methods. CAO S. Higdon replied that this is the case and help will be available.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve a full electronic method for the 2024 municipal election, seconded by Coun. B. Knight.

On the Question: Coun. S. Lawand re paper ballots. CAO S. Higdon replied that there will be no paper ballots. Coun. G. Pentz re advertising the method of voting and that assistance will be available.

CAO S. Higdon explained the process and how assistance will be provided.

Coun. G. Pentz re voters list. CAO S. Higdon stated that the province updates the voters list monthly; also, people can get sworn in at the poll or contact Returning Officer Josephine MacDonald. Coun. S. Campbell re cost of paper ballots as compared to having people assisting at the polls for electronic voting.

CAO S. Higdon replied that with paper ballots, three extra staff are needed.

Motion Carried.

3. Council approve the electronic voting commence on October 6, 2024 at 12:00 a.m. to October 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m., approved on motion by Coun. G. Pentz, seconded by Coun. B. Knight. **Motion Carried.**

CAO S. Higdon, for Council's information, reported that Josephine MacDonald is commencing her Returning Officer's duties on May 1.

Coun. S. Lawand inquired about getting the election results. CAO S. Higdon replied that the results are sent to the CAO's and media.

13. Open Forum

14. Next Council Meeting: Monday, May 13, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

15. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned on motion by Coun. G. Pentz.

MAYOR

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER