

FEBRUARY 10, 2025
STELLARTON, NOVA SCOTIA

MEETING

A meeting of the Stellarton Town Council was held on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT

Mayor D. Stroud, Couns. S. Eis, M. Fortune, S. Campbell and G. Pentz. Also present was CAO S. Higdon, Fire Chief M. O'Sullivan, Marketing and Communications P. Draper and Town Accountant B. MacKay.

1. AGENDA

The Agenda was approved, on motion by Coun. G. Pentz, seconded by Coun. M. Fortune. **Motion Carried.**

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from January 13, 2025 Regular Council were approved on motion by Coun. G. Pentz seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4. Temporary Borrowing Resolution - \$2,080,000 Sewer Lines and Curbs

Town Accountant Brenda MacKay provided information regarding the Temporary Borrowing Resolution; seeking approval to borrow the 2.08 million for sewer lines and curbs capital projects.

Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve Temporary Borrowing Resolution, seconded by Coun. S. Eis.

Mayor D. Stroud re clarity on approving the projects last fiscal year, and approving the borrowing/funding the next fiscal year. B. MacKay explained that borrowing the money can be done at any time from a bank; the project needs to be 100% complete before borrowing for a debenture from the province to pay off loan.

CAO S. Higdon read the Temporary Borrowing Resolution for the record:

WHEREAS Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act provides that the Council of the Town of Stellarton, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, may borrow to expend funds for a capital purpose as authorized by statute:

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Stellarton has adopted a capital budget for this fiscal year as required by Section 65 of the Municipal Government Act and are so authorized to expend funds for capital purposes as identified in their capital budget; and

WHEREAS the specific amounts and descriptions of the projects are contained in Schedule A, Sewerlines for \$1,696,000 and curbs for \$384,000

BET IT THEREFORE RESOLVED

THAT under the authority of Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act, the Council of the Town of Stellarton borrow a sum or sums not exceeding Two million eighty thousand Dollars (\$2,080,000) for the purpose set out above, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing;

THAT the sum be borrowed by the issue and sale of debentures of the Council of the Town of Stellarton to such an amount as the Council deems necessary;

THAT the issue of debentures be postponed pursuant to Section 92 of the Municipal Government Act and that a sum or sums not exceeding Two million eighty thousand Dollars (\$2,080,000) in total be borrowed from time to time from any chartered bank or trust company doing business in Nova Scotia;

THAT the sum be borrowed for a period not exceeding Twelve (12) Months from the date of approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of this resolution;

THAT the interest payable on the borrowing be paid at a rate to be agreed upon; and

THAT the amount borrowed be repaid from the proceeds of the debentures when sold.

Motion Carried.

B. MacKay left the meeting.

5. Presentation – NS Association of Realtors – Paige Hoveling, Stakeholder Relations Manager at the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors (NSAR) made presentation to Council, highlights:

- Professional Association for Realtors; 2,100 members
- Strict code of ethics, licensing, education and training
- Administration of the MLS System
- Quality of Life principles - Ensuring economic vitality; Building better communities; Preserving our environment; Protection property owners; Providing housing opportunities
- Average Spin-Off Spending 2023 (2024 not available) and Revenues
- New Glasgow/Stellarton area has 1.7 months of inventory; 1% vacancy rate across the province
- 2024 Home Sales data
- 2025 Outlook provincewide – increase in sales approx. 4.9%; home prices to increase by 5.3% approx.; balanced market; lower interest rates
- Homeownership Rates; survey 59% of non-owners want to own a home in Canada
- Attainable Housing and Spectrum; diversified supply and what is needed to achieve it
- Down Payment Assistance Program; Alignment of “First Time Buyer” definition; Pilot Project focusing on Accessibility in the Trades; Legislative Reforms; Data and Expertise
- Provincial Work – Housing Needs Assessment; African Nova Scotian Housing Strategy; Land for Housing Program; Secondary and backyard suite incentive program where many municipalities are implementing; Student housing; New Public housing; HST Removal on purpose-built rentals; Increase in Long Term Care Beds
- Federal Assistance – Housing Accelerator Fund; Multi-generational Home Renovation Tax Credit; Co-op Housing Development Program and Rent-to-Own Projects
- Increasing housing of all types and price-points across the country

Questions/Comments:

Mayor D. Stroud re quarterly updates for their information. Paige Hoveling commented on their semi-annual newsletter; an update on housing in the province.

Coun. M. Fortune re data pertaining to Stellarton in particular.

Coun. S. Eis re vacant land available for housing. Paige replied that they have that information as well.

6. Presentation – Ship Hector Society Presentation – Rebecca Whiffen made presentation to Council highlighting:

- History about the Ship Hector and its settlers

- Transform from a dock-side attraction into a touring passenger vessel
- More financially sustainable
- Enhance the experience with sailing training
- Corporate sponsors, Weddings, Chartered Tours, etc.
- Boatbuilding school, Workshops
- Youth engagement
- Preservation; relationship with Indigenous people
- Tourism and Visitation growth over the next few years
- Grand Opening planned for this year on July 12, 2025
- Capital Projects include the Interpretive Centre which is fully funded by provincial and federal governments, and the Ship Restoration which is through donations from the community
- Ship progress to date and rebuild of wharf
- Electric motors and solar panels; the first tall ship in North America to be run by green energy
- Destination designation
- Local economic impact and spinoffs; employment opportunities

They are asking for municipal support. The Town of Pictou and the Municipality of Pictou County each donated \$10,000 towards rebuilding the Hector and asks that Stellarton match that amount. Municipal support will aid in obtaining Provincial funding.

Questions/Comments:

Mayor D. Stroud commended the Society for their work and dedication to this project.

7. Reports from Staff: January (Attached and available online)

- a. Chief Mark Hobeck – Stellarton Police Service
CAO S. Higdon reviewed report to Council; 209 Calls in January; 9.5 hours of Foot Patrol; 122 hours of Traffic Enforcement; and 11.5 hours of Community Relations. Notable events include Chief Hobeck and Sgt. Irving attended G. R. Saunders School to read to students during Literacy Week; Sgt. Morrell attended G. R. Saunders to spend an hour with a grade 5 student during lunch period.
Coun. G. Pentz made motion to accept Police Service Report, seconded by Coun. S. Campbell. **Motion Carried.**
- b. Fire Chief Mike O’Sullivan – Fire Department
Chief O’Sullivan reported that the Stellarton Fire Department had 13 calls in January; practices were held every Thursday evening; Equipment checks were completed weekly. New bunker gear was purchased.
Coun. M. Fortune motioned to accept Fire Department’s report for January 2025, seconded by Coun. S. Eis. **Motion Carried.**
- c. Paige Draper – Marketing and Communications
P. Draper highlighted the TownApp has been upgraded with new enhancements and ready to be downloaded; Volunteer of the Year nominations are now open; Homecoming dates are July 23 – 27, 2025.
Coun. G. Pentz re volunteer recruitment. P. Draper is looking for individuals to help with various events.
Coun. G. Pentz made motion to approve the Marketing and Communications report, seconded by Coun. S. Eis. **Motion Carried.**
- d. Blaine Murray – Town Engineer
CAO S. Higdon noted that in January, a report of a wastewater overflow was reported to the Town Hall, upon investigation, a manhole adjacent the railway was overflowing and escaping into the storm system; there was a blockage in the sanitary main going under the tracks; a hydrovac truck was called to remove any blockage in the pipe but could not get past the blockage; a sinkhole was also found beside the tracks which indicated a break. As per

protocol, NS Environment and Environment Canada were notified immediately of the incident and are involved in the subsequent repairs. Public Works set up a temporary pump system that pumps the flow to the downstream manhole. This has been a priority over the past several weeks; Engineering staff have been working on drawings and specification for the project. It is anticipated that the installation of the new line will take place in early February.

Other projects include developing drawings and specifications for the Rutherford Infrastructure upgrades.

No significant snowfall events to report; vehicle maintenance is ongoing. Markers were placed on new fire hydrants on Claremont and Kirk Avenue. For the Water Utility, there were 2 water breaks, on Rutherford and Maple Street.

Water Treatment Plant, average treated water for January 2025 was 2.6% higher than same time last year; the #1 Membrane had 11 leaks; Staff begun the Annual Report due March 31, which is a requirement in our Approval to Operate license issued by the Province. These reports are available online. Coun. S. Campbell re costs to fix issue. CAO S. Higdon said preliminary costs are \$150,000., which will come from the Reserves.

Mayor D. Stroud asked the cause as well as other water breaks in Town. CAO S. Higdon replied that a pipe collapsed; most of the other breaks this past year were on Rutherford, hence why it's the next major infrastructure project for upgrades; age of pipes, and work on Hudson, etc.

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

Staff left the meeting.

8. Correspondence

a. Healthy Pictou County Re: Report for December/January – CAO S. Higdon stated that this report comes out every month for Council's information.

b. Pictou Antigonish Regional Library Re: Funding Review Update – CAO S. Higdon received and read update from Eric Stackhouse for Council's information; new personnel; and a recap of the Library Funding Review.

9. Committee of the Whole Report

The following recommendations are for Council's consideration from the Committee of the Whole meeting held on January 27, 2025:

Recommendation #1

On recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council approve 1/6 share of the request from Viola's Place for a study on Creating a Regional Strategy to address Housing and Homelessness Needs across Pictou County in the amount of \$13,000 plus HST divided by the 6 municipalities.

Recommendation #2

On recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council approve the Capital purchase by the Stellarton Fire Department for six sets of Bunker Gear in the amount of \$29,294.99 including HST dependent on the funding from the Emergency Provider Service Funding (in the amount of \$20,000).

Recommendation #3

On recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council accept the tender received from Sitech for the GPS Survey system in the amount of \$22,190.00 plus HST as that was the lowest tender received.

Recommendation #4

On recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council approve the proposal received from Veoila for the Membrane Replacement under Water Capital in the amount of \$191,540.00 plus HST for fiscal 2025-2026. It requires pre-approval due to the delivery date of 30-45 weeks.

Recommendation #5

On recommendation of Committee of the Whole Council not participate in the Bulky Waste Program with Pictou County Solid Waste for the amount of \$1.25 per household plus tipping fees.

Coun. S. Eis Made motion to approve recommendations from Committee of the Whole, seconded by Coun. M. Fortune. **Motion Carried.**

10. Update from Riverview Home Corporation – Coun. Eis updated Council; she attended Board of Directors meeting on January 23; highlighted the implementation of the Remedy Report; transitional state for moving residents into other housing; started the tender process for medically viable housing; purchasing two community-based homes.

11. Open Forum

Brian Deagle spoke regarding concerns about the pathway from Bridge Street to Foster; water pooling issues; children use path; requires more drainage.

Another concern B. Deagle spoke about is transparency and Freedom of Information Act; requested information from Police but no response received in a timely manner.

CAO S. Higdon stated the path issue will be brought up at budget deliberations and discussed with staff; as for his other concern, she will bring it to the Police Chief for an update.

12. Next Council Meeting: Monday, March 10, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

13. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned on motion by Coun. G. Pentz.

MAYOR

CAO