

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Tuesday March 31, 2020
Zoom Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Present: Warden Danny Muise; Deputy Warden Guy Surette; Councillors Glenn Diggdon, Nicole Albright, Richard Donaldson, Roderick Murphy Jr., Lucien LeBlanc, Kathy Bourque, Calvin d'Entremont, Director of Finance Marsha D'Eon, Chief Administrative Officer Alain Muise, and Municipal Clerk/Recorder Lori Murphy.

Regrets: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Deputy Warden Guy Surette.

Agenda:

On a motion by Lucien LeBlanc and seconded by Glenn Diggdon the agenda was approved with addition of 8d-waste park.

Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Deputy Warden Guy Surette asked for any declarations of conflict of interest from the floor.

None declared

Presentations

None

Adoption of Minutes - None

Business Arising from the Minutes

Regional Agreements & Structural Reform Conversation

Nothing to report

Library Funding Update

Nothing to report

Updates- COVID-19

CAO Muise highlighted some changes at staff level and community level. March 18 decision as made to close the office to the public, however we are not closed to serving the public. Most of staff are working from home. Alain working from home and going in occasionally if something needs to be signed. Those that are still in the office are rotating shifts and respecting social distancing rules.

Public works is making sure no issues with wastewater systems. Protective equipment is there if needed. Most times people are working alone or from a safe distance and no one

can travel together. Archives and courthouse are both closed to the public. Kaitlyn and Judy working out between themselves when they are in the office. Senior safety not doing visits just making calls to check on seniors.

Hans is constantly updating policies and procedures from a safety perspective. Our planned capital projects are still moving forward.

Staff is sharing all information and updates from REMO and Provincial government on Municipality of Argyle FB site which is reaching many of our residents.

Any resident travelling outside of NS must self isolate for 14 days. For update on list of symptoms on COVID-19 go to 811.novascotia.ca, and please stay isolated if you suffer from the symptoms.

Budget work is ongoing and will be seeing many changes with the onset of the pandemic. The Province is being asked to assist municipalities with a tax deferral plan, with many details still to be ironed out. It will delay payment of taxes and not eliminate them. There will be some form of criteria, not everyone will qualify for tax deferral.

Waste park is closed to the public, but we are still collecting garbage. Mariners center is closed. Airport has put its “non-essential” staffing on-call. Waste Check and YASTA have closed their offices but operating remotely.

Rails to Trails are open but follow restrictions set out by the Province. Pubnico point trail is open and signs have been posted about distancing and no gathering at trail heads. Do not do physical activity in groups or outside your community. Councillor Albright has observed increased usage on trails as far as side by sides and 4-wheelers. Reminder to exercise in your own community. Recreation Director Natalie d’Entremont states only use the trails if you can walk to it. Absolutely do not drive to a trail. Only use those trails in your own community.

Province is saying that best option is to stay home in order to flatten the curve. Doesn’t mean you can’t leave your house but practice physical distance if you do go out.

Just a reminder that if public needs 911 services, ensure you tell dispatchers that you have travelled outside of NS or may be a carrier of COVID-19. This will protect our front-line staff.

Tax department is open everyday for payment arrangements. Can pay by credit card, cheques in mail or online. Many people are using CAFT, which is our pre-payment monthly billing. There is a secure drop box service at the municipal building located at 2nd door.

If people are self isolating, they can still go out for drives and be outside on or off your property provided you don’t come in contact with anyone. The purpose of self isolating is to stay away from other people.

Questions from public:

- *Are their cases in our community?* Province and NSHA are not indicating where the COVID-19 cases are located specifically, so we do not know.
- *Will we still get our tax bills as usual?* Time frame of tax bills going out will be the same as in the past. The decision of when they are due has not been made.
- *Will new building be put on hold?* No, we will not unless general contractor decides to put it on hold. The money for building is capital in nature and we already have it and can only be used for capital purposes.
- *Can public pick up garbage in the ditches?* Municipality has delayed our community litter garbage collection program, but residents can pick up garbage in ditches on their own. Municipality would pick up those bags left on the side of the road if people wanted to clean the ditches themselves. They should contact the Municipality to inform them of the bags..
- Municipality will post list of trails that are open on FB site.
- *Have there been any measure put in place for crisis councillors at a distance for community members?* We will post mental health services on our FB site. We don't deliver that service municipally.

Council Updates- COVID-19

Councillor Diggdon: Met with grocery manager of De La Tour Co-op in Pubnico to talk about doing food orders for local residents and has been delivering orders for people in Pubnico. Met with Jenny Proudly from Pharmasave in Pubnico to let her know he is available to deliver medications. Contacted Rev Bill Newell from food bank in Yarmouth and things are going well. No new cases in food bank in Pubnico. Thanks to everyone who is keeping everything going for us like healthcare workers and first responders, truck driver's etc.

Deputy Warden Surette: Senior Safety reported that there are some seniors who are struggling so please check on your neighbours and let Councillors know if anyone needs assistance.

Councillor Albright: Checked in with some seniors and some are very prepared. They are afraid to go into grocery stores. Some are using the services provided by Carls' Store.

Councillor Bourque: Contacted some seniors and delivered groceries. Thank you to staff. Have patience and be kind to each other.

Councillor Donaldson: Applaud the work Councillor Diggdon is doing. Richard is in high risk category but will work something out if someone needs anything.

Councillor LeBlanc: Lobster fishery markets can't sustain in the current state. No one has answers as to what is going to happen. Uncertainty as to what the future holds. LFA 36 in NB has delayed their season by a month.

Warden Muise: Not receiving too many calls from residents. Any residents needing anything please reach out. Staff is doing a great job. We need to keep the public informed.

Councillor Murphy: If public needs anything please reach out. Be safe everyone.

Councillor d'Entremont: Keeping ears and eyes open to what's going on in the community. If anyone needs help, please reach out.

COVID-19 Decisions

Interest on Accounts

CAO Muise gave an overview of the letter from the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce. Our tax bills don't go out until June so any suspensions on interest or collection on property taxes would be on old taxes from previous years. The 2020 tax bills will go out at the usual time. The Federal and Provincial governments have implemented significant subsidies to support local individuals and municipalities.

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Danny Muise that Council approve that the Province of Nova Scotia be asked to lead a province wide tax deferral program, where the Province enables appropriate lending to support qualified taxpayers. The program shall target businesses and residents impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Grants to organizations-process & deadline

CAO Muise explained the request for decision. The on-line application process came out at a good time. Kim Rowley is the lead staff for the grants process this year. If someone doesn't have access to a computer, we will complete the application process over the telephone. Municipality is committed to helping those who need it. YMCA, Mariners Center and Airport are separate line items. They don't directly impact non for-profit community grants, but perhaps indirectly if expenses increased in other areas.

It is moved by Danny Muise and seconded by Lucien LeBlanc that Council approve to extend deadline to September 15th for all grants to organizations applications and enable partial funding for applicants up until this deadline, to meet cash flow demands of our non-profit organizations.

Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Public engagement for land use by-law

CAO Muise and Clerk explained how we are going to move forward and how we plan to engage the public. Waiting for direction from Province on how to conduct public hearings. Council did not oppose staff's approach to continue with an online public engagement.

No motion required

For Decision

Solid Waste tender

Deputy Warden Surette explained the tender and asked for clarification on what the total amount is. Last year the amount was about 332,000. Next year it will cost \$352, 000 for the collection of solid waste. Cost of business is increasing for the supplier. There was only one bid submitted, and it was in good order.

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Richard Donaldson that Council approve the negotiated pricing for solid waste collection for the 5-year term as requested in the original tender request.

Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Tax sale tender

Deputy Warden Surette explained the request for relief of taxes. There is no redemption period for this property due to the length of time it has been on our tax sale.

It is moved by Lucien LeBlanc and seconded by Roderick Murphy Jr. that Council approve the request for relief of Taxes on AAN #03776964, 24 Newell Road, Plymouth in the amount of \$2,017.80.

Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Transfer request to Capital Reserve

CAO Muise explained request for decision and gave details of the surplus. Prudent to put aside money for capital purposes.

It is moved by Roderick Murphy Jr. and seconded by Danny Muise that council approves \$115,000 of the 2019-20 operating surplus be transferred to the Capital Reserve, for a total transfer to the Capital Reserve of \$250,000 for the 19-20 fiscal year.

Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Waste Park

Deputy Warden Surette explained that the public is upset about waste park being closed and is looking for Council to allow people to put more garage on side of road to have it picked up. Spring cleanup will still go ahead as planned. Construction and debris or electronics cannot be put on roadside for pick up. Councillor Diggdon asked that we look into an exception to the rules on what gets picked up. Municipality has reached out to the hauler to review options. Will look into possibility of waste park opening up a couple days a week. Deputy Warden Surette will bring up the suggestions to the Waste Park board.

No motion required

Correspondence and for Information

Mariners Centre Funding from Municipality of Yarmouth

No action, for information.

Financial Requests

Community Grant - Le festival de la barge

It is moved by Jr. Murphy and seconded by Glenn Diggdon to provide a \$500 District community grant to Le festival de a barge
Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Community Grant – St. Joseph Parish

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Glenn Diggdon to provide a \$500 District community grant to St. Joseph Parish
Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Community Grant – Seal Island Church

It is moved by Calvin d’Entremont and seconded by Roderick Murphy Jr. to provide a \$500 District community grant to the Seal Island Church
Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Community Grant – Kemptville Volunteer Fire Department

It is moved by Danny Muise and seconded by Kathy Bourque to provide a \$500 District community grant to the Kemptville Volunteer Fire Department
Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting/Notice of Motion

None

Question Period

- Senior Safety is often called upon from the town. They are working closely with REMO and VON
- Is there money in the budget for Pubnico Lake road ditching and repairs? It’s a provincial responsibility. MLA, Colton LeBlanc would be able to answer the question.
- Province will start showing cases of COVID by health zones.

In Camera

HR

There being no further business, it is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Richard Donaldson to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting and go in-camera at 8:32PM

Recorder

Lori Murphy

Date Approved: _____

Chairman/Warden _____

Alain Muise, Chief Administrative Officer _____