

# MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE

## Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, May 13, 2021

Zoom 6:00 p.m.

**Present:** Warden Danny Muise, Deputy Warden Nicole Albright; Councillors Calvin d'Entremont, Glenn Diggdon, Guy Surette, Gordon Boudreau, Richard Donaldson, Ted Saulnier, Kathy Bourque, Director of Finance Marsha D'Eon, Chief Administrative Officer Alain Muise, and Municipal Clerk/Recorder Eilidh Canning.

**Regrets:** none.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Warden Danny Muise.

### **Agenda:**

On a motion by Guy Surette and seconded by Nicole Albright the agenda is approved as circulated.

*Motion Carried*

### **Conflict of Interest Declaration**

Warden Danny Muise asked for any declarations of conflict of interest from the floor.

None declared.

### **Adoption of Minutes**

Committee of the Whole & Grants to Organizations Meeting Minutes - April 27, 2021

It is moved by Nicole Albright and seconded by Richard Donaldson that the April 27, 2021 minutes of the Committee of the Whole and Grants to Organizations Meeting be approved as circulated.

*Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)*

### **Business Arising from the Minutes**

None.

### **Approval of Fire Budget**

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Kathy Bourque to approve the fire budget in the amount of \$463,749.

*Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)*

### **Approval of Utility Budgets**

Tusket Sewer Charge (Operating & Capital)

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Nicole Albright that Council establish an operating rate of \$285.00 per equivalent unit and the capital rate of \$217.38 per equivalent unit for the Tusket Sewer Charge for the 2021- 2022 fiscal year.

*Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)*

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#### West Pubnico Sewer Charge (Operating & Capital)

It is moved by Calvin d'Entremont and seconded by Kathy Bourque that Council establish an operating rate of \$300.00 per equivalent unit and the capital rate of \$211.00 per equivalent unit for the West Pubnico Sewer Charge for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

*Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)*

#### East Pubnico Water Utility (Operating)

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Calvin d'Entremont that Council establish the following rates for the East Pubnico Water Utility:

1. Middle East Pubnico - \$3405.31 plus \$3.61 per 1,000 imperial gallons.
2. Lower East Pubnico - \$632.78 for a 1.5-inch pipe plus \$2.13 per imperial gallons.
3. Lower East Pubnico - \$1011.86 for a 2-inch pipe plus \$2.13 per imperial gallons

*Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)*

#### Wedgeport Sewer Charge (Operating & Capital)

It is moved by Gordon Boudreau and seconded by Ted Saulnier that Council establish an operating rate of \$145.00 per equivalent unit and the capital rate of \$550.98 per equivalent unit for the Wedgeport Sewer Charge for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

*Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)*

Councillor Glenn Diggdon joined the Council meeting late, which reflects in the motions below (there will now be 9 voting).

### **Resolutions**

#### Interest Rate / Date on Overdue Accounts

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Nicole Albright that Council establish an interest rate of 13% per annum on overdue accounts and that the current year's property taxes be payable and due by July 30th, 2021 and interest will accrue after that date.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

#### East Pubnico Area Rate (Year 2 of 6)

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Calvin d'Entremont that Council approve an area rate of 5 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing in the areas and/or communities covered by the East Pubnico Volunteer Fire Department for the Fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 2 of 6.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

#### Eel Brook & District Area Rate (Year 3 of 5)

It is moved by Nicole Albright and seconded by Kathy Bourque that Council approve an area rate equivalent to 12.5 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing in the areas and/or communities covered by the Eel Brook & District Volunteer Fire Department for the Fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 3 of 5.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

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Islands & District Area Rate (Year 5 of 5)

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Nicole Albright that Council approve an area rate of 7 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing in the areas and /or communities covered by the Islands and District Fire Department for the fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 5 of 5.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

Kemptville & District Area Rate (Year 3 of 6)

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Nicole Albright that Council approve an area rate equivalent to 3 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing, in the areas covered by the Kemptville & District Volunteer Fire department for the fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 3 of 6.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

Lake Vaughn Volunteer Fire Department (Year 6 of 10)

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Richard Donaldson that Council approve an area rate equivalent to 5 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing, in the areas covered by the Lake Vaughan Volunteer Fire department for the fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 6 of 10.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

Quinan & District Area Rate (Year 3 of 12)

It is moved by Nicole Albright and seconded by Kathy Bourque that Council approve an area rate equivalent to 10 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing in the areas and/or communities covered by the Quinan & District Volunteer Fire Department for the Fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 3 of 12.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

West Pubnico Fire Protection Area Rate (Year 1 of 1)

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Calvin d'Entremont that Council set an area rate of 9 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing in the areas and /or communities covered by the West Pubnico Fire Protection Association for the fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 1 of 1.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

Wedgeport & District Area Rate (Year 12 of 15)

It is moved by Gordon Boudreau and seconded by Guy Surette that Council approve an area rate equivalent to 7 cents per \$100 of assessment be collected by means of tax billing, in the areas covered by the Wedgeport & District Volunteer Fire department for the fiscal year 2021/22, this being year 12 of 15.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

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### FCM Application – Resolution 2021-05

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Municipality of the District of Argyle direct staff to apply for a grant opportunity from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Municipal Asset Management Program for the Argyle Municipal Asset Management Plan. BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT: The Municipality of the District of Argyle commits to conducting the following activities in its proposed project submitted to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Municipal Asset Management Program to advance our asset management program: Activity 1: Sewer and Manhole condition assessment Activity 2: Creation of the State of Infrastructure report Activity 3: Finalizing Asset Management Plan BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The Municipality of the District of Argyle commits \$24,500 from its budget toward the costs of this initiative.

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Richard Donaldson that Council approve resolution 2021-05.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

### **Capital Budget Presentation**

CAO Muise reviewed the Capital Budget presentation (*Attachment 051301*) with Council and highlighted the Capital projects and advised on the cost associated with each. These highlights are listed below:

#### Capital Fund

- Opening balance \$1,520,000
- Closing balance \$3,920,000
- Annual contributions from operations - \$150,000
- Increase balance due to debt replenishing reserve.
- However, payments on debt will partially come from this account in the future.

#### Federal Gas Tax Fund

- Opening balance \$1,700,000
- Closing balance \$ 714,000
- Annual federal contribution is approximately \$340,000. in 21-22 it will double to \$679,000
- Administration building, COMFIT solar and Rural internet are the top three disbursements this year.
- 2022-23 will include a second major installment in Rural Broadband (\$350,000), and there will be annual Gas tax commitments on admin. Building.

*Attachment 051301*

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**Approval of Capital Budget**

CAO Muise reviewed the Capital Budget attached to the agenda with Council and advised that these figures align with the presentation he had just done on the Capital budget.

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Kathy Bourque to approve the capital budget as presented.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

*Attachment 051302*

**Presentation of Operating Budget**

Director of Finance Marsha D'Eon along with CAO Muise reviewed the operating budget attached to the agenda (*Attachment 051303*) and briefly detailed the mandatory vs discretionary expenses.

CAO Muise then reviewed the presentation attached to the agenda (*Attachment 051304*). He reviewed that total operating revenues and expenditures are budgeted at \$9,125,900, which is an increase of \$648,000 from the prior year. He then advised, that as discussed in our last Special Council meeting, Council is being asked to increase commercial and residential tax rates in this draft budget by 2 cents to meet the sharp increases of operation. He then advised Council that this year's budget seeks to bring some services back to normal before COVID-19. COVID-19 has had positive impacts on property values and sales, but that has not yet impacted assessment values. CAO Muise then advised Council that COVID-19 has had a very negative impact on Recreation facilities and services, with sharp increases in costs to safely restart services.

As Council has seen the draft prior, they were satisfied that the operating budget was ready for approval.

*Attachment 051303*

*Attachment 051304*

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Ted Saulnier to raise Residential taxes by 2 cents as part of the 2021/2022 budget.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

It is moved by Calvin d'Entremont and seconded by Nicole Albright to raise Commercial taxes by 2 cents as part of the 2021/2022 budget.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Ted Saulnier that Council approve the operating fund budget in the amount of \$9,125,900 for 2021/22 as submitted.

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*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

#### **Presentation of Operating Reserve**

CAO Muise reviewed the Operating Reserve attached to this agenda.

*Attachment 051305*

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Guy Surette that Council approve the operating reserve for 2021/22 as presented.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

#### **Councillors Report**

Deputy Warden Albright advised that she has met with the Eel Brook Fire Department to discuss funding. She also had a recreation presentation which highlighted what activities residents enjoy the most. She attended a Glenwood park subcommittee meeting. She attended budget deliberations last week with the Municipality.

Councillor Bourque attended a water shortage meeting, as well as Recreation meetings. She also attended a Nakile meeting, Joint Council meeting for the Mariners Center on Main and budget deliberations. She also advised Council that there is a community garden started in the Bike Park in East Pubnico.

Councillor Boudreau advised that he attended many of the same meetings other councillors have mentioned along with a Wedgeport wastewater meeting.

Councillor Surette advised that he also attended several of the same meetings other councillors have attended, along with scholarship committee meetings for the Municipality and a waste park meeting.

Councillor Saulnier advised he attended meetings that other councillors have already mentioned.

Councillor d'Entremont advised that the grader has been in the West Pubnico area, and Great Pubnico Lake has been done. If there are roads that haven't been done, he wants his residents to reach out and let him know.

Councillor Donaldson attended all committee meetings that he is on, many of which have already been mentioned by other councillors.

Councillor Diggdon advised he too has attended meetings that other councillors have mentioned. He also advised Council of his concern regarding the lack of ambulance availability. He then advised he spoke to the MLA and the Minister of Health expressing his concern regarding ambulance in availability in our Municipality.

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**Warden's Report**

Warden Danny Muise reviewed his report, as attached to the agenda.

*Attachment 051306*

**Staff Report**

CAO Muise reviewed the staff report, as attached to the agenda.

*Attachment 051307*

**For Decision**

Low Income / Property Tax Exemption 2021

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Kathy Bourque to approve the low income / property tax rebate program in the amount of \$17,680.66.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

National 3-digit Suicide Prevention hotline

WHEREAS the Federal government has passed a motion to adopt 988, a National three-digit suicide and crisis hotline;

AND WHEREAS the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand for suicide prevention services by 200 per cent;

AND WHEREAS existing suicide prevention hotlines require the user to remember a 10-digit number and go through directories or be placed on hold;

AND WHEREAS in 2022 the United States will have in place a national 988 crisis hotline;

AND WHEREAS the Municipality of the District of Argyle recognizes that it is a significant and important initiative to ensure critical barriers are removed to those in a crisis and seeking help;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Municipality of the District of Argyle endorses this 988 crisis line initiative;

and that Staff be directed to send a letter indicating such support to the local MP, MLA, Federal Minister of Health, the CRTC and local area municipalities to indicate our support.

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and Ted Saulnier for the Municipality of the District of Argyle to endorse this 988 crisis line initiative; and that Staff be directed to send a letter indicating such support to the local MP, MLA, Federal Minister of Health, the CRTC and local area municipalities to indicate support.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

Article C4 - Grants to Organizations Policy

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Requested changes have been made to the Grants to Organizations policy, and 7-day notice has been given. This policy can be approved this evening, at the will of Council. Council discussed this policy, and Alain Muise gave history on why religious organizations are funded via the District Community Grants. He did advise Council, that it is up to them to decide if they want to continue to fund religious organizations via the District Community Grants, or if they want to move forward with having the ability to fund cemeteries via the Grants to Organizations. Council deliberated, and the majority of councillors came to the decision to keep the policy as it has been, and fund religious organizations, including cemeteries via the District Community Grants. They also requested Staff delete section 4.8 from the Grants to Organizations policy.

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Nicole Albright to remove section 4.8 and add a section to the Grants to Organizations policy that states cemeteries can only be funded via the District Community Grant.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

#### 1st reading - By-law 40 – Regional Emergency Management

Council discussed the draft Regional Emergency Management By-law 40 which was developed based on input from the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator.

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Kathy Bourque that the Regional Emergency Management By-law 40 receive its first reading.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

#### Mariners on Main Plan

Warden Danny Muise reviewed attached report, *Mariners Center on Main Street Opening Plan and Budget*. CAO Muise then reviewed the financials associated with this attachment and advised Council that \$451,264 is the cost to reopen this facility and also that the facility has a projected life expectancy of 5 years (as outlined in *attachment 051308*).

*Attachment 051308*

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Nicole Albright that Council approve the Mariners Center on Main Street Opening Plan and Budget as presented.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Calvin d'Entremont that Council approve the Musée Acadien et Archives request for the Municipality to fund the archivist position for 3 years (years 2021, 2022, and 2023) in the amount of \$18,000.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

### **Correspondence and For Information**

NSFM 12-month notice letter

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No action, for information

Dept of Fisheries letter to Charlene LeBlanc

No action, for information

Safe Restart Fund

No action, for information

**Financial Requests**

None

**Agenda Topics for Next Meeting/Notice of Motion**

Agenda topics for next meeting-Sidewalks

**Question Period**

**In Camera**

Contract Negotiations

It is moved by Guy Surette and seconded by Nicole Albright to recess the Regular Council Meeting and go In-Camera to discuss contract negotiations at 9:10 PM.

*Motion Carried (9 in favour, 0 against)*

There being no further business, it is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Kathy Bourque to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting at 9:14p.m.

Recorder

Eilidh Canning

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman/Warden \_\_\_\_\_

Alain Muise, Chief Administrative Officer \_\_\_\_\_