



Municipality of the District of Argyle

Item: RFD – Pubnico Library
Branch – Western Counties
Regional Library

Date: Sept 1, 2020

VISION

We see Argyle as home to a healthy and thriving rural population. Our municipality promotes and supports economic and social opportunities for the region and engages in the active expression of our unique Acadian heritage. We are a place of choice for rural living and are widely recognized for our warm hospitality and joie de vivre. Surrounded by fresh air and cool ocean breezes, we work and play in the great outdoors. People choose to live in Argyle because of our commitment to each other, to our community and to our neighbors. Argyle is a place we are proud to call home.

Background:

In June of 2019, CAO Alain Muise, Municipal Clerk Eilidh Canning, and Community Development Officer Charlene LeBlanc attended a meeting with Western Counties Regional Library (WCRL) Director, Erin Comeau on April 30, 2019 to discuss the issues that the Pubnico library are currently facing in their current location. The main issue is lack of public use of the Pubnico library (due to lack of technology, parking, and location), and staffing. The WCRL is of the belief that the current location of the library in Pubnico head, paired with the aging building, do not make it an attractive place to go for the public, nor does it make it an attractive place to work therefore creating issues when trying to staff vacancies. The other issue is that the current location of the library does not meet Provincial accessibility standards.

In June 2019, Council passed a motion that allowed staff to identify potential non-profit entities within the Pubnico area that may be able to share space with the Western Counties Regional Library and the results be brought back to Council.

After a review of possible locations that meet the requirements, the following list was developed:

1. Argyle Historical Church in Argyle Head
2. Pubnico Area Lions Club
3. West Pubnico Legion
4. Musee des Acadiens in West Pubnico
5. East side community Hall
6. West Pubnico Golf Association

The Argyle Historical Church in Argyle Head and the West Pubnico Golf Association were ruled out because they are seasonal. Staff also ruled out West Pubnico Legion due to lack of land for expansion. The Pubnico Lions Club was also ruled out due to the location requirements outlined by the WCRL and the East Side Community Centre has low traffic and is not near public places.

The recommendation from staff is The Musee des Acadiens in West Pubnico since it meets all the criteria.

Attachments/Additional Information:

The potential new location has to be 25 km from Yarmouth and 25km from Barrington to meet Western Counties Regional Library standards. According to the WCRL, the position is funded as a bilingual position, that is to serve a francophone community. As long as the location is in the Pubnico Area, this would suit WCRL requirements. The location must be attached to a non-profit, not be seasonal and be in a high traffic area that is not isolated.

Budget and Cost Considerations:

Staffing and personnel management is the responsibility of the Western Counties Regional Library. The maintenance and upkeep of the Pubnico library building is the responsibility of the Municipality of Argyle.

The consideration of a new location should not come to a tremendous surprise to anyone. While the location itself is fairly central to many communities, the location has come into considerable disrepair.

CAO's Recommendation:

Based upon the current and past expense to the Municipality to maintain the existing Pubnico library, paired with the potential opportunities available for a shared location, it is my recommendation that council approves staff to approach the selected non-profit to determine if they are willing to accept such an expansion for a new library.

I would also recommend that the establishment of a new library be added to the long term capital investment plan for the Municipality, and that it be an objective of both the WCRL and the Municipality to find funding support for a new build. Certainly, the location makes a lot of sense, as the objectives of the Musee match in many ways, the objectives of the library, and that the space would be extremely useful for genealogical research as well as for library purposes.

It should be noted that this is not a decision to build at this time. The consideration of a new library needs to follow our policy on asset management. The condition of all municipal assets must be considered, with a recommended priority list that council and staff shall use to guide their long-term planning. The construction of a new library would be done in collaboration with the WCRL – who are very eager to see a new, safer and better location. Keep in mind that the selection criteria used did not only come from staff, but from the WCRL as well.

Suggested Motions:

It be moved that council approve a location for the Western Counties Regional Library and council approve staff to approach the chosen non-profit entity to see if there is interest in potential partnering.

Moved that Council add the addition of a new library for the Pubnico area on their long-term capital priorities list