

ANTIGONISH REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

An Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee Meeting was held Tuesday, October 3rd, 2017 at 3:30pm in the Board Room of the Municipal Administrative Centre, 285 Beech Hill Road, Antigonish NS.

Present were:

- Warden Owen McCarron
- Councillor Rémi Deveau
- Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer
- Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
- Mayor Laurie Boucher (Town of Antigonish)
- Councillor Diane Roberts (Town of Antigonish)
- Jeffery Lawrence, CAO (Town of Antigonish)
- Tom Bennett, Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee was called to order by Glenn Horne at 3:38pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Deveau and seconded by Councillor Roberts that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Mr. Horne opened nominations for Chair of the Emergency Management Advisory Committee. Warden McCarron nominated Mayor Boucher.

Moved by Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor Deveau that Mayor Boucher be appointed the Chair of the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee.

Mr. Horne opened nominations for Vice Chair of the Committee. Warden McCarron nominated Councillor Deveau who accepted the nomination.

Moved by Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor Roberts that Councillor Deveau be appointed the Vice Chair of the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of the Roles and Responsibilities of Committee

The Roles and Responsibilities are outlined in several documents, specifically in both the bylaws for the town and the county and the inter municipal agreement between the Town and The County creating the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization. The Committees role is to be responsible for the direction and management of emergency preparedness activities in the region and to advice councils pursuant to the emergency management act. This mandate is met by ensuring that the Emergency Management Coordinator is carrying out their mandate and that plans are developed and maintained for the event of an emergency.

Mr. Horne said there is also a governance role between the Emergency Management Organization and the enabling Councils. The Advisory Committee members would be responsible in the event of an emergency for briefing each respective Council on what is going on.

If an Emergency Command Centre is set up, the Incident Commander role would be filled with the Clerk/Treasurer or the CAO. Mr. Lawrence suggested that in the event of an emergency, if he is in the Incident Commander role he could have to give direction to County resources and vice versa if Mr. Horne was in the Incident Commander role, he would have to give direction to Town resources. It is important for Councils to understand and support that.

In the bylaws, it states that because this is a Regional Organization, the Town can declare a state of emergency in the County or the County can declare a state of emergency in the Town. It truly is a Regional Organization that acts as one body.

Once it goes beyond the Regional resources then EMO Nova Scotia would come in and take over.

Notice of Resignation of the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC)

Mr. Bennett has submitted his resignation effective December 31, 2017. He feels there should be continual change in the position. In order to move the program forward there should be new thoughts and new ideas.

Mr. Bennet thinks it would be advantageous for the Town and County to look at moving the position from a part-time position to a full-time position. There is a lot of stuff that he didn't have time for because it was only a part time position. He would suggest having plans of all major businesses, hospitals, nursing homes, municipalities and the university centralized with the Coordinator. He stated that the Business Continuity plans could roll into this position as well.

Mayor Boucher asked how far away we are from knowing all the plans for the hospitals, nursing homes, university and having a master plan of sorts. Mr. Bennett as the coordinator knows the plans for the nursing homes but as far as other organizations or businesses go he doesn't have a lot of feedback. It is not feeding back in to the one position. There is a liaison with the fire departments as well and they all use the Incident Command System.

Warden McCarron said at the Department of Natural Resources keeps an inventory of all the fire departments assets in their annual operating plan.

Mr. Bennet handed out the risk assessment for Antigonish which rates events by probability of them happening here. Any events noted with a 4 or 5 (high probability of occurrence) there are plans in place for them.

Mr. Horne noted that Municipalities are required to provide Emergency Management Services. There is an opportunity that exists between the Town, County and the University for a three-way partnership for the Emergency Management Coordinator position. There have been preliminary conversations around such a partnership and it can be explored further.

On behalf of the Committee, Mayor Boucher thanked Mr. Bennett for his work as the Emergency Management Coordinator over the last three years and for his dedication to the position.

Update from the EMC

Emergency Management Plan template has been completed is ready to submit to George Muise (EMO Nova Scotia). Mr. Bennett will circulate to committee. The plan is quite lengthy but the appendices deal with action plans for specific events.

Planning committee meets on a quarterly basis, having last met in September and will meet again in December.

The renovations of the Emergency Command Centre at the Municipal Administration Centre are coming along well. The new location will be a lot more functional. The secondary location will be at the Keating Centre on StFX University campus.

At the December meeting the planning committee will be doing a table top exercise on communication. This stems from the outage we had this summer where all the Bell Communications lines were down and it affected the communication among first responders.

Consideration of a Mutual Aid Agreement with StFX University

The agreement lays out the terms for assistance from the university in the event of an emergency, particularly how university facilities could be utilized in the event of an emergency. There has to be some clean up to the agreement of the ICS terminology. Once it is updated Mr. Horne will circulate it at the next Advisory Committee Meeting.

Update & Discussion on Special Hazards Response in Antigonish

Applications for additional funding from the Municipality and the Town were received from The Antigonish Special Hazardous Response Unit the past two years. In both instances there was an application or funds to fully operationalize the ASHRU and both applications were rejected. In the meantime the ASHRU still lives on as an organized society.

Mr. Horne was contacted by the Level A team out of Truro wondering what the intent was with the Level B team here. The funding that the Municipality and the Town do provide goes to Truro, 60% of it stays in Truro and the remainder would typically go to ASHRU but where they have been non-operational for the past 2 years, that money has stayed in Truro.

Greg Smith, Chair of ASHRU would like to make another attempt to have ASHRU become operational again. Some decision has to be made as to whether it is going to become operational again. The fire chiefs are going to meet later in October and decide if there is a need on their end for ASHRU to exist and if they are willing to contribute financially.

If there is determined to be a need for a Hazmat response there are several ways options for service delivery. There is a model where a stand along organization provides the service such as ASHRU. There is a model where fire departments provide their own level of service and can call on mutual aid. The last model is that the New Glasgow fire department is fully certified, trained, equipped and willing to provide the service.

Councillor Deveau asked if any of the local fire departments are equipped to deal with a Hazmat response or showing any interest in getting trained and equipped. Mr. Horne said most Antigonish County units have responded to incidents along Highway 104. There is also some capacity within the Department of Transportation to help with certain situations.

Mr. Horne suggested that the Level A team from Truro could come and present to the committee or to Joint Council about the service they provide.

ADJOURNMENT

Councillor Roberts asked how often the committee will meet. It was suggested that the meetings occur every three months until the new position is established and then meet twice per year.

Councillor Roberts moved for the meeting to be adjourned at 4:40pm.