

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF  
**ANTIGONISH**

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

A Committee of the Whole Meeting was held Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administrative Centre, 285 Beech Hill Road Antigonish NS.

Present were:           Warden Russell Boucher, Chair  
                          Deputy Warden Owen McCarron  
                          Councillor Mary MacLellan  
                          Councillor Donnie MacDonald  
                          Councillor Hughie Stewart  
                          Councillor Vaughan Chisholm  
                          Councillor Rémi Deveau  
                          Councillor John Dunbar  
                          Councillor Bill MacFarlane  
                          Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer  
                          Beth Schumacher, Deputy Municipal Clerk

Regrets:                 Councillor Gary Mattie

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden Boucher, at 5:33pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The following additions were made to the agenda:

- Options for well funding
- Proclamations
- Crosswalk on South River Road
- School Options Committee
- Stop sign at Trunk 4 and Beech Hill Road
- Hospital Foundation Fundraising Update
- Flashing Amber Lights on 104 at Dagger Woods

*Moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor MacLellan that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Moved by Councillor Deveau and seconded by Councillor Dunbar that the Committee of the Whole minutes of March 7, 2017 be approved as presented. Motion carried.*

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **CANADA 150 UPDATE**

Marlene Melanson, Director of Recreation, provided the Committee with a follow-up presentation regarding the proposed Canada 150 Celebration additions to the regular Canada Day celebration hosted by the County, as well as some more information about funding applications and a possible legacy project. Copies of the memo provided at the March 7, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting were re-distributed to the committee for consideration.

Mrs. Melanson noted that the enhanced Canada Day celebrations as planned would proceed if the funding and grants applied for were secured. If the grant awards were reduced or refused, some changes to the preliminary programming would need to be made. With respect to the proposed legacy project, Mrs. Melanson reviewed the proposal for an outdoor stage at the St. Andrews Junior School yard where the Canada Day celebrations have been held over the last few years, and outlined how this structure could be utilized year-round for programming by the municipalities, schools, and other community groups.

A number of questions followed regarding funding, timing, and the commitment from other identified partners, including the school board. Mrs. Melanson identified that she was looking for a motion from the Committee to proceed with formally requesting contributions from potential funding partners. Discussions with the school board would be ongoing, to work out matters such as access, ownership, and maintenance.

*Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor MacLellan that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council make a request to the Town of Antigonish for a contribution to the Canada 150 capital project. Motion carried.*

*Moved by Councillor Deveau and seconded by Councillor MacFarlane that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council commit a maximum of \$45,500 to a Canada 150 capital project contingent on receiving funding from other partners and having an acceptable agreement with the Strait Regional School Board. Motion carried.*

### **REVIEW OF NON-PROFIT TAX EXEMPTIONS AND GRANT FUNDING**

Mr. Horne facilitated a discussion regarding the summary of the non-profit tax exemptions and grant awards provided by the Municipality over the past five fiscal years. The 2014/2015, Municipal Council tied grant expenditures to tax revenue by Policy, giving a percentage of tax revenue for general municipal purpose, minus mandatory contributions, as a maximum amount for grants each year. In preparation for this discussion, Mr. Horne had polled other municipalities in the Province and found that their grant contributions range between 1% and 4% of tax revenue. Mr. Horne asked whether the Committee wanted to consider changing the amount used by the Municipality. Consensus from the group was to stay at 4%.

Mr. Horne then noted that there were four organizations to which the Municipality provides grants, but whose services could be considered indirect municipal services. Those services were the Antigonish Heritage Museum, Antigonish Community Transit, Antigonish Senior Safety Coordinator, and Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores (DEANS). Collectively, the grants to these groups total almost \$80,000, and removing these would bring the percentage of tax revenue given to community grants down to 3.2%. Discussion followed regarding the optics of the re-categorization of the community grants and the indirect municipal services, and a concern was expressed that there may be a perception that the total amount being provided has been reduced. Consensus from the group was to remove the four organizations from the regular community partnership grant "pot", and to reduce the percentage

of total tax revenue in that “pot” to 3.2%, but to ensure that efforts are made to communicate that this is a reorganization for budgeting, and not an overall reduction in funding to community groups.

Finally, Mr. Horne requested direction from the Committee regarding how best to address the multi-year contribution to the St. Martha’s Foundation, due to the restrictions in the policy and the specific accounting requirements beyond those applied to annual grants. Consensus from the Committee was to consider the St. Martha’s foundation multi-year contribution outside of the community partnership grant limit of total tax revenue.

### **NORTHUMBERLAND AND EASTERN SHORE AREA GUIDE ADVERTISING REQUEST**

A request has been received for the Municipality to purchase advertising space in the 2017 edition of the Northumberland and Eastern Shore Area Guide at a cost of \$389. Mr. Horne noted that, while the Municipality had purchased space in this publication in the past, it had not purchased an ad in 2016 due to the publication primarily featuring and targeting businesses and tourists in the Pictou/New Glasgow area. Discussion followed. Councillor MacLellan asked to see a copy of the publication before the Committee made a recommendation. Staff indicated that they would have this available at the next meeting.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Mr. Horne briefly reviewed several of the updates provided by staff in the agenda memo, including a reminder of the next CEDI workshop, and update on the OHS manual overhaul, the Saltscapes exhibition happening later in April, and an update on the Recreation website update.

### **OPTIONS FOR WELL FUNDING**

Deputy Warden McCarron enquired regarding an announcement that came last summer from the Province enabling Municipalities to create financing programs for property owners to install wells, similar to a local improvements project. Mr. Horne noted that, currently, the Municipality doesn’t have anything like this in place, and early fall would be the timeline for having a by-law ready to go with the appropriate due diligence undertaken. It was his understanding that the Province had made this program available in response to water shortage issues last summer in the South Shore. Discussion followed regarding the risks and expenses involved in such a program and the role of the Municipality vs. the private sector in providing financing for these types of projects. The group felt that it would be a good idea to wait and see how the units in the South Shore fare with tool before exploring further.

### **PROCLAMATIONS**

Mr. Horne noted that, in the last month, a number of requests for proclamations had been received by the Municipality. Staff was looking for direction regarding how best to handle these requests, and whether there should be an application process or criteria for considering a submission. The Committee requested that staff prepare a report after reviewing how the issue is handled in other municipalities, for consideration at a future meeting.

### **CROSSWALK ON SOUTH RIVER ROAD**

Councillor MacFarlane requested that staff contact the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to request a crosswalk be installed crossing South River Road at Trinity Lane, to provide the residents on Trinity Lane with safe access to the sidewalk on the opposite side of South River Road.

### **SCHOOL OPTIONS COMMITTEE**

The Committee had a discussion about the recent meetings held by the School Options Committee in reviewing the feeder system for Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School feeder system, and in particular, about their recommendation to close the Antigonish Education Centre. The Committee felt that it may be an issue for discussion at a meeting of the Joint Town and County Council Advisory Committee, in advance of the School Board's final decision on the matter, and provided direction to staff to begin arrangements with the Town. Suggested guests at that meeting include representatives from the School Board, Mr. Ford Rice, members of the School Options Committee, and the Hon. Mr. Randy Delorey as MLA for Antigonish.

### **STOP SIGN AT TRUNK 4 AND BEECH HILL ROAD**

Councillor MacFarlane made note of the new solar-powered flashing stop signs at the intersection of Trunk 4 and Beech Hill Road, and requested that staff send the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal with a note of thanks for making that change to improve safety at that intersection.

### **ST. MARTHA'S FOUNDATION UPDATE**

Councillor Stewart provided the Committee with an update on the efforts of the St. Martha's Foundation fundraising campaign. To date, \$11.5 million of the \$20 million goal has been raised, and the group is keeping up the effort to reach their goal.

### **AMBER LIGHTS AT HIGHWAY 104 AND DAGGER WOODS ROAD**

Councillor Deveau expressed concern that the flashing amber lights that were installed over Highway 104 at the two intersections with Dagger Woods Road have yet to be activated. Councillor Deveau has been in touch with TIR staff, who has indicated that they are waiting on Nova Scotia Power to activate the power feed to the lights. Councillor Deveau requested that staff prepare a letter to Nova Scotia Power encouraging this to take place as soon as possible.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Moved by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Deputy Warden McCarron that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 7:18pm. Motion carried.*

  
Warden Russell Boucher

  
Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer