

TOWN OF NEW GLASGOW
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

JUNE 2, 2020

A Committee of the Whole meeting was held virtually on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. using the Microsoft Teams platform. Present were: Mayor Dicks; Deputy Mayor Lewis; Councillor Dorrington; Councillor Guthro; Councillor Fraser; Councillor Proudfoot and Councillor MacDonald. Also present were: Lisa MacDonald, CAO; Earl MacKenzie, Town Engineer; Derek Eisan, Director of Information Technology; Ross White, Director of Fire, Inspection and Emergency Services; Thiv Tharma, Director of Community Development; Corey Smith, Director of Corporate Services; Kelly Sloan, Executive Assistant; Rachel Mitchell, Climate Change Coordinator; Frank DeMont, Solicitor and Cindy MacKinnon, Executive Director DEANS for a portion of the meeting.

Mayor Dicks stated that she would like to voice her support for the people of our community peacefully protesting the recent violence in the death of George Floyd in Minnesota. The Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief attended the protest and had deep conversations with the protesters. The protest will end but the conversations will continue.

AGENDA

Mayor Dicks requested that item 10a. be removed from the agenda as it was proclaimed at the last Council meeting.

It was regularly moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion carried.

MINUTES

It was regularly moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on May 19, 2020 be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION DEANS

Cindy MacKinnon, Executive Director, made a presentation to Council regarding the activities of DEANS over the past year and some of the challenges facing tourism operators for the upcoming season due to COVID-19.

Mayor Dicks thanked Ms. MacKinnon for her presentation.

MATTERS FOR SENIOR STAFF

PROPERTY TAX AND WATER UTILITY INTEREST

Council reviewed a memo from the Director of Corporate Services requesting Council to discuss whether to continue to waive the interest for May for all water and tax accounts in arrears as was done for March and April. He noted that every month interest is waived on taxes and water the Town forgoes \$14,000 in revenue. He noted that there have not been very few property owners asking about assistance being provided by the Town but more of how they can pay their taxes with the Town Office being closed.

It was regularly moved and seconded that interest resume on outstanding tax and water accounts and requests for assistance from property owners be considered on an individual basis as is currently the practise.

Motion carried.

COVID 19 PROPERTY TAX FINANCING PROGRAM POLICY

Council reviewed the Property Tax Financing Program Policy that establishes a one-time property tax installment payment program for owners of residential and commercial properties negatively affected by the Covid-19 global pandemic for the current fiscal year.

It was regularly moved and seconded that the Policy be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

The CAO thanked the Director of Corporate Services for taking the lead role with the Finance employees in the Pictou County Municipal Units to coordinate this policy.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

COVID-19 UPDATE

The CAO presented an update on Covid-19. The Provincial State of Emergency has been extended another 2 weeks so essentially effective noon on Sunday, May 31st to noon on Sunday, June 14th.

PC Solid Waste – Very busy and the County landfill vouchers are now being issued which creates a busier operation. Over 250 cars to the site yesterday alone. The landfill will be open on Saturdays for their regular hours starting this week.

There are currently no municipal resources needed or identified for any units.

Communications are continuing messaging and a focus on Safe Grad messages. There will be a mock accident videoed in the new couple of weeks and posted to the REMO site. Continuing messaging of the fire ban information especially due to the dry weather. Now moving to the hurricane updates, as necessary. New website for PC

REMO being worked on and this will complement the facebook and twitter REMO pages.

The removal of the Ship Hector is scheduled for June 4, very early in the morning and it will be livestreamed through REMO facebook.

No municipal operational concerns currently. Municipalities working on their re-introduction to services plans.

REMO Update: The REMO meetings have been changed to Tuesdays only and the number of municipal staff participating in the meetings has been reduced. Today, we had guests from the Not-for-Profit sector, Michelle Ward, ED of Kids First; Michelle Ferris, ED of Aberdeen Health Foundation; and Ellen Fanning, ED of the PC United Way. They provided an overview of the challenges facing their clients and the not-for-profit agencies during this time.

Town Hall staff will return to the office on June 8th when the cabling project is complete for the 1st floor and proper cleaning completed. Both doors will remain locked and there will be an intercom for the main door. One person at a time to be served at the front desk due to social distancing requirements and appointment bookings are welcome. A building entry and exit schedule will be completed for staff as well as a lunchroom schedule established for breaks and lunches. Only one person will be permitted to use the elevator at one time. Cleaning protocols and a checklist for sign-off to be established for each floor to be completed each day. No in-person staff meetings will be permitted; everything will continue virtually. The temporary laptops and mobile phones that were issued at the start of the pandemic will remain in place to ensure we are well positioned to mobilize virtual operations if required during a second wave. A

public notice will be issued for the town hall reopening hours and explanation on how services will be conducted. We will also provide a written overview to Council, so you have the information to answer citizens with any inquiries.

NSFM has another video call with the Mayors, Wardens and CAOs on Wednesday night with CEO of Tourism Nova Scotia and Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Councillor Proudfoot asked what controls were in place for the students attending the Melmerby Beach as Friday is supposed to be good weather.

The CAO stated that charges have already been laid at this location last Friday. The RCMP and the NS Department of Lands and Forests are working together on this issue. She will get an update from the Police Chief on the matter.

Councillor Proudfoot asked if there is signage erected at the Melmerby Beach noting the restrictions.

The CAO stated that she will check into this also.

Councillor Dorrington asked if the playgrounds are open. It was noted that they are not open due to the Provincial Order to close them. She saw children and parents in the Ward 1 playground on two separate occasions.

The CAO stated that she will mention this to the Police Chief; however, it is important for complaints should be sent to the police as soon as an observation is made to ensure a timely response.

It was regularly moved and seconded that the report be approved.

Motion carried.

RESPONSE FROM NEW GLASGOW FLEA MARKET

Council reviewed a letter from Jim Corbett, General Management, Big Eagle Investments Corp., responding to the concerns indicated in Anne MacPhee's letter to the Town regarding the state of the New Glasgow Flea Market.

Mayor Dicks noted that Ms. MacPhee did not provide any contact information in her letter so a response to her letter can not be provided; however, if she contacts the Town again the information from Mr. Corbett will be provided to her.

NEW BUSINESS

POLITICAL SIGNS POLICY

Mayor Dicks stated that she feels the number of elections signs for the upcoming municipal election should be limited for environmental reasons, they can litter our community. She suggested designating areas where signs can be located and limiting the number of signs each candidate is permitted to erect.

Councillor Proudfoot stated that he brought this matter up in 2016 and he is suggesting that the signs be limited to private property only.

Councillor Fraser stated that it can be a problem if there are too many in one location they can appear as a cluster.

Councillor Proudfoot questioned how the Town could control signs being erected on private properties.

Councillor Dorrington stated that because of Covid 19 it may not be possible to campaign door to door for this election so the election signs would help promote the election and keep people engaged.

The CAO stated that we could find out what other municipal political signage policies reflect in the Province through the AMANS list serve.

It was regularly moved and seconded that a survey be carried out through the AMANS list serve to see what other units in Nova Scotia are doing with respect to election signs.

Motion carried.

EMAIL – CHRIS LEWIS – MARINA/BOAT TOURS

Council reviewed an email from Chris Lewis regarding New Glasgow Family Fun Boat Tours. He would like to use the Marina to load and unload tourists for the boat tours.

It was regularly moved and seconded that this matter be referred to staff for the preparation of recommendation report to Council at the next meeting.

Motion carried.

IN CAMERA

The meeting resumed in camera with the Town Engineer present.

ADJOURNMENT

It was regularly moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.,

Motion carried.