

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF ARGYLE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Tuesday September 29th, 2020
Tusket 6:30 p.m.

Present: Warden Danny Muise; Deputy Warden Guy Surette; Councillors Glenn Diggdon, Nicole Albright, Calvin d'Entremont, Richard Donaldson, Roderick Murphy Jr, and Kathy Bourque, Chief Administrative Officer Alain Muise, and Municipal Clerk/Recorder Lori Murphy.

Regrets: Lucien LeBlanc

The meeting was called to order at 6:32p.m. by Deputy Warden Guy Surette.

Deputy Warden Surette and Warden Muise presented a long service award to Councillor d'Entremont on behalf of NSFM

Agenda:

On a motion by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Nicole Albright the agenda was approved as circulated.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Deputy Warden Guy Surette asked for any declarations of conflict of interest from the floor.

None declared

Presentation

Angelique LeBlanc and Evan Nemeth from Western REN presented on an energy study completed on the Western region.

Some challenges faced by the Western Region are fundamental barriers to economic development. A few of these barriers are finding and keeping workers, access to reliable internet and access to reliable energy systems. All these things are critical to economic development. This study is the first step to address some of these issues and barriers around energy in the region.

Presentation attached (092901)

Adoption of Minutes

Regular Council Meeting Minutes – September 8, 2020

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Danny Muise that the September 8, 2020 minutes of the Regular Council Meeting be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

ARC Meeting Minutes – June 18, 2020

It is moved by Nicole Albright and seconded by Kathy Bourque that the June 18, 2020 minutes of the ARC Meeting be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Audit Committee Meeting Minutes – September 8, 2020

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Danny Muise that the September 8, 2020 minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting be approved as circulated.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Business Arising from the Minutes

None

Financial Statement – August 2020

Director of Finance sends her regrets. CAO Muise spoke briefly about the financial statement. Predicting a surplus of \$136,000 for the year, about \$121,000 of that figure earmarked for general operations, and \$15,000 for wastewater and other services we provide.

Approximately half of the \$121,000 is derived from revenues from deed transfer taxes and interest income on cash flow. Return on investment is better than predicted. The other half of the \$121,000 is expenses. Expenditures for Grants to orgs is in the negative due to increased contribution for the COCMA 2024. Cash flow from tax collection is better than last year and far better than planned.

The Federal and Provincial Governments announced COVID “Safe Restart” funding for municipalities. While we are not certain of the amount, our requested funding was about \$230,000. This figure is not shown in these financial statements.

It is moved by Richard Donaldson and seconded by Roderick Murphy Jr. that the August 2020 financial statement be approved as circulated

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Documents attached (092902)

For Decision and discussion

Pellet heat feasibility study – request for pilot project

CAO Muise explained the request for decision. WestFor has a mandate in NS to increase the efficiency of forest management on Crown Land. Hans Pfeil, Director of Public Works, explained this study is using innovative technology largely used in Europe. The system uses wood-pellets for a combination of heat and possibly electricity. This would support the WREN energy study. WestFor would use The Municipality of Argyle as a pilot project to assess the feasibility of establishing a wood pellet-based heating initiative. Hans explained that the amount and source of needed for this type of heating is not that large and it's mostly waste product.

It is moved by Danny Muise and seconded by Roderick Murphy JR. that Council accept the WestFor/Torchlight Resources request to participate in a study, at no cost to Argyle, to determine the feasibility of using wood-pellet technology for a residential heating source for our residents

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Article P31-Flexible Work Schedules Policy

CAO Muise gave a brief overview of the policy. Questions were raised about the potential of creating a larger gap of benefits between and private industry and government. CAO Muise shared examples of private industry also embracing a work from home option, and in many instances, it is mutually beneficial to the staff and the business. There would be small savings on travel costs in the cases where staff would otherwise choose to travel to meetings etc. The policy requires the CAO to review flexible work arrangements on a regular basis.

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Richard Donaldson that Council approve the policy Article P31-Flexible work schedule as presented

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Audit Committee member

Deputy Warden Surette highlighted the memo. Province has mandated this request.

It is moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Glenn Diggdon that Council approve Renaud d'Entremont to sit on the audit committee

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Yarmouth Airport-Voting members

Deputy Warden Surette explained the memo. This is being brought forward now in case board meets prior to election. Councillor Murphy volunteered to sit on the board as an alternate.

It is moved by Glenn Diggdon and seconded by Kathy Bourque that Council approve Councillor Murphy as an alternate member of the board on the Yarmouth International Airport Corporation.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Request for letter of Congratulations to Vaughne Madden

Deputy Warden Surette highlighted the request

It is moved by Danny Muise and seconded by Nicole Albright that Council approve a letter of congratulation be sent to Vaughne Madden

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Eel Brook Fire-Request for funding for truck

Deputy Warden Surette highlighted the request for decision. CAO Muise explained the amount that is being asked. The adjusted request amount is \$182,566. There is a draft policy that staff is working on and will be presented to Council at a later date. While the policy was never going to exclude the larger Fire Departments (West Pubnico, Wedgeport and Eel Brook), it was clearly the intent of Council to support these requests when the area rate could not fully address the need. EBVFD cannot set a reasonable area rate to fund both the building and the truck at the same time.

CAO Muise feels EBVFD did their homework on finding a truck that would suit their needs. Questions were raised regarding the type of truck they are requesting, and the fact that Eel Brook will require other vehicles in the future. The large area coverage of this department was also discussed, and since this department is the primary responder on Highway 103, their location serves all our travelling residents.

Council asked how this decision will affect Argyle's ability to offer funding to other departments. CAO Muise reminded Council that most of this recommended funding is a loan, not a grant. Also, the policy will have to address this specifically, and it speaks to the need for a comprehensive fire service review of the Municipality.

It is moved by Nicole Albright and seconded by Danny Muise that Council support the request from the Eel Brook Volunteer Fire Department for the purchase of a combined Rescue/Pumper truck, and that the additional funds needed to purchase this truck be paid for by the Municipality through a loan amounting to \$187,500. On March 31 of each year for the next 5 years, \$20,000 of this loan shall be forgiven by the Municipality, for a total forgiveness of \$100,000.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

It is moved by Nicole Albright and seconded by Roderick Murphy JR. that the CAO be tasked to create and secure a loan agreement between the Eel Brook Volunteer Fire Department and the Municipality of the District of Argyle, with an interest rate set at 1%, and a repayment plan that supports the needs of the Department in the construction of a new building.

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

5-year Capital Investment Plan

CAO Muise explained the Capital Investment Plan presented to Council. This document lists capital projects approved by motion or by need. CAO Muise highlighted the list of projects. A new library for West Pubnico is on the list, but no money attached to it yet, nor an estimate of cost, as it was just added to the plan in the fall of this year. Most of the money being used on these projects is from Federal Gas Tax. The admin building is in the debt column on this report due to the need for a loan in order to apply for a grant.

It is moved by Ricard Donaldson and seconded by Roderick Murphy JR. that Council accept the 5-year Capital Investment Plan

Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Letter of Support-Musee Acadienne -Nouveaux Horizons project

Deputy Warden Surette explained the request for a letter of support.

It is moved by Calvin d'Entremont and seconded by Glenn Diggdon that Council approve a letter be sent in support of Musee Acadienne -Nouveaux Horizons project
Motion Carried (8 in favour, 0 against)

Correspondence and for Information

WCRL - 2019-2020 Annual Report

No action, for information

WCRL Board Minutes

No action, for information.

Letter to-Minister Wilson

No action, for information.

Letter of Concern-Minister Jordan

No action, for information.

Provincial Volunteer Awards Virtual Presentation

No action, for information.

Letter from WREN Board

No action, for information.

Mariners Centre-New CEO

No action, for information.

Financial Requests

None

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting/Notice of Motion

Councillor Diggdon expressed concerns for residents who are running out of water.

Question Period

None

In Camera

None

There being no further business, it is moved by Consensus to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 8:25PM.

Recorder
Lori Murphy

Date Approved: _____

Chairman/Warden _____

Alain Muisse, Chief Administrative Officer _____

DRAFT