

**Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Video Conference  
Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020  
9:30 am**

Council:       Warden Betty Ann MacQuarrie  
                  Deputy Warden Alfred Poirier  
                  Councillor Jim Mustard  
                  Councillor Laurie Cranton  
                  Councillor John MacLennan  
                  Councillor John Dowling

Staff:           Keith MacDonald, CAO  
                  Tanya Tibbo, Director of Finance  
                  Donna MacDonald, Director of Tourism and Culture  
                  Charlotte MacDonald, Manager of Recreation  
                  Melanie Beaton, Special Projects Coordinator  
                  Debbie Nicholson, Municipal Council Administrative Assistant  
                  Karolyn Aucoin, Communications and Community Engagement Specialist

**CALL TO ORDER**

Warden MacQuarrie called the meeting to order at 9:45 am and welcomed all in attendance. Roll call was taken.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOVED:**           Deputy Warden Poirier  
**SECONDED:**       Councillor Dowling  
**MOTION:**         That the agenda be approved as presented.  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**ROAD NAME CHANGE**

Recommendation to Council that an unnamed private lane off Little Mabou Road in Colindale be named to Ocean Breeze Lane pending a change of County from Richmond to Inverness in the Eastern District Planning Commission Location Map.

**CONFIRMATION OF NOVA SCOTIA MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS DATE**

The 2020 Nova Scotia Municipal Elections has been confirmed for October 17<sup>th</sup>. Concerns were expressed by Council regarding the challenges that could be faced with holding the election this October such as the campaigning process, safety, and a level playing field for all, as well as additional costs that could be encountered.

Recommendation to Council that a letter be written to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing expressing our concerns regarding holding a Municipal Election in October of 2020. Premier Stephen McNeil, MLA Allan MacMaster, and Dr Robert Strang to be copied on the letter.

### **INVERNESS COUNTY HOMES CORPORATION: SMALL OPTIONS HOMES**

The Federal Government recently announced a Pandemic Premium. This is a wage top up for essential workers who are making minimum wage. The provinces are responsible for deciding who is eligible for the wage top up. Four Councillors sit on the Municipal Homes Board, that governs the Inverary Manor, Foyer Pere Fiset, Koster Huis, and the Port Hood Small Options Home. The top up provided by Nova Scotia is the Essential Health Care Workers Program. This would include eligible employees at the NSHA (Nova Scotia Health Authority), the IWK, Long Term Care, Home Care, and Emergency Health Services. Staff at Small Options Homes and Group Homes do not qualify. Warden MacQuarrie would like to seek clarification as to why some frontline health care workers are excluded from this program.

Recommendation to Council that a letter be sent to Premier Stephen McNeil asking for clarification as to why some frontline health care workers were excluded from this wage top up program. MP Mike Kelloway, MLA Allan MacMaster, the Minister of Health and Wellness, and the Minister of Community Services.

### **CELLULAR EXPANSION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

A First draft of the Cellular Expansion Request for Proposals was presented previously to Council and comments and feedback were received. Other Municipalities were consulted on how they handled cellular expansion. The Final Draft was presented to Council today. The Request for Proposals will be made public tomorrow via the Municipal website. Updates will be provided to Council once the Request for Proposals is closed, and review of the submissions will begin.

### **COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM:**

#### **Glendale & Area Community Cooperative Limited**

\$7,500.00 is the current request of Council to undertake building repairs and painting.

Recommendation to Council to approve the request, with \$5,195.00 of funding coming from District 6 CDC Budget unspent monies that are now in the Regional Grant Account. \$2,305.00 of funding to come from the 2020-2021 District #6 CDC budget (yet to be determined).

### **PROPERTY TAX FINANCING PROGRAM POLICY**

Tanya Tibbo introduced the draft policy to Council. This is a tax financing program that would be administered through the Municipal Finance Corporation. The goal of the program is to provide some temporary tax relief to citizens that may require assistance. Discussion followed regarding who could be eligible for the tax relief (i.e. just residents of Nova Scotia), and if a minimum commercial value would be applicable. Tanya Tibbo recommends introducing the policy today and issue the tax bills in June 2020 as usual. After 3-4 weeks, the Finance Department will have a good

idea of how collections are proceeding and can then determine how to address the possibility of tax relief.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE ROUNDTABLE: CAPE BRETON -CANSO MP MIKE KELLOWAY**

MP Mike Kelloway joined the virtual meeting of Municipal Council for a roundtable discussion. He spoke on the many measures that were announced by the Federal Government since the COVID-19 Pandemic began. Individual Councillors brought forward their concerns as well as their appreciation for assistance received. Adequate cell service, as well as concerns within the tourism sector are common in all districts. Eleven satellite offices for MP Kelloway have been set up within the riding since he came into office. MP Kelloway looks forward to participating in future virtual meetings of Municipal Council.

### **DUPLICATE ACCOUNT: REQUEST FOR WRITE-OFF: M MORRIS**

The subdivision of property resulted in three duplicate tax accounts being created by Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) for the 2018-2019 taxation year. Once the duplication was discovered, the tax accounts were deleted. Tax payments were made by M Morris on all three accounts, and a request for a refund was made by the property owner to the Municipality. The recommendation of the Finance Department was to not refund taxes paid in prior years and that adjustments to property tax accounts are made based on changes to the to Inverness County Assessment Roll provided by PVSC. This issue was originally brought to Council in February 2020, and at that time the recommendation to Council was to not refund any tax payments made on these duplicate accounts.

Recommendation to Council that a letter be written to PVSC and copied to M Morris regarding the issue of these three duplicate accounts, and the resulting payments made.

### **BUDGET REVIEW: GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS**

This is one aspect of 2020-2021 budget. COVID-19 is impacting a number of the organizations that rely on this funding avenue. Tanya Tibbo provided an outline on what was provided to these organizations in the past, and what is potentially available for this fiscal year.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Department of Finance**

Tanya Tibbo provided an overview of the Department activity over recent months.

This department continues to work remotely. Staff remain very busy with audit and budget preparation and Water Utility Requests. Status reports for all projects were presented, and department staff meeting highlights were provided. Neptune Technology Inc. will return on May 25<sup>th</sup> to continue to install water meters.

### **Department of Tourism and Culture**

Donna MacDonald delivered a summary of this Department's recent activity. The COVID-19 situation has resulted in many new initiatives including food hamper delivery, community meetings, and the resource help line. Status reports for all projects were provided, and meetings were listed. Communication with Fire Departments, and community organizations has been ongoing since the pandemic began.

### **Department of Recreation**

Charlotte MacDonald has been working with the Pandemic Response Team, and Seniors groups. She continues to secure numerous funding programs for the hampers project. Regarding Recreation, she has been working with several recreation focused organizations. Many competitive sports will not be offered for the upcoming season. Remote recreation and resource sharing ideas are being developed.

### **Special Projects**

Melanie Beaton provided an update. This past month has been quite productive, seeing the mobilization of various initiatives, as well as the advancement of many other ongoing projects. Video conferencing platforms have been well utilized for meetings. Status reports for all projects were prepared.

### **NEXT MEETING DATES:**

Regular Monthly Council: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Special Budget Meeting: May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 1:30 pm

Recommendation to Council that the link of the video recordings of future Public Council meetings be made available on the Municipal website.

Recess: 2:15 pm – 2:20 pm

**MOVED:** Deputy Warden Poirier

**SECONDED:** Councillor Mustard

**MOTION:** That Council move to "in camera" at 2:20 pm.

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting came out of "in camera" at 2:32 pm

### **RECOMMENDATION FROM "IN CAMERA"**

Recommendation to Council that \$82,275.82 be funded through the gas tax fund for the repairs to the Inverness Wastewater treatment plant digester.

**MOVED:** Deputy Warden Poirier

**SECONDED:** Councillor Dowling

**MOTION:** That Council adjourn at 2:34 pm

**MOTION CARRIED**