

**Municipality of the County of Inverness  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021  
11:00 am  
Council Chambers**

Council:     Warden Laurie Cranton  
              Deputy Warden Bonny MacIsaac  
              Councillor Alfred Poirier  
              Councillor John MacLennan  
              Councillor Lynn Chisholm  
              Councillor Catherine Gillis

Staff:       Keith MacDonald, CAO  
              Tanya Tibbo, Director of Finance  
              Donna MacDonald, Director of Tourism and Culture  
              Charlotte MacDonald, Recreation Manager  
              Christine Murray, Manager of Legal and Governance  
              Debbie Nicholson, Administrative Assistant to Council  
              Melanie Beaton, Special Projects Coordinator

Warden Cranton called the meeting to order at 11:00 am and welcomed all in attendance. Roll call was taken. The Warden acknowledged that we are in the ancestral and territorial land of the Mi'kmaq people.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Two submissions were received in response to the Request for Proposals to conduct a Financial Audit for the Municipality; from Grant Thornton and MNP. Based on a ranking system, Grant Thornton received a higher score (185 vs. 164). The Audit Committee recommends the appointment of Grant Thornton as the Municipal Auditor for the fiscal years from 2021-2023. Recommendation to Council that Grant Thornton is selected to conduct the Fiscal Audit for the Municipality for fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Water and Wastewater Operations, Chestley Carr**

Winterization of all Municipal hydrants has been completed. Two dechlorinating systems have been installed, and an out of service hydrant at the Inverness Hospital has been replaced. Ongoing projects include Lift Station repairs and replacement, SCADA upgrades, sampling and inspections. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Infrastructure Unit, Ellen Murphy**

Ongoing tasks include addressing large and small scale water leaks, snow removal, and facility maintenance, upkeep and repair. Ongoing projects include curb stop repairs, the Municipal properties security plan, and retrofit lighting. A new mini excavator has arrived recently. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Operations and Occupational Health and Safety, Erin Gillis**

A large volume of recycling material remains at the Strathlorne facility. Saturday overtime should help to reduce the volume. The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee has received new members. Proposed changes to the Southern garbage run have been communicated to residents. The annual safety inspection of Kenloch equipment has been completed, with a final report expected. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Environmental Compliance, Trudy Gillis**

Monthly highlights include federal and provincial reporting, treatment plant inspections, completion of the asset management course, outfall inspections, ongoing sampling, monthly webinars on infrastructure, water, wastewater and biosolids and information gathering and data entry. Early steps for annual reports for the Municipality have begun. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Department of Finance, Tanya Tibbo**

Monthly highlights include the continued preparation of the February 2021 Tax Sale, processing tax and water payments, customer service, various tender applications, processing of invoices, meter installations, curb stop locations, administration of water accounts, bank deposits, daily mail, payroll administration, bank reconciliation, resident land concerns, policy review, budget preparation and year end preparation. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Department of Tourism and Culture, Donna MacDonald**

The seasonal/winter marketing campaign is underway which features a combination of print and

social media. Margaree and Whycomomagh projects are ongoing as well as Trails Support. The Cape Breton Partnership has launched a Welcome Network initiative to welcome newcomers. Staff will continue to connect with the three County network groups. Website updates are ongoing. The Winter Market Readiness Assessment is a proposed partnership aimed at identifying current capacity for winter tourism across Cape Breton Island. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Department of Recreation, Charlotte MacDonald**

The Recreation and Community Wellness has relocated to the basement level of the Municipal Building. The new MPAL position was filled in early January 2021. This position will be responsible for the development of the Physical Activity Strategy for the County. Funding for the Seniors Safety Officer has been received through the Department of Seniors. Winter equipment rentals have been busy, with rentals being filled by appointment only due to the office closure. Expansion of the equipment loan program is being explored. Winter workshops will occur in partnership with the Family Resource Centre. Multiple meetings within the department and with external partners continue.

### **Special Projects, Melanie Beaton**

Many meetings continue with consultant teams, project stakeholders, and community residents resulting in advancing projects and mobilization towards accomplishing project objectives. Additional capacity has been added to the Special Projects team with the hiring of an Onsite Construction Manager and the Whycomomagh Wastewater Treatment Plant Lead. Multiple wellfield program and wastewater treatment plant objectives continue. Multiple Community Projects and Community Grant Applications are ongoing.

### **PRESENTATION: BRAS d'OR LAKES BIOSPHERE RESERVE ASSOCIATION**

Eileen Crosby and Gordon Kerr presented to Council.

A UNESCO Biosphere is about balancing the needs of people with the needs of the environment. There are over 700 such Biospheres in the world, with 18 located in Canada. In 2011 the Bras d'Or Lake and its watershed was designated a UNESCO Biosphere with a total area of over 3600 km<sup>2</sup>. The aims, functions and benefits of a UNESCO Biosphere were outlined, as well as current initiatives.

### **UPDATE: MARBLE HILL WATER AND SEWER EXTENSION REQUEST**

In 2020 the Municipality received a request from residents in the Marble Hill area of Port Hood for access to the Municipal water and sewer services. Staff conducted an assessment, and determined that additional wells would be needed for any expansion of current services. Therefore, currently an extension of these services cannot be granted to the residents of Marble Hill. Accordingly, Council did not recommend the extension request at this time.

## **UPDATE: FUNDING FOR SYRIAN FAMILIES**

Two Syrian families recently resettled in Cheticamp. Discussion was held amongst Council on the amounts previously paid to Syrian families who relocated to the Municipality. A motion was approved by Council in 2016 to assist Syrian families by providing \$1,000.00 per family. Possible funding options for Syrian families relocating to the Municipality were discussed. Council decided to maintain the current amount of \$1,000 per family; therefore, Council did not make any change to the above-noted 2016 motion, which remains in place. Recommendation to Council to provide a contribution of \$1,000.00 per each Syrian family that recently relocated to Cheticamp.

*Lunch Recess: 12:20 pm*

*Return from Recess: 12:50 pm*

## **UPDATE: SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL**

The current Municipal Sidewalk Maintenance Policy indicates that snow will be cleared from sidewalks within 72 hours of a snow event. Concern was expressed regarding the length of time it took to clear sidewalks after a recent storm. A review of the current policy will occur at the next Committee of the Whole meeting with an opportunity for policy amendments.

## **LAND LINE SERVICE INTERRUPTION**

At the last Council meeting held January 7th, 2021, the interruption of land line service from Bell, during power outages, was discussed. Following that meeting, Staff looked into the appropriate procedure to follow up with Bell regarding this service issue. The CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) states that the first step when a customer wishes to address a service issue is to make a complaint directly to the telephone company. If the matter is not resolved following that contact, then a complaint can be submitted to the "Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services" (CCTS) or the CRTC, depending on the circumstances.

It is the recommendation from Staff that:

- A letter be sent directly to the CEO of Bell Canada (Mirko Bibic) and the Chair of the Board of Directors of Bell Canada (Gordon M. Nixon) outlining the service issues being experienced by our residents. The letter should ask for a response within a defined period of time, and should advise that if the matter is not resolved within that timeline, then the Municipality will take further action to ensure the matter is rectified.

Recommendation by Council for staff to draft a letter to Bell Canada for review and approval of Council at the next Council Meeting.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW UPDATE**

At the last Committee of the Whole Meeting Council was provided with the consultant's report from Davis Pier from 2017. This document can be updated. A request came from Council regarding a Human Resource audit and a Fiscal audit. The cost of an update to this review is approximately \$19,000.00. It is agreed that Council will move forward with the RFP Process and then approve it in the new fiscal year.

### **UNIVERSAL BROADBAND FUND APPLICATION**

Municipal staff has met with many groups to advance an application to this fund. The application deadline was Friday of last week. The current focus is on helping residents access Starlink Internet Services which is satellite technology. Council will be kept aware of the status of this application.

### **MUNICIPAL EXPENSE POLICY REVIEW**

The Municipal Government Act requires a review of the Municipal Expense Policy after a new Council is elected. Staff has gone through the Municipal Government Act and the regulations around an expense policy, to make the process clearer.

Recommendation to Council to:

1. Amend the current "Municipal Travel Expense Policy"
2. Adopt the amended expense policy
3. Amend the "Honorariums for Citizen and Advisory Committees Policy"

After discussion, Council recommended that the Honorariums for Citizen and Advisory Committees Policy not be repealed. Instead, Council recommended that the Honorariums for Citizen and Advisory Committees Policy be reviewed moving forward to ensure it is up to date and includes all required committees. Recommendation by Council that the amended Expense Policy be revised to state that Applicants may be eligible for an honorarium pursuant to the Honorariums for Citizen and Advisory Committees Policy, and to remove the section repealing the Honorariums for Citizen and Advisory Committees Policy, and that the Expense Policy be approved with such amendments.

### **REMUNERATION POLICY**

A draft version of a remuneration policy was presented to Council.

Recommendation that the Remuneration Policy be approved at the next Regular Meeting of Council.

### **HOSPITALITY POLICY**

The current and a revised version of the Hospitality Policy was presented to Council.

Recommendation to Council that the Hospitality Policy be approved at the next Regular Meeting of Council.

## **MUNICIPAL DOG BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The Municipality does not have any way to enforce the current dog by-law.

Recommendation to Council to proceed with next steps required to register the dog control by-law with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Department of Justice.

Recommendation to Council to enter into discussions with Victoria County for a cost sharing arrangement of a by-law control officer.

## **UPDATE: PRE-DESIGN AND SYSTEM ASSESSMENT FOR THE INVERNESS WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY**

Melanie Beaton, Special Projects Coordinator presented to Council.

The results of the Dillon report were presented, highlighting the condition and age of the Municipal Water and Waste Water assets. Recent upgrades and repairs were done to the Waste water Treatment Facility in Inverness. The data resulting from this report will enable Municipal staff to make informed decisions going forward. Municipal staff and engineering consultants will be meeting with Nova Scotia Environment to ensure design parameters are within regulatory compliance. A preferred replacement or upgrade options will then be recommended and chosen based upon a number of the criteria.

## **STONE POINT ROAD**

Residents of Stoney Point Road presented to Council in 2020 regarding the removal of road maintenance by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. This is a private road, and therefore is not the responsibility of the Municipality to maintain.

Recommendation to Council that a letter be written to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to reconsider this issue.

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

Correspondence was sent to Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) in 2020 asking for consideration of reimbursement of payment made to a duplicate tax account. No response was received from PVSC to date.

Recommendation to Council that another letter be issued to the Chair of the Board of PVSC and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding this issue.

## **COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**Strait Area Transit:** Fleet Addition. The current request of the Municipality is for \$10,090.00 to offset the cost of purchasing a 2020 Pro-master 2500. Consensus to defer this discussion until the end of the meeting

**Cape Mabou Community Pasture Cooperative:** Pasture Improvements. The current request of the Municipality is for \$15,000.00 for upgrades to land, water, buildings, equipment and fencing.

Recommendation to Council to support this request in full in the following manner:

\$3750.00 – from district # 2

\$3750.00 – from district # 3

\$3750.00 – from district # 5

\$3750.00 – from district # 6

**Inverness County Centre for the Arts:** Strategic Planning. The current request of the Municipality is for \$1000.00.

Recommendation to Council to support this request in the amount of \$1000.00 with funds coming from District # 3's Discretionary Fund.

**Mill Road Social Enterprises:** Mobile Wheels Pilot Project. The current request of the Municipality is \$10,000.

Recommendation to Council to support this request in the amount of \$10,000.00 with funds coming from District # 3 current fiscal year CDC budget (\$8481.00), and District # 3 next year's CDC budget (\$1519.00)

**Sacred Heart Hospital Charitable Foundation:** Medical Equipment and Building Repairs. The current request of the Municipality is \$20,000.00.

Recommendation by Councillor Poirier to defer this request until the end of this fiscal year (March 31, 2021)

**Highland Trail Groomers Association:** Groomers for Trail Maintenance. The current request of the Municipality is \$10,000.00

Recommendation to Council to support this request in the amount of \$10,000.00, with funds coming from the Recreation Facility Grant Fund.

*Councillor Poirier left the meeting at 3:20 pm*

**Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital Auxiliary:** Medical Equipment. The current request of the Municipality is \$30,000.00

Recommendation to defer this request until budget deliberations for 2021-2022.

**Strait Area Transit:** Fleet Addition. The current request of the Municipality is for \$10,090.00 to offset the cost of purchasing a 2020 Pro-master 2500.

Recommendation to Council that we fund this request in the amount of \$10,090.00 with funds coming from the Provincial SRA (Safe Restart Agreement) funds if allowed. If not, the funding shall come from the Grants to Organizations Fund.

## CORRESPONDENCE

- Eastern District Planning Commission statistics for December 2020 were presented to Council.

- Strait Area Mutual Aid: A request in writing to attend a meeting with Municipal Council; preferably in an evening.
- Inverness County Home Support Society: Request for Board Membership
- MLA Geoff MacLellan: Support for Tourism Operators
- Eastern District Planning Commission: Inter-Municipal Services Agreement
- Minister Mark Furey: Extension of deadline for the Municipal Accessibility Plan

#### **NEXT MEETING DATE**

Regular Monthly Council: February 4th, 2021 3:00 pm

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Deputy Warden MacIsaac Moved to Adjourn at 3:40 pm