

Minutes of a Town of Pictou Committee of Council meeting convened at the CN Station – Council Chambers on the above date. Deputy Mayor Dan Currie presiding.

PRESENT: Councillors Nadine LeBlanc, Melinda MacKenzie and Shawn McNamara

ALSO PRESENT: Kyle Slaunwhite, CAO
Michelle Young, Community Development
Iain MacIsaac, Public Works
Wayne Robinson, Fire Chief
Sally O’Neill, Recreation
David Nicholson, Finance
Nicole MacDonald, Deputy Clerk/Minute Recorder

ABSENT: Mayor Jim Ryan; Curtis MacKinnon, RCMP

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It was acknowledged that Town Council was meeting in the unceded territory of Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded land of the Mi’kmaq people.

3. CHANGES/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: To approve the agenda with three additions:
• 8d. Pool Rates
• 8e. Water Rates
• 8f. Saltwire Flyers

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-01-08-24-2735

4. PROCLAMATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

5. PRESENTATIONS

6. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

a. Fire Department

- Report was included in the Council package.

b. RCMP

- Sgt Curtis MacKinnon was unable to attend.
- Report was included in the Council package.

- c. Community Development
 - Report was included in the Council package.

- d. Public Works
 - Beeches Road valve is complete
 - New Operator for Public Works was hired – Kaleb Clarke
 - Question on patching and sidewalks – plant issues and weather delayed work in December; plan to complete within the next couple of weeks
 - Salt Truck Tender – closed with no bids, reached out to several companies for quotations

- e. Parks and Recreation
 - Open Swims have resumed with a monitor present
 - Thanks to the Recreation Committee for volunteering at the holiday events over the past month
 - Winter Recreation programs have resumed – Badminton, Pickleball, Yoga, Chair Yoga and Tai Chi

- f. Variance
 - Revenue is significantly higher than budgeted due to higher than expected interest rates and advance payments on capital projects
 - RCMP vacancies filled so variance will shrink in the second half of the year
 - \$200,000 surplus projection
 - Tax Sale is February 14
 - Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) just mailed out assessments for the upcoming year

7. APPOINTMENT COMMITTEES

- a. Pictou Lobster Carnival – Councillor LeBlanc
 - Had two successful fundraisers in December – Gift Card Bingo and Family Skate & Fireworks. There were over 200 people at the skate. Thanks to the Town and Municipality for paying for the cost of the ice rental.

- b. Ship Hector – Councillor McNamara
 - New site manager hired – Rebecca Wiffen
 - New fundraising site launched – planned launch date August 2024
 - Three new upper decks installed on vessel
 - Fibreglass on hull nearing completion
 - Propulsion motor on order – to be installed in April

- c. Councillor MacKenzie
 - No meetings

- d. Regional Library, McCulloch Genealogy Centre and Pictou County Partnership – Deputy Mayor Currie
 - Pictou County Partnership – report in the agenda package
 - Source Water Committee – County looking for new member

- McCulloch Genealogy – Escape Room is going well, planning on reviving the DARBY lecture series

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Building Official Appointment

MOTION: For Council at their next Regular Meeting to appoint Avery Withrow as a Building Official and Fire Inspector for the Town of Pictou.

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-01-08-24-2736

9. DISCUSSIONS

a. Street Assessment Report

Public Works Superintendent Iain MacIsaac presented a Street Assessment Report that summarizes the conditions and potential projects for the next 10 years.

The report included the following:

- Summary of Town Owned Streets and conditions
- Investment Options and how they will improve street conditions
- A recommendation to:
 - Review and update the existing sub-division bylaw and engineering specifications
 - Approve projects a year in advance; allowing time to prepare drawings and tender packages prior to the start of the next fiscal year allowing for earlier tender postings
 - Continued focus of large projects
 - Increase funding to \$1.4M annually to maintain average pavement condition index (PCI) of 6/4; approach will reduce backlog over a 25-year period
 - Create a flexible 10-year capital plan

Questions:

- Can we commit to an annual construction plan without knowing what our future capital budgets are? – Suggestion to pilot the \$1.4M budget for a couple of years, gage the comfort level, then generally assume and plan for that figure in the future; adjust scope of projects as needed each year, based on current financial constraints
- How much has material increased? – 30 to 100% inflation over the last 2 years
- Why are you suggesting updates to the Subdivision By-law? Are there issues because of the by-law? – Last update was 2012; only development that happened since the review was Harbour Crossing Drive; developments from the late 70s and 80s did not follow the municipal specs; repairs now are twice the cost than if specs had been followed
- Can the presentation be shared with the public? – Yes, once the report is accepted by Council

MOTION: For Council at their next Regular Meeting to accept the Street Assessment Report as presented.

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-01-08-24-2737

b. Municipal Innovation Project

The CAO reported meeting with the Provincial Municipal Advisor and the other three similar sized Pictou County towns. They discussed opportunities to collaborate with the goal of cost savings and eliminating waste.

If each municipal unit puts in \$5,000, \$80,000 can be leveraged from the Province to complete a study and help with implementation.

MOTION: For Council at their next Regular meeting to approve \$5,000 out of the 2024-25 Operating Budget, toward a joint-study on ways Pictou, Stellarton, Trenton and Westville can cooperate and collaborate.

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-01-08-24-2738

c. 88 Dunromin Terrace

Douglas Robertson has purchased 88 Dunromin Terrace for \$12,000 with a commitment to build a single-family home and garden suite within 3 years or a 70% buyback.

d. Pool Rates

The new pool rates and reasoning for the increase were recapped.

e. Water Rates

The new proposed water rates and reasoning for the increase were recapped. The NS Utility and Review Board will hold a Public Hearing on April 8. Anyone from the public can speak to the increases at the Hearing or submit comments in writing. More details on how to speak or submit information can be found on Facebook, the Town website or the Advocate.

f. Saltwire Flyers

Some residents have expressed concern with waste associated with flyer distribution. They have tried to remove their names from the distribution list to no avail. Staff will contact Saltwire to see what the process is and to suggest alternate ways of sharing weekly deals.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

11. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:50 pm.

APPROVED

Dan Currie
Deputy Mayor

Kyle Slaunwhite
CAO