

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

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Dan Currie; Councillors Nadine LeBlanc, Melinda MacKenzie and Shawn McNamara

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

ABSENT: Iain MacIsaac, Public Works

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 one addition:
9e. Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Resolution

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-02-05-24-2745

4. PROCLAMATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chair acknowledged the Public Works staff for their efficient and hard work to make streets passable during the recent storm.

5. PRESENTATIONS

6. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

a. Fire Department

- Report was included in the Council package
- Question – any calls for assistance over the last four days during the storm? – no
- Comment that if residents are able to, clearing fire hydrants near their property would be helpful; staff and fire fighters will tend to this task as time permits

b. RCMP

- Report was included in the Council package
- Question on what “other calls” refers to in the report – Wellness Checks and General Questions

c. Community Development

- Report was included in the Council package
- Question – will activity be happening around Caladh Marquee again this year? – yes, but not to the same extent

d. Public Works

- Superintendent sent his regrets
- Report was included in the Council package
- Salt truck update – town is down to one salt truck; looking to purchase a salt hopper for the new one-ton truck to fill the gap until new salt truck is delivered
- Question – when will the larger piles of snow in the downtown and main arteries be removed? – contractors are lined up to work with Public Works in the coming days; remaining sidewalks are going to take longer
- Thanks to contractors who have been helping out including SW Weeks, Scott Stewart Excavating and Partners Construction
- Question – why can’t the snow be put into the harbour? – NS Environment no longer allows this; the Town would be fined

e. Parks and Recreation

- Report was included in Council package
- Winter Carnival – February 16-19; activities available on website and Facebook
- Question – Could the MPAL employee attend a future meeting? – plans are for him to make a presentation on the Physical Activity Strategy when it is complete

f. Variance

- Revenue is significantly higher than budgeted due to interest rates and advance payments on capital projects
- Anniversary celebrations received more grants than anticipated
- RCMP vacancies are filled so variance will shrink in the second half of the year
- \$311,000 surplus projection
- Tax Sale is February 14

7. APPOINTMENT COMMITTEES

a. Pictou Lobster Carnival – Councillor LeBlanc

- Working on entertainment lineup
- Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, February 17 from 8-11 am at the New Horizons

b. Fisheries Museum – Councillor LeBlanc

- Received accessibility grant for entrance and bathroom doors

- c. Police Advisory Board – Councillor LeBlanc
 - Staff Sgt MacKinnon can host a Q and A for interested businesses
- d. 144 CEF – Councillor McNamara
 - Request to present at a future meeting
- e. Habitat for Humanity – Councillor McNamara
 - Orientation with Chair tomorrow
- f. Pictou Recreation and Parks – Councillor MacKenzie
 - Snowfolk competition and coloring contest poster for Pictou Winter Carnival
- g. deCoste Centre – Councillor MacKenzie
 - Strategic planning session held online due to weather
 - Construction is on schedule; should be completed in late spring and then the process of preparing and moving in will begin
- h. Regional Library, McCulloch Genealogy Centre, Pictou County Partnership, Accessibility – Deputy Mayor Currie
 - Report included in package

8. RECOMMENDATIONS/REPORTS FROM PRIVATE SESSION

Four items were on the agenda. Three items related to the Tax Sale. The CAO received direction on the fourth property matter.

9. DISCUSSIONS

a. 2024-25 Capital Budget

The CAO reviewed the presentation on behalf of the Superintendent of Public Works. Three options were presented – Coleraine Street Renewal, targeted smaller renewal options, or a combination of the smaller options and streets identified in the 2024 Street Assessment Report Table 10 (having a Pavement Conditions Index of 10).

MOTION: For Council at their next Regular Meeting to approve the 2024-25 Capital Budget in the amount of \$20,309,044.

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-02-05-24-2746

It was noted that Council’s preference was leaning to many items in Option #2 with some of the streets listed in Table 10. Further discussion to be held at the Regular Council meeting.

b. 2024 Municipal Election

Josephine MacDonald was appointed Returning Officer in 2016 and remains appointed. Consensus was that she continues as Returning Officer for the Town of Pictou. A motion is not required.

In the previous election, the Town piggybacked off the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) tender for alternative voting – online and telephone. The pricing with their current contract has increased substantially. Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) is in the process of issuing an expression of interest that smaller municipalities can access. Pricing looks more reasonable.

Council consensus was to continue to explore alternative voting. More details will be shared as they are available.

c. Hector Heritage Society Partial Tax Exemption Policy

This policy allows for a portion of the property to be charged residential, namely the Gift Shop building. For a period of time, this building was being used for housing and is being charged residential taxes. However, it is once again being used for commercial purposes. This has triggered a review of the policy with the possible reapplication of commercial taxation. A question about whether the gift shop operates 12 months of the year was asked, as the commercial tax could be prorated.

Council tabled this discussion until staff could get more information.

d. Mutual Aid Agreement

A draft of an updated Mutual Aid Agreement was circulated for feedback. This agreement will replace the signed agreement from 1990. No issues.

e. Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Resolution

In order to apply to the Federal Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund a motion from Council is required committing the Town portion of the funds.

MOTION: For Council at their next Regular meeting to authorize the Mayor and CAO to enter into and execute an agreement with the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund for the purposes of the project titled Pictou Marina and Breakwater Expansion Project Number 1408; and further for Council to support and commit to provide its share of \$3,600,000 toward the \$6,000,000 project cost.

MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED

COC-02-05-24-2747

10. CORRESPONDENCE

11. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

APPROVED

Jim Ryan
Mayor

Kyle Slaunwhite
CAO