



Village of New Minas
Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting
Monday May 11, 2020 @ 10:00 AM
Meeting Held By Teleconference
New Minas, Nova Scotia

Commissioners Present:

- Dave Chaulk, Chair
- Cheryl Manzer, Commissioner
- Mary Munroe, Commissioner
- James Redmond, Commissioner

Staff Present:

- Gerard Hamilton, Operations Manager
- Ian Morrison, Clerk Treasurer/CAO
- John Ansara, Director of Recreation & Community Development
- Patrick Diotte, Archivist & Administrative Assistant

Others Present:

- Jim Winsor, District #8 Councillor

Call to Order:

Chair Dave Chaulk called the meeting to order at 10:01 am, welcoming those in attendance.

Approval of the Agenda:

THAT the Agenda for the May 11, 2020 regular Commission meeting be approved, with the addition of New Minas Secondary Plan Working Group.

M/Mary Munroe

S/James Redmond

CARRIED

Approval of the Minutes from Prior Meetings:

THAT the Minutes for the April 14, 2020 regular Commission meeting be approved as presented.

M/James Redmond

S/ Cheryl Manzer

CARRIED

Business Arising from Minutes:**New Minas Secondary Plan Working Group**

The Commission discussed the Request for Decision and Terms of Reference, both pertaining to the structure and governance of the New Minas Secondary Plan Working Group, discussed at the May 5 meeting of Municipal Council. In general, the Commission felt that, while planning issues are the jurisdiction of the Municipality, there existed a lack of communication and a lack of opportunity to comment on the aforementioned Request for Decision and Terms of Reference.

Furthermore, the members of the Commission felt that the process around this particular issue worked to undermine the confidence in the partnership between the Municipality and the Village, with regard to the Secondary Plan.

Jim Winsor, Councillor for District #8, acknowledged that the communication around this issue was problematic. However, Mr. Winsor assured the Commission that the Council is committed to this project and that the Request for Decision was designed to establish a compromise between concerns members of Council expressed regarding the diversity of the Working Group and the desire of the Commission to ratify the four citizen representatives it had appointed.

The Commission appreciated the desire of Council to create a workable compromise, but reiterated that compromise entails discussion, which, in this case, the Commission felt was lacking. The Commission identified that there existed a need to re-start the process and establish confidence that both parties can move forward in a collaborative way. The Commission, therefore, adopted a Motion crafted to establish dialogue with representatives of the Municipality to achieve this objective.

THAT the Clerk Treasurer/CAO be directed to setup an “in person” meeting involving representatives of the Municipality and representatives of the Village in an effort to clarify the ongoing issues regarding the New Minas Secondary Plan Working Group.

M/Cheryl Manzer

S/James Redmond

CARRIED

Presentations:

None

Committee Reports:

- Beautification Group – no report
- Clerk Treasurer/CAO – report included in package
- Finance – report included in package
- New Minas Water Commission – report included in package
- Operations – report included in package
- Recreation & Community Development – report included in package

- Recreation & Community Development Advisory Committee – no report
- Regional Sewer Committee – no report

THAT the reports for Clerk Treasurer/CAO, Finance, Operations, and Recreation & Community Development be accepted as presented.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

THAT the report for the New Minas Water Commission be accepted as presented.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

New Business:

Capital Budget Discussion

The Capital Budget for the fiscal year April 1, 2020-March 31, 2021 was presented for discussion. The budget includes \$784,329 in proposed spending and \$436,512 in projected grants and offsets. The total value of the Village contribution would be \$347,817. Some of the items included on the list are carryover items from a prior year and, in the case of the Flat Screen Project, its acceptance would nullify the need for the Data Projector Project. The ratification of the Capital Budget is contingent on the following factors: determination of the value of the cumulative surplus from the prior year and an assessment of possible impacts of non-payment of property taxes, due to COVID-19, on cash flow and reserves.

The list of projects included the following:

- Accessibility Reserve \$20,000
- Beautification Projects \$25,000
- Board Room Project \$7124
- Card Swipe Project \$5500
- Data Projector \$800
- Desktop Computer \$800
- Desktop Computer for Custodian \$800
- Dog Park \$16,000
- Exterior Light \$800
- Fitness Centre Expansion \$45,000
- Flat Screen Project \$9560
- Irrigation System for Crescent Park \$5500
- LMCC Road Entry Widening & Lighting \$2000
- Plate Temper (50%) \$1250
- Railing for Perrier Drive & Prospect Road \$15,000
- Railing for Prospect Road \$5000
- Ride-On Mower \$35,000

- Secondary Planning Process-Phase #2 \$187,945
- Shingle Project \$20,000
- Sidewalk – Lockhart Drive \$50,000
- Smallwares \$750
- Tablets for Commissionaires \$3500
- Tennis Court Refurbishment \$30,000
- Trail Access Point \$10,000
- Vehicle Replacement \$50,000
- Village Sidewalk Program \$225,000
- Water Fountains \$10,000
- Wireless Thermostat & Sensor \$2000

Total: \$784,329

Trade-ins on equipment: \$13,000

Grants & Gas Tax Funding: \$423,512

Net Village Contribution: \$347,817

Discussion ensued on the list of proposed projects. The Clerk Treasurer/CAO was directed to enquire whether the Municipality would contribute to any of the proposed sidewalk projects. The second draft of the Capital Budget will be presented at the June meeting of the Village Commission.

Property Taxes

The Clerk Treasurer/CAO presented a process, for consideration of the Commission, on a method to administer payment of property taxes for residents and businesses, once the tax invoices are issued in June. The opportunity exists to provide ratepayers that may be experiencing hardship as a result of the economic and health conditions created by COVID-19 with a method to delay their payment of taxes under a system organized by the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS), the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NFSM), and the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA). In addition, the opportunity exists for the Village to obtain a low-interest loan from Municipal Finance Corporation, for the purposes of bridge financing created by the absence of the payment of taxes, at a rate of approximately 1.1% to 1.35%.

By consensus the Commission provided direction, as follows. The Clerk Treasurer/CAO will develop a policy to provide short-term relief for ratepayers, according to the recommendations crafted by AMANS NFSM, and DMA. The policy will be presented for ratification at the June meeting of the Village Commission and, if approved, be communicated to ratepayers with a deadline to apply for participation in the relief program. Once applications are received, the Clerk Treasurer/CAO will identify an estimated amount of the shortfall due to non-payment of taxes. Once that amount is determined, the Village Commission will assess the need for bridge financing.

Correspondence:

None.

Public Discussion Period:

Mr. Winsor advised the Commission that the Council is currently engaged with the Province in a process to repair and pave a large number of "J Class" roads within the Municipality. As well, the Municipality is assessing its operating budget to determine the impact of non-payment of property taxes by ratepayers. At present, the position of the Council is that assistance programs generated by the federal and/or provincial governments would be a more effective response.

Adjournment:**M/James Redmond**

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 11:45 am.