



Village of New Minas
Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting
Monday June 8, 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:

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

Others Present:

- Jason Haughn, Municipal Advisor, Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing

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 June 8, 2020 regular Commission meeting be approved, with the addition of Correspondence from Lawrence Parker, under Correspondence.

M/Mary Munroe

S/James Redmond

CARRIED

Approval of the Minutes from Prior Meetings:

THAT the Minutes for the May 11, 2020 regular Commission meeting be approved as presented.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

Business Arising from Minutes:

None

Presentations:**Admin Assistant & Archiving Project**

Patrick Diotte, Acadia Co-op student, is employed for the summer as the Admin & Archiving Assistant. Mr. Diotte presented to the Commission an outline of his summer activities. Mr. Diotte provided an overview of the archiving project, which will include an analysis of files to be retained and files to be destroyed, in accordance with Village policy. In addition, Mr. Diotte identified some documentation that can be destroyed at this time. In addition to these tasks, Mr. Diotte is working on the organization of the pending civic election.

THAT in accordance with Section 3 of the Records Management & Document Destruction Policy, the following documents be disposed of by way of the document destruction company contracted by the Village

- Walk Sheets and Billing Audits 2011-2017 (10 boxes)
Includes lists of working copies, work orders, meter changes, and adjustments. Also
Includes dog tag registration forms from 2010-2011;
- Rec files 2009-2013 (1 box)
Includes camp information and payment receipts for 2009-2013 March break camps;
- Payroll 2010-2013 (10 binders).

Furthermore, this Motion will serve as an affidavit from the Clerk Treasurer/Chief Administrative Officer that the above documents have been inspected and there is no information of value contained within.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

Property Tax Financing Program

The Clerk Treasurer introduced the draft policy proposal to establish a Property Tax Financing Program Policy for the Village. The draft policy, is based on a policy draft generated by the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia in conjunction with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing, and the Municipal Finance Corporation. The draft has been reviewed by the legal counsel for the Village, with comments by legal counsel having been incorporated into the draft. The policy draft was presented for discussion.

The policy draft provides a process to administer payment of property taxes for residents and businesses, once the tax invoices are issued in June. This provides 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. 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, once the impact of COVID-19 on ratepayers is assessed.

Mr. Haughn provided background on the creation of the program designed to backstop the policy. The program is a response to concerns raised by municipalities that ratepayers may be unable to meet their tax obligations. The government has worked with stakeholders to establish a \$380 million bridge loan program to be administered through the Municipal Finance Corporation. The program was developed within the confines of the Municipal Government Act and, at the same time, offers municipal units some flexibility in structuring the program. The steps in the process are as follows:

- Approve a policy to govern the program
- Draft and approve a Resolution authorizing an operating loan, to be adopted by Commission
- Submit the necessary Schedules to the Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing
- Obtain a guarantee resolution from the Municipality
- Obtain approval from the Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing
- Obtain approval from the Board of the Municipal Finance Corporation
- Sign an agreement with the Municipal Finance Corporation

No meeting of the electors is required and the approval process is designed to be expedient. Mr. Haughn, in responding to questions about the viability of the loan request, commented that the sustainability of the request must be supported by evidence of the financial state of the municipal unit. Furthermore, the funding available was based on a survey of all municipal units in the province, estimating the possible effect of non-payment of property taxes on operations. At this point, the expectation is that there is ample money in the fund to serve the projected need.

The Commission directed the Clerk Treasurer/CAO to include a provision for an appeal mechanism for a property that may be listed as an exclusion and that a revised draft should be presented for discussion and ratification at the July meeting of the Commission. In the meantime, property tax invoices will have been released and this should provide valuable information in terms of assessing the scope of the problem.

Committee Reports:

- Beautification Group – report included in package
- 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 – report included in package

The Chair enquired about the incorporation of signage into the mandate of the Beautification Group, which the Commission thought was a good idea. In addition, it was opined that the cost of signage should be a separate capital item from the \$25,000 allotment being considered as

the capital investment for beautification initiatives in 2020-2021, due primarily to the cost of signage.

Ms. Munroe also enquired about the odour that was reported last year emanating out of the sewage treatment facility. While some initiatives have been undertaken to limit the odour this year, Mr. Redmond opined that there is a possibility of inclement smell again this spring and summer. The Commission was hopeful, however, that the steps taken this past year will mitigate the smell.

THAT the reports for Beautification Group, 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 Regional Sewer Committee 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/Cheryl Manzer

CARRIED

New Business:

Election Timetable

The matter of the election timetable was presented. A directive was issued by the Minister for the Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing on May 20 which, effectively, precludes holding the Annual General Meeting and the election while the state of emergency due to COVID-19 exists. The Annual General Meeting must, however, be held within 90 days of the removal of the state of emergency. At present, the state of emergency is scheduled to expire on June 14.

The Clerk Treasurer/CAO proposed that the election timetable, which will include a minimum two-week notification of the closure of the Nomination Period, should commence immediately once the state of emergency is lifted. The Commission agreed that this was a prudent decision, especially since the prospect of a second wave of the pandemic could occur and the Village should move ahead with its election at the earliest possible opportunity. Therefore, should the state of emergency be lifted on June 14, the timetable will be as follows:

- Nomination Period: Closes June 30
- Advance Polling Dates: July 6-10 and July 13-17
- Annual General Meeting: July 21
- Election Day: July 22

The Clerk Treasurer/CAO was directed to plan for release of the newsletter after nominations close and all nominated candidates shall be invited to provide a submission.

Capital Budget Discussion

The Clerk Treasurer/CAO proposed that Commission consider approval of the nine projects that qualify for Gas Tax proceeds. This would be intended to ensure that they comply with the timeline for submission of such projects. These projects have a value of \$390,000, however, the capital contribution from the Village would be \$129,000. The remainder of the Capital Budget can be discussed and/or ratified at the July meeting.

The list of projects included the following:

- Dog Park \$16,000
- Fitness Centre Expansion \$45,000
- LMCC Road Entry Widening & Lighting \$2000
- Sidewalk – Lockhart Drive \$50,000
- Tennis Court Refurbishment \$30,000
- Trail Access Point \$10,000
- Village Sidewalk Program \$225,000
- Water Fountains \$10,000
- Wireless Thermostat & Sensor \$2000

Total: \$390,000

Gas Tax Funding: \$261,000

Net Village Contribution: \$129,000

THAT the capital projects that quality for Gas Tax proceeds be accepted as presented and comprise part of the Capital Budget for 2020-2021.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

Correspondence:

Letter from Lawrence Parker

Lawrence Parker, citizen of New Minas, is interested in organizing a peaceful march aimed at promotion of racial equality. Similar marches are being organized in municipalities around the globe. Mr. Parker plans on engaging several community organizations, including the RCMP, in his organizational efforts. The planned details are as follows:

Friday June 19 @ 7 pm

- Commence at Mark's Work Wearhouse parking lot
- Proceed either to LMCC or Lockhart-Ryan Park
- Masks required
- Social distancing required

- 8 minutes of silence to be observed
- Entertainment by Shoulder to Shoulder (band)
- Spoken work component

The Commission felt that the initiative was a positive endeavor. The Village and its resources can be utilized to advise on the organization of the event, particularly in terms of obtaining the necessary permission, but the organization of the march should be a citizen-driven initiative. The Clerk Treasurer/CAO and staff were directed to research any insurance issues associated with the occurrence of the march on Village property and any other issues associated with its organization.

Public Discussion Period:

None.

Adjournment:

M/Mary Munroe

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 11:15 am.