



Village of New Minas
Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting
Monday July 13, 2020 @ 2:30 PM
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
- Patrick Diotte, Archivist & Administrative Assistant

Others Present:

- Jim Winsor, District #8 Councillor

Call to Order:

Chair Dave Chaulk called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm, welcoming those in attendance.

Approval of the Agenda:

THAT the Agenda for the July 13, 2020 regular Commission meeting be approved, as presented.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

Approval of the Minutes from Prior Meetings:

THAT the Minutes for the June 8, 2020 regular Commission meeting be approved as presented.

M/Cheryl Manzer

S/James Redmond

CARRIED

Business Arising from Minutes:

None

Presentations:

None

Committee Reports:

- Beautification Group – 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

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/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

New Business:

Financial Statements & Management Letter

The Village Commission recently received the audited Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2020, and the corresponding Management Letter, both as prepared by Morris Brewster Lake. A teleconference to discuss the Financial Statements was held on July 9, 2020, in which Lawrence Lake, auditor, presented these statements to the Village Commission, acting as the Audit Committee.

The Clerk Treasurer/CAO asked the Village Commission to accept the Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2020 as well as the Response to the Management Letter.

THAT the Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2020 be accepted as presented and that the Financial Statements shall be presented to the electors at the next Annual General Meeting.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

The Chair enquired whether the audit firm was satisfied with the responses issued in the Response Letter by the Village and the Clerk Treasurer/CAO confirmed that this was the case.

THAT the Response to the Management Letter be accepted as presented.

M/James Redmond

S/Mary Munroe

CARRIED

Capital Budget

Upon receipt of the Financial Statements, which demonstrate the strong financial position of the Village, the Clerk Treasurer/CAO proposed that the Commission consider approval of the 16 projects. These projects have a value of \$385,469 and will complete the Capital Budget for the 2020-2021 year.

THAT the capital projects listed be accepted as presented and comprise part of the Capital Budget for 2020-2021:

- Tablets for Commissioners \$3,500
- Desktop Computer \$800
- Secondary Planning Process (Phase #2) \$187,945
- Accessibility Reserve \$20,000
- Board Room Project \$7,124
- Data Projector \$800
- Exterior Light (LMCC) \$800
- Smallwares \$750
- Beautification Project including Highway Sign \$32,000
- Irrigation System (Crescent Park) \$5,500
- Ride On Mower \$35,000
- Plate Temper @ 50% \$1,250
- Railing-Perrier Drive/Prospect Road \$15,000
- Railing-Prospect Road \$5,000
- Shingle Project \$20,000
- Vehicle Replacement \$50,000

Total: \$385,469

External Funding/Offsets \$176,512

Net Village Contribution: \$208,957

M/Mary Munroe

S/James Redmond

CARRIED

Drainage – Perrier Drive & Prospect Road

Ms. Munroe raised concerns about ongoing flooding in the Perrier Drive and Prospect Road areas and, in particular, with the culvert which is underneath Prospect Road at its intersection with Perrier Drive.

In general, the Commission discussed concern around several aspects of drainage, which has been observed to be compromised by recent heavy rains. Also observed is the effect on infrastructure which largely belongs to Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR). An issue has also been apparent with drainage on Highland Avenue. At present, TIR does not appear to have the resources to deal with these concerns in a timely manner. Therefore, the Commission felt it was appropriate to direct a letter, outlining their concerns, to the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kings South, with a copy being supplied to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. The Clerk Treasurer/CAO was directed to draft a letter, outlining concerns, for the review of the Commission.

In the interim, the Commission directed the Clerk Treasurer/CAO to authorize Village staff to remove the debris and sand that has collected and clogged many of the drain covers located on streets within the Village prior to the next heavy rainfall.

Property Tax Financing Plan

The Clerk Treasurer introduced the second draft of the 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 draft also incorporates the suggestions raised by the Commission when it was initially presented at the June 8 meeting. The core suggestion is an allowance for residential property owners in a position of hardship because their tenants cannot pay rent to them.

The Clerk Treasurer/CAO reported the property tax invoices have been issued. Preliminary analysis of other units within Nova Scotia indicates that municipal units have not seen a large uptake on their property tax financing plans. For example, Amherst, Bridgewater, Mahone Bay, Municipality of Shelburne, Oxford, and Stewiacke have each received two or fewer applications for tax relief. The Municipality of East Hants has received seven applications for tax relief. The Municipality of Kings has received payment from 65% of residential ratepayers and 47% of commercial ratepayers for its July 31 payment deadline.

In the meantime, property tax invoices for the Village have been issued and the next several weeks should provide valuable information in terms of assessing the scope of the problem. Therefore, the Clerk Treasurer/CAO recommended deferring a decision on the Property Tax Financing Plan until more data to support such a policy is collected.

Correspondence:

Ms. Munroe advised that she has written to the Board of the Association of Nova Scotia Villages enquiring whether the planned annual conference, which the Village of New Minas has been designated to host, will be occurring in September or will it be cancelled or postponed due to concerns around COVID-19. She will advise the Commission once a response has been received.

Public Discussion Period:

Mr. Winsor advised that the Municipality has approved the appointment of Michelle Coleman, Temma Frecker, and Paul Gates to the Working Group for the New Minas Secondary Plan. Furthermore, Mr. Winsor will be acting in the capacity as Chairperson of the Working Group and would like to assemble a meeting involving the supporting staff from the Municipality and Village, as well as representatives of Upland Planning & Design, as soon as possible.

Mr. Winsor also asked if he could receive a copy of any correspondence which might be issued discussing the state of drainage and drainage issues in the Village. This would be intended to coordinate his work on this file. The Chair confirmed this would be possible.

Mr. Winsor also advised the Commission that TIR should be issuing tender documents specifying street paving in the near future. Several streets in New Minas are being proposed for paving in this budget cycle.

Adjournment:**M/James Redmond**

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 3:15 pm.