

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

A Committee of the Whole Meeting was held Tuesday, December 6th, 2016 at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administrative Centre, 285 Beech Hill Road, Antigonish NS.

Present were: Warden Russell Boucher, Chair
 Deputy Warden Owen McCarron
 Councillor Mary MacLellan
 Councillor Donnie MacDonald
 Councillor Hughie Stewart
 Councillor Vaughan Chisholm
 Councillor Rémi Deveau
 Councillor John Dunbar
 Councillor Gary Mattie
 Councillor Bill MacFarlane
 Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer
 Beth Schumacher, Deputy Municipal Clerk
 John Bain, Director, Eastern District Planning Commission
 Adam Rodger, Municipal Solicitor

Gallery: Jamie Chisholm, TIR
 Robert (Gussie) MacInnis, TIR
 Gerald Teasdale, Resident
 Charlie Lowe, Resident

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden Boucher, at 6:07pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Deputy Warden McCarron requested that the following items be added to the agenda:

- Antigonish Care Van
- Antigonish Early Childhood Intervention

Moved by Councillor MacLellan and seconded by Councillor Deveau that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Deputy Warden McCarron that the Committee of the Whole minutes of November 15, 2016 be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL PRESENTATION

Jamie Chisholm, the Area Manager for Eastern District Operations (Antigonish-Guysborough) and Robert (Gussie) MacInnis provided members of the Committee with a brief overview of some of the work that

had been done in the County over the summer construction and maintenance season. Some of these items included; pavement of 337, shoulders on 245, ditching, hot patch in various locations, culvert installations and reconstructions, and roadside vegetation management. Sections of Cloverville Road and Taylor's Road have been rebuilt, and a culvert on the Summerside-Bayfield Road represented a large project for the department.

For the winter, an additional plow is being brought in from Sydney to be added to the local rotation due to the new highway now being open. A new plow truck is included in the capital plan for purchase next year. Further for this winter, the local office is looking at placing more emphasis on anti-icing efforts. As well, the region's public call-in line is being transferred to a call centre in Sydney, which will centralize that information and provide the local office with a system of formally tracking calls and requests. Doing this will provide staff in the local office with more time to undertake their assigned duties.

Regarding Access Management on old Highway 104 (now Trunk 4), no changes are proposed to the existing 2008 Access Management Guidelines, and this stretch is staying "restricted access", with accesses proposed requiring TIR/Minister approval. A copy of these Access Management Guidelines was left for distribution to the Committee.

With respect to the intersection at Trunk 4 and Beech Hill Road, a traffic count was done to determine whether volumes warranted a signalized intersection now that Trunk 4 is open through. Levels did not meet signalized warrants now, but counts will be done in the future if further development in the area takes place. Nothing else is anticipated to be done with this intersection now.

Councillor MacFarlane asked a question about the speed limit along the stretch of Trunk 4, and whether consideration would be given to keeping the speed 70km/h for the full stretch instead of varying as it does now. Mr. Chisholm indicated that he would pass that suggestion along.

Councillor Stewart asked whether there were any complaints following the reconfiguration of the intersection at Market Street and Trunk 4. Mr. Chisholm noted that there were some calls during the first few days after the change, but that drivers were adjusting that TIR was still working on signal timing there.

Deputy Warden McCarron enquired as to whether alternative wording might be considered for the signage at the Trunk 4/Beech Hill intersection, where reference is made to "through" traffic not stopping - some drivers may believe that they do not have to stop if they are proceeding through the intersection instead of Trunk 4 traffic having the right-of-way. Mr. Chisholm noted that the signage team had been exploring options for wording, and would continue to develop/explore options for this specific intersection. Deputy Warden McCarron further asked for clarification on shift change times for the local department; Mr. Chisholm responded that shifts for drivers changed at 4am and 4pm, which had been moved up from a 5am/5pm changeover in an effort to avoid shift changes happening during rush hours.

Councillor Mattie asked whether any of the traffic movements permitted at the Trunk 4 / Beech Hill intersection had changed from what was permitted before the closure. Mr. Chisholm replied that nothing there was new (movements permitted), but that the public was adjusting following that intersection being different for so many years.

Regarding the intersection of Trunk 4 and Trunk 7, Mr. Chisholm identified that design staff had looked into the feasibility of adding a temporary right turn lane to ease congestion, but found that the prices that came back for the proposal were too high to justify for a temporary use. The local department was waiting for further analysis and design work to be done for the best solution at this intersection during the winter.

Deputy Warden McCarron asked Mr. Chisholm for some budget trend information, understanding that local budgets are being decreased while roads numbers remain consistent, to inform Committee/Council as potential lobbyists on behalf of their constituents. Mr. Chisholm brought to their attention a new program for gravel roads, for their reconstruction, that the department is looking to bring out.

Councillor Stewart asked about the chip seal on Ohio Road. Mr. Chisholm noted that the third coat of chip seal is applied in the third year, to accommodate some settling of the previous coats, and that the road in question was likely due for that this upcoming year.

Councillor MacDonald asked about the winter readiness of the local office in terms of equipment and staff. With the exception of the additional plow on its way down from Sydney, the local office was ready to go should a snow event happen.

Councillor Deveau asked whether there was any more information about the concerns raised with the turns off of Highway 104 onto Dagger Woods Road. Signs have been installed, and NS Power was on the site within the last week to explore installation options for a flashing amber light. No plans were in the works yet for a dedicated turning lane for this road.

DANGEROUS AND UNSIGHTLY

Mr. Bain introduced his report, which was included in the agenda package, outlining the circumstances leading to this particular discussion. The property in question has been the subject of previous orders by the Municipality, with complaints going back to 2008. In this past year, a derelict vehicle was removed from the property and a dilapidated shed was demolished. Concerns regarding the condition of the interior of the building, including its occupation by rats that have begun to spread to adjacent homes, resulted in this current report.

Mr. Bain has been working with the Municipality's Solicitor to ensure that the methods and measures used to gain entry to the structure to evaluate whether its condition warrants formal orders under the Dangerous and Unsightly. The advice provided has indicated that, if the Municipality provides 24 hours of notice that is not then denied by the property owner, access could be gained by:

- Utilizing the services of a locksmith to gain entry; or,
- Looking into the building via the windows to determine interior condition of the structure and contents, which would be likely if it appears that the interior condition is not safe for entry.

The local deputy Fire Marshall and Mr. Bain would be on site when the Property Standards Administrator goes to enter the building. Page four of the staff report provided to the Committee outlines the options of Orders that could be issued; in this case, an order to make the building hygienic is likely.

Councillor MacLellan asked whether attempts have been made to speak with the property owner. Mr. Bain and Mr. Horne both indicated that they had been in touch with the property owner in the past, but had not been able to reach the owner in recent weeks.

Councillor Chisholm asked about a dumpster that appeared to be on site. That dumpster has been on site since the notice regarding the derelict vehicle was issued earlier this year. Mr. Horne noted that, when the previous notices had been issued, he had included a letter identifying concerns about the interior condition of the building.

Mr. Rodgers provided the Committee with a brief overview of timelines regarding notices and when work might be possible on the property, depending on whether access was denied. Councillor MacDonald asked whether affidavits from neighbours might be helpful, which Mr. Rodgers confirmed would be.

Moved by Councillor MacFarlane and seconded by Councillor Dunbar that the Committee permit members of the gallery to speak to the matter before the Committee. Motion carried.

Mr. Gerald Teasdale, a neighbour of the property in question, provided some background on his recent discovery and issues with rats following the demolition of the shed at the adjacent property that was subject to a D&U order earlier this year. He has shot and/or trapped 13 rats since earlier in the fall, and has had a carpenter and exterminator to attend to his property to repair his home and remove rats from it. The neighbours need Council's help with the D&U property; neighbours have been neighbourly and tried to help by cutting grass and offering help, but the interior of the building is in very bad condition, and now adjacent properties are being affected by rats that are suspected to be coming from it.

Mr. Charlie Lowe, who is also a neighbour to the property in question, noted that his home has not had rats inside due to its stucco construction. He first remembered seeing a pest control truck on the subject property eight or nine years ago around the time that the property owner moved out of the house. He did come across some rats on his property, but undertook pest control to get rid of them.

Councillor Stewart asked whether Mr. Bain had been to the subject property. Mr. Bain noted that he had been there numerous times, and would be moving on the issue as quickly as possible.

Councillor MacFarlane indicated that he wanted to do something with funds from his Special District Grant to address the pest issue on the D&U property that was now having an adverse effect on the adjacent properties. Some discussion took place about timing and required notices, and both Mr. Teasdale and Mr. Lowe were thanked for coming to speak to the Committee.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Deveau that the Committee's consideration of this item be tabled to a future meeting. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING REQUEST FROM ST. MARTHA'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Mr. Horne asked the Committee whether they would like to fulfill the request from the St. Martha's Hospital Foundation, and if so, requested that the Committee provide staff with direction regarding whether the funds for the grant come from the 4% (of tax revenue for general municipal purpose minus mandatory contributions) cap noted in the Municipality's Community Partnership Grant Policy, or if the funds should come from elsewhere in the budget. While the Committee was unanimous in their support for the Foundation request, there was some discussion about the best way to fund the grant without significantly impacting other grant requests. Members of the Committee asked whether the "pot" that the funds come from could be determined at a later date. Mr. Horne indicated that this was possible, but that the Committee should decide before the grant process starts in the spring.

Moved by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Deveau that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve request made by the St. Martha's Hospital Foundation to provide \$500,000.00 over ten (10) years, in the amount of \$50,000.00 each year. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF A MUNICIPAL AUDIT COMMITTEE

Mr. Horne introduced a request for decision from staff, included in the agenda package, outlining the requirement of Section 44 of the Municipal Government Act for municipality to formally establish a Municipal Audit Committee. The Committee of the Whole, and previously the Finance Committee, had served this role without a formal protocol. Staff is looking for direction from the Committee of the Whole as to whether they would prefer to see a separate Audit Committee established, or if the Committee of the Whole policy should be amended to include this role in their description.

The Committee asked Mr. Horne a number of questions for clarification, and decided that the option of using the Committee of the Whole as the Municipal Audit Committee due to the interest of most members of the Committee is learning more and being involved in the audit process.

Moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Deputy Warden McCarron that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council establish the Committee of the Whole as the Audit Committee and direct staff to draft amendments to the Committee of the Whole policy reflective of best practices. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF JOINT COUNCIL COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mr. Horne outlined that the edits that had been suggested by the Committee during their previous review of this document have been incorporated, and the Terms as Reference as now proposed were approved by the Town's Council at their last meeting. The Committee asked about other joint community committees in the province, and how they compare to what the Town and County are doing.

Moved by Councillor MacFarlane and seconded by Councillor Stewart that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the Joint Council Committee Terms of Reference as proposed. Motion carried.

CLERK'S MEMO

Mr. Horne provided a brief overview of the items listed in the Clerk's memo section found in the agenda package.

ANTIGONISH CARE VAN

Deputy Warden McCarron noted that the Antigonish Senior's Care Van has historically received \$1000 of funding from the Municipality, but had missed the funding this past spring because of a staff illness. The organization has requested that the Municipality consider providing the Care Van with \$1000 of funding.

Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor MacDonald that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council provide a grant of \$1000 to the Antigonish Senior's Care Van. Motion carried.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

Deputy Warden McCarron had been contacted by the Antigonish Early Childhood Intervention Program, who noted that, in the past, the Municipality had provided up to \$2500 to this organization but in this past round of grants, they had not received anything. Deputy Warden McCarron asked that staff look into the status of any application or letter from this organization, and made a motion that they be provided with any funding requested, up to a maximum of \$2500.

Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor Deveau that the Committee recommends that Municipal Council provide a grant up to a maximum amount of \$2500 to the Antigonish Early Childhood Intervention Program. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Deputy Warden McCarron and seconded by Councillor MacFarlane that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 8:10pm. Motion carried.

Warden Russell Boucher

Glenn Horne, Municipal Clerk/Treasurer