

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday January 23, 2024, following Asset Management Committee
Council Chambers
Municipal Administration Building
285 Beech Hill Road
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

Present were: Warden Owen McCarron
 Deputy Warden Bill MacFarlane
 Councillor Mary MacLellan
 Councillor Donnie MacDonald
 Councillor Hugh Stewart
 Councillor Shawn Brophy
 Councillor Remi Deveau
 Councillor John Dunbar
 Councillor Gary Mattie
 Councillor Harris McNamara

Regrets: None

Staff Present: Glenn Horne, CAO
 Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk
 Shirlyn Donovan, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
 Tammy Feltmate, Director of Sustainability

Others Present: Gallery

Call to Order – Chairman, Warden Owen McCarron

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden McCarron, at 6:39pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden McCarron called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. A request was made to add an item regarding an amendment to the Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organization Policy to reflect a change in ownership for the Maryvale School Hall.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Approval of January 9, 2024 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden McCarron called for any errors or omissions in the Committee of the Whole minutes of January 9, 2024. Councillor McNamara asked that the minutes reflect that he raised opposition to a marketing by-law on behalf of Airbnb operators in his district.

Moved and Seconded

That the minutes of January 9, 2024 be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Delegations

There were no delegations.

Continuing Business

Review of the Antigonish Tourism Strategy

Mrs. Donovan presented the strategy, which had been presented at the September 2023 Joint Council meeting, to provide a chance to reintroduce the strategy and outline the five strategic directions that came out of the development of that plan. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions.

Questions were asked about how the consultation package to send to vendors is being modified based on the discussion at the previous committee meeting, and what the long-term benefit will be of the proposed levy discussed at the previous meeting. Concerns raised by operators in the community were raised by several councillors. Questions were raised about the timing of the by-law coming forward for first reading, and clarification about hotels and motels in the County. A question was asked about whether there would be public consultation as part of the consideration of a levy by-law. Staff noted that the consultation package has been revised based on the feedback received by the committee at the last meeting and will be sent to the operators following tonight's discussion.

A question was asked at whether a set rate could be utilized instead of a percentage, and Mr. Horne noted that the legislation provided for a percentage to be charged. A comment was shared about how events over the summer months often clustered on the same weekends, with other weekends having nothing scheduled, and perhaps something could be done to coordinate spreading those events out. Concerns heard from operators regarding the additional tax being charged to their clients, the additional administrative burden for them, and the shortage of accommodations in the community

were shared. Councillors shared that they heard from operators that many are doing their own marketing, and don't feel that an additional marketing body is required.

A question was asked about whether the levy was necessary to implement the tourism strategy, and how a strategy might help to support tourism in the community without a levy. Feedback from tourists visiting facilities in the community and the efforts that community groups running tourist sites were shared. Ensuring that a strategy supports the tourism sector in the community, for all types of tourists, was expressed as being important even if the 3% levy is not pursued.

A question of clarification about how the proposed levy is being explained to operators as part of the consultation package was asked. There is an interest in hearing the responses of operators in the sector.

Mrs. Donovan was thanked for her work on the Tourism Strategy.

Interest in Attending the FCM Conference in Calgary, June 6-9 2024

Mr. Horne asked any Councillors who are interested in attending FCM in Calgary this year to please let staff know. Staff was asked to confirm who attended the FCM conference, where two of the past three FCM conferences were cancelled due to Covid-19. Several members of Council expressed an interest in attending. A concern was raised about a large delegation of Councillors attending. Mr. Horne noted that the number of delegates attending would ultimately be a decision of Council.

New Business

Annual Community Partnership Grant Allocation

Mrs. Donovan shared that in the next few weeks, applications for the Community Partnership Grants will be opening. An estimation of the amount of funds available in the budget, based on the tax rate from years past, was shared for information.

Community Events

- Councillor McNamara shared that there is a concert coming up in Havre Boucher. He also shared that the Aulds Cove Fire Department used their generator during a recent power outage, and it worked well. On February 2nd, residents are encouraged to wear red in memory of Teddie DeCoste and to support those with CHD.
- Councillor Deveau shared that the Carnivale in Pomquet will take place in February.
- Councillor Mattie shared some updates following discussions with A Roof Over Their Head following their announcement about an emergency shelter being set up at the Monastery.

- Warden McCarron shared that Chase the Act has started in St. Andrews and is building. It takes place every Thursday night from 7-9pm. Pickleball takes place at the school in St. Andrews.

Reports from Inter-Municipal Boards, Committees, and Commissions

Antigonish Heritage Museum Board

- Board last met on January 8th and will be meeting on February 5th. Staff is working with the Heritage Museum Board to facilitate new resident appointments from the County to fill several vacancies.

Antigonish Arena Association

- A valve in the sprinkler system at the arena failed this past weekend, and cause some flooding damage to the equipment room, locker room below it, and throughout the building. The arena staff and many parents at the building on Sunday expedited cleaning and no ice time was missed due to their assistance. Repair work and system upgrades are being planned.

Eastern District Planning Commission

- The Board met earlier in the month.

Eastern Regional Solid Waste Management Committee

- The new truck arrived in December. EPR update: all five municipalities have opted in, and details are expected in a future update. On January 22nd Ashley Lansley has joined the ERSWM team as a Regional Educator. The next Board meeting is planned to take place on the February 29th.

Pictou Antigonish Regional Library

- A meeting is planned for Thursday November 25th.

RK MacDonald Nursing Home

- The Board is meeting on Thursday January 25th.

County Paqtnkek Joint Steering Committee

- Nothing to report. Warden McCarron read through the results from the recent election at Paqtnkek and asked that letters of congratulations be sent to the Chief and each member of Council from Municipal Council.

Consolidation Steering Committee

- Nothing to report.

Community Navigation and Physician Retention Services Association

- Nothing to report.

Additions to the Agenda

Amendment to the Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organization Policy to reflect a change in ownership for the Maryvale School Hall

Councillor MacLellan shared that the property listed as the school (hall) in Maryvale in the Tax Exemption for Non-Profit organizations policy, has changed ownership to a new non-profit organization. The listing in the policy will need to be updated to reflect this change.

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee recommends that Municipal Council amends Part 1 of the Tax Exemption for Non-Profit Organization Policy to change the name listed for AAN00695491 from the Catholic Episcopal Corp of Antigonish to Maryvale Schoolhouse Hall Society.

Motion Carried

In-Camera Items

Moved and Seconded

That the Committee of the Whole adjourn to an in-camera session to discuss Litigation and Personnel Matters at 7:43 pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That the in-camera session adjourns at 7:57 pm.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends to Municipal Council that the CAO be authorized to sign the Housing Accelerator Fund Contribution Agreement with Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation.

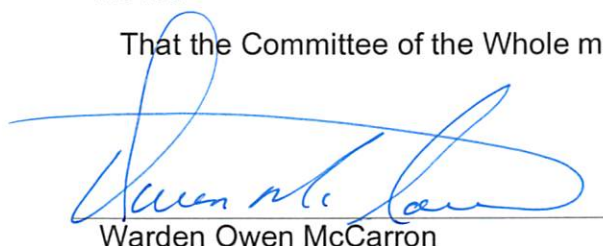
Motion Carried

Adjournment

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 7:58pm.

Motion Carried



Warden Owen McCarron



Glenn Horne, CAO