

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA

Tuesday, June 11, 2024, 6:30pm
Council Chambers
Municipal Administration Building
285 Beech Hill Road
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

1. Call to Order – Chair, Warden Owen McCarron
2. In-Camera Items
 - a. Personnel Matters
 - b. Personnel Matters
 - c. Advice Eligible for Solicitor-Client Privilege
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of May 29, 2024 Committee of the Whole Minutes
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Delegations
 - a. There are no scheduled delegations.
7. Continuing Business
 - a. Concerns regarding new streetlights and visibility on Highway 104
8. New Business
 - a. Engage Nova Scotia Quality of Life Survey Funding Request
9. Community Events

This item provides Councillors with an opportunity to briefly bring to the attention of Council events that are taking place in their communities.
10. Additions to the Agenda
11. Adjournment

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES CHART (amended October 2022)

COUNCIL PRIORITIES	
<p><u>NOW</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WATER UTILITY DEVELOPMENT <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expansion & Renew Aging Infrastructure b. Securing Long-Term Source Water c. Long-Term Financial Plan 2. DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT AN EVENTS & TOURISM PLAN 3. CONNECTIVITY – CELLULAR AND BROADBAND 4. RENEWABLE ENERGY 5. NEXT GEN SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 	
<p><u>NEXT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN: Update & Implementation • ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN: Implementation • COMMUNITY HUBS: Plan & Implementation 	<p><u>ADVOCACY/PARTNERSHIPS</u></p> <p><i>Connectivity Funding (Prov & Feds)</i> <i>TIR Service Provision (Prov)</i> <i>Long-Term Care Facility Funding (Prov)</i> <i>Aging In Place Program (Prov)</i> <i>Accessible/Affordable Housing</i></p>
ADMINISTRATION	FINANCE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CELLULAR & BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY 2. EVENTS & TOURISM 3. ASSET MANAGEMENT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING: Plan & Implementation - Ongoing
PUBLIC WORKS	RECREATION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WATER UTILITY DEVELOPMENT 2. NEXT GEN SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION 2. COMMUNITY HUBS
SUSTAINABILITY	PLANNING
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RENEWABLE ENERGY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCC • COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MANDATORY MINIMUM PLANNING: Development & Implementation 2. EASTERN ANTIGONISH PLANNING STRATEGY & BYLAW: Complete Review

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Wednesday May 29, 2024, 5:30pm
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 Shawn Brophy
Councillor Remi Deveau
Councillor John Dunbar
Councillor Gary Mattie
Councillor Harris McNamara

Regrets: Councillor Hugh Stewart

Staff Present: Glenn Horne, CAO
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk
Allison Duggan, Director of Finance
Tammy Feltmate, Director of Sustainable Communities

Others Present: Gallery (in person and on Zoom)

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 5:33 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden McCarron called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. The following additions were made: Burnham Morrow Lane; Leave of Absence for Councillor Stewart.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Approval of May 14, 2024 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden McCarron called for any errors or omissions in the Committee of the Whole minutes of May 14, 2024.

Moved and Seconded

That the minutes of May 14 26, 2024 be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Delegations

There were no delegations.

Continuing Business

Budget Deliberations

Mrs. Duggan provided the Committee with a page-by-page overview of the 2024/25 budget. Additional detail regarding returns on investments, capital expenditures, and internal borrowing were reviewed. Discussion regarding the garbage truck fleet led to a suggestion to have the Director of Public Works to come to a future Asset Management meeting to review the maintenance schedule.

Mrs. Duggan provided an overview of the impact of anticipated revenue based on assessment if changes to the tax rate were considered. A discussion regarding rate options followed, with Councillors noting that years of being fiscally responsible have put the municipality in a position where residents and businesses that are experiencing higher costs and assessments can be supported by a reduction in the tax rate. Consensus was that a reduction in the residential rate of three cents and a reduction in the commercial rate of one cent was desirable.

Mrs. Duggan was thanked by members of the Committee for the work that she and her team have done in preparing this budget.

Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council that the 2024/25 Operating Budget be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council adopt the budget and strike the tax rate as per the resolution presented and attached.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

That Municipal Council approve the borrowing resolution as presented and attached.

Motion Carried

New Business

Tax Write-Offs

Mrs. Duggan provided an overview of tax accounts that were deemed uncollectable. A request was made to write-off those accounts.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve inactive account write-offs in the amount of \$1,057.30.

Motion Carried

Trunk 4 Signage and Landscaping Contract Award

Mr. Horne noted that the contract is for landscaping work planned along the AT Corridor. Mr. Horne noted that the contract amount is fully funded through the Connect2 and Make Your Move programs.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council award the contract for Signage and Landscaping of the Antigonish Trunk 4 AT Corridor to WSP for the bid amount of \$32,320.00 + HST.

Motion Carried

Additions to the Agenda

Burnham Morrow Lane Request

Councillor MacLellan read a petition from residents along Burnham Morrow Lane who are looking for year-round maintenance and maintenance upgrades. The road is maintained by the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works. Mr. Horne noted that the concerns about the condition of the roadway have been forwarded to the NS Department of Public Works, and he will send further details to Councillor MacLellan.

Leave of Absence for Councillor Stewart

Mr. Horne noted that the Special Council Meeting scheduled for later in the evening will be the third consecutive meeting that he has sent regrets for and will require an excusal from Council.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council provide a leave of absence to Councillor Stewart for the May 29, 2024 Special Council Meeting for medical reasons.

Motion Carried.

Congratulations to Councillor Mattie – Provincial Award

Warden McCarron took the opportunity to provide his congratulations to Councillor Mattie on his receipt of a provincial accessibility award, recognizing his ongoing advocacy for the improvement of accessibility in the community. On behalf of himself and Council, he thanked Councillor Mattie for everything he has done to bring attention to and improve accessibility.

In-Camera Items

There were no in-camera items.

Adjournment

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 6:58pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Owen McCarron

Glenn Horne, CAO

REQUEST FOR DECISION

TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Madeleine McCarron, Municipal Intern
SUBJECT: **ENGAGE NOVA SCOTIA QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY FUNDING**
DATE: 06/06/2024

SUMMARY

Engage Nova Scotia is looking for financial support in conducting their 2024/25 Quality of Life survey in Nova Scotia. This survey is census-like in scope and would be sent to 100,000 randomized Nova Scotians to complete. The data, weighted to reflect regional and demographic make up, would provide information on what quality of life issues are most pressing on a local level and which groups are most impacted by these issues. Engage Nova Scotia is looking for a contribution of 50 cents per resident from municipalities to help cover the costs of conducting this survey. Municipal promotion of the survey would also help encourage residents to complete it if it was received. The data provided by this survey could help in the development of policies and initiatives that improve the quality of life for everyone in the County.

BACKGROUND

Engage Nova Scotia is an independent registered charity organisation that is doing work in measuring the quality of life in the province. In 2019, they conducted a province wide survey in partnership with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing to get an in-depth data set for quality of life. Out of the 80,000 surveys sent out, around 13,000 were filled out. With the information provided, Engage Nova Scotia worked with Dalhousie to develop an interactive tool to better visualize the data and see quality of life differences across the province and across different intersectional demographics. These surveys provided information on eight aspects of quality of life (community vitality, healthy populations, living standards, environment, democratic engagement, leisure, education, and time use) and can be broken down by various factors including region, age, sex, and income level.

Municipalities can use the data provided while making strategic, policy, and budgetary decisions. The ability to have local and demographic specific data can allow for decisions that target certain groups in the areas that affect them more and that foster community inclusion. The CBRM has used the data in the original survey to see what are points of major concerns for the quality of life for underserved demographics and to develop a new strategic vision that accounts for economic development, population growth, and community inclusion.

Engage Nova Scotia is planning on conducting a second survey during the 2024/25 fiscal year, this time increasing the number of surveys sent out.

DISCUSSION

Question: How will this data be meaningfully different from that of 2019?

In this instance, the two data sets would show the differences in quality-of-life pre and post Covid-19. Having the results of both surveys will show who may still be recovering from the effects of the pandemic and if there are any areas that are getting left behind. In general, the five-year span between surveys would allow to see if things are changing in the way that was intended. It would be able to showcase if the baseline value of any factor had changed in either direction and if certain demographics are nearer or further to that baseline than previous. This could be a prompt to consider taking a new course of action in the case that a measurable unit is declining or confirm that something may be working if the outlook is good.

Question: What is the cost of this type of project?

Considering outreach, design, promotion, administration, mailing, and data integrity Engage Nova Scotia estimates the 2024/25 survey to cost about \$1,000,000. The funding for this project is coming from various streams and partners, including both provincial and federal governments. Of municipalities, Engage Nova Scotia is asking for a financial contribution of 50 cents per resident. In the case of Antigonish County, who in 2021 had a census population of 20,129, that would be around \$10,000.

Question: How long would it take to receive that data from this survey?

The survey would likely be conducted within 2024. Once completed, the data would be analysed and added to their visualization tool within several months.

CONSIDERATIONS

The data could still be accessed without providing support. However, municipal support would ensure a more robust data set and more accurate results. Engage Nova Scotia also wants to work with municipalities and their other partners to reflect their priorities and questions within the survey data. A goal of Engage Nova Scotia in this work is to provide 'unique-to-you' possibilities and reflect local needs.

NEXT STEPS

The Committee could decide to do one of the following:

- Approve the funding request as proposed.
- Deny the funding request.
- Provide funding for a lesser amount than what was proposed.

If the Committee decides to extend funding to Engage Nova Scotia for this initiative, its source would need to be determined. Other municipalities who have decided to support Engage Nova Scotia have chosen to have funding be an invoice to the CAO or from a council grant.