

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday December 10, 2024, 5:30pm
Council Chambers
Municipal Administration Building
285 Beech Hill Road
Beech Hill, NS B2G 0B4

Present were: Warden Nicholas MacInnis
Deputy Warden John Dunbar
Councillor Mary MacLellan
Councillor Adam Baden-Clay
Councillor Richelle MacLaughlin
Councillor Shawn Brophy
Councillor Wayne Melanson
Councillor Gary Mattie
Councillor Harris McNamara
Councillor Sterling Garvie

Regrets: None

Staff Present: Shirlyn Donovan, CAO
Beth Schumacher, Deputy Clerk
Chris Boyd, Legal

Others Present: Susie Doucet
Gallery

Call to Order – Chairman, Warden Nicholas MacInnis

The meeting of the Committee of the Whole was called to order by the Chair, Warden MacInnis, at 5:33 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Warden MacInnis called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. A request was made to remove the in-camera business regarding personnel matters from the agenda.

Moved and Seconded

That the agenda be approved amended.

Motion Carried

Approval of November 25, 2024 Committee of the Whole Minutes

Warden MacInnis called for any errors or omissions in the Committee of the Whole minutes of November 25, 2024. Hearing none, the minutes were considered approved.

Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

Delegations

Susie Doucet – Community Physician Navigator

Ms. Doucet provided members of the Committee with an overview of the operations and organization of the Physician Retention Association. Ms. Doucet's presentation outlined measures being taken by the navigator team to assist with attraction and retention of physicians in the community. 2024 numbers and 2025 goals were reviewed. Challenges raised by those looking at the community were childcare and housing.

Questions from the Committee and discussion followed. Deputy Warden Dunbar asked if there was anything that the County could do to assist with the retention efforts being undertaken by the Navigator. Ms. Doucet suggested that elected officials assisting with celebrating and highlighting new physicians coming to the community would be helpful. Ms. Doucet was thanked for her presentation.

Continuing Business

Municipal Code of Conduct

Ms. Schumacher provided an overview of the proposed code of conduct, referring to the staff report that was prepared to facilitate the introductory discussion on November 25th.

Councillor McNamara noted that he would like to see a clause added to explicitly note that the code of conduct would apply to in-camera sessions of meetings. Discussion followed regarding the most appropriate location to include this clause, with consensus to add a clause after 3.1 in the Schedule A model code of conduct under consideration.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council adopts the model Code of Conduct for Municipalities prescribed by the Minister under subsection 520(1) of Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998, the Municipal Government Act, as outlined in Schedule A of N.S. Regulation 219/2024, as amended to include a section following subsection 3(1) noting that the Code of Conduct applies to elected officials at all times and in all locations, including in-camera sessions, and to renumber previous subsection 3(2) to 3(3).

Motion Carried

Committee Representation by Council

Staff presented the list of standing committees and asked members of the Committee for further input on Council assignments to these committees. Positions were filled, and consensus was that the RK MacDonald Board vacancy was noted to be for a public member and will be advertised in the new year.

A question about public members on the committees listed. Staff noted that there are positions that note that renewals will be required in 2025. Staff expects that this will take place early in the new year.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the Standing Committee Appointments as proposed.

Motion Carried

New Business

Antigonish Skateboard Park Community Partnership Grant

Mrs. Donovan spoke to a request made in a letter from Jason Mason regarding a community partnership grant that was awarded in the spring of 2024. Mr. Mason is requesting for his grant to be carried over into the 2025/26 fiscal year. Mrs. Donovan explained the challenges posed by the timing of the grant application and review process when community groups are looking to hold events early in the fiscal year. Discussion regarding carry-overs and the policy followed.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council approve the deferral of the 2024/25 Community Partnership Grant in the amount of \$2000 awarded to the Antigonish Skatepark Association to the 2025/26 fiscal year.

Motion Carried

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council directs staff to bring forward the policy regarding community partnership grants for review by the Committee.

Motion Defeated

Highway 337 and Mount Cameron Crosswalk Request

Moved and Seconded

Having received several communications from Mt Cameron residents expressing concerns about pedestrian safety when crossing Route 337 between the top Mt

Cameron entrance and the Bethany walking trail, and requesting that a crosswalk with lights be installed at that location, and having begun to learn about the history of this issue and the many previous communications and requests from the Municipality to the Province to have this crosswalk installed, the Committee recommends that Municipal Council direct staff to prepare a report on the history and current status of this issue for presentation to the Committee at the next meeting, with recommendations, in order that we can determine an appropriate course of action.

Discussion followed about timing of the report, in light of the timing being so close to staff holidays. Amended motion was put forward

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council direct staff to prepare a report on the history and current status of the request for a crosswalk crossing Route 337 between the western Mount Cameron entrance and the Bethany walking trail for presentation to the Committee at a future meeting, with recommendations, in order that we can determine an appropriate course of action.

Amendment to Motion Approved

Motion Carried

Water and Sewer Discussion

Warden MacInnis handed the Chair to Deputy Warden Dunbar for the duration of this item of business. Warden MacInnis noted that he was looking to request that staff prepare a summary of the water and sewer services in the municipality, to provide an idea of the available capacity of those services. Discussion followed regarding well facilities and those shared with the Town of Antigonish, as well as upcoming development applications that could add to demand of this infrastructure.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council direct staff to prepare a report detailing all existing water and sewer infrastructure in the Municipality, with information regarding the capacity of the system.

An amendment to the motion was proposed, to have infrastructure summary done but look at capacity later due to how long it would take to have those studies done.

Moved and Seconded

The Committee recommends that Municipal Council direct staff to prepare a report detailing all existing water and sewer infrastructure in the Municipality.

Motion Carried

The Chair was returned to Warden MacInnis.

Staff Reports

Mrs. Donovan reviewed some highlights from the staff report regarding Internet installation in the community, training and staff presenting at conferences in the province. Updates were provided regarding holiday events in the community, and holiday hours of the office were noted. The impact of the postal strike on operations was reviewed.

Community Events

- Deputy Warden Dunbar shared that on Saturday December 14th there will be a Christmas Market at Heatherton Community Centre. On Sunday the 15th, a tree lighting and carols will take place at the Community Centre, with the unveiling of the community mural.
- Councillor MacLellan noted that a number of holiday events will be taking place in District 1.
- Councillor Mattie attended the annual rock-a thon in Tracadie. 28 seniors participated. He also attended the fire department awards dinner. The Monastery Fire Department Santa visit takes place this weekend.
- Councillor McNamara shared that in Havre Boucher the Festival of Lights took place on December 7th and there was good attendance and lots of floats. On December 14th Aulds Cove Volunteer Fire Department is having a food drive. On December 14th there will be a Christmas Workshop to fundraise with an auction. Catered dance for the 50s club was held, and the Havre Boucher Volunteer Fire Department had a training exercise.
- Councillor Melanson shared that a senior's dinner was held and 133 seniors were served. Pomquet Development Society assembled baskets to take to seniors in the community. A group of women in the community created a social group at the community centre. A new convenience store opened on the Pomquet Beach Road, along the way to the beach. Pomquet Volunteer Fire Department is hosting a dance on Saturday December 28th.
- Councillor MacLaughlin shared that in Lochaber a breakfast is planned to be taking place on the second Sunday of each month. The first was held this month and was very successful. Crossroads County Christmas hosted in the community and raised healthy funds for three community charities. FireLoch is starting a community calendar and will be busy in 2025.
- Councillor Baden-Clay noted that Mini Trails Community Centre summarizes activities in the community on their Facebook page. 4 Valleys Volunteer Fire

Department is having a celebration on December 14th, and Councillor Baden-Clay wished members of all of the volunteer fire departments in the County a wonderful holiday.

- Councillor Brophy attended the Lights of Love event at the RK MacDonald Nursing Home. This year funds are being used to purchase a new blanket warmer.
- Warden MacInnis noted that the St Andrews Volunteer Fire Department having their dinner on Saturday December 14th. Antigonish Kinsmen have been hosting their holiday gift card drive for local families in need.

Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda

In-Camera Business

There was no in-camera business.

Adjournment

Moved

That the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned at 7:33pm.

Motion Carried

Warden Nicholas MacInnis

Shirlyn Donovan, CAO