



Minutes of the Rescheduled Committee of the Whole Meeting

Place: Conducted through Zoom, streamed live to Town of Oxford FaceBook, per the authority provided by direction by the Minister of Municipal Affairs while under a State of Emergency on March 22, 2020, under the authority provided in Section 14 of *the Emergency Management Act*.

Date: Monday, June 8, 2020

Presiding Officer: Mayor Patricia Stewart

Councilors Present: Councilors Dave Clark, Dawn Thompson, Rick Draper, Wade Adshade, Wendy Sweet-Kontuk and Brenton Colborne (by phone)

Regrets: Nil

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Staff in attendance: CAO - Rachel Jones and Deputy Clerk - Linda Cloney (recording secretary)
Presenter in attendance: Mr. Dean Smith

1. Call to Order

Mayor Patricia Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Mayor Stewart and Council expressed congratulations to the OREC Graduates of 2020.

2. Approval of Agenda

It was moved and seconded that the agenda of the Committee of the Whole Meeting for June 8, 2020 be approved.

Motion Carried

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting for May 5, 2020 be approved.

Motion Carried

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting for June 4, 2020 be approved.

Motion Carried

4. New Business

4.1 Intelivote Alternative Voting Software: Mr. Dean Smith

Council had a general discussion regarding the Intelivote Alternative Voting Software that was presented by Mr. Dean Smith.

- Nova Scotia has a Municipal Elections Act that allows for electronic voting. Electronic voting methods are internet and telephone voting.
- Using this software, electors may vote using their phones, tablets, smartphones, and computers. Any internet enabled device would give access for electors to vote.
- Electronic voting addresses the Provincial accessibility requirements.
- COVID-19 pandemic issues have created a variety of new challenges including hiring election workers, social distancing requirements, sanitization of high-touch surfaces (requiring more time in between voters) and possibly a second wave in the fall. Most of these issues can be addressed by offering electronic voting.
- With electronic voting, typically within 10 – 15 minutes the results of the election are available.
- In past elections, the municipalities that offered electronic and paper voting, approximately 60 – 80% of the electors utilized the electronic voting.
- Council asked the question if Intelivote has ever run into glitches or crashes with the software during an election? Staff will follow up with this question and report back to Council.

Following this presentation Mr. Dean Smith exited the meeting, 6:45 pm.

4.2 Financial Variance Report: First Quarter Comparison 2019 to 2020

Council had a discussion regarding the Financial Variance Report presented by CAO Jones.

Council discussed the Town Garage Maintenance, as it was higher than last year. Part of the expense is from purchasing a used high-volume shipping container to install as storage at the Town Garage. Another part of the expense is for the demolition of the storage shed that was unstable. Council asked to know the name of the company the container was purchased from. Staff will follow up with this question.

Council discussed the Arena Electricity expense as it is higher than last year and that the arena was closed early due to COVID-19. Staff will follow up to Council.

4.3 Draft 2020-21 General Operating Budget: Discussion

CAO Jones presented the Draft 2020-21 General Operating Budget.

Council suggested to assume the arena may not be able to resume operations due to COVID-19 and that staff should adjust the costs and revenues accordingly.

After a rounded discussion, direction was given to the CAO to review budget options and costs on the following areas:

- Arena operations;
- Theatre operations/revenues;
- Travel expenses;
- NSCC Foundation funding contract (defer for a year);
- Fuel costs;
- Community/Economic Development position and budget;
- School enhancement fund;
- Audit fee;
- Recreation Director position.

It was also expressed that a minimal/zero tax increase be in place, with the intent of maintaining the current Council honourariums for this year, and that there may be opportunity to develop the residential lots behind the current Habitat for Humanity to enlarge the residential tax base for future revenue.

Staff will also review the details around wages to ensure accuracy.

Street Maintenance – Council asked if this expense could be included in the paving contract and/or the Gas Tax. CAO Jones explained that patching is not capital, it is operational and needs to be in the General Operating Budget.

Tree Expense/Trail Reserve – Council asked if there are any trail expenses could it come from Gas Tax Revenue. It was noted that the \$5,000 is for the tree work.

Library Expense – Staff budgeted \$6,000 to the library as they are uncertain as to what the expenses will be once the Satellite Library opens.

School Crosswalk Guard – The budgeted number is for one crosswalk guard.

CAO Jones reported to Council some ideas to balance the budget. She noted that it will be important to look at our core essential services that are mandatory. If Oxford is going to reduce service levels, we should consider the least negative impact on the largest number of residents.

- If we do not operate the arena this year we would have between \$75,000 - \$100,000 to put back into the budget.

- Regarding the Community and Economic Development service, the Amherst Chambers of Commerce is close by and other resources are out there that can assist our local businesses.
- Oxford could look at having a four-day work week and that will have a 20% reduction to salaries.

We are in a critical point and we do not have reserves of any substantial amount. CAO Jones recommended to Council to think about the service level impacts and what that might mean.

Council Renumeration was discussed and initially the intent was to match the lowest rate of any Council in Nova Scotia. This budget reflects that rate, and it raises the costs to about \$10,000. Council is interested in applying this in the next fiscal year and keeping the current honorarium levels in place for this fiscal year.

5. Correspondence

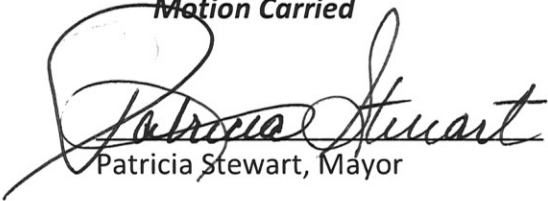
5.1. Elizabeth Smith McCrossin

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin, MLA Cumberland North announced that as of June 3, 2020, David Ritcey, MLA for Truro – Bible Hill – Millbrook – Salmon River will be assuming the critic role for Municipal Affairs.

6. Adjournment

At 7:30 pm, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion Carried



Patricia Stewart, Mayor



Linda Cloney, Recording Secretary