Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting

Place: Conducted through Teleconferencing 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, March 23, 2020
Presiding Officer:	Mayor Patricia Stewart
Councilors present:	Councilors Brenton Colborne, Dave Clark, Dawn Thompson, Rick Draper, Wendy Sweet-Kontuk and Wade Adshade
Regrets:	Nil

A quorum was present throughout the meeting.

Staff in attendance: CAO – Rachel Jones and Deputy Clerk – Linda Cloney (recording secretary)

1. Call to order

Mayor Patricia Stewart called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. A round table discussion ensuring the health and safety of all members of Council took place prior to the business of the meeting beginning.

2. Approval of Agenda

It was moved and seconded that the agenda of the rescheduled Regular Town Council Meeting for March 23, 2020 be approved as circulated.
Motion Carried

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Regular Town Council for February 18, 2020 be approved as circulated.
Motion Carried

4. New Business

4.1 Coronavirus – 19: Update and Discussion

The Town of Oxford's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to date:
All facilities are closed to the public until further notice;

All staff who can work from home are doing so. Those still working are strictly observing the social distancing requirements put in place by the Chief Medical Officer of Nova Scotia;
Main phone line continues to be answered;
Mail is still being collected and processed;
Workplans are being developed for staff to continue business continuity to the best extent possible;
The CAO's for Oxford, Amherst and Cumberland County, along with the REMO Coordinator are meeting Monday, Wednesday and Friday by Skype until further notice, more so if necessary, to discuss mutual issues and communication needs;
Municipalities are coordinating public communications for consistent and clear messages for the public;
The three municipalities agreed upon the essential services that we provide, and how we may need to share resources in the future to provide these services to the public;
The Mayor and CAO have been in contact with the Cumberland Member of Parliament and MLA's to keep communications open and discuss any concerns;
The Cumberland Business Connector is coordinating support and information for all our local businesses;
The Town now has a COVID-19 tab on our website where we can post information and updates, and also have active postings on our FaceBook pages;
Internally we have clarified staff communications roles and are documenting processes to ensure business continuity;
The Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia is having an emergency board meeting on March 25th to discuss and document municipal concerns that will be forwarded to the Provincial Government;
Additional personal protective equipment is in short supply and we have forwarded our requirements for the Fire Department through that process for provincial response and procurement;
We will be developing a list of ideas and activities that we will regularly share on our social media that will support and encourage community building/strengthening activities in a virtual manner due to the expected extended social distancing requirements;
The Fire Department, although currently registered as a Medical First Responder department, has been advised by EHS that Fire Departments will no longer be responding to medical calls into private dwellings, those calls reserved for EHS response; fire will continue to respond to motor vehicle accidents and extraction calls.

4.2 Amended Signing Authority

It was moved and seconded that Council approve adding Councillor Wade Adshade as an additional signing authority for emergency purposes and to add Ruthann Brookins in place of Linda Cloney as a signing authority.

Motion Carried

4.3 2020-21 Operating Budget Spending Approval

It was moved and seconded that Council approve one-half of the Operating Budget for 2019/20 in the amount of $1,267,081 for the purpose of providing spending authority and business continuity in the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2020, and until a full Operating Budget is presented and approved by Council.

Motion Carried

4.4 Debt Affordability Model – Deferred until further notice

4.5 Draft 2020/21 Capital Budget

There was discussion regarding the Arena Energy Projects, Water Utility Projects, Fire Truck Replacement and Trails.

It was moved and seconded that Council approve the 2020/21 Capital Budget as presented.

Motion Carried

The CAO noted that, although the Capital Budget is now approved, it is for the purpose of business continuity so that when/if funding programs are announced, the Town is prepared to make application for funding assistance on critical infrastructure projects.

4.6 RFD #005-2020: Preliminary Elector's List

It was moved and seconded that Council approve entering into the Information Sharing Agreement with the Chief Electoral Officer of the Province of Nova Scotia for the use of the provincial list of electors from Elections Nova Scotia for the purpose of upcoming general or special municipal elections.

Motion Carried

4.7 Occupational Health and Safety Policy: Annual Review

It was moved and seconded to approve the Occupation Health and Safety Policy as presented.

Motion Carried

4.8 Financial Variance Report: 1 April 2019 – 29 February 2020

There was a general discussion regarding the Financial Variance Report. There are more water transfers that need to be done to the report. It is anticipated by staff that the Town of Oxford will reflect a deficit due to salary increases, Occupational Health and Safety requirements, Department of Environment and Labour requirements, heating maintenance issues, legal fees and unexpected costs.

4.9 Route 6 Snowmobile Club: Letter of Support Request

The Route 6 Snowmobile Club gave a verbal request to the Town of Oxford for a letter of support. Route 6 Snowmobile Club intends to submit the letter of support to the Municipality of the County of Cumberland as part of a grant application.

Council directed staff to write the letter of support.

5. Reports

CAO Jones presented the reports.

Economic Development – Council expressed their appreciation to Ruthie's continued hard work.

Recreation and Leisure Services – Volunteer of the Year for the Town of Oxford will be Al and Maxine Clark. They were invited to Halifax on April 27, 2020 to receive their Provincial Award. Staff will do a press release regarding this story.

The arena is closed to the public and the staff are in there cleaning the facility.

Public Works – Council commented their awareness of less water breaks lately.

Arena Fundraising Committee Minutes: 29 January 2020 – The arena fundraising committee is considering that the Hunting and Fishing Show may be postponed due to the COVID-19, nothing has been decided yet.

Oxford Library Brief – all libraries are currently closed due to the COVID-19. The Oxford Library will need to be relocated due to building maintenance issues.

It was moved and seconded that Council receive the reports as presented.
Motion Carried

6. Correspondence

Nil

7. Adjournment

Mayor Patricia Stewart advised Council that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 20, 2020 at 6:00 pm in the Council Chambers.

At 7:13 pm, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.
Motion Carried

Patricia Stewart, Mayor

Linda Cloney, Recording Secretary