



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee Of The Whole (COTW) Meeting
Thursday, July 2nd, 2020

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

The COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Thursday, July 2nd, 2020 at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Warden Mosher | Councillor Kaiser-Kirk |
| Councillor Baker | Councillor Smith |
| Councillor Findlay | Councillor Malloy |

Also Attending:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Marvin MacDonald, CAO | Marissa Jordan, Municipal Clerk |
| Marian Fraser, Director of Finance | |

Absent with Regrets:

Deputy Warden Dort

3. Approval of Agenda:

On motion of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council approved the agenda with the following additions:

- 7d. Training
- 7e. Letter of Support-Canadian Heritage River

Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Councillor Kaiser-Kirk and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held Wednesday, June 17th, 2020.

Motion carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- No business arising.

6. Correspondence

a. 2020-21 Emergency Services Provider Fund (ESPF)

- A letter from the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) on behalf of the Office of the Fire Marshal was received regarding the 2020-21-Emergency Services Provider Fund (ESPF). The Emergency Services Provider Fund is intended to assist first responder organizations in Nova Scotia with the purchase of equipment used directly in response to fire or emergency situations. The Program will pay 75% of the total eligible costs, up to a maximum grant of \$20,000.
- The application is now available and must be submitted to the Fire Marshal by July 13, 2020. A copy of the letter and application were emailed to all of the St. Mary's Municipal Fire Departments on June 25th, 2020.

7. Other Matters of Business:

a. Streetscapes Update

- CAO MacDonald update Council on the progress at 16 Main Street as part of Phase 1 of the Streetscapes Plan. The washroom at 16 Main Street is complete with an accessible ramp and the gravel for the

- parking lot will be done over the next two weeks. The lot will be graded, gravel added and the lot rolled to create a smooth surface as well as to accommodate the future landscaping. The ornamental trees have been received and will be planted in the next week along the side of the Shoppers building.
- The CAO stated that staff are still waiting on word for the application for phase two funding for the Beautification and Streetscaping Program in which the deadline ended earlier this week.
- Council Malloy asked if the bathroom would have year round access or only seasonal access. The CAO relayed that the building is insulated and that it will be intended for year round use.
- Councillor Smith asked if the bathroom would be open as tourist season will soon be opening up and Sherbrooke Village. The CAO stated that it will be ready for the opening of the tourist season and in time for the opening of Sherbrooke Village.

b. Non-Profit Organization Property Tax Exemption Policy

- Municipal Staff presented Council with a new policy called the Non-Profit Organization Property Tax Exemption Policy for Council to consider. This policy would provide a standard method for exemption of current property taxes for property(s) of a qualified local non-profit organization so they can continue to provide necessary services, support and/or charitable programs to residents.
- The Director of Finance stated that prior to this there has been no policy or application in place for property tax exemptions of non-profit organizations. Past practices have been to have potential organizations request to Council to be put on the tax exemption list.
- A number of our current organizations on the exemption list are inactive. The CAO explained that some of the criteria to be eligible under the new policy would allow for inactive organizations to be removed from the list.
- Councillor Smith pointed out section 3.1.2 *“The qualified local non-profit organization must show need for financial relief”* and asked if this was left open to Council to decide what would qualify as financial relief or if there were guidelines that Council would defer to. The Director of Finance stated that it was left that way to give some discretion to Council after reviewing the organization’s financials and application form and deciding based on what the organization’s current activities are and current expenses are.
- Councilor Findlay asked if the new application process and policy will apply to existing organizations that already receive an exemption. Director of Finance stated that the existing organizations will need to fill out an initial application and if approved will be placed on the draft list (Schedule A) then Council will review and approve the list annually at the Annual General Meeting of Council. If approved, the policy and application will be sent to current organizations to review and apply for the upcoming year 2021.
- Councillor Smith asked if the application could include more specific questions about the organizations events and needs so that Council can make more informed decisions about which organizations can be approved.
- Councillor Findlay asked if there was a way to put on the application form what the amount the organization would pay if they were not approved as an exempted organization. The Director of Finance stated that this would mean each application would need to be personalized for each organization, but if they would like to contact the office, that information could be provided.

On motion of Councillor Kaiser-Kirk and seconded by Councillor Smith, Council to approve the Non-Profit Organization Property Tax Exemption policy with the application form amended to reflect the comments from Council.

Recommendation adopted.

c. Municipal Tax Sale

- The Director of Finance (DOF) presented Council with a staff report outlining potential properties for Council to consider for 2020.2021 reduced sealed tender that did not sell at the last tax sale. The DOF stated that she usually starts preparing in August for the Municipal Tax Sale but due to the current

COVID-19 restrictions, it is difficult to start traditional tax sale preparations at this time, especially with the high number of public attendants at the last tax sale.

- The DOF provided Council with a suggested timeline for starting the two rounds of sealed tender tax sales in 2020, followed by a regular in person tax sale in 2021 for Council's consideration. The DOF also had recommendations for Council for a number of accounts that have been troublesome and has investigated them with Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC).
- The Director of Finance asked that Council consider which properties they would like to choose for the first round of the sealed tenders and place the minimum bid for those properties during an in camera session.

On motion of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Findlay, Council moved into an in camera session for Municipal Tax Sale at 7:18pm.

Council reconvened to regular session at 7:57pm.

On recommendation of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Kaiser-Kirk, that Council write off all taxes owing on assessment account number 03470814 assessed to Stanley Naugle due to Property Valuation Services Corporation determining the account to be inactive and deleted, funds to be taken from the allowance for uncollectable taxes reserve.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Findlay and seconded by Councillor Malloy, that council write off all taxes owing on assessment account number 01515373 assessed to Neil Langille due to Property Valuation Services Corporation determining the account to be inactive and deleted, funds to be taken from the allowance for uncollectable taxes reserve.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Findlay and seconded by Councillor Malloy, that council write off all taxes owing on assessment account number 00103527 assessed to Andrew Archibald due to Property Valuation Services Corporation determining the account to be inactive and deleted, funds to be taken from the allowance for uncollectable taxes reserve.

Recommendation adopted.

On recommendation of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Baker, that council set the minimum bid for the sealed tax sale tender at \$3500 for AAN 02084341 and \$2500 for AAN 00991082. Sealed tenders will be due October 7, 2020 at 9:00am.

Recommendation adopted.

d. Training

- Councillor Smith would like to see the municipality offer training in the same way that is currently done for First Aid, WHIMIS for citizens, but would like the municipality to be a leader in the next training that is offered. She stated that the Municipality has made an effort to include things like gender neutral language when writing municipal documents, working towards environments that are free from discrimination and work and education has been ongoing. Councillor Smith proposed that the Municipality plan and host a series of training opportunities for the public and separately for businesses around inclusivity, anti-racism and best workplace practices. Councillor Smith stated
"We are currently being confronted with our white privilege, racism and anti-LGBTQ views. We are being asked to be allies and in order to be an ally, you need to enact change in the space you occupy. The space we occupy is Municipal Leaders. We have been elected to be leaders in our space and addressing things like the policy by educating our residents and by leading by example we can enact those changes in our space and be an ally. By offering these types of training we

are creating a space to sit in discomfort of the structural issues we have built and by sitting in this discomfort, opening the dialogue and continuing to educate we will lead our community to become more aware and inclusive moving forward.”

- Councillor Smith asked the Warden to consider her request and to take to Council for discussion and, if decided to go forward, to give direction the CAO MacDonald to proceed with appropriate avenues.
- Warden Mosher directed staff to research this topic and possible training opportunities and then add this item to an upcoming COTW agenda.


e. Letter of Support- Canadian Heritage River

- Staff received a request from a Mr. Liam MacDonnell, a senior student at Saint Francis Xavier University, for a letter of support for an application to the Canadian Heritage River Association to have the St. Mary's River designated as a Heritage River.
- CAO MacDonald explained that the designation of a Canadian Heritage River does not provide legislative authority and that jurisdictions and landowners retain their management authority and responsibilities but is recognized across the country as good practice for rivers. Possible developments on lands surrounding the river would be dependent on a case being put forward for things like environmental approvals and development permits that would support the development going forward, regardless if it is a heritage river or non-designated river. CAO MacDonald said from that perspective, by supporting this decision it's not making the decision of Council of whether or not there is support for other developments or plans. They are not mutually exclusive.
- The CAO drafted a letter of support for Council's consideration and asked for direction from Council on how they would like to proceed.
- Councillor Findlay stated that it is just the title that the river would be getting, and it does not give them a different avenue they are already working in or doesn't change anything. CAO MacDonald stated that it does provide best practices for the management of the river and is recognized around the world but there is no legislative authority over the land use or how any of the landowners manage their land.
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk stated that she fully supports having St. Mary's River designated as a Canadian Heritage River and it is a public trust which is very important. She agreed with their guiding principals including those around sustainability.
- Councillor Smith agreed and said that with the designation of crown lands around the river this year and the river possibly being recognized as a Canadian Heritage River could give a stronger case when talking with other levels of government about developing into parks or more locations. Councillor Smith stated that it will only strengthen the case to help build those type of infrastructures or long-term strategic plans that could lead to economic impact and only sees benefit from this decision.
- Councillor Findlay stated that if the government does give development permits to certain developments on the river this would make a stronger case for stricter regulations and is a good thing in that respect.
- Council agreed that the CAO should send the letter of support

Adjournment

On motion of Kaiser-Kirk and seconded Councillor Findlay, there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 8:13pm.


Recorded By
Municipal Clerk/Special Projects Coordinator


Approved By
Warden Mosher