



Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee Of The Whole (COTW) Meeting
Wednesday, May 6th, 2020

1. Meeting, Date & Time:

The COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Wednesday, May 6th, 2020 at 7:00pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

2. Attending:

Warden Mosher (via teleconference)
Councillor Baker (via teleconference)
Councillor Findlay (via teleconference)

Councillor Kaiser-Kirk (via teleconference)
Councillor Smith (via teleconference)
Councillor Malloy (via teleconference)

Also Attending:

Marvin MacDonald, CAO (via teleconference)
Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (via teleconference)

Marissa Jordan, Municipal Clerk (via teleconference)

Absent with Regrets:

Deputy Warden Dort

3. Approval of Agenda:

On motion of Councillor Kaiser-Kirk and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the agenda as presented

Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes:

On motion of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held Wednesday, April 8th, 2020.

Motion carried.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes:

Streetscapes Update:

- CAO MacDonald updated Council on the progress for Phase 1 of the Streetscapes Project. Work is currently being done to install a new public bathroom at 16 Main Street. Water and Sewer connections are currently being hooked up and preliminary work to the bathroom has been completed.
- A landscape plan has been developed to install plants and shrubs along the side of the parking lot and plants should be delivered in the next month for installation. Pricing for the curb and concrete work for 16 Main Street has been received and final planning for that portion of the project will be up coming. Request for funding for Phase 2 of the Streetscapes Plan has been submitted but there are currently no updates on the funding.

6. Correspondence

a. Recreation Facility Development Grant:

- CAO MacDonald relayed to Council that staff received correspondence from the Recreation Facility Development Grant stating that the Municipality was successful in its request for funding in the amount of \$30,600. This funding is to help offset the cost of the new chiller and upgrades for the Recplex ice plant that were done this past winter.

7. Other Matters of Business:

a. Office Generator Update:

- CAO MacDonald relayed to Council that the generator will be delivered to the municipal office tomorrow May 7th, 2020. KVS Electrical will be on site to start work on the set up and connections and should be in a position to commission the generator and show staff the operational procedures by the end of next week.

b. Municipal Office Front Desk Update:

- CAO MacDonald relayed to Council that the municipal office front desk modifications have been completed with the exception of a small piece of glass that is still waiting to be shipped. This will be installed as soon as it arrives.
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk asked if the insert was one solid piece of glass or sections. The CAO explained that the glass is in three separate sections with spacing between. This modification will allow for increased security for staff, but will still allow for appropriate communication with the public.

c. Heritage Properties By-Law:

- CAO MacDonald relayed to Council that staff started to look into the Heritage Properties By-Law due to an inquiry from Kirk United Church about the process to be de-registered as a heritage property. The CAO looked into this and informed Council that it is a lengthy process that involves a public hearing.
- CAO MacDonald also contacted the Municipal Solicitor to see if there was any way to bypass the public hearing in light of the restrictions on gatherings due to COVID-19. The solicitor stated he didn't think there was a way to bypass the hearing and recommended that Council reappoint people to the now, inactive Advisory Committee. The committee would then have the ability to set a date for a public hearing, when COVID-19 restrictions allow, to register or de-register heritage properties.
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk asked if there was any discussion about updating the Heritage Properties By-Law. CAO MacDonald said the By-Law was established in 1989 and does need to be updated. This would be addressed by the new Advisory Committee when it is re-established.

d. New Three Year Cost Sharing Agreement for Subdivision Streets:

- CAO MacDonald received a letter from Transportation Infrastructure & Renewal (TIR) stating that the Municipality's Three year Cost Sharing Agreement for J Class Streets will run out as of March 31, 2021. TIR is looking for an updated agreement that allows the Municipality to apply for funding each year under the subdivision Cost Share Agreement.

On recommendation of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Findlay, Council approve that the Warden and CAO be authorized to sign the new Cost Share Agreement # 2020-020.

Recommendation adopted.

e. Audit Committee:

Councillor Findlay declared a Conflict of Interest and left the meeting at 7:17pm.

- Director of Finance (DOF), Marian Fraser, relayed to Council that staff had received an application for the St. Mary's Audit Committee from Dana O'Connell.
- Council discussed and agreed that Mr. O'Connell would be a good fit for the committee and asked if there were other applicants. DOF Fraser stated this was the only new applicant but the Audit Committee also has Kevin Pye sitting on the committee as a community resident and the Municipality does take up to two individuals on the committee.

On recommendation of Councillor Malloy and seconded by Councillor Smith, Council agree to appoint Dana O'Connell to the St. Mary's Audit Committee.

*Councillor Findlay declared a Conflict of Interest.

Recommendation adopted.

f. Electric Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Deployment Initiative:

Councillor Findlay returned to the regular session at 7:20pm.

- CAO MacDonald received an email from Angela MacLeod with Nova Scotia Power who is heading up an effort to submit a joint application for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Funding to Natural Resources Canada. This email was sent to all municipalities in Nova Scotia looking for a quick number of how many charging stations each municipality may be interested in.
- The application from Nova Scotia requires twenty charging stations as a minimum to qualify for funding under this grant. The CAO relayed to Ms. MacLeod that the Municipality may tentatively look at two charging stations, but would have to consult with Council first. The funding grant would cover up to 50% of the cost of the charging stations. Ms. MacLeod indicated that the province may cover up to another 25%, although that is not yet finalized.
- These charging stations may cost \$7,000-\$10,000 each to install.
- Councillor Findlay asked the CAO if these were low or high voltage charging stations. CAO MacDonald was unsure as to which type of stations these were, but assumed that they were probably the high voltage stations but would have to wait for more details. The CAO mentioned that 16 Main Street may be an appropriate location for them in the future if this does go ahead.
- Council agreed that it would be a choice for the Municipality to express interest in the charging stations at this point. Councillor Kaiser-Kirk stated that although she agrees in expressing interest in them at this time, she has more questions in regards to accessibility in future discussions as well as another other costs associated with this endeavor. The CAO said he still has no details in regards to the cost, but believes the cost of electricity would need to be expanded on.

g. Property Tax Financial Plan:

- The Director of Finance (DOF), Marian Fraser, update Council that on April 28th, 2020 the province of Nova Scotia approved a three year municipal loan program to assist municipalities with cash flow issues as a result of tax payers affected by COVID-19 and their inability to pay their 2020/2021 tax bills.
- This is a voluntary program for municipalities which has been developed in partnership with the province, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMA). It has been designed to create consistency throughout the province to deal with the inability of those affected by COVID-19 to pay their 2020/2021 tax bills.
- Municipal staff has developed a draft policy and application that outlines eligibility and criteria. This would allow eligible participants to apply by July 15th, 2020 after which the approved applicant would have six months at a very minimal cost to be part of the program and then they would have two years to pay the 2020/2021 property tax.
- Municipal staff will send the draft policy to Council for review and potentially have a Special Council Meeting to approve the policy and move forward with the program if they so choose.

h. Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-Law Request for Proposals:

- The CAO updated Council that the Municipality's Request for Proposals (RFP's) closed on May 1st, 2020 and staff received three proposals from planning and design consultants; Upland Planning and Design Studio, Fathom Studio and Stantec. The CAO, Development Project Coordinator, Director of Finance, and Municipal Clerk evaluated the RFP's with a scoring template to determine the best proposal and value of the contracts. Fathom Studio scored the highest, Upland came in second and third was Stantec.
- Fathom Studio offered the most consulting hours and the greatest involvement by the senior consultant, the best council and public engagement options and links the Plan into promotion and economic development type tools for the Municipality.
- The price for the Fathom proposal is \$54,720.00 plus HST, which would be approximately \$7,000 over the budget for the project. It is suggested that the overrun amount can be reasonably taken from the Economic Development Budget to cover the economic development component of the project.
- Upland had the lowest price for the project at \$34,385 and Stantec's price for the project was \$49,115 plus a number of extras such as travel over 100 km for Stantec and Trace (Subcontractor) and the cost for advertising and venues for public meetings, etc.
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk asked where Fathom Studio was located. The CAO said they are from Halifax and are an offshoot of Ekistics Consulting, a firm that has been around for a number of years.
- Councillor Smith asked the CAO to elaborate on the community engagement section of Fathom's proposal and why it was more superior than the other RFP's. The CAO stated that Fathom Studio would be establishing social media platforms as well as a microsite for the project to engage the public. Fathom would implement a branding strategy for the plans as well as have a designated social media specialist that would also implement online surveys as well as Zoom meetings to engage the community. They would also do two full days of community workshops to facilitate community input.
- Councillor Findlay asked if it was wise to engage them now with the restrictions due to COVID-19 and if waiting until the fall to start the project would be more beneficial. The CAO said that

Fathom has a sufficient plan to deal with the restrictions and staff would like to have the review of these documents started during the term position of the Project Development Coordinator, which potentially may end as of December 31st, 2020.

On recommendation of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council agree to award the contract to review and update the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land-Use Bylaw to Fathom Studio for the amount of \$54,720 + HST.

Recommendation adopted.

Adjournment

On motion of Councillor Baker there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 7:42pm.



Recorded By
Municipal Clerk/Special Projects Coordinator



Approved By
Warden Mosher