

MEETING #488MINUTES OF MEETINGGRAND FALLS-WINDSOR TOWN COUNCILHELD IN THE TOWN HALL7:00 P.M., TUESDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 2018

PRESENT: Mayor: Barry Manuel
 Deputy Mayor: Mike Browne
 Councillors: Rod Bennett, Amy Coady-Davis, Shawn Feener,
 Darren Finn, Mark Whiffen
 Staff: J. Saunders, Town Manager\Clerk
 N. Chatman, Director of Engineering and Works
 K. Antle, Director of Parks and Recreation
 B. Griffin, Director of Finance
 G. Hennessey, Economic Development Officer

Prior to the meeting the Mayor presented the prizes for the “Light-Up for Christmas Contest – 2017.” The winners were as follows:-

1st Place - Dave Gardner, 39 Snow Crescent
 2nd Place - Dr. James and Candace Sheridan, 114 Goodyear Avenue
 3rd Place - Derek and Evelina Stroud, 6 Pondview Drive

Best Commercial Property – Pampered Paws, 264 Grenfell Heights

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and asked for any errors or omissions to the Minutes of Meeting #487 of Tuesday, December 5th, 2017.

Motion

Feener\Finn

Be it resolved that the Minutes of Meeting #487 of Tuesday, December 5th, 2017 would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

None

DISBURSEMENT REPORT

Councillor Coady-Davis presented the disbursement report in the amount of \$2,283,621.35.

Motion

Coady-Davis

Be it resolved that the disbursement report in the amount of \$2,283,621.35 would be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Administration

The following report was presented by Councillor Coady-Davis.

Budget Discussion

The Committee reviewed and discussed information pertaining to the 2018 Budget. Items discussed included:-

- Land for Resale Inventory
- Stadium Net Book Values
- Five Year Historical Taxation Revenue
- Five Year Historical Operation Expenses
- Five Year Human Resource Cost
- Projected Five Year Capital Plan
- Projected Five Year Debt Payment
- Capital Out of Revenue Ten (10) Year Impact Analysis
- Current Debt Schedule
- Projected Five Year Expenditure Plan
- Proposed Detailed and Summary Budget for 2018

1-7 Maple Avenue

The Committee reviewed the latest offer from Kingsway Living Inc. for the purchase of the property at 1-7 Maple Avenue for the development of a personal care facility. The Committee also discussed the need for the upgrade of the existing one hundred (100) mm diameter waterline to a one hundred and fifty (150) mm diameter.

The Committee recommends that the purchase price be accepted and that the upgrade of the waterline be included in the current Multi-Year Capital Works Program.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Bennett

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Finance and Administration

The following report was also presented by Councillor Coady-Davis.

Year-End Labour Report

The Committee reviewed the labour costs as of week fifty-two (52). Total labour was \$3,463,973. This was \$101,947 (2.9%) over budget.

The Committee recommends that staff continue to monitor labour costs.

Cash Collections

The Committee reviewed taxation collection for December 31st, 2017. Total taxation receivable as of that date was \$906,833 (\$842,364 – 2016) – an increase of \$64,468 (7.65%) from the previous year.

Disbursement Report

The Committee reviewed the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$2,283,621 and recommends this be presented at the next Council Meeting.

Council Remuneration Policy

The Committee reviewed the Council Remuneration Policy.

The Committee recommends that this be approved.

Management\Non-Union

The Committee reviewed the wage and benefits as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The Committee recommends that the wage increase be outlined in the Agreement be approved for all management and non-union personnel.

2017 Art Procurement

The Committee reviewed the summary of art submitted for Council's Art Procurement Program. Total submissions were fifty-two (52) and total numbers of works purchased were thirteen (13).

The Committee was pleased with the participation and congratulates all people who submitted art works.

Tax Incentives

The Committee reviewed the Tax Incentive Programs in place in other communities.

The Committee recommends these be reviewed in detail at a future meeting.

Fragrance Controlled Workplace

The Committee reviewed the Fragrance Controlled Workplace Policy.

The Committee recommends that this be further discussed at the next Finance and Administration meeting.

Recreation Special Event Workers

The Committee reviewed the current wages for Recreation Special Event Workers.

The Committee recommends this be increased by \$3.00 retroactive to September 1st, 2017.

Ski Trail Development

The Committee reviewed the revised costs for the Ski Trail Development. The revised cost of the development of \$1,406,800 with the Town's share is \$348,807 – an increase of \$95,315 over the original estimate. The project also requires an additional allocation from Multi-Year Capital for \$120,000.

The Committee recommends the adjusted funding be approved.

Funding Requests

The Committee reviewed a request from the Grand Falls-Windsor Fire Department and Muscular Dystrophy to enter a team in the 22nd Annual Curling for Charity Funspiel.

The Committee recommends that this be approved.

The Committee reviewed a request for sponsorship for the PA-MIN-CO Curling Bonspiel.

The Committee recommends this be approved in the amount of \$363.00.

The Committee reviewed a request from the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Parliament to provide program funding.

The Committee recommends that this be denied. The Committee also recommends that we notify the Association that any participants from Grand Falls-Windsor will be eligible for Travel Grants from the Town.

Garbage Collection – Four (4) Unit Buildings

The Committee received two (2) requests from property owners for garbage collection for four (4) unit buildings. The Committee noted that the assessment method for these properties result in a lower valuation than similar properties of less than four (4) units.

The Committee recommends that we adhere to our current Garbage Collection Regulations.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Bennett

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councillor Whiffen noted that the increase would be \$3.00 per hour for the Special Events workers.

Councillor Finn explained that the Special Event workers adjustment was advocated by former Councillor Tom Pinsent. He brought it forward to Council on behalf of the employees.

Mayor Manuel acknowledged the Art Procurement Program and stated it was impressive to have fifty-two (52) pieces presented for viewing. The art work is displayed in all Municipal buildings.

Finance and Administration

Prior to the reading of this report Mayor Manuel was excused due to a perceived conflict of interest.

The following report was also presented by Councillor Coady-Davis.

Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association Agreement

The Committee reviewed a draft of the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association Agreement governing the Association's use of the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association Centre.

The Committee recommends this be amended to include municipal usage and that revenue generated would be expected to contribute to building operating costs. The Committee also recommends a meeting be held with the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association's Executive to discuss the proposed Agreement.

I move the recommendation and report of this Committee.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Bennett

Be it resolved that this recommendation and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Mayor Manuel returned to the meeting at this time.

Committee of the Whole

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

The Committee reviewed the Goals and Objectives for Economic Development, Engineering and Works, Recreation and Finance. Adjustments were made and will be forwarded to the Finance Department for inclusion in the 2018 Budget document.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Bennett

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Deputy Mayor Browne mentioned that the Minutes are short, but it was a very long meeting.

Parks, Recreation and Special Events

The following report was presented by Councillor Bennett.

Jump Start Accessibility Grant

The Director of Parks and Recreation presented the Committee with the details of a “Jump Start Accessibility Grant”.

The Committee recommends staff apply for this Grant to upgrade our playground accessibility. Grants are available for up to \$250,000.00 and the deadline for admissions is March 16th. Items we will apply for include wheelchair swings, paved walking paths and paved disability parking spaces.

Figure Skating Show and Cats Herder Game

The Director informed the Committee of a possible ice time booking clash between the Figure Skating Club year-end ice show and a possible Herder Senior Hockey game on April 21st, 2018.

The Committee recommends the Director of Parks and Recreation contact both groups and see if an arrangement can be made for both events to take place on the same week-end utilizing Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the same week-end.

Miss Teen Grand Falls-Windsor Pageant

The Director explained to the Committee the costs associated with renting the Gordon Pinsent Centre for the Arts as well as the Pageant Show costs. It is likely the Show will need an approximate subsidy of \$2,000.00 from the Town to assist with the organization and implementation of the event.

The Committee recommends Council subsidize the event through a financial contribution of \$500.00 and provide the registration for the winner to attend the Provincial Miss Teen Pageant.

Figure Skating Invoice

The Director explained to the Committee a dispute over a Figure Skating invoice for last year's ice show. A mistake was made on the invoice resulting in an inaccurate credit to Figure Skating's account.

The Committee recommends staff send the invoice to Figure Skating for payment.

2019 Provincial Winter Special Olympics

The Director presented the Committee with a proposal from Special Olympics to host the 2019 Winter Special Olympics in Grand Falls-Windsor from February 28th - March 3rd, 2019.

The Committee supports this event and recommends the Director meet with the Special Olympics organizers and report back to the Committee with the details of the cost and staffing involvement needed from the Town.

2017 Programs and Special Events Report

The Director presented the Committee with a report of all 2017 programs and special events highlighting the number of activities, the number of participants and the profits generated from these activities.

The Committee accepts this report and recommends staff continue providing these programs as well as develop new programs in the future.

YMCA Air Handling Unit Update

The Director gave the Committee an update on the repairs needed to the YMCA pool air handling unit. It is likely it will be two (2) weeks before Heating Products from St. John's will be here to make the necessary repairs.

Recreation Programs Update

The Director gave the Committee an update on the programs the Department are working on this winter. Gymnastics is started up again with a huge enrollment, Mid Winter Bivver is almost sold out, Perfectly Centered Food Festival has most of the chefs booked and the Winter Programs Brochure has been sent out in the mail.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Bennett\Browne

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Manuel noted that the Special Olympics being proposed is being explored by the Town for 2019. He also hoped to have success for the funding application for the Jump Start Program.

Public Works and Planning

Prior to the reading of this report it was decided to remove the 188 Lincoln Road – Sewer Damage item to be voted on separately.

Motion

Finn\Whiffen

Be it resolved that the 188 Lincoln Road – Sewer Damage would be removed and voted on separately. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councillor Feener was excused from the meeting at this time due to a perceived conflict of interest.

Motion

Browne\Bennett

Be it resolved that the 188 Lincoln Road – Sewer Damage item would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Councillor Feener returned to the meeting at this time.

The remainder of the report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

Occupancy Deposits

The Committee discussed the \$300.00 fee that is charged with the building permit. \$50.00 of this fee is for the inspection\occupancy permit and \$250.00 is a deposit that is refunded if a final inspection and occupancy permit is completed prior to the homeowner moving in. This fee is in addition to other permit fees and penalties. The administration of this has caused many issues for both the Engineering and Finance Departments. As housing starts are lower, the effort to continue this is not worth the hassle.

The Committee recommends that the \$50.00 final inspection\occupancy permit fee will continue to be charged with the building permit. If a final inspection is not completed prior to house being occupied, the \$1,000.00 fine will be imposed and water shut off as per the current permit guidelines. The applicant will continue to be informed of all regulations when the building permit is issued.

Tuck's Bee Better – Land Request

The Committee reviewed a request by Trevor Tuck to purchase 4.3 acres of land behind #273-275 Grenfell Heights. Mr. Tuck requested this property for expansion of his business which may include processing, educational tours, etc...

Although the Committee is in support of local businesses, Town Policy normally does not permit a resident\business owner to purchase land behind other properties. The Committee requests additional details of the proposal from Mr. Tuck and it be brought back to the Committee for further discussion.

Rezoning Request – Ivany's Road\Dwyer Street

The Engineering Department received five (5) objections to the rezoning request in the Corduroy Subdivision. Corduroy Developers had requested to rezone three (3) lots on Ivany's Road for Single Unit Urban Residential Zone (RS-3) to Two Unit Urban Residential Zone (RT) and two (2) lots on Dwyer Street

from Single Unit Urban Residential Zone (RS-3) to Low and Median Density Multi-Unit Residential Zone (RM-1). This is requested for construction of duplexes and quadplexes respectively. The design of the properties is to be agreed upon by the Town and Corduroy Developers.

The Committee recommends Corduroy Developers contact these individuals to provide information on the type of proposed structures to be constructed. Some of the objections seem to stem from lack of information. Once feedback is received, it is to be brought back to the Committee for discussion.

Rezoning Request – 83 King Street

The current owners of the property at 83 King Street are looking to rezone the property from Commercial Neighbourhood Zone (CN) to Low and Median Density Multi-Unit Residential Zone (RM-1). They propose to convert the existing convenience store and adjacent garage into ground level apartments. There is currently an upstairs apartment present.

The Committee recommends that the initial stage to rezone commence. This includes notification to the public.

Discretionary Use – 8 Elizabeth Street

The Committee reviewed a request for a home based business to operate a meat cutting business commencing September 2018. Notice was mailed to adjacent properties and advertised in the local newspaper and no objections were received.

The Committee recommends this application be approved.

Land Request – 39A Snow Crescent

The Committee reviewed a request for an additional twenty-five (25) feet of backland from the owners at 39A Snow Crescent. The area of land requested is 1,115 square feet.

The Committee recommends that this request be approved and land sold as per Town policy.

10 Thomas Street – Concerns

The Committee reviewed correspondence from Peter Norman of 10 Thomas Street. Mr. Norman is concerned with past flooding events in the area and the proposed Capital Works that is being completed to help prevent this in the future.

The Committee requests staff to provide a copy of the storm system drawings for the area for review and to bring back to the Committee for more discussion.

Plastic Bag Ban

The Committee reviewed a request by Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador for all municipalities to write their local MHA's and Minister supporting a Provincial ban on plastic bags. This ban should be a Provincial responsibility and not the municipalities.

The Committee recommends Council wait for further discussion at the Urban Municipalities Committee meeting before responding.

Garbage Collection – 142 Lincoln Road

The Committee reviewed correspondence from Ms. Vicky Knee who owns the property at 142 Lincoln Road. This property is a four (4) unit apartment rental. The Town's Garbage Regulations state all rental properties with four (4) or more units are responsible for their own garbage disposal. Ms. Knee has requested garbage collection for this property.

The Committee recommends that this be deferred to the Finance and Administration Committee for discussion.

3 Ryan Street – Concerns

The Committee reviewed correspondence from Ms. Carolyn Hamlyn, the resident at 3 Ryan Street, who voiced concern of proposed duplex construction at Locke Street. Also, Ms. Hamlyn noted lack of directional signage on Scott Avenue and Union Street to note access to the Trans Canada Highway and fear future development of Grenfell Estates would block access to the T' Railway.

The Committee recommend staff respond to Ms. Hamlyn explaining that Locke Street is zoned appropriately for the duplex construction and that the dwelling has to be approved by the Engineering Department. The properties must be a good fit for the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the Public Works Department will look into the signage and replace as needed and she is to be reassured that access to the T' Railway will be maintained in future development of Grenfell Estates.

40 Coronation Street – Concerns

The Committee reviewed a concern of traffic speeding on Thirteenth Avenue and at times missing the turn to Coronation Street and entering the property at 40 Coronation Street. The concern is the reverse curve around the intersection.

The Committee recommends staff investigate to determine if there are any obstructions and remove if possible to improve sight distance. Also, request Municipal Police discuss concern with residents and monitors and use traffic calming devices such as the radar speed signs to try and reduce speed of traffic.

188 Lincoln Road – Sewer Damage

The Committee reviewed correspondence from Ms. Lorraine Hearn of 188 Lincoln Road. Ms. Hearn had sewer back-up in her basement in November and a claim to the Town's insurance company was denied as the Town was not found to be negligent. Ms. Hearn is requesting compensation from the Town for damages.

The Committee requests reports on all blockages in the area since the incident in November to see if there are any relations to Ms. Hearn's issues. Once information is received, further discussion is required at the Finance and Administration Committee meeting.

Street Lights

Council is concerned with the numerous outages in street lights around Town. They would like all outages to be reported to Newfoundland Power.

The Committee recommends that Public Works staff investigate and report all outages to Newfoundland Power. Furthermore, the Committee recommends all residents report outages to the local Newfoundland Power office or on their website.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Bennett

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councillor Finn acknowledged the letter of concern from 10 Thomas Street. This has been an issue for a few years and will be reviewed at the next Public Works and Planning meeting. He also expressed concern with the plastic bag ban and said he was not supportive of this ban, but suggested efforts should be considered to collect and recycle them.

Salmon Festival

The following report was presented by Councillor Feener.

Salmon Festival Entertainment

The Committee discussed possible entertainment for this year's Festival.

The Committee recommends that we continue to review potential acts.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Feener\Browne

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councillor Finn noted that the Minutes have always been vague with respect to the details. There is another event that is being planned for this year's Festival and stated that he is not in favour of starting this new event because of the associated costs.

BUDGET – 2018

Prior to the presentation of the entire Budget, it was noted that there are three (3) items – Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association, Grand Falls Golf Course and Minor Baseball Association which will be removed and voted on separately.

Motion

Finn\Whiffen

Be it resolved that the three (3) items – Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association, Grand Falls Golf Course and Minor Baseball Association would be removed and voted separately. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councillor Bennett was excused from the meeting at this time due to a perceived conflict of interest.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Feener

Be it resolved that the \$2,500.00 grant for the Minor Baseball Association would be approved as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Councillor Bennett returned to the meeting at this time.

Deputy Mayor Browne was excused from the meeting at this time due to a perceived conflict of interest.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Bennett

Be it resolved that the \$25,000.00 grant for the Grand Falls Golf Course would be approved as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

It was noted that the \$25,000.00 grant was part of a lending agreement with the Grand Falls Golf Course.

Deputy Mayor Browne returned to the meeting at this time.

Mayor Manuel was excused from the meeting at this time due to a perceived conflict of interest and Deputy Mayor Browne assumed the Chair.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Bennett

Be it resolved that the \$40,000.00 grant for the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association would be approved as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Mayor Manuel returned to the meeting at this time and assumed the Chair.

Councillor Amy Coady-Davis, Chairperson of the Finance and Administration Committee, presented the 2018 Annual Budget for approval.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Browne

Be it resolved that the 2018 Annual Budget for the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor would be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 4-3 with Councillors Coady-Davis, Finn and Whiffen voting “Nay”.

Deputy Mayor Browne advised there are updates on Capital Projects – upgrading the sewage treatment plant to meet Federal Guidelines, water and sewer upgrading on Grenfell Heights, two (2) new sets of traffic lights on Cromer Avenue and another on Hardy Avenue.

Councillor Finn stated he would like to discuss his position on the Budget. He will be voting against it because the capital out of revenues is not sufficient. Council adding another discretionary management position is not acceptable when no attempt has been made to lower expenses. The debt ratio is increasing. Interest rates are increasing and will have a negative impact on our expenditures. Forty-seven percent (47%) increase in annual debt payments over the next five (5) years. This is the current position with no additional expenditures on capital. Some communities have higher debt ratio, but others have less. There are no allocations for YMCA, SPCA, Heritage Society or the Grand Falls House. The 2017 capital out of revenue was \$1.2 million and 2018 is \$657,000. This funds our Capital Works Program to minimize borrowing. Electrical rates could increase resulting in an additional \$200,000. Staffing and HR is sixty-two percent (62%) of our operating Budget. We are over Budget on labour in 2017 and we have five (5) requests for reclassifications. Having a new position shows Council is not concerned with the expense. The Saturday drop-off was decreased a number of days this year to save on costs and in contrast Council adds a position to the Recreation Department. The most contentious Budget issue is the new position in Recreation. This is not the time to add a new position with no real benefit. The existing Assistant Director has the same duties as the new position. Also new software was purchased to reduce man hours. The Budget was not supported by all Finance Committee members as they were against the increase in HR costs in Recreation.

Councillor Bennett stated that as Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee he can see what work is done by staff. In the last two (2) years events have grown to seventy-seven (77) new events. The existing staff are over-worked. Two (2) Recreation staff worked three hundred and eighty (380) hours overtime in 2017. The list of events are for the residents of Grand Falls-Windsor and 20,000 residents attended the events offered by the Parks and Recreations. The staff work very well together and this past year they found it difficult to take vacation. These

events do generate revenue such as \$17,151 in 2017. With the addition of the new position, there is potential this revenue can grow. He said he will be supporting the position and new programming as this will make Grand Falls-Windsor a better place to live.

Councillor Whiffen advised that this is his first Budget so it was a tedious process. When he revisited the numbers, he made the difficult decision to vote against the Budget. His biggest concern was the debt and capital out of revenues. Additional debt would be required and will result in additional borrowing because \$657,000 capital out of revenue is not acceptable. Tough decisions will have to be made with no amounts for the YMCA, Grand Falls House lands and property. If anything unforeseen arises, it will decrease our capital out of revenue. The loss on a significant commercial business from Valard took place this fall. We do have some new developers and that is positive, but will not necessarily cover our losses in taxation. There is a lot of uncertainty with the economy. We have a pension liability that will have to be addressed, our debt ratio is increasing. I understand there will always be debt, but this has to be managed. We need to start showing constraint in spending. Interest rates will increase resulting in additional costs. Our HR factors are showing significant increases, labour costs increase due to contract negotiations and these costs must be managed. I do not support the new position being proposed for the Parks and Recreation Department. Discussions are needed for other positions and felt they should be addressed before discretionary positions are added. We must maintain status quo. We need to focus on Economic Development, but we decreased that Budget. This will result in a big increase to maintain essential services. Without Budget changes, we have to be concerned about our financial position, review operations and that will result in identifying efficiencies. We cannot keep going down this path. We have to look at the long-term planning and onus is on Council to bring forward suggestions. We have a great community, with lots of programming, new retail, healthcare, but we have to work out finances.

Deputy Mayor Browne stated he will be supporting the Budget as recommended by the Director of Finance. He will be supporting the new position and the programming that will be provided which will encourage residents to choose Grand Falls-Windsor. With the Parks and Recreation increasing programs, management staff is at the same level as in 1990. This position can also assist with Economic Development and as suggested it will generate additional revenues.

Councillor Feener said that he will be supporting the Budget. During the campaign he heard residents say they did not want an increase in taxes and this Budget has no increase.

Councillor Coady-Davis said it was a very difficult position as Chair of Finance to not support the Budget. It is a good Budget, but she is concerned with

long-term debt, reassessments next year and most likely taxes will have to be increased to maintain existing levels of service. She gave the following examples:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Capital Out of Revenue</u>	<u>Borrowing</u>
2016	\$2.7 Million	\$1.60 Million	\$850,000
2017	\$2.8 Million	\$1.26 Million	\$1.6 Million
2018	\$2.9 Million	\$0.657 Million	\$2.27 Million

We reduced HR costs in the past by eliminating the Town Planner and the reassigning of duties to the GIS Technician. Also changes in the Recreation Department to reassign Leisure Services duties to the Assistant Director. We do run a lean operation and must continue this practice. We did run seventy-seven (77) programs in 2017, but with existing staff. Some events are now being offered by the public. Chefs in Town are offering food events and the Town will not compete, so I do not see why we need to add an additional position. The capital funding amounts can change and have negative impacts. We had to cut our asphalt program from six (6) kilometers per year to four (4) kilometers per year. She was really at a loss that we had 380 overtime hours worked when we laid off unionized staff. She is disappointed that a person's name was mentioned as part of the discussion. She also said we have no allocation for the Grand Falls House. What will happen if Government tells the Town that we have to take the responsibility for the upkeep? It was a blow to residents last year with the Provincial Budget and we do not need an additional position for leisure services. We are doing an organizational review and we are unsure of what that report will determine. Changes in funding programs will have an impact. The Recreation software was to reduce the work load of staff. Rising interest rates and increased electrical costs will have a negative impact. Why not wait for a year was suggested, but no way would the majority agree. Councillors Whiffen, Finn and myself will be voting against the Budget because there was no movement by others.

Councillor Bennett requested the Parks and Recreation Director to speak.

The Director of Parks and Recreation stated that unfortunately this has been a contentious issue. This is not the first time the position has been requested. In 1991, he started with the Town and there were five (5) staff in the front office and today we have five (5) staff overall. The facilitating of events and programs have increased. We have a great unionized and management staff and am so proud of what the staff are doing to make Grand Falls-Windsor a better place. We are working day and night to offer these program. We get lots of positive comments from visitors from other communities. We need this position to continue to offer these programs. Staff are working more hours than they should. Programs will

continue to be added and employment is created. The Parks and Recreation Department was under Budget in 2017.

Councillor Finn said this debate is about the economic position of today. Populations are decreasing and is not opposed to what programs are offered, but there are other needs that are more important. This Budget could be tolerated if we were not adding the additional position.

Mayor Manuel vacated the Chair and Deputy Mayor Browne assumed the Chair.

Mayor Manuel said there was a lot said here tonight and over the past couple of months in Budget discussions. He said he was disappointed with the negative comments in the Chambers tonight. Projections have been there and have not changed. The objections are routed in the discussions to add the Leisure Services position. He asked the Director of Finance what has changed from previous years and he said nothing. Borrowing is a necessary evil in the operation of a community. We can consider not to spend on capital, cut services, lay off, etc... Our debt ratio was in the range of 20% twenty-five (25) years ago. Taxes in our community are reasonable and other than this Recreation position, there are no other suggestions to impact the Budget. This position is not impacting our capital borrowing. This position is 0.3% of our Budget. This is not the be all end all with this Budget. We cannot quantify the benefits of the program on a balance sheet, but can based on reaction from the residents and visitors. When possible, we want to incubate and give to the private sector. This is about place making. We are building a community where people want to live. Young professionals from other communities are commenting on the positive programs being offered. These programs build community pride. I feel the comments being made are suggesting Council is being reckless with adding the position. The Recreation Director has been requesting this position for several years, and we hired an Assistant Director of Engineering a few year ago for succession planning. The Recreation Director is begging for this position and not getting any recognition. Confidence in our community is being proven by new businesses being constructed. They would not be spending millions if this was not the case. This community is resilient. Over the past twenty-five (25) years we have lost significant employment, but we have reinvested ourselves and we will continue to be resilient. Rural Newfoundland is decreasing, but we will be the beneficiary of that. I am certainly on side with savings. The organization review will be completed this fall and the Recreation Master Plan completed several years ago recommended we hire several new staff, but this did not happen. There was an opportunity for savings and as mentioned earlier about place making. Communities in this country are reducing infrastructure and putting savings into Recreation. It is all about building a quality of life for our residents. Our Capital Programs are projections and we have control

over these numbers. Taxation forecasts are assumptions based on projection and it is up to Council to manage known costs. It is about attracting new families and offering a great service. Our average taxation is less than many communities. We provide services such as sidewalk snow clearing that many communities do not. This position is only a small piece of the Budget and it is disappointing to hear the negative comments here tonight. Our major infrastructure is in good shape such as the Water Treatment Plant and the Sewage Treatment Plant. The focus of this Budget is on this new Recreation position. We have other Departments that are well managed. We have challenges and we can rise to that challenge. The challenges will be addressed as we move forward. We will continue to be committed to providing excellent services to all our residents.

Mayor Manuel assumed the Chair at this point.

Councillor Whiffen advised the opposition to the Budget is not the Recreation position, it is about where we are now. We do have lots of positive things offered to build the kind of place we want, but if we do not have jobs then people will not move here.

Councillor Coady-Davis said we all know our roles as Councillors. We have to maintain services and we have excellent staff. We cannot justify the position, by saying revenue from programming will pay for the position. The revenue from any program will go into general revenue with the Town. We all benefit from programs, but they are being offered now with existing staff. Some of these events are now being offered by local businesses. We should not compete with these businesses. We can offer grants to groups and we do not need to fund and operate these programs. The new businesses that are starting here are not because of programming or service, but because of employment. Business start-ups are not the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department, but with the Economic Development Department. A slight increase in the Economic Development Department Budget would have had significant impact on business development. The genomics announcement today was a result of Economic Development and not Recreation programs. We are offering great programs and we have to be fiscally responsible going forward. Adding a discretionary position at this time is not necessary. The Assistant Director of Engineering position has saved significant capital dollars because we manage our Capital Works Program. Other communities are paying millions to consultants to manage capital. This has been a difficult night. We have staff who are dedicated and have our best interest at heart.

Deputy Mayor Browne would like to thank the Director of Finance for his contribution over the past thirty (30) years.

Mayor Manuel vacated the Chair and Deputy Mayor Browne assumed the Chair.

Mayor Manuel stated we all have the concerns expressed and have taken advantage of our situation and moved forward. When the Assistant Director of Engineering was mentioned, it was to identify support for the position. Commercial starts show confidence in our community going forward. We have spent forty (40) to fifty (50) hours at the Budget table and there was no discussion on what is needed for Economic Development. We need to discuss this at the Committee table. We need to have jobs to attract people. We will continue to work to grow our economy. We do differ in opinion, but we do work good together. We all have the Town's best interest at heart.

Mayor Manuel assumed the Chair at this time.

Councillor Whiffen stated that when going over the Economic Development Objectives, he did say there were goals that require financial assistance, but they were not costed.

Mayor Manuel thanked everyone for the strong debate on the Budget.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Whiffen advised that this past week-end two (2) biathletes competed in Corner Brook. It is hoped to build on a Biathletes Program when snow conditions improve.

Deputy Mayor Browne advised that he attended community events recently. The Special Olympics Christmas Party was a great success and he expressed thanks to the Knights of Columbus for supporting the dinner. He also noted former Councillor Dan Blackmore recently passed away and expressed condolences to the family.

Councillor Coady-Davis noted that the Northcliffe Drama Club's 7th Annual Robert Burns Night will take place at Sara's Diner and encouraged residents to attend.

Councillor Bennett expressed congratulations to Bart Walsh on his service to the Town and his recent retirement. He also congratulated former Councillor Terry Goodyear on being invested into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. He also noted a highlight of Christmas was the giving back to residents with gift cards and paying for groceries in the amount of \$176.00.

Mayor Manuel advised that there were approximately five hundred (500) gift cards given out during Christmas, but all were donated. He congratulated Terry Goodyear on being invested into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador. He also congratulated Jordan Woolfrey and Courtney Pinsent who competed in Florida in the International Cheerleading Competition with Memorial University and won their Division. He expressed condolence to the Davis family on the

passing of Walt. He was very involved and made significant contributions to our community.

Motion

Bennett\Finn

Be it resolved that the meeting of the Grand Falls-Windsor Town Council would be adjourned until the next regular scheduled meeting of 7:00 P.M., Tuesday, February 13th, 2018. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 P.M.

Barry Manuel
Mayor

J. Saunders
Town Manager\Clerk