

MINUTES OF MEETING

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL

HELD IN THE TOWN HALL

7:00 P.M., TUESDAY, AUGUST 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2021

PRESENT: Mayor: Barry Manuel  
 Deputy Mayor: Mike Browne  
 Councillors: Rod Bennett, Amy Coady-Davis, Holly Dwyer,  
 Shawn Feener, Mark Whiffen  
 Staff: D. Finn, Chief Administrative Officer  
 K. Antle, Director of Community Services  
 N. Chatman, Director of Public Works and  
 Development  
 S. Gosse, Director of Corporate Services  
 R. Hannaford, Communications Officer  
 K. Hutchinson, Deputy Town Clerk

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and asked for any errors or omissions to the Minutes of Meeting #545 of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Browne

Be it resolved that the Minutes of Meeting #545 of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

None

## DISBURSEMENT REPORT

Councillor Whiffen presented the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$405,605.95.

Motion

Whiffen\Browne

Be it resolved that the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$405,605.95 would be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Community Services

The following report was presented by Councillor Coady-Davis.

#### Gymnastics Program

The Director updated the Committee on the status of renting a building for the Gymnastics Program this fall. The building we were looking at fell through and is no longer available.

The Committee recommends staff work on obtaining another building for the program and report back to the Committee at the next Community Services Committee Meeting.

#### Participation Community Better Challenge

The Director informed the Committee that Grand Falls-Windsor won the Participation Community Better Challenge as the most active community in Newfoundland and Labrador. The winning prize was \$15,000.00.

The Committee recommends staff formulate a plan as to where this money will be spent to better further our recreational programs and facilities.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Dwyer

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

Councillor Feener questioned where the planning is with the gymnastics building, He stated that he understands that the old Canadian Tire building is not going to be feasible. He is concerned that there is 300+ gymnastics athletes signing up within a week for registration for the program that runs from September to June and as it looks right now, we can only offer them the Joe Byrne Memorial Stadium until December. He advised that Council are going to have to look at something drastically fast for this program in the next couple of days or let it die.

Councillor Coady Davis advised that she has been in communication with the Town's new Economic Development Manager on the gymnastics program, and there are several options they are looking at. She stated that the program is certainly not dead, and she would not want that message to get out to the gymnastics group, because that is not even a consideration at this point. She stated that Council are looking at every possible idea that they can come up with to continue to run the program, and the Joe Byrne memorial stadium would be a consideration until the fall at least and there has not been a deadline as to when it will not be available to use. There are several other locations that council have been talking about and looking into, as unfortunately the building that they had a lease agreement signed for fell through. Unfortunately for gymnastics that agreement fell through, but there was another lease agreement signed from another business that will be going into that building which is great news. Council are 100% committed to the gymnastics program and we are diligently working to find a solution and a permanent location for that group. We will stay in constant communication with the gymnastics group and will inform the public as soon as a decision is made.

Mayor Manuel noted that Council have been challenged with finding another location for the gymnastics group for approximately 2 years. He stated that Six months ago they had a very good meeting with some of the representatives, a coach, and some of the parents, and were very upfront with them on the challenges they are having finding a new location for gymnastics. We understand that the registration for gymnastics has grown tremendously, and we hope to see it continue

to grow and the last thing we want to see is our gymnastics program go by the wayside. As we explained to the representatives at that meeting, the potential cost of a new building at this point will be anywhere from 3-5 million dollars. We are looking at recreational complex feasibility studies, our aging infrastructure, and other recreational needs, and gymnastics would fall into that category for the long term. He announced that if anyone has any suggestions of buildings that may be suitable for the gymnastics group by all means let Council know, although he doesn't think there will be anything mentioned that they haven't already looked at. He stated that it's a difficult situation when we can't find space, and we would like nothing more to be able to tell this group than that we have found a location for them. We have a lot of things to consider when it comes to looking at big costs for new infrastructure, and those financial implications were explained in our meeting.

### Public Works and Development

The following report was presented by Councillor Holly Dwyer.

#### 260 Grenfell Heights

The Committee discussed the request from the resident at 260 Grenfell Heights to continue cleaning up some of the Town owned land adjacent to his property. The original request was to cut some fallen trees, but they since have cleared close to 0.23 Ha, and constructed a road and a ditch on town property. The resident is now requesting to complete additional clean up and do some landscaping on Town property.

The Committee recommends this request be denied and inform the resident that no further work is to take place on Town property. If it continues the town needs to take legal action.

Environmental Assessment – Rushy Pond

The Committee was advised of an undertaking that was registered under the Department of Environment and Climate Change to replace the bridge at Rushy Pond on the Trans-Canada Highway just west of Town. The proposed plan is to construct a temporary bypass, demolish and remove the existing structure, and replace with a new one in the same location. The Department reached out to Council to see if there were any comments or concerns with the proposal.

The Committee are pleased that this work is being undertaken and recommends that no action be taken as there are no negative affects to the town.

Land Request – 12 Riverview Road

The Committee reviewed a request from the resident at 12 Riverview Road to purchase approximately 160.57m<sup>2</sup> of backland.

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

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Dwyer\Browne

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 agreed that the construction of the new bridge just west of Grand Falls-Windsor near the golf course is long overdue and stated that it is great news that government have finally realized that it needs to be replaced.

The following Resolution was presented by Councillor Dwyer:-

RESOLUTION GF-W 2021-325

RESOLUTION

GAS TAX AGREEMENT AMENDMENT 2019-2024

WHEREAS:the funding for the Federal-Provincial Administrative Agreement on the Federal Gas Tax Fund for 2019-2021 has been amended;

AND WHEREAS: the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor has reviewed the allocations for the Amendment based on the 2016 census population data;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor approves the allocation of funds under the Federal Gas Tax Fund – Provincial Council approves the Ultimate Recipient Gas Tax Agreement 2019-2024 received on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Motion

Dwyer\Coady-Davis

Be it resolved that Resolution GF-W 2021-325 would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Councillor Dwyer commented that the amount that was included in this amendment was \$602, 784.00 which brings that Gas Tax amount for 2021/2022 year to \$1,232,965.00.

### Corporate Services

The following report was presented by Councillor Whiffen.

#### Cash Collection Report

The Committee reviewed taxation collection for June 2021. Total taxation receivable as of that date was \$5,477,781 (\$7,117,255 - 2020) a decrease of \$1,639,474 (23.04%) from the previous year.

The Committee recommends that staff continue to work with residents and businesses to get all outstanding taxes paid as soon as possible. In addition, residents are reminded to contact the Corporate Services Department at 709-489-0402 to discuss payment options, or to set up a payment plan.

### Disbursement Report

The Committee reviewed the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$405,605.95 and recommends this be presented at the next Council Meeting.

### Labour Report

The Committee reviewed the labour costs as of week thirty (30). Total labour was \$1,915,219. This was \$264,153 (12.1%) under budget.

The Committee recommends that staff continue to monitor labour costs moving forward.

### Goodyear Avenue Parking and Ball Field Recreation Upgrades

The Committee reviewed the tender results to the complete the work under project MI13144. There was only one response, and the bid came in approximately \$60,000 over budget. The project is cost-shared with the Provincial Government; however, the excess amount would be 100% Town cost.

The Committee recommends that management review the components of the project to ensure everything included is required and make a further recommendation at a future meeting.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Whiffen\Browne

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

### NOTICE OF MOTION

None

## OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Feener implored the Union to get back to the table to get the outstanding issues clarified.

Councillor Dwyer advised that the Kitchen Party Theatre Company has show's ongoing at the Gordon Pinsent Centre for the Arts. The "Girls from Away" show is based on war time in Grand Falls-Windsor and is a very nice story, there is also another show that Gordon Pinsent wrote. This is a great opportunity for residents to get out at lunch time or in the evening for an hour of entertainment.

Mayor Manuel noted that The Kitchen Party has been anchored here and we are expecting it to grow over the years, being a big attraction for tourists and residents. He also agreed that the acting at these shows was fantastic, and the stories are great, and they are worth the time to see if you can.

Deputy Mayor Browne advised that the Corduroy Brook Nature Centre and Trail are having an International Youth Day on August 12th from 2-6pm, and he would like to welcome all the youth from Grand Falls-Windsor and surrounding areas to partake in that event and the activities involved.

Councillor Coady Davis stated that she had the privilege to attend the Queen Street Dinner Theatre nighttime show "Dolly's Country Pop Disco", and it was fantastic with such amazing talent performing. She has also heard great reviews for the lunch time show, so if anyone is interested in either of the shows make sure to check Queen Street Dinner Theatre online. She also wanted to remind residents to be safe this summer and be aware of their surroundings. She also advised that it is now your prerogative whether to wear a mask or not, but to please be respectful of people's choice.

Councillor Bennett expressed his concern on the low numbers of the Grand Falls Windsor volunteer Fire Department as the numbers are down to 35 members, and we need to recruit 10 more members. He stated that our Fire Department is the most important organization our town has, and it is very demanding, but much more rewarding. If you are interested, please contact the Fire Department with any questions you may have.

Councillor Bennett apologized for his comments in the last meeting about whether he was being in Conflict of Interest with respect to negotiations and his conduct during that meeting. He noted that he misspoke and that his actions were were the hardest thing he has had to do in the last 4 years. He also noted that the last few weeks have been very stressful, and it's taking a toll on him and his family, but he is doing his best to stay out of everything and remain neutral. Councillor Bennett also requested an apology from the Mayor because at the last meeting he said that Councillor Bennett was in conflict, and he believed he was not. Mayor Manuel responded that Councillor Bennett had declared himself as



being in conflict at the beginning of the negotiations process back in October of 2020, and he made a Facebook post stating the same making sure that everybody knew he was in conflict because he had a spouse that works in the Union. Mayor Manuel stated that two Council Meetings ago Councillor Bennett stood up and again announced that he was in conflict on the Union issue, and at the last meeting stated the same. He said that at the last meeting he just reiterated what Councillor Bennett had been saying all along, and that is he is a little confused as to why an apology is necessary. He advised that if Councillor Bennett is thinking that he was insinuating that he was in conflict in the Council Chambers, then he would have been clear to everyone and that was not his intent.

Councillor Bennett left the meeting.

Mayor Manuel reported that Council have been looking at the Aquaculture industry in Central Newfoundland, particularly in Grand Falls-Windsor for approximately 5/6 years now. The main person on staff who has overseen the mission is our Business Development Officer. Since that time Mayor Manuel advised that he was appointed by Council to be the representative to go to aquaculture conferences and attend meetings.

Councillor Coady-Davis advised that the reason that Councillor Bennett declared that he was in conflict of interest with regards to Union negotiations, is because there is a direct financial impact on him because his spouse is a member of the Union of Grand Falls-Windsor. So, he definitely is in conflict, which is why he recognized it back when we were beginning negotiations, and then Council agreed that yes, he was indeed in conflict and should no longer be involved in any of these negotiations' conversations. She claims that she doesn't know why Councillor Bennett is back tracking or has requested an apology, because Council has done nothing but recognize that he is in conflict and that he has declared that himself, therefore there was no further negotiation conversations with him included.

Mayor Manuel again reiterated that at the last Council meeting Councillor Bennett chose to get up and have his say that he is not involved, he then resigned from Chair of Corporate services, and then tonight referred to the election. A political campaign does not belong in the Council Chambers.

Browne\Whiffen

Be it resolved that the meeting of the Grand Falls-Windsor Town Council would be adjourned until the next regular scheduled meeting of September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:57 P.M.



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Barry Manuel  
Mayor



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Darren Finn  
Chief Administrative Officer