

MINUTES OF MEETING

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL

HELD IN THE TOWN HALL

7:00 P.M., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH, 2020

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
 N. Chatman, Director of Public Works and
 Development
 K. Antle, Director of Community Services
 S. Gosse, Director of Corporate Services\Clerk
 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 #534 of November 3rd, 2020.

Motion
Dwyer\Browne

Be it resolved that the Minutes of Meeting #534 of November 3rd, 2020 would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

None

DISBURSEMENT REPORT

Councillor Bennett presented the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$3,710,495.73.

Motion

Bennett\Feener

Be it resolved that the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$3,710,495.73 would be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Corporate Services

The following report was presented by Councillor Bennett.

Labour Report

The Committee reviewed the labour costs as of week forty-four (44). Total labour was \$3,183,830. This was \$133,830 (4.0%) under Budget.

The Committee recommends that staff continue to monitor labour costs and ensure work being completed is necessary.

Cash Collections

The Committee reviewed taxation collection for October 31st, 2020. Total taxation receivable as of that date was \$3,046,655 (\$2,453,814 – 2019) an increase of \$592,840 (24.16%) from the previous year.

The Committee recommends that staff continue its efforts to collect all outstanding taxes and to increase communication and statement mail-outs. The Committee also recognizes the impact of COVID-19 on collections and want staff to continue to work with residents and businesses to ensure all outstanding amounts are collected.

Disbursement Report

The Committee reviewed the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$3,710,495.73 and recommends this be presented at the next Council Meeting.

Grenfell Heights Waterline

A resident requested that the Committee review the water connection fee that is charged when a lot of land is developed at the end of Grenfell Heights. The

Committee reviewed Minutes from Council meetings from 2001-2002 and determined that what the resident was referring to was actually a calculation of the cost of installing a waterline, split amongst the lots of land on a “per foot” basis. This calculation allowed the residents to enjoy water service and for the Town to recoup the cost of the installation.

The Committee agrees with the calculations and recommends that staff continue to implement this practice on the remaining lots in the area.

Business Tax

The Committee reviewed correspondence from a local business suggesting that they should be considered in a different business tax category.

The Committee recommends that staff review this case and check on options with the Municipal Assessment Agency. If there is nothing to be changed within existing tax categories, staff can bring this back to the Committee during Budget discussions for a possible change.

Fundraiser

The Committee reviewed a request from Royal LePage Generation Reality to provide a donation to the “Pop the Balloon” Fundraiser.

The Committee recommends that \$100 of gift cards from local businesses be donated on behalf of the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor.

Ambulance

The Mayor led a discussion about the response time and call volumes for paramedics at the Hospital. MHA Chris Tibbs recently discussed this publicly during the House of Assembly and the Mayor suggests Council support this initiative to ensure the residents of Grand Falls-Windsor and surrounding areas receive the best ambulance service possible.

The Committee recommends that the Mayor reach out to the local medical practitioners that may have more information on this, and to reach out to MHA Chris Tibbs to provide support moving forward.

Budget Discussion

The Director of Corporate Services discussed the plan for the upcoming Budget season and the Committee recommends that staff prepare as much

information as possible and provide to Council ahead of time so that the process can move along efficiently.

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.

Councillor Bennett wanted to remind all residents that if they need to make arrangements to have their taxes paid by the end of the year to call the Town Hall and they will gladly assist.

Mayor Manuel advised the lack of Paramedics in the area is causing long wait times for patients and it is a concern of Council because it affects our residents. There has been a one hundred percent (100%) increase in calls this year, yet there has been no change to the service provided. He wanted to encourage residents to make phone calls and write letters to Government to make their concerns heard and Council will certainly do the same thing.

Community Services

The following report was presented by Councillor Coady-Davis.

MP Scott Simms

The Committee welcomed MP Scott Simms to the meeting at 5:00 P.M. He updated the Committee on different programs and initiatives the Federal Government are working on that will provide more jobs to the citizens of Grand Falls-Windsor. Council also brought forward several questions and concerns regarding current ACOA Funding Projects and the possibilities for future Projects. MP Simms agreed to work closely with Council to address any concerns and questions around funding and services the Federal Government provide to Grand Falls-Windsor.

MP Simms was excused from the meeting at 6:30 P.M.

Economic Development Update

The Manager of Economic Development updated the Committee on the activities and initiatives the Department are working on including ATV Trail Development, Website Development, Business Retention and Expansion, Social Development Programs and the Rural Health Simulation Project.

The Committee recommends staff continue to work on these initiatives and report back to the Committee with further developments.

Stadium Issues

The Committee discussed issues around the arena operations including rental scheduling, spitting in the players benches and COVID-19 Regulations.

The Committee recommends staff work with all the user groups to come up with solutions to these issues ensuring we follow all Government and Arena Regulations.

YMCA Building Issues

The Director updated the Committee on an issue with the swimming pool losing water from an unknown leak in the system. The Consultant who did the pool renovations for us several years ago is looking at possible solutions and a response from him is expected later this month.

The Committee recommends staff work with the Consultant to come up with a solution and to formulate a cost estimate to make the necessary repairs.

Gymnastics Parents Correspondence

The Committee discussed correspondence from a Gymnastics parent who is concerned with the program not having a permanent location. The program is currently using the Joe Byrne Memorial Arena while ice is not down at the facility.

The Committee recommends staff arrange to have parent representatives attend a future Committee meeting to discuss possible future plans.

Sliding Hill

The Mayor updated the Committee on a meeting he had with the President of the Rotary Club regarding the plans for a sliding hill on Scott Avenue.

The Committee recommends staff work with the Rotary Club to come up

with a plan to develop the facility utilizing Government Funding and bring the plan to Committee for approval before moving ahead with the implementations of the project.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Coady-Davis\Feener

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

Councillor Coady-Davis expressed “Thank You” to MP Scot Simms for joining the Community Services Committee meeting and providing Council and staff with updates on Government Programs that are available. We are fortunate to be able to provide the Joe Byrne Memorial Stadium to the Gymnastics Club, but it is realized that a more permanent place is needed. Council will continue to look for a new location and hopefully have a solution in the New Year.

Mayor Manuel advised right now we are focusing on a sliding hill, but he wanted to inform residents that this plan has a long way to go before it is finalized. We have to look at the hill locations, powerlines in place, safety, funding and come up with a plan to get this project completed as quickly as possible.

Public Works and Development

The following report was presented by Councillor Dwyer.

1 Sapling Street

The Committee welcomed Mr. Verdon Young at 5:55 P.M. to discuss the plugged service line at his residence in 2019. Mr. Young provided a detailed summary from his perspective. Mr. Young feels that the repairs are the responsibility of the Town as a section of this service line is not on his property and that is where the plug occurred.

Mr. Young left the meeting at 6:40 P.M.

The Committee recommends this be discussed further at the next Committee meeting.

Permit Summary

The Committee reviewed the updated Permit Summary Report dated to September 30th, 2020. The number of permits is on par with 2019.

19 King Street – Commissioner’s Report

The Committee was presented the Commissioner’s Report for the Public Hearing on the rezoning of 19 King Street from Public Use (PU) to Commercial Neighbourhood (CN).

The Committee recommends this be reviewed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting to give all Councillors the opportunity to review the report in detail.

Street Sign Policy

The Committee reviewed the updated Street Sign Policy which gave details on the standard look of all street signs in Grand Falls-Windsor. Currently, there are several different types of signs and the goal is to be consistent.

The Committee recommends all land be sold as per policy.

Land – Riverview Road

The Committee reviewed the land acquisition on Riverview Road that is adjacent to the overflow parking area for the Regional Health Centre. The land was obtained to fulfil requests of residents along Exploits Lane to obtain backland. Furthermore, there is a residential building lot available with a 22.4m frontage.

The Committee recommends all land be sold as per policy.

Proposed Cottages

The Committee reviewed a request from a developer to consider an area of land be available to construct riverside cottages near Gorge Park. There is approximately 1.6ha that could potentially be used. The proposed area would need to wait for the updated regulations to be completed to permit construction.

The Committee recommends that this proposal be put on hold until a complete Riverfront Plan is developed to ensure all areas are utilized appropriately. This discussion will occur at a future Committee meeting.

Grenfell Heights Extension

The Committee was updated on the request to have the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure complete upgrades to Grenfell Heights Extension. An estimate to complete the work was submitted to Government for review and Town staff are waiting on a meeting with the Assistant Deputy Minister to discuss further.

The Committee recommends staff continue to pursue a meeting with Government and update the Committee at a future meeting.

Grenfell Heights Street Lighting

The Committee has concerns with the street lighting along Grenfell Heights from the roundabout to the east end of Town.

The Committee recommends staff follow up with NL Power to plan improvements along this area to make it safer for pedestrians.

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 stated he had a few calls regarding the lack of light on Grenfell Heights just past the roundabout. Upon inspection it appears that there is sufficient lighting in that area, but the lights are placed too far back from the road. Because of the danger this causes for our residents our Director of Public Works and Development will contact NL Power to try and get this issue rectified.

Councillor Dwyer advised in regards to Grenfell Heights Extension we did have a meeting arranged with the Minister to discuss this issue, but due to COVID-19 it got cancelled. We will continue to pursue the Government on this matter and hopefully be able to reschedule the meeting.

Committee of the Whole

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

Resident Correspondence – Noise Complaint

The Committee reviewed correspondence from a resident regarding excessive noise from vehicles within the area of Lincoln Road. The resident encouraged Council to join with the efforts of the City of St. John's to establish regulations that can restrict citizens from having vehicles that produce sounds with excessive levels of noise. Council has heard these similar concerns from other citizens in the past. Provincial and Town Regulations allow Police to fine drivers with faulty mufflers that produce excessive noise, however, there are no Provincial Regulations that address mufflers that are not faulty, but still produce sounds that are considered by some to be excessive.

The Committee believes this issue could rightly be addressed by additions to the Highway Traffic Act because vehicles are not restricted to any single municipal jurisdiction. The Committee also recommends that Council write a letter to the Provincial Government encouraging them to update the Highway Traffic Act Regulations, so that then Police can address the sound decibel levels any single vehicle can emit.

Resident Correspondence – Operations of Central Health

The Committee reviewed correspondence from a concerned citizen about operations of Central Health. Specifically, the citizen was concerned about the four (4) different senior leadership positions that were filled by staff who are living and operating from either Nova Scotia, Ontario or New Brunswick. The citizen was concerned about how the organization was functioning with senior leadership not in the Province and was further concerned about the apparent lack of concern from Government. This issue about the locations of senior leadership, combined with the issue of relocating laboratory services to Gander for political reasons, and the recent concerns about an adequate ambulance service cause Council to be increasingly concerned.

The Committee recommends that Council write the Provincial Government and address all these concerns.

Municipal Plan Amendment – 19 King Street

The Committee reviewed the Commissioner's Report about the rezoning change of 19 King Street submitted by Bryan Blackmore. Following the required period of Public Consultations, the Commissioner could not find any compelling reason to not approve the zoning change from "Public Use" to "Commercial Use", therefore recommends Council proceed with the zoning change amendment.

The Committee recommends that the Commissioner's Report be received as a final document for its considerations and that the property of 19 King Street be rezoned to "Commercial Use". The Committee also recommends that the required documentation be submitted to Government regarding the same.

Tender – Water Treatment Plant Actuators

The Committee reviewed the Tender Results for the Supply and Installation of Actuators at the Water Treatment Plant.

There were three (3) bidders in total and the lowest bidder was Atlantic Controls at a bid price of \$196,477.31 HST included. This bid price is within the Budget.

The Committee recommends that the bid from Atlantic Controls be accepted.

Budget Review 2021

The Committee reviewed the goals, objectives and tasks for 2021 related to the Departments within the Town. The Committee also reviewed a summary of all the expenses and revenue.

The Committee recommends that staff continue to work on the Budget preparation and set up future Council meetings that are necessary to finalize the 2021 Budget.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Whiffen

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

Councillor Dwyer explained that the correspondence we received regarding the lack of leadership at Central Health is not only from a resident, but also a Central Health employee. How can important decisions be made in the best interest of Central Newfoundland when our top management personnel are not even living in the Province. We are very concerned with this issue, along with the lack of Paramedics in the area and the re-direction of lab services, our voices and the voices of residents needs to be heard.

Mayor Manuel advised our healthcare has been politicized far too much and it is time for that to stop. Politicians are making decisions on healthcare based on

politics, they should be making them based on evidence and facts. This is extremely important to us and we need not only residents, but everybody in the region to support us in expressing our concerns.

Councillor Dwyer noted that we have received our ATIPP information that we requested from Central Health regarding the lab relocation and she is more convinced than ever that this decision was political. After reviewing the information on the reasons for the lab relocation, it was easy to see that the information was manipulated to make Gander the choice. This is very important to Grand Falls-Windsor and we will keep fighting to keep the services here.

Mayor Manuel advised that because Council does not have any jurisdiction to do anything about the loud mufflers on vehicles in Town, we have written a letter to the Provincial Government asking them to come up with a solution to this issue.

Councillor Dwyer advised that the Commissioner could not find any compelling reason not to rezone the property located at 19 King Street. We did have a concerned citizen living close to the area about his property now being zoned Commercial. We have made a commitment to contact that resident and discuss how this change may be in his best interest.

The Chief Administrative Officer stated there will be no impact on that property at 19 King Street due to this zoning change.

NOTICE OF MOTION

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Dwyer mentioned the deadline to apply for the Legacy Scholarships is Monday, November 30th and that is for any students that graduated in 2020 and are attending Post-Secondary Education. There is free general skating on Sundays at 3:00 P.M. for fifty (50) minutes and on Mondays and Wednesday there is pre-school and adult skating. The Fire Department had their Honorarium Night this week for the firefighters, so congratulations to Captain Mike Mackey on his Provincial Medal for thirty-five (35) years of service. She would also like to remind residents this time of year to consider shopping locally as it is very important to support our neighbourhood businesses.

Deputy Mayor Browne noted the Special Olympics Annual General Meeting is tomorrow at 7:00 P.M. at the Soccer Clubhouse on Cromer Avenue. If anyone

would like to volunteer this is a very worthwhile and rewarding cause. He also wanted to express congratulations to Emily Hewlett who purchased a chip van and sold salty treats and sweets all summer. Emily received the Youth Ventures Emerging Entrepreneur Award for 2020 and she also received the YMCA Entrepreneur Olympic Award for 2020. It is nice to see our youth take the initiative to start a business on their own and become successful.

Councillor Coady-Davis wanted to advise residents that we are starting our “Give Back Campaign” again during the holidays, and to remind residents that with the COVID-19 restrictions things have changed this year. All the details and updates will be on our social media sites, so stay tuned to our Facebook and Twitter pages. With the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the Province, she wanted to remind residents the importance of being careful, washing hands, wearing masks and following the directions of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. On Saturday, December 5th from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on Main Street in a stationary parade, where people can drive by. She also wanted to express “Thank You” to the Santa Claus Parade Committee for arranging the Parade while adhering to COVID-19 restrictions.

Councillor Bennett advised the Art Procurement Program is this Saturday, so if you have any art to drop off make sure you do by Friday, November 27th at 12:00 Noon at the Town Hall.

Mayor Manuel advised staff have done a wonderful job putting our 2021 Budget together and it will be released soon. He noted we will have a flagraising and Proclamation signing tomorrow at the Town Hall for the Purple Ribbon Campaign. This Campaign is 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and runs from November 25th to December 10th, 2020. He also wished “Happy Retirement” and congratulations to one of our employees, Mr. Wayne Tait, who is retiring this Friday after approximately eighteen (18) years with the Town. On behalf of Council and all staff we wish Wayne all the best on his retirement.

Motion

Browne\Dwyer

Be it resolved that the meeting of the Grand Falls-Windsor Town Council would be adjourned until the next regular scheduled meeting of December 15th, 2020. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Barry Manuel
Mayor

Darren Finn
Chief Administrative Officer