

MINUTES OF MEETING

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL

HELD IN THE TOWN HALL

7:00 P.M., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 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  
 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 #535 of November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Motion

Browne\Coady-Davis

Be it resolved that the Minutes of Meeting #535 of November 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 \$1,452,497.76.

Motion

Bennett\Feener

Be it resolved that the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$1,452,497.76 would be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Committee of the Whole (1 of 4)

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

#### Budget Review – 2021

The Committee reviewed budget issues, revenue and expenses related to preparation of the 2021 Budget.

The Committee recommends staff continue to make adjustments as discussed and meet again November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Dwyer

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

#### Committee of the Whole (2 of 4)

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

#### Budget Review – 2021

The Committee reviewed budget issues, revenue and expenses related to preparation of the 2021 Budget. The Committee also reviewed the Debt Schedule and the Town Funded Capital commitments for 2021.

The Committee recommends that staff make the adjustments discussed and meet again on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

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.

Committee of the Whole (3 of 4)

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

Budget Review – 2021

The Committee reviewed budget issues, revenue and expenses related to preparation of the 2021 Budget. The Committee also reviewed the comparative data for other communities.

The Committee recommends that staff compile a drafted final budget document for a possible public presentation on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Coady-Davis

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

Committee of the Whole (4 of 4)

The following report was also presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

Voyent Alert

The Committee participated in a software demonstration by Voyent Alert. The software would allow the Town to notify citizens in a targeted manner about events and emergencies within the Town.

The Committee recommends that staff investigate this software further and if it is determined to be the best solution to then start the process of implementing its use within the organization.

### Millcrest Academy

The Committee reviewed the Millcrest Academy Building Conditions Assessment Report presented by SNC-Lavalin Inc. in December 2020. The Report determined that once the school is torn down it would cost the Town \$412,620 to make the gymnasium functional. In addition, to this expense there will be other expenses related to hazardous material abatement, parking lot improvements, landscaping and other general operating and maintenance costs.

The Committee recommends that staff and the Mayor contact the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Grand Falls-Windsor and finalize details with respect to acquiring the Millcrest Academy gymnasium at no cost.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Coady-Davis

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

Mayor Manuel explained the Voyent Alert is software that we are contemplating on purchasing and currently comparing to other software out there. He would like to mention that one thing that this software will do is allow us to reach out to residents based on how the issue impacts them. For example, if there was a water line break on Goodyear Avenue, we would not have to notify the whole Town just those that the situation affects. Also we had anticipated that the gymnasium would be donated to the Town, we put in a request for the school, particularly, the library, music room and the land for the purposes of community development in the future. Unfortunately, we were told that we would not get the land and the plan is to demolish the old school, but we could have the gymnasium if we wanted to assume the cost to get it to functionality standards. However, they are no longer interested in donating the school to the Town, but want us to lease it instead. Council agrees that we are not interested in spending \$500,000 on a building that we do not own and could be sold out from underneath us. Also, to spend that kind of money on a gymnasium we would need to have a long-term plan for its future use. Our plan is to go back to the Diocese to see if they will reconsider the donation of the building.

## Public Works and Development

The following report was presented by Councillor Dwyer.

### 1 Sapling Street

The Committee reviewed the information surrounding the sewer plug that occurred to a resident's service line in January 2019. At the last meeting, the resident met with the Committee to provide the details from their perspective and felt the Town was responsible for the damages. The original claim was denied as per the Sewer Blockage Policy.

The Committee recommends that the decision of staff be upheld as per the current policy. The Committee also recommends staff review this policy moving forward.

### Royal Canadian Legion Land

The Committee discussed the offer from the Royal Canadian Legion to sell their land to the Town on Beaumont Avenue.

The Committee recommends it not be purchased at this time. However, the Committee suggests staff inform the Legion that they should consider rezoning the property from Public Use to Residential to maximize their return as it is sufficient for a building lot.

### Land Request – 7 Queensway

The Committee reviewed a request from the property owner at 7 Queensway to purchase 1,215 square metres of backland for a possible business expansion.

The Committee recommends staff contact the owner to get details of the expansion and bring back to the Committee for review.

### Variance – 3 Bennett Avenue

The Committee discussed a request from the resident of 3 Bennett Avenue for a variance of ten percent (10%) to accommodate the construction of an accessory building. The adjacent homeowners to the property were contacted for input or representation and there were no objections or concerns received.

The Committee recommends the requested variance be approved.

### 2021 Saturday Drop-Off Schedule

The Committee were presented with the 2021 Schedule for the Saturday Drop-Off. A total of eighteen (18) events were proposed.

The Committee recommends the Schedule be approved. In addition, the Committee would like staff to contact Central NL Waste Management to organize another Household Hazardous Waste Day in the spring.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Dwyer\Whiffen

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 advised in the case of the blocked sewer line at 1 Sapling Street, it was found to be the responsibility of the homeowner. His service line was on another property, but still had not reached our main line for the Town to be responsible. As per our Policy, it does not matter where the service line runs it is still the homeowner's responsibility until it meets the main line.

Mayor Manuel noted our Saturday Drop-Off facility is a very popular service that the Town provides and this comes at a cost. We contract a company to be able to deal with the waste, separate it on site and truck it to the Waste Management facility in Norris Arm. The cost of waste management continues to rise and what would cost us \$3,600 per event a few years ago is now costing \$5,000 to \$6,000 per event. Obviously, we cannot offer this event every week-end based on cost, but eighteen (18) events in 2021 is a reasonable amount and we are happy to provide those worthwhile events to residents.

### Corporate Services

The following report was presented by Councillor Bennett.

#### Labour Report

The Committee reviewed the labour costs as of week forty-eight (48). Total labour was \$3,443,806. This was \$105,942 (3.0%) 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 November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Total taxation receivable as of that date was \$2,472,678 (\$2,084,824 – 2019) an increase of \$387,853 (18.60%) from the previous year.

The Committee recommends that staff continue its efforts to collect all outstanding taxes.

### Disbursement Report

The Committee reviewed the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$1,452,497.76 and recommends this be presented at the next Council Meeting.

### Funding Requests

The Committee reviewed a request from the “VOCM Cares Foundation” to donate to this year’s Happy Tree Campaign.

The Committee recommends that \$500 be approved.

The Committee reviewed a request from the “RCMP Wish Tree Campaign” in support of Make-A-Wish.

The Committee recommends \$250 be approved.

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.

## Community Services

The following report was presented by Councillor Coady-Davis.

### Dial-a-Carol

The Committee discussed a request from the Oddfellows and Rebekahs for sponsorship of their Dial-a-Carol Fundraiser in aid of the Hope Valley Youth Treatment Centre.

The Committee recommends making a \$200.00 donation.

### Centennial Legacy Scholarships

The Committee discussed the Centennial Legacy Scholarships for 2020 which was delayed due to COVID-19. All applications have been submitted and the Judging Committee is in place with Councillor Bennett as a Council representative on the Committee.

The Committee recommends awarding the 2020 Scholarships as soon as possible and to work with Exploits Valley High for the promotion of the 2021 Scholarships.

### Mental Health Video

The Director informed the Committee of a Mental Health Video being produced by Rogers TV and Town staff to help with coping strategies and techniques during COVID-19 and the long winter months. The video is hosted by Deputy Mayor Browne with interviews from several healthcare professions and seniors from our community.

The Committee recommends to post excerpts of the video on our social media throughout the winter.

### Stadium Schedule Correspondence

The Committee discussed a request from the Major Midget Impact Hockey Team to host a Provincial Hockey Tournament in Grand Falls-Windsor in January 2021.

Due to the increasing concerns of COVID-19, the Committee denies this request.

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 Coady-Davis stated the decision has been made for the winners of the Centennial Legacy Scholarships for 2020 and there will be a presentation taking place on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at Exploits Valley High for the two (2) winners. The applications for the 2021 Scholarships will be available later in the school year.

### NOTICE OF MOTION

None

### BUDGET – 2021

Mayor Manuel advised we do have members of Council that are also members of Community Organizations that do receive some support from the Town, which as a result causes a conflict of interest. Because of this when those organizations are discussed in Committee meetings, those members are excused from the meeting for the discussions. So, I would like to call for a Motion to separate those items from the 2021 Budget and be voted on separately.

The following motion was presented by Councillor Dwyer:-

I move that the line items for the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association, Grand Falls Golf Club and the Grand Falls-Windsor Minor Baseball Association be removed from the 2021 Budget and voted on separately.

Motion

Dwyer\Whiffen

Be it resolved that this motion be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Budget – Grand Falls Golf Club

Deputy Mayor Browne was excused from the Council meeting at this time. Councillor Bennett read out the line regarding a Grant for the Grand Falls Golf Club in the amount of \$25,000.

Motion

Bennett\Whiffen

Be it resolved that the Grant for the Grand Falls Golf Club in the amount of \$25,000 be approved as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Deputy Mayor Browne returned to the meeting at this time.

Budget – Grand Falls-Windsor Minor Baseball Association

Councillor Coady-Davis was excused from the Council meeting at this time. Councillor Bennett read out the line regarding a Grant for the Grand Falls-Windsor Minor Baseball Association in the amount of \$2,500.

Motion

Bennett\Whiffen

Be it resolved that the Grant for the Grand Falls-Windsor Minor Baseball Association be approved as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Councillor Coady-Davis returned to the meeting at this time.

Budget – Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association

Mayor Manuel was excused from the Council meeting at this time, so Deputy Mayor Browne asked Councillor Bennett to read the line regarding the Grant for the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association in the amount of \$40,000.

Motion

Bennett\Dwyer

Be it resolved that the Grant for the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association be approved as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Councillor Bennett mentioned the amount of traffic at the Corduroy Brook Enhancement Association shows us how important it is to the Town. This grant of \$40,000 is only pennies compared to if we ran this ourselves. It is a gem for the residents and visitors of Grand Falls-Windsor.

Mayor Manuel returned to the meeting at this time.

Councillors Bennett presented the remainder of the 2021 Municipal Operating Budget.

Motion

Bennett\Feener

Be it resolved that the remainder of the 2021 Municipal Operating Budget be approved as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Deputy Mayor Browne stated we have a good Budget, any time we can keep our taxes and fees at the rate they currently are yet maintain the level of services shows we are in good shape. 2020 was a good year, we paved nine (9) kilometers of roads and we did a significant amount of work on our Water Treatment Plant and our Wastewater Treat Plant. He looks forward to Phase II of Gorge Park and the ATV Trail which will enhance our ability to attract visitors to Grand Falls-Windsor. 2021 looks to be a very positive year with Marathon Gold and the mining sector in full force, the aquaculture industry looks promising, the long-term care facility on Scott Avenue will open in April and the Lionel Kelland Hospice is about to start construction. So, all in all 2021 looks to be a very positive year for Grand Falls-Windsor with some new employment opportunities for residents. He would like to thank our staff and compliment them on the work they have put into the Budget.

Councillor Bennett stated as it was noted in the Budget, we must borrow \$4.7 million dollars and a big portion of that is for the UV building that will be located at the end of the lagoons at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Keeping the debt ratio of 10.6% is phenomenal and he is sure other municipalities in Newfoundland wish they would have that low of a debt ratio.

Councillor Feener noted no tax increase is great news for residents going into 2021. We also implemented the KPMG Report this year and hired four (4) well established individuals to join our team and that was a Communications Officer, Deputy Town Clerk, Human Resources Manager and Economic Development Manager, and we are happy with those choices. We are finalizing our Wastewater Treatment Plant facility in 2021 and Phase II of Gorge Park. We will also be completing the Billy Ballard monument as well. We will be focusing on tourism with new ski-doo trails and easy access to the river for fisherpersons.

Thank you to Manager and Senior Staff for a job well done in preparing our Budget document.

Councillor Whiffen stated we remain to be in a very strong financial position despite the different year we have had, and we have continued to work on some major infrastructure projects. We are fortunate that we can keep the mil rate the same because of being in a good financial position, but he would like us to keep a close eye on our debt ratio. We have started to implement the recommendations of the Organizational Review, and it is something we will continue to implement in the next year as well.

Councillor Coady-Davis expressed “Thank You” to staff for working tireless hours to prepare the Budget and making sure everything is in order. The level of borrowing this year and the increase in debt ratio is certainly not a trend that we want to continue, however, it is necessary this year and we are going to be able to do some wonderful things with that additional amount of money. We will continue to monitor this, and we will get back on track. She is happy that we can maintain our discounts for our seniors, as it has been a difficult year so maintaining the discount was important to us. We have implemented some of the KPMG recommendations and hired on some new staff and she is confident that we made the right decision on who was hired. A lot of our activities and programs were cancelled this year due to COVID-19, but residents came up with their own ideas and it showed the resiliency of our residents and the support of our Town, so “thank you” for that.

Councillor Dwyer said it was certainly an interesting year to join Council with the challenges of COVID-19 and she was proud of the way our Town handled the challenges that were presented to us. She supports this Budget and looks forward to 2021.

Mayor Manuel mentioned you will notice in the Budget that a lot of the spending that the Town does is in core infrastructure such as the Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant and water and sewer. Overall, no tax increase is always great to hear along with maintaining our level of services. We do realize that it is a time where we must be a little more cautious when it comes to spending as there is a lot of uncertainty in the world right now, but Grand Falls-Windsor is in a good position for our long-term sustainability. We have a perfectly centered location and we are starting to see industry potential become fruition now and we look forward to working with those industries to make Grand Falls-Windsor the best place it can be. We pride ourselves on the job we do with our programming, events and special events and things that the community does to build community pride, our parks, infrastructure and green space is all what make Grand Falls-Windsor a desirable place to visit and to live for all ages. We have a very positive future and we will continue to serve the residents of Grand Falls-Windsor. We did

hire five (5) new key positions this year as a result from the KPMG Report, these positions were recognized as deficiencies within the organization for many years and we are already seeing the benefit of those positions. We did not just add five (5) positions and five (5) salaries, there were several retirement positions that were not re-filled so there was only \$75,000 to \$100,000 increase to our Budget for all five (5) new positions. With the value that they bring in key areas, that is a reasonable and smart investments to make.

### OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Dwyer wished residents and staff a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday. Please anyone travelling on the holidays, do not drink and drive.

Councillor Whiffen wished a Merry Christmas to all staff and residents. This will be a different holiday for many with the COVID-19 restrictions, but hopefully next year we will be back to normal.

Deputy Mayor Browne expressed “Thank You” to the Santa Claus Parade Committee, it was a very successful stationary Parade, so congratulations. He would like to wish the volunteers of Rogers Cable a very Merry Christmas who are here every Council meeting to help get our messages out to the public, so “Thank You” for all that you do. He also wished a Merry Christmas to all staff and residents of Grand Falls-Windsor and a reminder to all to try and be generous and help those that are less fortunate this year.

Councillor Coady-Davis advised the Queen Street Dinner Theatre managed to be able to put off their Annual Christmas Show and although the allowed attendance was limited, they were very successful, so congratulations to them. She congratulated the Perfectly Centered Gymnastics group, they did their Christmas Show in the stadium and did a fantastic job and put off a great show. She wanted to encourage everyone to sign up for the Marathon Gold Newsletter because there is lots of development and job creation with that project. She expressed “Thank You” to all residents for sticking with us, for your patience, for your resiliency, cooperation, ideas and for being the best residents in the best Town, you are all appreciated. Merry Christmas to all and Happy New Year.

Councillor Bennett advised our Volunteer Fire Department is presently recruiting new members, so if any residents of Grand Falls-Windsor would like to join our Fire Department, please drop by our Fire Department and pick up an application. He wished a Merry Christmas to all citizens of Grand Falls-Windsor and a Happy New Year.

Councillor Feener wished all residents and staff a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. If you know of a senior that is struggling and might need some help, please help whenever you can.

Mayor Manuel expressed condolences to the family of a former resident of Grand Falls-Windsor, Darren Hamilton, who died tragically at forty-nine (49) years old. Darren's uncle and one of our longtime employees Phil Hamilton also died last week, so our condolences go out to his family as well. Condolences also go out to the family of the late Bill Hanlon, who was a very well-known resident of Grand Falls-Windsor. He also said he is glad 2020 is almost over, it has been a year to remember and he would hope that everyone follows the COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, do not drink and drive and stay safe.

Motion

Whiffen\Dwyer

Be it resolved that the meeting of the Grand Falls-Windsor Town Council would be adjourned until the next regular scheduled meeting of January 26th, 2021. This motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 P.M.

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Barry Manuel  
Mayor

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Darren Finn  
Chief Administrative Officer