

MINUTES OF MEETING

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR TOWN COUNCIL

HELD IN THE TOWN HALL

7:00 P.M., TUESDAY, MARCH 5TH, 2024

PRESENT: Mayor; Barry Manuel
 Deputy Mayor: Mike Browne
 Councillors: Bob Hiscock, Andrew Little,
 Dave Noel
 Staff: Darren Finn, Chief Administrative Officer
 Steve Gosse, Director of Corporate Services\Town
 Clerk
 Todd Mercer, Director of Community Services
 Robyn Hannaford, Communications Officer

Prior to the meeting Mayor Manuel signed Proclamations for Amyloidosis Awareness Month, International Women’s Day March 8th and Multiculturalism Month.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and asked for any errors or omissions to the Minutes of Meeting #588 of February 13th, 2024.

Motion
 Noel\Hiscock

Be it resolved that the Minutes of Meeting #588 of Tuesday, February 13th, 2024 would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

None

DISBURSEMENT REPORT

Councillor Little presented the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$259,430.52.

Motion

Little\Browne

Be it resolved that the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$259,430.52 would be received as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Services

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

Windsor Stadium Update

The Director gave the Committee an update on the work carried out at Windsor Stadium during last week's mechanical shutdown. The Director informed the Committee that he will meet with the Director of Public Works and Development to discuss further equipment upgrades to the plant room and the air exchange system to ensure that the facility is able to handle the increased use for both spring and summer ice.

Exploits Regional Curling Club Correspondence

The Committee reviewed the correspondence from the Exploits Regional Curling Club.

The Committee recommended that the Director and Chairperson Deputy Mayor Browne meet with the Club's Executive at the end of the year to discuss any issues and to discuss the Club's plans for 2025.

Snow Sculpture Contest

The Director informed the Committee that the Snow Sculpture Contest details are posted on the Town's Facebook page and the contest has gotten a lot of

views, likes, and shares on Facebook. The contest will close on February 27th, and the winners will be announced the following week.

Facilities\Equipment Discussion

The Director informed the Committee of work required to our Recreation facilities including the arenas, softball and baseball fields.

The Committee recommended that the Director discuss any equipment and facility upgrades with the Director of Public Works and Development and bring back cost estimates to be reviewed at a future meeting.

Mid-Winter Bivver Update

The Director informed the Committee that planning is well underway for the 11th Annual Mid-Winter Bivver, scheduled for March 8th-9th, and that the snow conditions should be perfect for this year's event. Any person who is interested in attending can contact the Community Services Department or the Town's website to purchase tickets.

Medical Students

The Committee had some discussion about partnering with the Exploits Valley YMCA on Medical Learning Membership passes.

The Committee recommends that the Economic Development Department continue to work with the YMCA on this matter.

Regional Economic Development Forum

The Director informed the Committee that the Regional Economic Development Open Forum will take place at the Classic Theater on Wednesday, February 21st at 6:30 P.M. and all Councillors are invited to attend.

Mascot

The Committee asked the Director of Community Services to follow up with the newly named and rebranded Calibre Mining Corporation on the use of their mascot and see if it is available for future Town functions.

Exploits Nordic Ski Club

The Committee discussed grooming equipment, standards, and scheduling issues at the Exploits Nordic Ski Club this past weekend. The Director informed the Committee that the Town equipment is out of service and 40 centimeters of snow was forecasted, therefore the Town had to source outside equipment until replacement parts necessary to fix Town equipment arrived. With the short season and heavy community use on the trails each day it was imperative, to Council, that the trails stay open.

Community Garden

The Committee had some discussion about the Community Garden.

The Committee recommends that the Director of Community Services investigate any grant opportunities that are available to the Community Garden Club and work with them to find funding necessary to support their human resources requirements and report back to the Committee in a future meeting.

Arenas

The Committee had some discussion on dressing room improvements required at both arenas. The Director of Community Services will meet with the Director of Public Works and Development staff to address the issues and to address other necessary maintenance moving forward.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Little

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

Deputy Mayor Browne said unfortunately our Snow Sculpture Contest could not go ahead because of the lack of snow. There were only two (2) people that registered for the contest so due to the cancellation they were provided with Town of Grand Falls-Windsor swag gift bags.

Councillor Noel was very disappointed that the Mid-Winter Bivver also was cancelled due to the lack of snow because so much preparation goes into planning the event, but we look forward to an even better event in 2025.

Mayor Manuel stated planning for winter activities in the past five (5) years has been difficult because you never know what kind of weather we are going to get. It seems like we have a snowfall and then a few days later we get warm weather and rain. We try to plan events to keep people active in the winter, so it is disappointing when those events get cancelled, because it douses the spirits of those who enjoy the winter outdoors, like the snowmobilers, skiers, and even sliders at our sliding hill which is very unfortunate. Now that Marathon Gold branding has changed, we have asked them if we can use their mascot because we have had Gus the Moose for approximately fifty (50) years and we would like to have Marigold which is a female moose. We think it would be a perfect complement to Gus to show off at our events which he is sure that children will enjoy tremendously.

Corporate Services

The following report was presented Councillor Little.

Labour Report

The Committee reviewed the labour costs as of week seven (7). Total labour was \$466,080. This was \$17,233 (3.8%) over budget. The Committee recognizes the significant snow events that we've had as of late and their impact on the labour budget.

The Committee recommends staff continue to monitor the labour budget as we continue through the winter season and provide updates at a future meeting.

Tax Receivables Analysis

The Committee reviewed tax receivables as of January 31st, 2024.

Total receivables at January 31st, 2024 are \$19,720,781 (January 31st, 2023 was \$19,186,002 – a 2.8% increase). Collections remains a top priority for staff moving forward and the Committee recommends staff to utilize all avenues for tax collection to ensure improvement is made in this area in 2024.

Disbursement Report

The Committee reviewed the Disbursement Report in the amount of \$259,430.52 and recommends this be presented at the next Council meeting.

Advisory Committee Updates

The Director of Corporate Services\Town Clerk provided an update on both the Youth Advisory and Accessibility Advisory Committees as they both are planning their initial meetings in the coming weeks.

The Committee is looking forward to working with these Committees to ensure more people in the community have a voice and can provide input for consideration.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Little\Browne

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

Public Works and Development

The following report was presented by Councillor Hiscock.

Water Quality

The Committee continued their discussion on water quality. Staff continue to complete regular testing and monitoring around Town. The Consultant hired to complete the Water Quality Study of the distribution system is nearing completion and hopes to present it to Council in the coming weeks. This report is a little behind schedule.

2023 Capital Works Annual Report

The Committee was presented with a 2023 Capital Works Annual Report. This report outlines the various Capital Projects that were carried out in 2023, including the scope of work and the expenditures. In total, \$8.46 million was invested into Capital Infrastructure with seventy-two percent (72%) of this in water and sewer projects. The construction included:

- 1) 2.4km of sanitary sewer relining
- 2) 163m of new sanitary sewer

- 3) 1.5km of new water main with ten (10) new fire hydrants
- 4) 1.3km of new storm sewer
- 5) 2.2km of new curb and gutter
- 6) 915m of new sidewalk
- 7) 145m of new guiderail
- 8) 4.8lane km's paved over ten (10) streets
- 9) New Salt Shed at the Public Works Depot
- 10) Upgrades to the Water Treatment Plant and Public Works Depot
- 11) Expansion to the Skateboard Park

The Committee is pleased with the amount of work accomplished and thanked all staff involved in the delivery of the Capital Works Program.

The Committee recommends staff continue to seek out new funding opportunities and complete design for future projects.

Public Works Production Reports

The Committee reviewed the latest report from Public Works. Up to February 16th, 2024, there has been 23 square meters of asphalt patching, five (5) waterline leak repairs, one (1) main break repair, eleven (11) plug sewers, four (4) frozen water calls, along with constant efforts of snow and ice control and over 3800 cubic meters of snow removal.

The Committee thanked staff for their continued efforts and recommends staff continue to focus on pothole repairs as spring approaches.

Crown Lands Referral – Pondview Drive

The Committee reviewed a Crown Lands Referral on an application for 0.38 hectares of land from O&M Holdings Ltd. This request is for the expansion of the Newco Metal facility property at 21 Pondview Drive to improve their operations.

The Committee recommends this be approved.

Rezoning Request – Main Street West Development

The Committee reviewed submissions received from the Public Consultation regarding the rezoning of a section of Main Street West from a Single Unit Compact Residential Zone (RS-1) to Two Unit Urban Residential Zone (RT). The purpose of the rezoning is to increase density in some residential neighbourhoods to help address the housing needs of the community. There was one (1) submission received.

The Committee recommends continuing with the rezoning and submitting the amendment to the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs for a Section 15 review as per the Urban and Rural Planning Act.

Housing Accelerator Fund

The Committee was updated by staff on the application for the Housing Accelerator Fund. The application is still being processed and the Town is awaiting a final decision that may come in the near future.

Wetland Habitat Stewardship

The Committee reviewed correspondence from a resident on the Wetland Habitat Stewardship Agreement that was signed between the Province and the Town. The resident was seeking clarification on this Agreement and when the rezoning took place on land adjacent to it. The Agreement was an effort to protect the wetlands and all animal and plant life that rely on it to survive. In fact, the Agreement has helped protect the Town from high runoff as a natural retention area.

The Committee recommends staff gather all the information and contact the resident to discuss their concerns.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Hiscock\Little

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

Councillor Noel advised the Capital Works Annual Report is a great example to show where the money is being spent in the municipality, and as you can see it is spread over multiple different areas. It seems a lot of people are focusing on getting new pipes because of discoloured water and we realize the importance of that, but as you can see there are many other things that also need to be improved.

Mayor Manuel explained this is the time of year where we experience freezing and thawing and it causes difficulty on our roadways causing potholes which our staff are continuously trying to mitigate. Potholes can appear all of a sudden, so we encourage residents to report them as soon as they see them so

that our staff can fix them before they become a safety issue or damage vehicles. For clarification the Wetlands Stewardship Habitat land is located near Rushy Pond on the Beothuck Park side. The Housing Accelerator Fund is interesting because the Federal Government is giving money to successful communities in the country to accelerate housing. Housing has been a topic on every agenda of Council meetings since the new year and will continue to be because it is an important issue that we need to address and this Housing Accelerator Fund will go a long way. Staff has put a lot of work into this because it was not just a general application, it was a very detailed application that took a lot of time and a lot of hard work, so we are hoping that we will hear an announcement soon that we are one of the successful communities that will receive this funding.

Mayor Manuel also wanted to thank the great job done on snow clearing from all staff, when we have snowfalls the roads are cleared very quickly and it is always a job well done and he has heard that from many citizens as well, so “Thank You” for your hard work and dedication.

The following Resolution was presented by Councillor Little:-

RESOLUTION GF-W 2024-382

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES GRANT

WHEREAS: funding is available through the Municipal and Provincial Affairs Department regarding Accessible Communities Grant;

AND WHEREAS: it is deemed that the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor is eligible for such funding via their application for replacement of a wheelchair accessible lift at the Town Hall;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that Council approves the application for funding for this project.

Motion

Little\Hiscock

Be it resolved that Resolution GF-W 2024-382 would be adopted as presented. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

Committee of the Whole

The following report was presented by Deputy Mayor Browne.

FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show

The Committee discussed the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference and Trade Show scheduled for June 6th – 9th in Calgary, emphasizing the opportunity for Council members to gain insights and share experiences with peers across Canada.

The Committee recommends that Councillors interested in attending should identify themselves to staff for the sake of registration arrangements.

Community Garden Correspondence

The Committee reviewed correspondence and a request from the Community Garden Committee for support in receiving a Town Grant for the purpose of hiring a staff person to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Community Garden.

The Committee discussed the importance of supporting sustainable community initiatives and recognizes the importance of supporting the garden by comparison to other community organizations. The previous in-kind support from the Department of Public Works and Development and the financial support from the Department of Community Services equal a sizable commitment to-date from Council.

The Committee recommends staff assist in identifying suitable Grant Programs and re-evaluate the Garden's request for financial assistance post grant application outcomes. The Council has also recently allocated an additional .438 acres for their expansion, totaling 1.17 acres.

Health Accord Coalition Advisory Committee Update

(The Coalition Members arrived at 6:00 P.M. and departed at 6:45 P.M. Attending the Committee meeting included: Cyril Farrell (Chairperson), Denise Spencer, Marg Power, and Reg Hamilton.)

The Committee received a comprehensive update from the Health Accord Coalition Advisory Committee on their activities focusing on health service improvements in Grand Falls-Windsor, including efforts in recruitment, retention, and the establishment of a Family Care Team.

The Committee expressed gratitude for the Coalition's dedication, acknowledging the importance of addressing the social determinants of health. The Committee recommends continuing to support the Coalition's efforts to enhance healthcare and social support in the region.

Town of Harbour Grace Correspondence

The Committee reviewed correspondence from the Town of Harbour Grace advocating for municipalities right to apply liens on properties for costs related to the removal of dilapidated buildings. The Town of Grand Falls-Windsor provided a letter of support to the Town of Harbour Grace who were leading this advocacy. The Town of Harbour Grace updated the Town that the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs has responded and will be incorporating some language into the new Municipalities Act to address this concern.

The Committee recommends expressing appreciation for Harbour Grace's advocacy and looks forward to the legislative changes enhancing municipalities capabilities to manage neglected properties effectively.

Town Boundary Modifications Correspondence

The Committee discussed correspondence sent to the Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs regarding modification to the Towns boundaries. Considering the strategic importance of controlling watershed areas, residential zones, and road networks for infrastructure and future needs, the Committee discussed the request to modify the Town's boundaries.

The Committee recommends pursuing these boundary modifications to ensure comprehensive management and development of Grand Falls-Windsor's surrounding areas.

Black History Month Acknowledgement Correspondence

The Committee considered a citizen's request to acknowledge Black History Month, recognizing the value of celebrating cultural heritage and diversity within the community.

The Committee recommends that staff respond to the citizen and offer support for activities he may want to undertake that will honour Black History Month, reinforcing the Town's commitment to inclusivity.

Urban Municipalities Committee Meeting

The next Urban Municipalities Committee meeting is scheduled for April 5th and 6th in Pasadena. The Committee acknowledges the importance of participating in discussions with Urban Municipalities to address common challenges and opportunities.

The Committee recommends ensuring representation from both Council and staff at the meeting.

Housing Accelerator Fund Application

The Committee received an update on the status of the Town's application to the Housing Accelerator Fund, aimed at addressing housing needs in Grand Falls-Windsor.

Given the potential impact on local development, the Committee recommends that staff persist in following up on the application and begin preliminary planning for the strategic investment of any approved funds to enhance the Town's housing infrastructure.

Vacant Land Policy

Considering the 2024 Budget adopting a 15.5 mil rate for vacant land effective January 1st, 2025, the Committee discussed the implementation of a Vacant Land Tax Policy. This policy aims to encourage development and efficient use of land within the Town.

The Committee recommends the adoption of the Vacant Land Tax Policy, directing staff to apply the tax to serviced or serviceable lands after one year of ownership, promoting growth and proper land utilization.

I move the recommendations and report of this Committee.

Motion

Browne\Noel

Be it resolved that these recommendations and report would be adopted as circulated. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

NOTICE OF MOTION

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Hiscock noted the Town of Grand Falls-Windsor is a busy place and on High Street when we have sporting events at the stadium or shows at the Classic Theater, the businesses on High Street that only have two (2) or three (3) parking spaces available for their customers are being used by people attending those events. He asks people to be mindful when parking to attend these events because you are blocking patrons from entering the businesses on High Street. There are plenty of parking lots between Scott Avenue and High Street and he asks residents or visitors to be cognizant of that when parking for events in the future. He also wanted to thank all staff for their snow clearing efforts and doing a wonderful job and to the Community Service Department for all their hard work in preparing for the Mid-Winter Bivver that unfortunately got postponed. He advised that himself and Deputy Mayor Browne volunteer at the Community Kitchen every Wednesday and this past Wednesday unbeknown to anybody, members of the Rotary International came in and presented Laurie Ballard with the Paul Harrow Fellow Award, so congratulations to her for the recognition of all her hard work. And “Thank You” to all staff that volunteer at the Community Kitchen cooking and preparing approximately two hundred and forty (240) meals each week not only for Grand Falls-Windsor, but also Bishop’s Falls.

Mayor Manuel said providing over two hundred (200) necessary meals a week is a stunning statistic, as these meals go out to people who really need it, “Thank You” to everyone involved. He also agrees that parking is an issue on High Street when there is special events and suggested that we prepare signs to advise visitors to our municipality that those particular parking spaces are reserved for the patrons of the affected businesses.

The Director of Community Services advised that we do have signs that we put in front of these businesses on weekends, but people just do not abide by the sign and park there anyway.

Councillor Little advised the Accessibility Advisory Board met for the first time since our last meeting. It was a great meeting, and the members brought some valuable points and perspectives to our attention. They spoke about the new chairlift for the Town Hall and the weight capacity which would need to be able to hold the new heavier wheelchairs and they also spoke about the new Community Centre and how they would like to be a part of making sure that that facility is fully accessible.

Mayor Manuel wanted to thank the members of the Accessibility Advisory Board for putting their names forward as it consists of a variety of people that are familiar with issues within the community and have lived experiences, because if you have not lived it a lot of times you would not recognize the deficiencies that exist around Town for persons with disabilities. It is great that we have this Committee, and he looks forward to hearing some suggestions and ideas going forward.

Deputy Mayor Browne would like to recognize Laura Horwood, who is a resident of our community who was attending school in England and ended up making the Great Britian Ladies Ice Hockey Team. Congratulations to Laura and keep up the good work. There was a party at Centennial Field yesterday for the Special Olympians for coming home with their Silver Medals from the 2024 Special Olympics Winter Games in Calgary. Congratulations to all the athletes, coaches and staff on their tremendous success. And also, congratulations to Liam Gibbons and his Coach Trevor Wicks for bringing home a Gold Medal from the 2024 Special Olympics for bowling.

Mayor Manuel noted at the gatherings yesterday he was talking to a Staff Member\Coach and they were saying how many compliments the Grand Falls-Windsor Team gets from other participants in these events because they are so well behaved, good sportsmanship, and great athletes, so they represent Grand Falls-Windsor well and “Thank You” to the residents for continuing to make Special Olympics thrive in our region. He also wanted to congratulate Laura on her success and he mentioned that he used to coach Laura on a hockey team that was all boys except for her. He stated that she was always one of the most coachable and smartest hockey players that he ever encountered with outstanding work ethic, so congratulations to her as well.

Councillor Noel advised that Exploit Valley High School put off a twenty-four (24) hour musical, it was a job well done and very enjoyable, so he thanked everyone involved in that event. There are still issues with motorists driving on the divided Trans Canada Highway in the wrong direction. He asked if anyone sees this and has a dash cam to record it and send it to Council so that they can put together a package to send to Government before another tragedy happens. He also thanked the Community Services Department who go above and beyond for providing events for our citizens.

Mayor Manuel noted the divided highway is a problem that we need to focus on because entrances can look as though they are exits and exits like entrances, and if you are unfamiliar with the area it can be confusing, there needs to be some big signs erected before another tragedy occurs. He advised that the Kiwanis Music Festival is coming up later this month and he encouraged residents to get out and support the Music Festival. The Cataracts are into the play-offs and into the finals

now, so he also encouraged residents to get out and support their local team. Lastly, it was in the news some time ago that the local Cancer Clinic Physicians have written to Government asking for some more support and resources, and they have also attached a deadline to their request. He is glad to report that from meetings they had today it was favourable that they are working on this issue to resolve it, his message to them was that we just want to make sure that the people who use the facility in the Central Health Region get the same level of care as the rest of the Province no more and no less. There will be another meeting in ten (10) days so we will hear more about these issues then.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Little\Noel

Be it resolved that the meeting of the Grand Falls-Windsor Town Council would be adjourned until the next regular scheduled meeting of Tuesday, March 26th, 2024. This motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 P.M.

Barry Manuel
Mayor

Darren Finn
Chief Administrative Officer