

COUNCIL

MARCH 27, 2007

#07-03

The Parrsboro Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, March, 27th, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers with Mayor Doug Robinson presiding.

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith
Councillor Gleneida Canning
Councillor Lois Smith
Councillor Lyle Yorke
A.D. Brown, Town Clerk
Kevin Yorke, Secretary

1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed all those in attendance.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith, seconded by Councillor Lyle Yorke that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Motion carried.

3. **RCMP REPORT**

Cpl. John James noted that as he was unable to attend the last two Council meetings due to other commitments he had previously submitted copies of his reports for January and February to the Clerk for distribution to all members of Council. He asked if the Council had any questions of these reports.

Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith noted that there was an incident that will probably appear in his March report of a suicide possibly resulting from drug abuse. The Deputy Mayor indicated that there are rumours circulating about the amount of substance in the area and as he is very concerned about our youth he would like to see the RCMP do a little more to control that type of activity.

Cpl. James indicated that he was aware of the incident to which the Deputy Mayor was referring, however, investigations revealed that there were no contributing factors involved in the suicide. He did indicate that he believes that there are substance abuse problems, however, the RCMP does try to do as

much as possible in the areas of education and drug enforcement. He stated that at the end of the day it is a life style choice and that the RCMP are open to any other ideas that people may have. He noted that not long before the incident he and Principal Pam Hoare had discussed having more drug educational programs and courses. He noted that the DARE course was taught here a few years ago by Guy Bergeron who has since retired and it will be necessary to have someone else trained in that. Cpl. James stated that it may be a big problem here but it is a big problem everywhere.

Deputy Mayor Smith indicated that something like this may be noticed more in a small community. He indicated that it has been a concern of his and a few people have mentioned to him that if something could have been done the incident may not have happened.

Cpl. James indicated that everyone felt a great loss when someone that young chooses to take that option out and that he understands that the Minister at the funeral made a number of points about substance abuse.

Mayor Robinson asked about the status of the DARE program and if it was targeted toward a specific grade.

Cpl. James advised that Guy Bergeron was teaching the DARE program before but had since retired. He advised that he himself was trained in the DARE program a long time ago but has not taught it in a while and would need a refresher course. He indicated that he would be in the schools as soon as his course had been upgraded. Cpl. James advised that the program is targeted to the grades five and six.

Mayor Robinson advised that at the public meeting on the Minister=s panel on crime a very good point was brought out by a couple of the teenagers that the DARE program is given at a certain level and is not repeated. He indicated that it may be worthwhile considering repeating the program in the higher grades rather than targeting one or two grades.

Cpl. James noted that the DARE program is a very well researched project and that grades 5 and 6 were targeted because it was thought the children in these grades were in their formative years when they would be making those choices. He agreed that a follow up in the high school would be great, however, as with a lot of things it is a resource issue. Cpl. James also advised that one of the people at the public meeting was a probation officer who spoke about methamphetamine drugs which are not so prevalent here but are in surrounding areas, and that the RCMP are trying to get him to talk to the youth.

As there were no further questions, Mayor Robinson thanked Cpl. James for his report.

4. PRESENTATIONS

(a) Fred McFadden RE: Speeding on Pier Road - Mr. McFadden identified himself as a resident of Parrsboro living at 70 Pier Road next to the playground. He advised that he has a 5 year old daughter and that he wished to address an issue of concern to him and many others with children to do with

speeding vehicles and ATVs on Pier Road, an activity which he indicated takes place during all hours of the day and at night. He suggested speed bumps as a deterrent or perhaps a surveillance camera to identify the vehicle and ATV operators. Mr. McFadden advised that he has contacted the RCMP on several occasions, however, by the time the police arrive the vehicles are gone and that he has been unable to copy down license plate numbers because the vehicles are moving too fast. Mr. McFadden indicated that he was bringing this matter to Council's attention in the hope of preventing an accident before it happens.

Mayor Robinson thanked Mr. McFadden for bringing the matter to Council's attention and he was informed that the Protective Services Committee would discuss it with the RCMP at their next meeting.

(b) Diane Campbell RE: Security on Main Street - Diane Campbell, owner/operator of Ken's Grocery advised that she was here this evening with a few other merchants to address an issue of concern on Main Street to do with vandalism. She noted that the door of her establishment was damaged last Thursday, and that over the past six months there have been other acts of vandalism including a flower box that was set on fire. Her vehicle was also vandalized when she lived on Main Street. Ms. Campbell indicated that with the onset of summer this kind of activity will only escalate and she suggested that security cameras on Main Street would act as a deterrent and aid in the apprehension of the perpetrators.

Councillor Canning suggested that this also be added to the agenda of the next Protective Services Committee meeting.

Ms. Campbell asked if she could get an answer within a certain time frame where it was the end of March and the warmer spring weather would be bringing more people out on the street.

Mayor Robinson advised that all the Council can do is promise to look into it and get back to her as soon as possible. He suggested that if she had not heard from the Town within a couple of weeks to call either himself or another member of Council to check on the status of the matter.

(3) Autumn House - Barbara Jack, Chair of the Board, Karen Dickinson, Treasurer and Karen Yorke-Gilbert, staff made a presentation to Council to review the services provided by Autumn House, operating budget and sources of funding and to request a financial contribution from the Town.

Karen Yorke-Gilbert, support counsellor for Autumn House began the presentation with a review of services. She advised that Autumn House is a 9 bed safe shelter for women and children experiencing domestic violence and provides a crisis line staffed 24/7. Programs offered include the Womens= Program through which they get referrals from the clients themselves, other agencies, family, friends, a lawyer or the police. An outreach service provides support to women in rural areas throughout Cumberland County who for a variety of reasons are not able to access services in Amherst. The support counsellors in the outreach program assist clients in identifying the options available if they decide to leave or stay home and cope with the situation. Also offered are group programs on abuse and the

impact on women and children, self esteem and assertiveness. One staff counsellor is assigned to a program that assists children of family violence. Child care services are also offered while the women attend their legal appointments or support groups. A support program for men is also offered which is a unique model that is not offered by most transition houses in the Province. It provides information and tools to help men acknowledge their abusive behavior and control their emotions.

Karen Dickinson indicated that while there is a misconception that Autumn House is 100% provincially funded., it is funded to some degree by the Province based on a funding formula.. It is a 9 bed facility with 9 2 staff, however, the Province feels that it should only require 8 staff and funds it accordingly. Wages for the staff are mandated by the Province and are not negotiable, therefore, the wages cannot be reduced to save money. The extra staff are needed because Autumn House has a very unique model that allows people to go out into the county as it is felt that families in the rural areas deserve the same service as those in Amherst. Ms. Dickinson advised that the Province funds 80% of the 8 positions and other costs that they feel are adequate. For example, for fiscal 2005/06 the total budget was \$538,000 and \$440,000 was received from the Province. The balance of the budget had to be raised by the volunteers, board of directors, and staff. There are other expenses associated with the operation and maintenance of the safe house including heating fuel, electricity, insurance and groceries, as well as business expenses. Ms. Dickinson noted that in previous years Autumn House had been a member agency of the United Way, however, that funding has been lost because they wanted to start a funding project of their own called A Friends of Autumn House@ . Ms. Dickinson advised that in 2005/06 Autumn House averaged 110 new female clients, 35% of which were from Amherst, 34% from the County, 1% from Oxford, 13% from Springhill, 6% from Parrsboro, 11% from New Brunswick and other counties in Nova Scotia. Ms. Dickinson advised that they are trying to be consistent in the amount of money requested from each of the municipal units in Cumberland. The Town of Amherst has yearly granted \$10,000 and based on its population this works out to slightly more than \$1.00 per person and this formula will be used in their request to the various municipal units. Ms. Dickinson ended her presentation by indicating that Autumn House has to raise an average of \$10,000 a month and because the amount is so large they go day to day not knowing if the bills can or will be paid . She indicated that Autumn House is in a crisis situation and desperately needs consistent, regular funding to survive.

Barbara Jack indicated that Autumn House sees itself as serving the entire County and that it costs more than following the urban model which she suspects is how they are funded by the Province. They do have 1 2 more staff than the Province allots, but they feel that to try to function with fewer would cause the women and children in outlying areas to suffer and it is why they try so hard to maintain the model the way it is because they are convinced that it is the best service. Ms. Jack also pointed out that Autumn House is an integral part of the web of services, i.e. they work with Community Services, the Justice system, various police departments, Mental Health, Addiction Services, etc., and that their staff are professionals who do excellent work. Ms. Jack indicated that short of full funding from the Province that they would dearly love to see, they are asking the municipalities for help, preferably on an ongoing, predictable basis. Ms. Jack advised that the Town of Parrsboro was being asked for a contribution of \$1,200 and that the request would be put in writing for that amount if required to do so. She also noted that Karen would circulate copies of information dealing with services, statistics and everything the Council needs to know when making their decision.

Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith asked for which budget year they were asking for the money from the Town.

Ms. Jack indicated that they were requesting it for the coming year's budget.

Mayor Robinson thanked the presenters for coming this evening and advised that their request will be addressed at budget time. He commented that Autumn House has a good program and that organizations that offer social programs on a volunteer basis in Cumberland make our area an awful lot better for which we should be thankful.

(4) Ship's Company Theatre - Chuck Homewood, Artistic Producer, indicated that it was ironic that tonight's theme is wellness because the one important thing he would like to achieve is wellness between the Town of Parrsboro and the Ship's Company Theatre. He expressed the opinion that if some of the hurtles from the past can be overcome, the Town and SCT can come together and move forward. He noted that the Town of Parrsboro has many challenges when it comes to wellness of the spirit, financial wellness and economic wellness and that he believes that the SCT, aside from being an economic generator, has a role as partner with the Town in that journey to wellness. Mr. Homewood advised that currently the SCT is in a strategic planning process which is being professionally led and is gathering input from the local community. The point of the strategic plan is to realign themselves given the current new paradigm with the new theatre facility which has many financial challenges associated with it. Mr. Homewood advised that the board, staff and volunteers of the Ship's Company find that their fund raising capabilities are exhausted and one of the first directives out of the first strategic planning session is the need for community outreach through the creation of satellite programs such as community theatre, continuing adult education, and children's programming which will be profit centres underwriting the core activities of the theatre. This is especially important in light of the current environment of shrinking government dollars, competition for the corporate dollar, and volunteer burn out. He noted that one of the things the theatre has been talking about is bringing world class instructors to Parrsboro in the off season to attract cultural tourists who want to study an instrument, learn to dance, etc., because we have the infrastructure such as restaurants, banks, accommodations, high speed internet, etc. and the venues for the classes.

Mr. Homewood noted that he is working full time, Pamela Halstead has assumed the position of Artistic Director on a part-time basis, and the other two staff, Tina Smith and Lisa Ward, are full time only six months of the year, therefore, staff cut backs are really not an option if they are to continue producing theatre on the same level. Mr. Homewood advised that his basic request and the reason for being here is that the SCT would like to see recognition in regard to the Service Nova Scotia and their personal tax assessment decision in rewriting the schedule to the bylaw to reflect the 12% office occupancy as opposed to the 22% as per the current schedule and therefore, a reduction in the total tax bill.

Mayor Robinson advised that this was something that the Council would obviously have to discuss in a budget meeting and that he was happy to hear that we are off for a new beginning. He noted that for a small town Parrsboro does manage to do a great deal, however, that results in requests for funds from

the Town winding up rather large for a small community and some tough decisions have to be made. He indicated, however, that he is confident that Council does understand the situation and is capable of making those decisions both in the balance of the budget and the balance of the requirement.

Mr. Homewood expressed the hope that the dialogue will continue and that the Mayor shares his view that the Ship=s Company Theatre has the potential to bring economic success to the town in the long term.

The Mayor noted that it is an important factor and that to his knowledge there would be no one on Council that would disagree with that statement, but again there is the problem of having so many requirements on the Town=s resources that it is not always easy to make the decision that you may want to make. He stated that the Council appreciates what the theatre does and that the ongoing dialogue is the only way to go.

Councillor Canning asked if the strategic plan would change the mandate of the theatre.

Mr. Homewood indicated that the purpose of the strategic plan is not to change the mission statement or mandate of the theatre. The strategic plan will hopefully alleviate some of the ongoing challenges of the new facility and also position and direct the theatre in those new challenges. If anything the ancillary activities being discussed will maintain the core activities of the theatre, and will also hopefully help it to grow.

For clarification Mayor Robinson indicated that if the shift is made it would apply in the future because it is set now.

Mr. Homewood advised that he understands that it is not retroactive.

Mayor Robinson thanked Mr. Homewood for coming and indicated that the Council has always been supportive of the Ship=s Company Theatre, maybe not to the extent that some people thought they could have been, but they certainly were to the extent that they could be.

5. FIRE CHIEF=S REPORT

Fire Chief Aubrey Fenton presented the following report covering the period February 28, 2007 to March 27, 2007.

Emergency Calls:

False Alarms:	2
Fire Alarms:	3
Flue Fires:	1

Vehicle Fires:	0
MVA:	1
Medical First Responder:	0
Structure Fires:	0
Grass/Brush Fires:	1

The update on the new truck. We are waiting to hear back from the county before we can go any further with the plans.

Mayor Robinson advised that the Town is in the process of setting up a funding meeting with the County to sort out the financing of the truck.

6. APPROVAL OF CHEQUE SHEET

Moved by Councillor Lois Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith that the Cheque Sheet in the amount of \$92,632.49 be approved. Motion carried.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Robinson asked if there were any errors or omissions noted in the Council minutes of February 27th, 2007 (#07-02).

Hearing none he declared the minutes approved as circulated.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Finance - Report given by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith:

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 2007

(a) CREDA RE: Funding - Correspondence from Dan Burke, Chair of the Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association requested cost shared funding from the Town of Parrsboro for fiscal 2007/2008. Mr. Burke noted that although the Board is supporting a core funding increase request to offset increased operational costs, the Town of Parrsboro= s contribution has actually decreased from \$3,900 to \$3,500 based on the funding formula. Mr. Burke also request reaffirmation of Parrsboro= s \$10,000 commitment to the Shared Development Officer position.

After a discussion the Committee recommended approval of the Town= s commitments to CREDA= s

operational budget and the Shared Development Officer.

(b) Cumberland County Tourism Destination Committee - A draft of the Terms of Reference for the Cumberland County Tourism Destination Committee, a sub-committee managed by CREDA for CAPSO, was presented to the Committee for their consideration.

After a discussion the Committee recommended approval of the Terms of Reference with the idea that the CCTDC will report to CREDA.

(c) Fire Works - A letter from the Canada Day Fireworks Fund Raising Committee requested the Town of Parrsboro to make a donation toward the fireworks.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that this request be referred to the budget.

(d) Source Water Protection Advisory Committee - The Town is in the process of setting up the Source Water Protection Advisory Committee which provides advice to the councils on issues dealing with the protection of Parrsboro's well field recharge area. The Terms of Reference were reviewed including membership which will consist of two members from the council of Parrsboro and two from the council of the Municipality of Cumberland, two at large members from the citizens of the Town of Parrsboro, one at large member chosen from landowners who reside within the watershed area, and advisors from the Provincial Department of Environment, augmented by staff from Natural Resources, Transportation, Agriculture, the Town and County. It was reported that two citizens have expressed an interest in sitting on the Committee, namely Frank Hartman and David Harrison.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the following be appointed to the joint committee from the Town of Parrsboro: Doug Robinson (Chair) and Lloyd Smith from Council and citizen at large reps Frank Hartman and David Harrison.

(e) Garbage Collection - The Committee revisited the municipal garbage collection issue and after a discussion recommended that the Clerk proceed to put out a call for tenders to provide the service.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith, seconded by Councillor Lyle Yorke that the Finance Committee Report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.

Councillor Gleneida Canning noted that there were a couple of issues discussed at the last meeting for which there would not be allowances made, one being for unoccupied houses. She asked if this particular issue was settled or if there would be further discussion.

Mayor Robinson stated that it was settled unless someone came up with a suggestion as to how it could be done without creating the problems that were discussed. He noted that unfortunately, like with any service the Town provides, it will not satisfy 100% of the people.

Councillor Canning noted that she would be voting against municipal garbage collection and that she would like it voted on separately from the Finance Committee Report.

The mover and seconder agreed to amend the motion to accept the Finance Committee Report and recommendations contained therein, with the exception of item (e). Motion carried.

For information the Mayor advised that a letter has gone to the County regarding the the Source Water Protection Advisory Committee and we are waiting to hear back from them regarding their representatives.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith, seconded by Councillor Gleneida Canning that item (e) of the Finance Committee Report be accepted.

Deputy Mayor Smith noted that the Council will not know what the tenders will be until the tender call is made and they know what they are dealing with, therefore, he expressed the opinion that it is very important to continue moving forward on the tender process.

Councillor Canning asked if the issue of unoccupied houses will be on the table for further discussion if and when a tender is accepted.

Mayor Robinson reminded the Council that there may not necessarily be a tender accepted if the tenders come back higher than Council had anticipated, however, if the tender call results in a tender being accepted the rules discussed up to now will apply and will not be up for negotiation after the fact because the tender will come back with a rate and that rate was based on dwelling units, unless there is a way to adjust it and still have the same amount for the tender but he did not know how one would do it.

As there were no further questions or discussion the Mayor called for a vote on the motion.

Voting in favour - Mayor Robinson, Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith, Councillor Lois Smith and Councillor Lyle Yorke. Voting against - Councillor Gleneida Canning. Motion carried.

(b) Public Works - Report given by Councillor Lyle Yorke:

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 2007

(a) Superintendent=s Report - John Henwood reported the following activity in the Public Works Department over the past month.

- snow removal and cleaning of snow on Main Street as required by weather conditions

- a couple of frozen water lines on Main Street were attended to and are now back in service
- some cold mix patching was undertaken on paved streets and gravel applied to the pot holes on gravel roads
- the sewer line on Pier road was flushed to improve the flow of effluent
- routine maintenance and repairs of vehicles and equipment

(b) Duffy House - The Committee discussed options for the disposal of the derelict house on the Duffy property recently purchased by the Town adjacent to the Scott property.

The Clerk and Superintendent were asked to investigate the options and proceed with the most cost effective method of disposing of the building.

Moved by Councillor Lyle Yorke, seconded by Councillor Lois Smith that the Public Works report and recommendations contained therein be accepted. Motion carried.

(c) Recreation Committee - Report given by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith:

RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 2007

(a) Summer Program - The Committee discussed the summer recreation program for youth and is recommending that the program be offered again this year. The Clerk was requested to apply for the same number of summer student positions as last year for recreation and Glooscap Park through HRDC's Canada Summer Jobs program. The Chair will be in contact with the YMCA regarding the administration and supervision of staff for the summer programs.

(b) Volunteer Awards - The Committee has reviewed nominations for the Volunteer Awards and following are the recipients for 2007: Representative Volunteer of the Year - Keith Odlin; Youth Volunteer Award - Cassandra Morris; and Family Volunteer Award - Frank and Sarah Hartman. Keith Odlin will be representing Parrsboro at the Provincial Volunteer Award Ceremony and Luncheon that will be held in Halifax in April. Mayor Robinson will also be attending on behalf of Parrsboro. Cassandra Morris and the Hartman Family will be forwarded as nominees to be considered for Provincial recognition. All local volunteer nominees will be recognized at the Council meeting in April.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith, seconded by Councillor Lois Smith that the Recreation Committee report and recommendations contained therein be accepted. Motion carried.

9. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) **Kids Sport and Jump Start** - Deputy Mayor Lloyd Smith noted the Cumberland County Chapter of Kids Sport and Jump Start program for financially disadvantaged youth to take part in organized recreation programs, school sports programs or anything that provides physical activity. He advised the programs run twice a year and the time line for the spring session is June 1st . If there are any people that the Council or anyone in town knows that need applications for the program they can contact either the Deputy Mayor or Dwight Jones at Amherst Recreation. The program is eligible to youth 18 and under and provides assistance up to \$300/child. Deputy Mayor Smith noted that this is a good program and that last year the Canadian Tire Jump Start program provided funding for 61 youths to take part in programs in the amount of \$7,977.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Councillor Lyle Yorke the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.