

COUNCIL

JANUARY 24, 2012

#12-01

The Parrsboro Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, January 24th, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers with Mayor Lois Smith presiding.

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Lisa Ward
Councillor David Harrison
Councillor David Howe
Councillor Dawn McCully
J. Raymond Hickey, C.A.O.
Kevin Yorke, Secretary

1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

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

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved with the addition of “Tender” as item (a.1) under Finance in the Committee Reports.

3. **FIRE CHIEF’S REPORT**

Fire Chief Randy Mosher circulated two documents for Council to read, the first a master planning budget for the fire department for the next fiscal year and beyond to 2020 and the second, a report for the County of Cumberland of the distribution of calls over the past year. He noted that the Protective Services Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on February 9th to discuss the two documents. The Fire Chief also submitted his monthly activity report. In that report he noted that in terms of moving forward with getting a replacement for the 1987 fire truck he would like to have the Council’s approval to establish a truck committee within the department to go through the County specs and weed out what is not needed and secondly, he would like approval to establish a dialogue with Metal Fab to see what they would be able to do.

The Fire Chief was informed by the Council that he had their support to do research and gather information for the replacement of the fire truck.

The Fire Chief had also noted in his planning budget the need for a gas detector. Councillor McCully recalled that the Town had already purchased a gas detector

for the fire department. The C.A.O. confirmed this noting that it was to be shared by the fire department and Public Works Department but be stored at the fire hall and that he would look into its whereabouts. The Chief noted that once located he would assess the gas detector's capabilities.

4. RCMP REPORT

Cpl. Janet LeBlanc reported 67 complaints over the last month including the following:

- A number of break and enters into businesses and one shed resulted in the arrest of one individual who will be going before the courts in February.
- A break and enter into a residence at Cross Roads has resulted in three people being arrested.
- One complaint of domestic violence resulted in a male pleading guilty and being remanded for 90 days.
- One impaired driver is before the courts.
- A number of liquor tickets were issued over the holiday season.
- There have been a few vehicle accidents with the onset of winter.
- The RCMP participated in a number of community events including the Christmas tree competition at the museum.
- Plans are underway to do Safe Plan Code Blue exercises at the Parrsboro and Advocate schools.
- Assisting the Lions Club with finger prints in the Parrsboro and Advocate schools.
- Constables Hutchinson and Parsons are meeting regularly with the Youth Town Council.
- Daily patrols at the school are continuing.
- Cst. Brown, Ground Search and Rescue Coordinator, led the search during this past weekend's tragedy in the community and was assisted by the Pugwash and Springhill Ground Search and Rescue teams. Cst. LeBlanc commended all those who took part in the search noting that although the outcome was not what anyone had wished, they were able to bring closure for the families.

On behalf of Council, Mayor Smith thanked the RCMP for their participation in the search efforts over the weekend and also acknowledged the contribution of the Parrsboro Volunteer Fire Department.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Smith asked if there were any errors or omissions noted in the Council minutes of November 22, 2011 (#11-10). Hearing none she declared the minutes approved as circulated.

Mayor Smith asked if there were any errors or omissions noted in the Special Council minutes of December 23, 2011 (#11-11) the purpose of which was to approve the Town of Parrsboro Dangerous or Unsightly Premises Policy and

secondly, to approve proceeding with charges against a property owner for violation of the Town of Parrsboro Land Use Bylaw. Hearing none she declared the minutes approved as circulated.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

(a) Presentations –

- (a.1)** Sarah MacPherson, Health Promotion Coordinator for Public Health Services regarding Smoke Free Outdoor Spaces. She noted that if the Town of Parrsboro adopted a Smoke Free Outdoor Spaces bylaw, it would be the first municipality in Cumberland to do so.

After a discussion the Committee recommended to begin with a policy to put up Smoke Free Outdoor Spaces signs and then investigate a Smoke Free Outdoor Spaces bylaw.

- (a.2)** Randy Corcoran regarding his concerns about water levels in the Aboiteau. He was advised that the Town is in the process of investigating a solution which will require a coordinated effort between all three levels of government.

- (a.3)** Kevin Merriam of the Lumber Bureau with an update on the Wood First Program which is a national, federally funded program to encourage the use of wood wherever feasible, and where technical standards permit.

After a discussion the Committee recommended adopting the following WoodFirst resolution, the Town of Parrsboro being the first to do so in Atlantic Canada.

Being a wood champion, the Town of Parrsboro has the ability to play a central role by demonstrating environmental awareness, stewardship and leadership. It recognizes the importance of the wood sector, by the adopting the WoodFirst Resolution:

THAT Council adopts the following WoodFirst Resolution:

WHEREAS the Town of Parrsboro recognizes the historic, present and future value of the wood culture in Nova Scotia:

AND WHEREAS Nova Scotia's forest industry, as an integral part of the Municipality's economy, is developing new markets and new opportunities for wood products as part of a long-term strategy toward a health wood industry:

AND WHEREAS the Town of Parrsboro recognizes that wood is sustainable and renewable and that wood structures minimize or eliminate the carbon footprint of a building;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Parrsboro recognizes that wood meets building code requirements as permitted in the Canadian Building Code (2010 edition);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Parrsboro will continue to support the development of its wood culture by:

- when building new structures, renovating or adding on to existing buildings, the government shall strive to employ the material that has the lowest environmental impact, within building code requirements;
- using building materials with the lowest carbon footprint (where technical standards permit), when considering new construction, retrofit and refurbishment projects;
- using building materials and systems with the lowest embodied energy – wood-frame solutions – (where technical standards permit), when considering new construction, retrofit and refurbishment projects;
- always including a wood structure/material option when considering new structures, or performing renovations or additions to existing buildings;
- ensuring that all municipal infrastructure projects receiving Provincial or wood industry financial support employ the appropriate structural or architectural use of wood;
- ensuring that the performance of wood systems and products are considered whenever appropriate throughout all phases of infrastructure procurement and ownership.

Discussion on item (a.3) - Councillor Howe noted that he was not going to vote against the resolution because it does not obligate the Town to do anything, however, he did wish to point out that all the Council knows about it is what Mr. Merriam, a paid salesman, has told them. He indicated that he personally did not know if this is reasonable or whether the concrete or steel people could come and make the same argument for using their building materials. He also questioned the impact on forestry resources in the Province noting that there are limitations on clear cutting which could have an effect on the availability of wood. Councillor Howe noted that he suspects that the purpose behind the WoodFirst program is to protect the wood industry from European competition seeing that some sort of free trade deal between Canada and the European Union is in the works.

Deputy Mayor Ward commented that when Mr. Merriam brought this before Council he was asked if any studies had been done in regard to the availability of wood resources in Nova Scotia and the Maritime Provinces and he assured them that there would be no shortages.

Councillor Harrison expressed the opinion that it is more about buying local and supporting the forestry industry which is one of the main industries in Nova Scotia. He also felt that if every municipal building constructed this year in Nova Scotia was built out of wood it would be a drop in the bucket compared to what is produced.

- (b) **May 2nd as Anti-Bullying Day** – Councillor McCully proposed an Anti-Bullying Day in Parrsboro as an annual event noting that an attempt to organize a similar event last year earned a lot of interest and participation locally and abroad. She noted that the RCMP and the schools are on board and there are many volunteers and students interested. The plan is to establish a committee to organize and fund raise for a day long event that will feature a parade, a school program with counselors and guest speakers, media coverage, etc. She asked that the Town also come on board and provide some funding for t-shirts. She did not have a dollar figure yet for funding from the Town, however, a budget would be prepared once they have the go ahead to proceed.

After a discussion the Committee supported the idea and recommended giving Councillor McCully the go ahead to proceed with the project.

- (c) **Wind Turbine at Reservoir** - The Energy Committee has proposed the idea of a very small scale 120 ft. wind turbine at the reservoir which would generate about \$5,000 worth of energy each year for COMFIT to sell back to Nova Scotia Power. Because of its small size the windmill would have very minimal impact on its surroundings. The viability of the project is supported by a price reduction on the wind turbine, easy accessibility to power lines, the property being owned by the Town, and there is money in the Energy Committee's budget to do it. The C.A.O. noted that provided the Council is in agreement with the project, it could move forward quickly.

After a discussion the Committee supported the idea of a windmill on Town owned property at the reservoir and asked the C.A.O. to work out the details with the Energy Committee on the Town's behalf.

- (d) **Sponge Park** – Councillor Ward advised that the Town of Parrsboro did not make it to the finals for the AVIVA Community Fund, however, the committee is still looking to move forward on its own exploring funding options and locations. The committee has identified a portion of the former Scott Mill property as their priority location for the sponge park/splash pad and they are seeking a commitment from the Council that the property will be used for recreational opportunities and that the park can be located in the desired space. C. Ward added that the sponge park would be a component of a long range plan to develop the entire Scott Property as a recreational area and once the sponge park is built it will become an asset of the Town requiring some ongoing maintenance.

After a discussion it was suggested that over the course of the next few months while money is being raised we should identify the best possible location for the park within the town and work with the Recreation Director and other resources available to look at an overall plan for the Scott property and see if there is a spot that would be suitable.

- (e) **Cat Overpopulation** - A complaint was received from a resident about an overpopulation of stray cats in the area of the intersection of Western Avenue and Victoria Street that are causing a general nuisance and interfering with the family's ability to enjoy their property. The C.A.O. advised that there are not a lot of options to deal with this type of situation as there is no municipal cat control bylaw and the local animal shelter is not in a position to help.

After a discussion it was agreed that the Town has no jurisdiction to do anything about this situation where the cats are strays.

- (f) **Parking on Main Street** - The owner of Ken's Grocery approached the Town requesting that four parking spots, two in front of Ken's and two in front of the Old Post Office, be turned into a "No Parking" loading zone, Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm. to compensate for the loss of use of the driveway between Ken's and the Old Post Office which has been partially blocked off.

In the discussion the Committee determined that there are options that would not interfere with public parking and it was recommended that the owner of Ken's be requested to explore these options.

The proprietor of Cumberland PC has noted a concern about vehicles being parking in front of his business all day and requested time limitations on these parking spaces.

After a discussion the Committee agreed it would be appropriate to canvass all business owners regarding parking on Main Street.

- (g) **Unightly Premises** - The C.A.O. noted correspondence from the owner of a property being investigated under the Town's Dangerous or Unightly Premises Policy advising that they were unable to attend the January Committee-of-the-Whole to which they had been invited to discuss the matter.

After a discussion the C.A.O. was requested to contact the owner and set up a meeting at a mutually convenient time.

The Committee was also updated on the status of other properties being investigated under this policy and one property in violation of the Land Use Bylaw which is proceeding to prosecution.

- (h) **Standing Committees and Deputy Mayor** – The Standing Committees of Council were reviewed and after a discussion the recommendation was made to maintain the status quo. The Committee also recommended that Councillor Lisa Ward be appointed Deputy Mayor.

- (i) **2012 Tax Exemption** – The Committee discussed the Tax Exemption for low income residential property owners and recommended that the 2012 tax exemption be set at

\$325 for those with a maximum income level of \$16,500. The Tax Exemption will be advertised and application forms available at the Town Office.

Discussion on item (i) – Councillor Howe reported on his research since the last Committee-of-the-Whole into senior and social services incomes, food bank usage and inflation rates for food and that he has reached the conclusion that a more generous tax exemption would be the right thing to do and something that the Town could afford especially this year because there is a bit of a windfall from an increase in assessments. He recommended increasing the income level to \$17,000 and the tax exemption to \$500.

Deputy Mayor Ward affirmed her thoughts that increasing the income to \$16,500 and the tax exemption to \$325 is a good start and hopefully each year they will be able to be increased. Regarding Councillor Howe's assertion that the Town could afford a more generous tax exemption due to the increase in assessments, the Deputy Mayor stated that there will also be a lot of downloading on the Town this year.

Mayor Smith stated that she anticipates a lot of tax assessment appeals this year due to the higher assessments which will have an impact on tax revenue.

The C.A.O. restated his recommendation for gradual increases in both the exemption and the income level year by year instead of a large increase in one year because the impact is indefinite. He also pointed out that jumping from \$250 to \$325 percentage wise is much faster than the rate of inflation.

Councillor McCully stated that she would be comfortable with an income level of \$16,500 instead of \$17,000 but agreed with Councillor Howe that the exemption should be increased to \$500 to help the needy in the town.

(j) **Tax Write-Off** – A tax account (#05015901) in the name of Joyce Murray, M. Wissman and C. Graham was presented for write-off as the owners wish to donate the vacant property at 20 King Street to the Town. It was noted that there is an easement over this property for the sewer line to Mountain View Manor and it would be in the Town's best interest to own it.

After a discussion the Committee recommended accepting this piece of property and writing off the taxes which are currently in the amount of \$99.64.

(k) **Sale of Public Works Equipment** – The C.A.O. reported that there had been only one response to the advertisement seeking offers for surplus Public Works equipment which he presented to the Committee.

After a discussion the Committee felt they required advice from the Superintendent of Public Works in order to make an informed decision. The C.A.O. was asked to check with the Superintendent and report back.

- (l) **Accounting Software** – The Committee was advised that the Town’s computer software is outdated and the programming unreliable and needs to be replaced and upgraded.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the C.A.O. investigate options and obtain price quotes.

- (m) **Street Lights** – The Committee asked the C.A.O. to look at a couple of spots where it would be reasonable to install street lights and report back with his findings. One being the end of King Street where it intersects with Western Avenue, and the other on Jenks Avenue near the South Cumberland Community Care Centre.

- (n) **Compost/Garbage Pick Up** – C. Ward noted a concern that compost pick up every other week in the summer may create an undesirable situation and suggested more frequent compost pick up during the warmest months of June, July and August. It was suggested that perhaps compost could be picked up every week and garbage every other week during this period.

After a discussion it was recommended that the C.A.O. discuss this with the local garbage collector to see if something could be arranged. He was also asked to check into the availability of funding to purchase another supply of green compost bins.

- (o) **Post Office Parking Lot** – C. Ward expressed the opinion that if the Town is promoting this parking lot for public use it needs to be kept up to a certain standard of winter maintenance which has not always been the case. In the discussion it was noted that it is the responsibility of the property owner to keep the lot plowed and salted for which they receive some monetary compensation from the Town.

After a discussion the C.A.O. was requested to contact the owner about this.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Harrison that the Finance Committee report and recommendations contained therein with the exception of item (i) be approved.

Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Harrison that item (i) in the Finance Committee report be approved.

Voting for the motion – Mayor Smith, Deputy Mayor Ward and Councillor Harrison.

Voting against the motion – Councillors Howe and McCully.

Motion carried.

- (a.1) **Tender RE: Chemical Feed Building Upgrades** – Mayor Smith advised that tenders had been received from two different companies for switching chlorination

systems at the chemical feed building. Our engineers at CBCL are recommending the lower tender from Black and MacDonald Limited in the amount of \$51,462.50.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor McCully that the tender from Black and MacDonald Limited in the amount of \$51,462.50 for chemical feed building upgrades be accepted.

Motion carried.

(b) PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

(a) Warning Sign on Road to Partridge Island – Councillor Howe suggested that where the road to Partridge Island is not a publicly maintained road that is suitable for vehicle traffic there should be a cautionary sign near the beginning of the road.

After a discussion the Committee agreed that signage would be appropriate. The proper wording and location of the signage were left with the C.A.O. and Mayor to investigate.

(b) Plowing Ottawa House Road – The Committee was advised that the Parrsborough Historical Society would like the Town to consider plowing the road to the Ottawa House, or at least a portion thereof, for access to the building by employees who are working there during the winter months. The request was not for routine plowing, but rather assistance after a large snow storm when Public Works had time to do it.

After a discussion the Committee agreed in principle but felt that the Superintendent should be consulted about the logistics of it and asked the C.A.O. to talk to him.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Howe that the Public Works Report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.

Motion carried.

(c) PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Report given by Councillor Harrison

(a) Building Inspector's Report - Following is the activity in the Building Inspector's office for the months of November and December 2011:

Permit

Value

New Mini Homes	1	\$87,000
Accessory Buildings	1	\$ 3,000
Demolition	1	N/A
Total	3	\$90,000

Moved by Councillor Harrison, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ward that the Planning, Development and Housing Committee report be accepted.

Motion carried.

(d) TOURISM COMMITTEE REPORT

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Report given by Councillor McCully

(a) **CNTA** - Councillor Howe reported that CNTA is lobbying the Provincial Government to enact legislation that would allow fixed roof accommodations with over 12 beds to charge a tourism levy that would go toward promoting tourism and he has volunteered to assist with it. At this time 20% will go toward festivals and 80% will go toward advertising. The money would be collected by the municipalities and then given to CNTA. The fixed roof accommodation owners generally seem to be on board and the next step is to approach the MLA's. He noted that this levy would not apply to Parrsboro at the present time as there are no fixed roof accommodations with over 10 beds in the community.

Moved by Councillor McCully, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ward that the Tourism Committee report be accepted.

Motion carried.

(e) PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT

DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Report given by Councillor Howe

(a) **Rescue Fire Truck** – The Fire Chief is recommending the replacement of the 1987 Ford F80 fire truck due to its age and difficulty finding parts to keep it road worthy and functional.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the C.A.O. explore our options for replacing this vehicle in the not too distant future.

Moved by Councillor Howe, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ward that the Protective Services Committee report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.

Motion carried.

7. REPEAL BYLAW #54 – DANGEROUS OR UNSIGHTLY PREMISES, APPROVED OCTOBER 31, 1978

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Howe that Bylaw #54, Dangerous or Unsightly Premises, approved October 31, 1978 be repealed.

Motion carried.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Ward the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Mayor

C.A.O.

