

COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 25, 2014

#14-02

The Parrsboro Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, February 25th, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers with Mayor Lois Smith presiding.

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Lisa Ward
Councillor Robert Fancy
Councillor David Harrison
Councillor Ron Shaw
J. Raymond Hickey, CAO
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**

Moved by Councillor Harrison, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ward that the Agenda be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

3. **PRESENTATION RE: RISKS OF SHALE GAS FRACKING**

Harriet McCready representing a group of citizens concerned about the risks of shale gas fracking asked the Town of Parrsboro to join other municipalities such as the County of Cumberland and Inverness County in taking a stand against the practice used in shale gas exploration. Ms. McCready used drawings, photographs, statistics, and case studies to explain the risks and identified numerous areas of potential impact should fracking come to the Parrsboro area, including groundwater safety and possible contamination of the bay, increased trucking on local roads, noise pollution, damage to the landscape, earth tremors as well as negative consequences for wildlife, tourism and the fishing industry. Speaking to the economic impact she noted that communities in the United States that have allowed fracking have seen no economic benefit and, in fact, are less prosperous in comparison to others. Ms. McCready questioned whether the technology exists to do hydraulic fracturing safely as drilling for natural gas is ahead of the science that would prove whether or not it is safe. Bill Davison, an engineer who has expertise in risk assessment and mitigation also spoke in support of the cause noting the opinion that fracking is tremendously risky to the environment and that he is not convinced that it can be done safely. Ms. McCready presented each member of Council with an information package and sample resolution to consider.

Mayor Smith thanked the presenters for bringing this important issue before Council and promised that it would be looked at in more detail in the very near future.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Smith asked if there were any errors or omissions noted in the minutes of January 28, 2014 (#14-01). Hearing none the minutes were declared approved as circulated.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2014

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

(a) Bylaws Review – The Committee continued its review of bylaws for the purpose of eliminating those that are no longer relevant and updating those that should remain in effect.

After a discussion it was recommended that Bylaw #14 be struck off the books as it is non-existent, that Bylaw #15 regarding Town Boundaries be retained and that Bylaw #16 - General be looked at in more detail at the next meeting as it is a lengthy document.

(b) 2013/14 Tax Exemption – The Committee discussed the 2013/14 municipal tax exemption to see if any adjustments are required.

After the discussion the Committee recommended increasing the income level to \$17,500 from \$17,000 last year and retaining the exemption at \$350.00.

(c) Strategic Plan – The CAO received positive feedback from the Committee regarding the Town of Parrsboro Strategic Plan 2014 document. He noted that he would like to proceed with one item in the plan to do with a water rate study which is long overdue and that any recommendations coming from the report would have to be approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the CAO be given the authority to look into hiring a consultant to do this study and agreed that it would be appropriate in future to do a water rate study every four or five years.

The CAO also recommended looking at a sewer rate increase in the coming year's budget which does not require URB approval.

After a discussion the Committee recommended an increase of \$25.00 for next year's sewer billing bringing the total annual bill to \$200.00.

(d) King Street/Senior Housing Water – There was a discussion regarding problems with water quality affecting a portion of King Street and Phase V of the seniors housing complex. A letter of complaint signed by several residents of Phase V was presented by Deputy Mayor Ward on their behalf along with samples of laundry ruined by the condition of the water.

After a discussion the Committee recommended proceeding immediately to obtain requests for proposals to install a stop-valve in the King Street water line which has been recommended by our engineers as a possible solution to the problem. It is hoped that the installation of this device will also help to improve the quality of water at the seniors' complex, however, if it fails to do so the Council will look at other options.

(e) Pension Plan – The Committee was updated regarding meetings with the County of Cumberland to discuss opportunities for cooperation on pension delivery. The CAO advised that the County is receptive to the idea of the Town of Parrsboro joining their pension plan and that in his opinion it would be in the best interest of both the town and its employees to do so. He also proposed an increase of 0.5% to the employer contribution and an annual adjustment over the next few years to bring the employee's contributions up to 6.0%. The CAO also advised that eligible Council members can opt into the plan and that he would recommend it.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the Town of Parrsboro join the County of Cumberland's pension plan and that the CAO's recommendations with regard to adjustments to contribution rates be accepted.

(f) Main Street Grant – The Committee was updated regarding the Town's application for ACOA funding for Main Street improvements including the Band Shell/Town Square and harbourfront areas. The CAO outlined the steps that need to be taken to be eligible for funding beginning with a conceptual plan and some capital work for which there is Provincial funding available.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the CAO apply for funding to get a planning document completed.

(g) Sewer – Terms of Reference Document – The Committee was advised that the Terms of Reference document for the sewer project has been prepared and will be reviewed with appropriate Provincial officials in early March

(h) CJSMA Budget – The CAO reported on a meeting of the CAO's Advisory panel where a topic of discussion had been the Joint Authority's budget and options to attain required funding levels. He noted his preference for increasing tipping fees and the Committee noted that they agreed. On a related topic, it was recommended that the Town of Parrsboro hold another electronics pick-up before the long weekend in May.

(i) Request to Use Civic Grounds – A letter from Dorothy Best requested permission to use the civic grounds for a Miniature Horse Show fund-raising event on May 24th, 2014.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that permission be granted.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Fancy that the Finance Committee Report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.
Motion carried.

RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2014

Report given by Councillor Harrison

(a) **Tennis Court** – The CAO advised that an application has been submitted for funding for resurfacing, re-fencing, signage and lights for the tennis court. He noted that if the application is approved it would be expected that the Town would provide 2/3 of the cost of the project and the Province the remaining 1/3.

(b) **Fitness Centre** – Recreation Director, Tissy Bolivar, PRHS Principal, Sue Stevenson and Trina Clarke, Cumberland YMCA CEO met with the Committee to propose a Community Use Fitness Centre at the Parrsboro Regional High School as a joint venture. The Committee was advised that the support of the Town of Parrsboro was being sought to assist in the expansion and improvement of current equipment and ongoing support on an annual basis to help cover maintenance and staffing costs, approximately \$1,000/year.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the request be deferred for consideration in 2014/15 budget discussions.

Moved by Councillor Harrison, seconded by Councillor Shaw that the Recreation Committee Report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.
Motion carried.

CUMBERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES REPORT

FEBRUARY 2014

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

Coming Soon - Community Classes will be starting up again this spring in Amherst and Springhill. We are looking for volunteers to teach 5 Monday classes from April 7-May 12. Some of our previous classes have included crochet/knitting, fly-fishing, painting and guitar. Please call the Amherst Library at 667-2549 for more information or to volunteer.

March Break 2014 is fast approaching and planning is well underway. Last year the Cumberland Public Libraries had 468 kids attend programs that week. March Break is

March 10-15 and all libraries in the Cumberland Public Library system will have programs for kids in grades Primary to six. Call you local library or check our website for more information.

Did You Know? – The Cumberland Public Libraries received a grant of \$2,000 from the Dr. & Mrs. H.E. Christie Community Foundation. This grant is for the purchase of e-books for Cumberland Library patrons exclusively on Overdrive.

Statistics – In the month of December, Cumberland Public Libraries signed out over 8,000 items! This includes books, movies, TV shows, magazines and more.

Also in December, the 7 libraries held 30 programs county-wide for children and adults, with 315 people in attendance.

Find Out What's Going On – Check out the library's webpage www.cumberlandpubliclibraries.ca to see our Calendar of Events and get information on upcoming programs.

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@CumberlandPL) to get information on coming events, find out about new books and movies, and see pictures of our programs.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Fancy that the Cumberland Public Libraries Report be accepted.

Motion carried.

6. MOTION RE: SIGNING AUTHORITY

The CAO explained that the Town has a policy that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, CAO and Director of Finance are signing authorities, however, Revenue Canada has a previous mayor listed as the contact for the federal government. Therefore, they have requested that there be something in the minutes that specifically names the four individuals that are currently the signing contacts.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Lisa Ward, seconded by Councillor Harrison that Mayor Lois Smith, Deputy Mayor Lisa Ward, CAO Ray Hickey and Director of Finance, Janie MacKenzie be the signing authorities for the Town of Parrsboro.

Motion carried.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) **Band Association** – Correspondence from Lori Lynch of the Parrsboro Band Association requested permission to use the civic grounds for their annual Band Day event taking place on July 27th this year. As in the past they also requested picnic tables, of which they need more if possible, garbage cans and bags, and barricades.

The Council agreed to grant permission as requested. Mayor Smith noted she would inform Ms. Lynch.

(b) Pergola at Gavin Park – Carolyn Henwood noted that as instructed to do at the last meeting, she had approached the owners of the Gavin property and received permission to construct a pergola in the park. She had also obtained two quotes for lumber, however, noted her preference for cedar which is more expensive at \$600.00 but lasts longer and is more suited for this type of thing. There may be other minimal costs for additional items. Ms. Henwood indicated she will contribute \$100 to the project and expressed the hope that the Town will contribute at least half of the cost and that the remainder will be realized through fund raising efforts.

Ms. Henwood was advised that the Council would defer this matter to the next Committee-of-the-Whole meeting for discussion.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Ward the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Mayor

CAO