

COUNCIL

MARCH 24, 2015

#15-02

The Parrsboro Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, March 24th, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers with Mayor Lois Smith presiding.

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Lisa Ward
Councillor Robert Fancy
Councillor Ron Shaw
J. Raymond Hickey, CAO
Kevin Yorke, Secretary

REGRETS: Councillor David Harrison

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

Motion carried.

3. PRESENTATION OF 2013/14 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

George Jorgensen, accompanied by Denise Smith from the accounting firm, Jorgensen and Bickerton, presented the 2013/14 audited financial statements. Mr. Jorgensen noted that the 2013/14 financial statements normally would have been out last September, however, were delayed primarily due to the change over in the accounting program in the middle of the year which had caused a lot of problems. Due to the length of the documents, Mr. Jorgensen noted that he would not be reviewing the financial statements in detail but rather noting the highlights.

Reserves

Gas Tax Reserve	\$505,002
Operating Reserves	\$511,318
Capital Reserves	\$ 13,491
Equipment Reserves	<u>\$ 71,208</u>

Total Reserves	\$1,101,019
Water Operating	
Cash	\$322,000
Equity	\$327,320
Operating Loss	\$ 17,848 (expenses for well, testing, etc.)
Water Capital	
Depreciation Bank	\$ 204,436
Equity	\$2,274,769
General Operating	
Overdraft at year end	\$270,533
Receivables	\$488,070
Surplus for the year	\$ 10,118
General Capital	
Equity	\$4,054,836
*The town has no debenture debt	
Consolidated Surplus 2014	\$7,957,667
Consolidated Surplus 2013	\$8,061,543

Mr. Jorgensen commented that these figures indicate that the Town is still in very good financial shape with money being put into reserves that will be needed for projects that are coming up over the next few years. He added that the accounting has now been straightened around and that the 2015 statements should be on time.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Lisa Ward, seconded by Councillor Shaw that the 2013/14 audited statements be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

Mr. Jorgensen thanked the Director of Finance, Janie MacKenzie and Town staff for their assistance and Mayor Smith in turn thanked him for preparing and presenting the audited statements.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Smith asked if there were any errors or omissions noted in the Council minutes of February 24th, 2015. Hearing none the minutes were declared approved as presented.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 2015

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

(a) Low Income Tax Exemption – The Committee is recommending a two tier low income tax exemption for fiscal 2014/15. Homeowners with a total household income of up to \$17,500 can apply for a tax exemption of \$350.00 while those with a total household income between \$17,500 and \$19,500 can apply for a tax exemption of \$100.00. A deadline of April 30th is recommended for applications to be submitted to the Town Office. Residents are also reminded that there is a Seniors Property Tax Rebate available through the Provincial Department of Community Services. Those not already receiving the rebate can call 1-800-670-4357 to make inquiries about eligibility.

(b) Special Projects Coordinator Partnership & STEP Partnership – The CAO reported that he has been exploring the idea of forming a partnership between the Town and County for the Special Projects Coordinator position as well as the STEP Program which would enhance the ability of both municipalities to coordinate the promotion of this end of Cumberland County.

The Committee supported these proposals and recommended an official letter to the County to see if they would be interested.

(c) Parrsboro Creative Office Space – The Committee was advised that Parrsboro Creative has inquired about the availability of office space in the Town Hall for their Director of Marketing and Communications being hired through a grant from the Provincial Department of Community, Culture and Heritage. The CAO noted that there is space available on the second floor.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that an office be made available to Parrsboro Creative for this purpose with access during regular office hours.

(d) Tidal Communities Alliance MOU – The Committee recommended that the Tidal Communities Alliance Memorandum of Understanding be forwarded to the Energy Authority for their recommendation.

(e) Tourism Advertising – The Committee was informed of an opportunity to have the video “Parrsboro and Cumberland County – a good place to visit – a great place to live” placed on the novascotia.com website.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that appropriate arrangements be made to take advantage of this opportunity.

(f) **Logo for T-shirts** – The idea of having a logo designed with the theme “Anchored and Authentic” was proposed estimated to cost between \$200 and \$250. This logo could be used on t-shirts and other promotional items.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that the Town provide funds for the design of this logo.

(g) **Public Building Lighting** – The CAO reported that he had met with staff from Efficiency Nova Scotia to review lighting in the Town Hall, Public Works Garage, Fire Hall, Library and Bandstand. A proposal was received to upgrade lighting in the Town Hall at a cost of \$5,000 which would save approximately \$1,000/year on the power bill. It was noted that there is an opportunity to finance upgrades through Nova Scotia Power.

After a discussion the Committee recommended proceeding with the lighting upgrade to the Town Hall as well as the other public buildings that had been accessed by Efficiency Nova Scotia.

(h) **Debit Machine** – The Committee was advised that a proposal had been received for a debit machine to handle tax and water payments.

After reviewing the proposal the Committee recommended proceeding to have the debit machine installed provided it is compatible with the Town’s new computer software.

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

Motion carried.

(b) PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 2015

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

(a) **Superintendent’s Report** – John Henwood met with the Committee on March 17th to review some of the activity in the Public Works Department over the past couple of months. John noted that the department has dealt with over 14 frozen water lines. The majority of the lines have been thawed, however, one remains frozen to date. Residents are reminded that if they are concerned that their water lines could freeze, it is recommended that they leave a pencil sized stream of water running in the house. Although the frequent snow storms have been challenging, the main concern has been finding a place to dump the snow that needs to be hauled away. Keeping fire hydrants open has also been a challenge this winter. The weather conditions have required a lot of salt being used, however, more salt was recently brought in before the roads closed to top up reserves. The Superintendent noted that although it was necessary for the crew to work overtime and for the department to hire extra help, the late start of the winter

season, lower fuel costs, and the fact that there have been no major equipment failures should result in the department's budget balancing out.

(b) Snow Removal on Pier Road - A request was received from a property owner constructing a new home that a graveled section of Pier Road that is not routinely plowed by the Town Works Department be included in their regular winter maintenance schedule. The CAO noted the understanding that the section of road in question is a right-of-way reserved for a road and, therefore, is town owned property.

After a discussion the Committee recommended that this section of Pier Road be included in Public Works's regular plowing schedule.

Deputy Mayor Ward added that although Public Works has been working diligently to clear snow in anticipation of the spring run-off, they cannot possibly take it away from every street and every household. Therefore, people must realize that as the snow melts it is expected that some water will be experienced and that we are not the only town that will be affected.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Shaw that the Public Works Committee report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.

Motion carried.

(c) PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT

MARCH 2015

Report given by Mayor Smith

(a) Building Inspector's Report – The Building Inspector reported a fairly quiet month with no permits issued during the month of February.

(b) Sewage Treatment Project – The Committee was advised that the Build Canada Application has been submitted and that the Environmental Risk Assessment and Pre-Design have been completed. The next steps in the process are for the Committee to review the Pre-Design and make recommendations and to await the approval of Build Canada funding.

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

Motion carried.

(d) RECREATION REPORT

MARCH 2015

Report given by Councillor Shaw

1. Fitness Centre

- a. Current membership: 18

2. Volunteer Awards

- a. Dave Young has been selected as our provincial Volunteer Representative. Dave will be attending the Provincial Awards on Tuesday, April 7th in Halifax.
- b. Deadline for local awards nominations is Friday, March 20th, 2015. We only have one nomination in so far so please spread the word!!

3. Current Programming

- a. Winter Explorers: We wrapped up the season with an afternoon skating at the arena for all participants and families. It was well attended and lots of fun!
- b. Dance Classes: Last session will be next Wednesday night. We've had quite a few cancellations due to weather but they have all been made up.
- c. Walking Club: Still going strong. We have a dedicated group of walkers, typically upwards of 14 a day.
- d. Co-Ed Sports: Volleyball and basketball are running now. Volleyball numbers are high, basketball are picking up again.
- e. Ski Trips to Wentworth: We had 17 on our last trip. Lower than I would like, but glad we went! Our last trip is scheduled for March 20th.
- f. Craft Craze: New program started last week. It's been going great for both age groups. I have 6 in my younger class and 8 in my older class. Each week is a different theme with crafts that tie into it. Themes are music, nature, science and animals.

4. Equipment Lending

- a. Our snowshoes have been going like hotcakes! Great to see such a great response. I have people calling to book them ahead of time now to ensure they will be able to use them.

5. Regional Initiatives

- a. Fundy Connect: Continuing to work with the steering committee to move this initiative forward. The native base in Truro has come on board this project as well.

6. New Initiatives

- a. Our community health board has purchased 5 sets of snowshoes with poles for the Recreation Department. I just got word they are in Amherst, so they should make their way down soon. They also purchase 5 sets for the Lions Club that we could share.

Moved by Councillor Shaw, seconded by Councillor Fancy that the Recreation Committee report be accepted.

Motion carried.

The CAO noted that additional nominations for the local Volunteer Awards had been received since this report was written.

(e) LIBRARY REPORT

MARCH 2015

Report given by Deputy Mayor Ward

(a) Presentation by Denise Corey – Chief Librarian Denise Corey met with the Committee to present the Cumberland Regional Library’s 2013/14 Annual Report and to talk about the services and programs available through the library system. Ms. Corey also reviewed statistics noting that the Parrsboro Branch of the Cumberland Regional Library with a usage of 37% is well above the provincial average.

(b) Letter RE: HST on Books – The Council received a copy of a letter sent to the Honourable Dianna Whalen, Minister of Finance by Frank Balcom, Chair of the Cumberland Regional Library Board expressing the Board’s concern about Recommendation 1.3 of the Broten Report that “Nova Scotia should eliminate rebates for the provincial portion of the HST on printed books”.

The Committee shared Mr. Balcom’s concern that this change would have a significant impact on library budgets and recommended a letter in support of their proposal that the HST portion on printed books be rebated to libraries and schools.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Ward, seconded by Councillor Fancy that the Library report and recommendations contained therein be accepted.

Motion carried.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Parrsboro Citizens Band Association RE: Band Day – Mayor Smith noted that the Town received two letters from the Band Association regarding their Annual Band Day. The first requested permission to use the Civic Grounds for the event and that Public Works provide picnic tables, garbage barrels and barricades. The second letter from the Band Day organizing committee requested a monetary donation to help defray operational costs for the event.

After a discussion the request to use the civic grounds was approved as well as a \$200.00 grant equivalent to last year’s donation. Mayor Smith noted that other requests for grants will be reviewed at Committee-of-the-Whole and budget meetings.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Ward the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.