

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Barrington Municipal Council held in the Council Chambers, in the Administrative Centre, in Barrington, N.S., on Monday, February 27, 2017. The meeting was called to order by the Warden at 7:04 p.m., with the following members present:

- Warden Lindsay (Eddie) Nickerson
- Deputy Warden Jody Crook
- Councillor Murray Atkinson
- Councillor Shaun Hatfield

- Rob Frost, CAO
- Lesa Rossetti, Deputy Clerk

Absent due to medical reasons was Councillor George El-Jakl.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

It was agreed that Western REN approval be added to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Being duly moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Being duly moved and seconded that minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held January 23, 2017 be approved as circulated.

Motion carried unanimously.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Rural Internet Update

The CAO provided an update on rural internet initiatives taken by the Western Regional Enterprise Network. An RFP was issued requesting proposals for internet solutions for Western Nova Scotia. Only one proposal was received which did not fit the specifications of the RFP. WREN is now looking at working with larger players. Discussions continue on this matter.

WESTERN REGIONAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK

The CAO informed members that the Western Regional Enterprise Network has accepted Council's request to join their network effective April 1, 2017. Prior to April 1, Council will have to consider appointments to their Board.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of Warden

The Warden gave a brief report on his activities since the last meeting of Council.

Report from Outside Committees

Councillor Shaun Hatfield provided a written report on the UNSM Accountability and Transparency Session held in Halifax on February 24, 2017. Councillor Hatfield reported that 30 of the 55 municipal units were represented at this session. A copy of Councillor Hatfield's report is attached to the minutes.

Councillor Hatfield also provided a brief report on his activities since the last meeting of Council.

Deputy Warden Jody Crook

Deputy Warden Crook gave a brief report on his activities since the last meeting of Council.

Councillor Murray Atkinson

Councillor Atkinson gave a brief report on his activities since the last meeting of Council.

Report from Committees of Council

Councillor Atkinson reported on recommendations from the Committee of the Whole Council.

Barrington Regional Curling Club

The Barrington Regional Curling Club is requesting funding to carry out some much needed upgrades to the Curling Club. The brine pump needs to be replaced at a cost of \$9,000 to \$13,000, and the compressor needs an overhaul at a cost of \$11,000 to \$16,000, for a total of approximately \$20,000 to \$29,000. The Curling Club does not have additional resources to pay for these upgrades and is requesting the Municipality to provide a grant.

Resolution C170201

Being duly moved and seconded that Council defer the request for funding from the Barrington Regional Curling Club to future budget meetings.

Motion carried unanimously.

Appeal – Variance Granted – Shaun & Carla Hatfield – 49 Sand Hills Beach Rd. Ext.

Conflict of Interest

Councillor Shaun Hatfield declared conflict of interest, vacated his seat and left the meeting room.

Councillor Hatfield and his wife Carla had requested the variance for their property located at 49 Sand Hills Beach Road Extension.

A variance was granted to Shaun and Carla Hatfield to reduce the front yard requirements from 25 feet to 13 feet in order to build a storage building on their property located at 49 Sand Hills Beach Road Extension, Villagedale. Adjoining property owners were notified regarding the variance approval. An appeal has been received from Darlene and Gregory Nickerson. The appeal was considered by the Committee of the Whole Council at their meeting held February 21, 2017, at which time the Building Inspector was present as well as Darlene and Gregory Nickerson.

Resolution C170102

Being duly moved and seconded that Council approve the variance granted to Shaun and Carla Hatfield.

Motion carried unanimously.

Volunteer of the Year Appointment

Nominations for Volunteer of the Year were considered by the Committee of the Whole Council.

Resolution C170203

Being duly moved and seconded that Eliza Powell be recognized as Volunteer of the Year for Barrington Municipality.

Motion carried unanimously.

Purple Day 2017 – Epilepsy Awareness

Correspondence has been received from the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia requesting that March 26, 2017 be recognized as Purple Day in an effort to raise epilepsy awareness.

Resolution C170204

Being duly moved and seconded that Council recognize Purple Day as March 26, 2017 and provide a photo of Council wearing the purple ribbons as requested by the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia.

Motion carried unanimously.

The Warden then read the following Purple Day for Epilepsy Proclamation, and having received no objections, declared March 26, 2017 as Purple Day in the Municipality of Barrington.

WHEREAS Purple Day is a global effort dedicated to promoting epilepsy awareness in countries around the world, and

WHEREAS Purple Day was founded in 2008 by Cassidy Megan, a nine year old girl from Nova Scotia, who wanted people to know that if you have epilepsy, you are not alone, and

WHEREAS epilepsy is one of the most common neurological conditions, estimated to affect more than 50 million people worldwide, and more that 300,000 people in Canada, and

WHEREAS the public is often unable to recognize the common seizure types, or how to respond with appropriate first aid, and

WHEREAS Purple Day will be celebrated on March 26 annually to increase understanding, reduce stigma and improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy throughout the country and globally,

I therefore proclaim March 26, 2017 Purple Day in the Municipality of Barrington in an effort to raise epilepsy awareness everywhere.

Deregistration of Municipal Heritage Property – Marven and Deborah Stoddard

In 2013 Marven and Deborah Stoddard requested that their property located at 4733 Highway 3, Bear Point, Assessment Account No. 04926773 be deregistered as a municipal heritage property. This request was denied. The legislation states that after a period of three years the owners can proceed with their intended changes, or demolition which has occurred in this case.

Resolution C170205

Being duly moved and seconded that Council deregister the heritage designation granted to Assessment Account No. 04926773 located at 4733, Highway 3, Bear Point.

Motion carried unanimously.

CIBC Line of Credit Guarantees

Resolution C170206

Being duly moved and seconded that Council approve the revolving line of credit of \$1,500,000.00 with CIBC.

Motion carried unanimously.

Region 6 Budget

Resolution C170207

Being duly moved and seconded that Council accept and approve the 2017/2018 budget of Region 6 Solid Waste.

Motion carried unanimously.

Western REN Agreement

Resolution C170208

Being duly moved and seconded that Council accept and approve the amended Inter-municipal Agreement for the Western REN.

Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONS

Consideration of amendments to Policy 52 “Council Meetings and Proceedings”, Sec. 8

Notice of consideration of amendments to Policy 52, Section 8, was given at the last meeting of Council. It is proposed that Policy 52, Section 8, be amended to give Council better management over their agendas. The current policy does not provide an ability to determine if presenting information is of a municipal nature or related to municipal business and properly determine the appropriate meeting.

Resolution C170209

Being duly moved and seconded that Council approve amendments to Section 8 of Policy 52 “Council Meetings and Proceedings” as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of repealing Policy 12 “Sale of Municipal Property”

Notice of consideration of repealing Policy 12 “Sale of Municipal Property” was given at the January 23, 2017 Council meeting. It is proposed that Policy 12 “Sale of Municipal Property” be repealed due to the restrictions that this policy has created over and above what the Municipal Government Act allows.

Resolution C170210

Being duly moved and seconded that Council repeal Policy 12 “Sale of Municipal Policy” as all necessary requirements are covered by the Municipal Government Act.

Motion carried unanimously.

NEW OR OTHER BUSINESS

No new or other business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Warden

Chief Administrative Officer

Secretary for the Meeting

On website March 1, 2017.

REPORT FOR COUNCIL

RE: SPECIAL MEETING OF UNSM MEMBERSHIP ON TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

WORKSHOP HELD FEB ²⁴23/17 AT THE WESTIN NOVA SCOTIA, HALIFAX

SUBMITTED BY: COUNCILLOR SHAUN HATFIELD

Over 30 municipalities represented at this event which demonstrates a high degree of interest in the subject of transparency and accountability in municipal government.

Prov. Auditor General, Michael Pickup - presenter Amherst CAO, Greg Herrett - presenter

The day consisted of the following:

1. An educational component which included presentations by Auditor General, Michael Pickup and Amherst CAO, Greg Herrett:

A. Presenter: Michael Pickup - "Its public money, it's that simple". The public expects access to how their money is spent. In 2015, the Auditor General moved upon the NS legislature to monitor and report the travel and hospitality expenses of provincial senior bureaucrats. And, even though policy was update, by 2016 there was still no public disclosure of hospitality expenses. Not acceptable.

In terms of paying for alcohol, few situations are justifiable - unless the Queen comes for a visit to the province wherein we wouldn't charge her \$10 a glass for dinner wine. He stressed that policies should be different in various organizations/ situations, but there should be a clear policy which is adhered to by all members of any given public entity. Ie. There are about a hundred organizations within the one entity of "NS Government". It is important to clarify your own individual organization's policy and to be ready to explain it forthrightly to the public If the organization feels that certain travel is important, say for professional development, then they can adhere to that principle and easily defend their expense policy on the basis of that organizational value ... The obvious danger-areas in recent years have been with respect to hospitality/ entertainment/ alcohol. Michael Pickup covered recent examples of where greater transparency and accountability have been necessary, such as provincial government connections to The Atlantic Lottery Corp.

"Research and adapt your expense policy" - no one right answer for every organization... Don't just default to what other organizations are doing - lead the way by doing the hard work of blazing your own trail on this matter. Ie. City of Edmonton has a monthly online report which discloses all expenses for Mayor and councillors, but it also provides detailed explanations for these expenses so that the public can clearly understand their "organizational rationale" for permitting such expenses . For example, if one councillor has been attending events sponsored by entities like FCM, UNSM - then an explanation/ purpose is provided in the online expense record. (Ie. Warden - Hospital Foundation Meeting; Purpose - municipal shared services; Distance: 40 km @ .40 = \$16.00)

Conclusion: "Tell people clearly how you spend their money and why it is important for them and for the public organization that you spend this money."

Some councils require in their policy a pre-approved travel process for any out of province travel/ or for expenses over a certain ceiling amount.

{It is recommended that Councils separate their Hospitality Policy from their Councillors Expense Policy. ie. If you are liaising with German/ Chinese business prospects, and it's respectful of their culture to use alcohol for a supper engagement - then it may not be wise to prohibit the purchase. However, this is better clarified in a Municipal Hospitality Policy than permitted under individual councillor expenses...)

[It was also pointed out that many municipalities simply go with per diems in their expense policy for councillors – which does not incur the cumbersome and costly accounting process of submitting receipts for claimed expenses. With per diems there is less accountability/ more freedom for Councillors to spend their allotted meal amount however they wish. But submission of receipts for re-imbursment provides a clearer trail of how public money is being spent by councillors, yet places more work/ cost on the accounting team.]

B. Presenter: Greg Herrett - Set your expense policy in keeping with your own sub-culture and what would seem reasonable to your own community. Whatever your community would view as being reasonable for your expenses in conducting their business is what should govern policy-making.

Consistency – policy rules for expenses should be applicable to everyone on council. Compensation for expenses should not be considered in any way as a part of your remuneration. If the remuneration for your council is considered too low, then don't make up for it through expense claims... Change the remuneration policy.

Your expense claims should represent exactly what you intend to claim, so that no one except you alone are responsible for what is on the claim form.

Some councils make all overnight trips or out-of-province travel subject to group pre-approval.

Items usually addressed in an expense policy:

Mileage

Accommodations

Meals

Incidentals

Professional Development / Conferences

Alcohol

Spousal expenses (usually spousal expenses are excluded from all council-related activities).

Expense-Claims-In-Kind (ie. If you want to drive to FCM in Ottawa and the mileage claim would be over the cost of airfare, then it is reasonable to claim only the airfare cost as opposed to the greater cost of car travel.)

Some Municipalities have an expense provision – that if you stay at a friend's place and therefore significantly cut accommodation costs while on municipal business, then you can still claim a sizably lower amount for not incurring a greater cost to the public purse. ie. \$35.00

Other items typically covered in a municipal expense policy include:

Breakfast \$10-15 ?

Lunch \$15-20 ?

Dinner \$15-20 ?

Incidentals - \$10 for trip?

Professional Development is encouraged, so costs should be covered... Some municipalities require written proof of successful completion.

Other expenses to consider in a municipal policy: taxis, parking, tolls, laundry, hospitality (variation of hospitality policy recognizes individual organizations values, priorities and culture)

Once again it was stated that, if a council is unhappy with their remuneration, then they should not try to make it up by playing loose with an expense policy. Instead, consider adjusting the salary scale to a more reasonable level (with consideration of what your community considers reasonable for the level of your task/ responsibilities)

NEXT PART OF THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED DISCUSSION GROUPS:

1. Discussion Groups with focus on four questions. (See handout)
 - The MGA should require every muni to have an expense policy with clear guidelines for councillor expenses, but the MGA should not prescribe specific things (ie. No alcohol)... Best practices should be established through UNSM.
 - Whistleblowing - yes, there should be a process whereby a person who is abusing taxpayers money can be investigated and, if necessary, action taken. Could be done through the audit process.
 - Report-backs from small groups:
 - 100% support for MGA Legislation to require (and broadly define) what must be in an expense policy, but the MGA should not be overly prescriptive. UNSM should also craft a best practices policy for setting expense claims and public reporting. Councils should craft policies that would be in keeping with what their community would expect as being reasonable for councillors. Again, Hospitality and IT Policies should be separate from individual councillor's expense policy. Provincial standard for mileage rate should be adopted.
 - A public forum for viewing expenses online is deemed increasingly important. An internal audit committee, with qualified public members, could be used to review staff and council expenses. Per Diems verses Receipts? Professional Development should be covered by any expense policy. It was pointed out that, if reporting expenses begins to cost councillors too much politically, then it could negatively impact attendance at UNSM or FCM. So the organization, as part of their expense policy, should state why attendance at municipal conferences is deemed important for the public and the municipal organization. Each municipal unit should have an IT Policy with clear terms of reference and rationale - which is separate from a councillor expense claim policy.
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- Quarterly reporting online with expenses being broken down and fully explained ... Posting expenses online could encompass an entire year or full council term, but it should not be mandatory to leave expenses posted online beyond one specific term of office.
- A written report should be required by anyone attending a meeting on behalf of a municipality as part of expense claiming/ accountability/ transparency.
- "Whistleblowers" - Accountability should lie with CAO, Mayor, and Council. Our current Provincial "Municipal Financial Indicators Measure" should include a section to evaluate how each individual unit is doing in the matter of transparent reporting/ public disclosure.... Any whistleblowing policy must balance protecting elected officials from malicious complaints verses empowering the public to feel confident about the level of accountability/ transparency for elected officials....
- Municipal Advisors may be a good one to go to for external whistleblowing accountability. Also, extreme cases of abuse or misappropriation could also be directed to the Provincial Municipal Auditor General.
- On a local level, it was also suggested that we could have our annually retained/ contracted Municipal Auditor (ie. Doug Drane) examine expenses of councillors/ staff and have - as part of their annual contractual obligations, the local auditor craft a public statement regarding the reasonableness of staff/ councillor expenses , as well as comment on any need for further internal controls.

Closing observations/ synthesis. Done by the MC/ Faciliator.

1. Written evaluation of the day.... Each participant submitted a written evaluation of each part of the days activities ...
 2. It was observed by a number of new councillors - and generally agreed upon by those of us who have been around for a while - that there is usually little or no coverage of councillor expense claims during the orientation session for new council members. For example, I have been claiming mileage for travel to and from Council and CoW since I have been on council because, when elected, I was told that has been the typical practice within the MoB. However, after others brought this matter up during the workshop, I now realize that most municipalities only allow councillors to claim travel expenses for meetings related to municipal business (such as outside appointments to boards, foundations, committees, workshops, UNSM, FCM), but not for attendance at regularly scheduled meetings such as Council and CoW
 3. I also have questions related to the manner in which our paystubs/ T4's (as Councillors) has the salary upon which we pay tax, CPP, and EI as being much lower than the total amount we actually get? Why nearly one third of our remuneration is considered "stipend" or "honorarium"? Was the original intent of this allow for a "stipend" to cover travel expenses incurred in the line of service? If so, why do we have an additional "expense policy" for travel claims? Or, is the "stipend" part of our wages just a carry-over from the way things were done in yesteryear ... and in need of being revisited? For example, if we have a separate expense policy for travel, then shouldn't we be paying taxes, CPP, and EI on the full amount we are paid for Councillor remuneration?
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