



**Town of Westville
Regular Council Meeting
Monday, March 25, 2013**

Commencing at 6:00 pm

Council Members Present:	Mayor Roger MacKay; Deputy Mayor Lynn MacDonald; Councillor Charlie Sutherland; Councillor Bernie Murphy; Councillor Lennie White
Town Employees Present:	CAO Scott Fraser; Superintendent of Public Works Samuel Graham; Recording Secretary Diane Morrison
Visitors Present:	A number of Westville residents;
Media Organizations Present:	The News; 94.1 FM, Pictou Advocate

1. CALLING OF MEETING TO ORDER

1.1 Mayor MacKay called the meeting to order welcoming everyone in attendance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2.1 *It was moved by Deputy Mayor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Sutherland that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.*

- Highland Consolidated Middle School
- In Camera – Legal Issue

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 *It was moved by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor White to approve the minutes of the February 25th, 2013 regular Council Meeting as presented. Motion carried.*

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

4.1 7.2 Presentation Municipal Taxes

Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that she had mentioned at the last meeting she would like an invitation extended to the other Mayors, Warden and Councillors and have Wayne Fiander, Executive Director with the Chamber of Commerce invited to attend a meeting and give his presentation to everyone on new ideas for Municipal Taxation.

7.6 REN

Councillor White noted that he has not heard from anyone concerning this committee.

Mayor MacKay also noted that he had not heard anyone has been contacted to date either.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald questioned if it was through the Department of Economic Development and it was noted that it was.

CAO Fraser noted that we would contact them to see if they received the information.

8.1 1875 Purvis Avenue

Deputy Mayor MacDonald inquired if we have received the information on the date this demolition order was taken out.

CAO Fraser noted that he had requested the information but not received it to this date.

5. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS

- 5.1 *It was moved by Deputy Mayor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Murphy to approve/pay the accounts as presented. Motion carried.*

Councillor Sutherland noted that he had attended a Safety Conference in Halifax and there was an item for him concerning gas, meals, etc and it also shows the tax amount and he noted this is how we have to pay taxes over and over again.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 6.1 **Police -** *It was moved by Councillor Sutherland and seconded by Deputy Mayor MacDonald that the Police Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.*

Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that she has read information in the paper concerning Mental Health and Incarceration and that this item is being looked at and she was wondering if the Westville Police Department is involved.

CAO Fraser noted that he was under the impression that they were already working on this matter.

- 6.2 **Fire Report -** *It was moved by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Sutherland that the Fire Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.*

Deputy Mayor MacDonald asked to have a meeting set up with the CAO,

Fire Department Representatives and the Fire Committee Members to discuss items that the Fire Department may need. She noted that they need a new radio system and maybe they can purchase same over a period of time.

- 6.3 **Fire Inspectors Report – *Report not available as the Fire Inspector is off on sick leave.***
- 6.4 **Recreation Report - *It was moved by Deputy Mayor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Murphy that the Recreation Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.***
Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that after the Council Meeting in April they are going to hold a Volunteer Appreciation Evening and all volunteers are invited to attend. She also mentioned that Westville has chosen Bookie MacDonald to attend the Provincial Ceremony as our Volunteer of the Year.
- 6.5 **Compost, Garbage & Recycling Report - *It was moved by Councillor Sutherland and seconded by Deputy Mayor MacDonald the Compost, Garbage & Recycling Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.***
Commission Sutherland noted that there is a lot of discussion around the Province concerning recycling. He noted that when he was attending the Safety Conference he saw people along the highway picking up recyclables and he is concerned that this may be eliminated. CAO Fraser noted he did not think they would be changing anything at this time.
- 6.6 **Environmental Health Report – *It was moved by Deputy Mayor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Murphy that the Environmental Health Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.***
- 6.7 **Transportation Report - *It was moved by Councillor Sutherland and seconded by Councillor White that the Transportation Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.***
- 6.8 **Animal Control Report – *It was moved by Deputy Mayor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Murphy that the Animal Control Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.***
Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that she was interested to see the offer Mr Fillier was making to the Town concerning providing a work shop for dog walking. She would like to have the Recreation Department look into this.
Councillor White noted that he was glad that no names were shown on the report.
- 6.9 **Building Report – *It was moved by Deputy Mayor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Murphy that the Building Report be approved as presented. Motion carried.***

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Tearman Society

CAO Fraser noted that this is to provide information that their 19th annual "Celebration of Art" will be held at the Museum of Industry on May 10th at 7:00 PM. It was noted that it was an annual thing and that the Town always bought 2 tickets.

7.2 Pictou County Sports Heritage Hall of Fame Society

Councillor Sutherland made a motion and it was seconded by Deputy Mayor MacDonald to have request forwarded to the Finance Committee. Motion Carried.

7.3 VON Pictou County

CAO Fraser noted that this was a newsletter received from the Local VON for informational purposes.

Councillor Sutherland mentioned that they do terrific work.

8. NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Unsightly Properties

CAO Fraser noted that there are 4 properties listed since January 2013 and 2 show that no further follow up is needed. He noted that 1875 Purvis Avenue is still an ongoing issue and the homeowner is in possession of the demolition permit. He is waiting from the Shared Services Authority for the date that the permit was taken out.

CAO Fraser noted also that the 2695 Foxbrook Road property was presently waiting for a follow inspection to be done.

Commissioner White inquired on 2070 Diamond Street and 2088 Foley Street.

CAO Fraser noted that we would check on same.

8.2 Strategic Plan

CAO Fraser spoke on the last meeting and that quite a bit of work has been completed. He feels it is now at the point where they can start to put a draft together and that it will probably be May before it will be ready for review. At that time Council can approve same at a Council Meeting or recommend any changes.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that seemed fair as the CAO is presently working on the budget and finishing up the year end for the Town.

8.3 LED Lighting

CAO Fraser noted that he has received a copy of the UNSM LED buy or lease spreadsheet. He also noted that there was to be a training session but it had to be cancelled due to weather. He will attend the meeting that is now scheduled for Wednesday, April 3rd and once the calculations are finalized he will present a recommendation to Council. He is hoping a decision should be available for the April Council Meeting.

8.4 MFC- Borrowings

CAO Fraser noted that he was presenting a recommendation for the Spring Debenture Process which takes place each year. He is recommending that the Town proceeds with a borrowing resolution for a maximum borrowing of \$250,000.00 at a rate not to exceed 6.5% for a period not to exceed 20 years. CAO Fraser went on to explain how the MFC Borrowing worked and included a copy of the Borrowing Resolution and Project costs involved.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald made a motion that was seconded by Councillor White to proceed with the recommendation to borrow up to \$250,000.00 at a rate not to exceed 6.5% for up to 20 years as recommended by staff. Motion carried.

8.5 Police Board – Citizen Appointee

CAO Fraser noted that during the month of March interviews were conducted with residents interested in being members of the Westville Police Board. He noted that two residents applied and both were interviewed. He went on to note that it was agreed by the Board to recommend to Council that Steven Joudrey be appointed to the position recently vacated with the resignation of Bradley Cameron.

A motion was made by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Murphy to accept Steven Joudrey as a member of the Westville Police Board of Commissioners. Motion passed.

8.6 Financial Report

CAO Fraser presented the Financial Report for the period ended February 28th, 2013. He answered several questions from members of the Council. He ended by noting that at this time it shows that there is a surplus of approximately \$47,000.00.

8.7 Police Forum

CAO Fraser informed the Council that he attended a discussion group for CAO's regarding Police Services. He noted that there were a number of areas of interest and a Presentation was made on the growing use of Auxiliary Police and Special Constables. This outlined the benefits and risks associated with staffing alternatives to full-fledged officers. There was also a presentation made on the Summit of Police Economics and that the conclusion was that the rising costs are occurring nationwide and this is sparking changes in the way Police services are provided. He mentioned that this presentation touched on civilianization, tiered police services, and the benefits of measuring efficiency and effectiveness of the service.

He also mentioned that the Department of Justice made a presentation on standards of policing in Nova Scotia and they advised that the Provincial funding of positions will continue.

8.8 1778 Foley Street

CAO Fraser noted that a request was made by Councillor Murphy to have this added to the agenda.

Councillor Murphy was inquiring on a property at 1778 Foley Street and the fact that this property was acquired by the Town at the recent tax sale. He noted that there is a redemption period of six months on the property at which time if the arrears are not paid the land will become property of the Town of Westville. He noted that he was contacted by the Curling Club about the property potentially being used as a parking area to help resolve some of the congestion which has occurred during the curling season. After further discussion it was decided to wait for the redemption period to pass and at that time discuss this matter further.

8.9 Governance Study

Councillor White asked for this to be added to the Agenda and noted that he has a resolution to present as follows:

Whereas the idea of a Governance Study was initiated by a previous Council of the Town of Westville;

And whereas subsequently the terms of reference for such a study were developed with the input of all six units in Pictou County;

And whereas the study was estimated to be at a cost of \$300,000.00;

And Whereas the Provincial Government has agreed to fund 50% of the proposed study cost;

And Whereas the Municipality of the County of Pictou, the Town of Pictou, the Town of Trenton, the Town of New Glasgow, and the Town of Stellarton have all committed to the study and have agreed to provide their \$25,000.00 share of the cost of the study;

Therefore be it resolved that this council endorse the Governance Study proposed for Pictou County as outlined in the terms of reference noted above and previously circulated to council;

And further be it resolved that this council will contribute its share of the cost of the study to a maximum of \$25,000.00.

A motion was made by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Murphy to adopt the Resolution as presented.

Motion Carried – 4 Yeas, Mayor Roger MacKay, Councillor White, Councillor Sutherland and Councillor Murphy

1 Nay – Deputy Mayor MacDonald

On the question Councillor Murphy noted that he was talking to the Public and they want this study done and he feels that we need this information to make educated decisions for the Town. He noted that the study will not be binding and that he will vote in favour of this resolution.

Councillor White noted that he contacted the present Government and was assured that they are on board and that they will participate in the Study and the current government gave no indication that they will force anything on the Municipalities.

He feels that once the report is completed it will be put out to the Public for further discussion.

Councillor Sutherland noted that the previous Council was called to Halifax in regards to the Town finances and they wanted us to support it

and it was something that everyone wanted and at that time they asked a lot of questions and he asked tough questions to our CAO. He noted that the Province of Nova Scotia does not allow Municipalities to run a deficit. He noted that it may be 3 cents on the tax rate for the Government study but feels it has to be done and hopefully without a tax rate increase. Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that she will vote against the resolution that she did support the study and took the Minister of Service Nova Scotia at the time at her word that they would be paying for the study. Then all of a sudden they change their minds. She went on to note that this is the same Government that broke the MOU and now the Municipalities are responsible for the costs involved. She asked the other Councillors where they were going to come up with the \$25,000.00 and asked if they were willing to cut Council Travel Expenses or other items. She noted that the Town of Stellarton receives help when they have a subsidence issue but the Town of Westville apparently does not qualify and we are the proud owners of \$60,000.000 concrete and rebar filler over in the Diamond and no one helped us.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald went on to note that we run a very strict budget and that we have \$2,000.00 per year to share with the public for various tournaments, children on school trips, etc and we are very careful with every cent that we spend. She noted that if we have \$25,000.00 to spend we should be spending it in the Town of Westville on the potholes that are apparent on all streets.

Councillor White noted that he does not disagree and we have difficulties and he feels that the issues associated with the study need to be put to rest and that we should find a way to have the study properly done and have it so that all of Pictou County is included and properly assessed.

He noted that in Queens County when they joined forces the Council of the day had to put aside their difference and work together.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that he has now opened the door and gone on to reasons why we should amalgamate. She noted that he should read the Gord MacInnis study that was done to study Westville finances when we were in a shared services agreement with New Glasgow. He concluded that it was costing us through the roof for administrative services. She asked Councillor White if this will be part of our budget process. She also noted that you can't point out a problem without a solution. She went on to note at this rate if we have a subsidence this year we are going down that hole.

Mayor MacKay wanted to touch on this and he sympathizes that the Province and the fact that they were going to help and then they backed out. He noted that it is along the lines of the fact that we voted for no Sunday Shopping and what happened there. He feels that we have to move forward and he hopes that it will be better for Westville. He went on to mention that he feels that the Westville taxpayers need a break and we need to provide information to the residents and this will help them decide what happens.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that the study started at \$150,000.00 and is now \$300,000.00 and there is nothing in the Municipal Act that we have to pay for this.

Councillor White noted that we should look at this as an investment and that it should bring out ideas on how we can save money. We might have

to make some tough decisions but if we don't do it now can't we make good decisions.

Mayor MacKay noted that yes the original cost was \$150,000.00 and then it exploded as there was more input from the CAO's on things they needed to know about the infrastructure, etc.

CAO Fraser noted that until it is put to Tender they don't really know if it will be \$150,000.00 or \$300,000.00 that only after the Tender process with the price be known.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald asked CAO Fraser if he looked at the budget to see where the money is available.

CAO Fraser noted that if we have a balanced budget it may have to be a 3 cent increase in taxes and he noted sometimes you can cut things but he would not recommend that but it is still early to make decisions.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald mentioned that Council is going to commit and once we commit we are in.

Mayor MacKay asked if there is a possibility that it will not be in this year's budget and CAO Fraser noted that we will try to put it in this year.

8.10 Highland Consolidated Middle School

Councillor Lennie White noted that this is an issue that has to be discussed in public so that we can get public input. He noted that we are aware that the school is not going to reopen and that we as a Council did not make that decision. We had difficulty in presenting our case to the School Board and he does not feel that there was not a good discussion between the parties. He noted that the options presented were for 3 schools to go P-8

And they would be the Walter Duggan Elementary School, G R Saunders Elementary and the W A MacLeod or the W.A. MacLeod School would be renovated to hold more students.

Councillor Murphy noted that for 2 schools statistics are showing that they are going to increase in enrollment and one school is not expected to increase. He feels it should have been an option for 2 schools to be renovated and not 3. The 2 schools that will have increased enrollment are the Walter Duggan Elementary School and the G R Saunders Elementary whereas the statistics show that the W A MacLeod School will decrease in enrollment over the next few years.

Councillor Sutherland noted that at the Safety Conference he recently attended it was noted that the new school in Yarmouth has mould in it and ours is 40 years old and he noted that the one in Yarmouth is going to be saved. He noted that last April the children were sent to the NSCC and then moved to the W A MacLeod School and now they are going to close the Highland Consolidated Middle School. He mentioned that they use to have the Housing Commission in Town and it moved out and there were other organizations in the Town and they all moved out and they never came back. He mentioned that Westville does not have a for profit Senior Citizens home and now we are going to lose 20 jobs and 250 teenagers because they are closing the school.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald questioned what the School Board is going to do with the school and if they are going to fix it up as is required if they return it to the Town or are they just going to tear it down.

CAO Fraser noted that he has tried to communicate with the School Board and they do not seem to be very receptive to answer any questions. He

was trying to obtain a building report and a technical report on what is wrong and what has been done. He has sent for the information from the School Board through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and they will have 30 days to reply.

Deputy Mayor MacDonald noted that according to the Section 92 of the Education Act in a situation like this they would have to do the repairs and spend the 1.5 million dollars needed to remediate the school before they return it to the Town. Also noted was the fact that according to the Education Act they may discuss with the Town and have the building demolished at their cost.

Mayor MacKay noted that the writing is on the wall but there is a process to be followed and there will be another public meeting. We have to get the parents involved.

ITEM 9. QUESTIONS FROM CITIZENS

9.1 Morris Campbell – 1366 North Main Street

Mr. Campbell gave thanks for putting the school on the agenda.

He noted that he was at the public meetings and said his piece and he also noted that Lynn had lots to say at the meeting and then noted the other 4 said nothing.

Councillor Sutherland noted that he had spoken at the first meeting and at the second meeting he had to leave early.

9.2 Robert Ferguson – Maple Street

Mr Ferguson noted that he has been in business for 37 years and tonight he is shaking his head in shame. He noted that he is taking off his hat to Lynn MacDonald. He noted that Charlie should start working for the town. He noted that Roger has been there long enough to know better. He went on to say that schools have mould and he is sure there are other schools in Pictou County with issues. He noted that he is on the Business Association and he pays his dues every year but the other businesses don't work together. He noted that the cost of everything is going up such as power, fuel, etc. and now you are going to spend \$25,000.00 on a study we cannot afford. He noted that Council gave themselves a raise and are working for themselves.

Mayor MacKay noted that he did not accept his raise and he would like the business association to come to Council with ideas so they can work together.

Mr Ferguson noted that he does give ideas.....

9.3 Gordie MacIntosh

Mr MacIntosh asked if the Town would consider looking into a couple of streets in the Town that are very narrow and may be better if they were made one way going in the opposite directions. The Streets he was referring to are Irving and Court Streets.

Mayor MacKay noted it is something that would have to go to the Traffic Authority to be considered.

ITEM 10 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

10.1 *It was moved by Councillor White and seconded by Sutherland Murphy to move to an In-Camera session. Motion carried.*

10.2 *It was moved by Councillor White and seconded by Deputy Mayor MacDonald to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried*

Certified to be a true copy of the minutes of the March 25th, 2013 Regular Council Meeting for the Town of Westville.


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MAYOR


.....
RECORDING SECRETARY