

Rural Municipality of Belfast

Mayor: Garth Gillis; Chief Administrative Officer: Bob Brooks; *Incorporated 1972*

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, August 19, 2020 at 7:00 PM

New Location – Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Village

Maximum 15 Attendees at the Meeting

Council: Mayor Garth Gillis (Chair)
Deputy Mayor Virginia Cooke
Councillor Lynn Docherty
Councillor Billy Gamble
Councillor Andy Henry
Councillor Audrey Shillabeer
Councillor Joanne Vessey

Administration: CAO Bob Brooks

Item Order of Business

1. **Call to Order** – Council was called to order at 7:07 PM
2. **Covid-19 Considerations** –
 - As per Health PEI suggestions for public meetings; the maximum number of attendees allowed for this Council Meeting was limited to 15 people total (**7 Council, 1 CAO, 7 General Public**) (it was suggested in the Public Notices that only one person per group attend this meeting to allow for more representation)
 - Additional measures taken for this meeting included:
 - Tables and Chairs treated with a disinfectant;
 - Physical Distancing of approximately 6 feet between all participants; and
 - Face Masks, Gloves and Bottled Water was available.
 - All attendees had to sign-in for Contact Tracing, with completed list left with Wood Islands Management, and
 - As there were more attendees than were allowed (more than 15); public speakers who signed in, spoke to the Mosquito Issue, then left the meeting, to allow for another attendee at the meeting. There were no more than 15 attendees in the meeting at any one time.
3. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – There were no declared conflicts for this meeting.
4. **Approval of Agenda** – Council agreed to two additional items being placed on today's Agenda (**inserted under Item 10**), followed by the following motion:

Moved by Councillor Docherty and **Seconded** by Councillor Cooke to approve the Agenda as amended.

Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0

Result: **Carried Unanimously**

5. **Adoption of June 17, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes** (*previously distributed*)
(*comments/changes received to-date by Council, incorporated into attached Minutes*)

Moved by Councillor Cooke and **Seconded** by Councillor Henry to adopt the Minutes of the June 17, 2020 Council Meeting as presented.

Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0

Result: **Carried Unanimously**

6. **Business arising from the June 17, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes (CAO)** –

- **Future Municipal Office Space** – During the June 17th Council Meeting, Council asked that the CAO go back to Wood Islands (Mr. John Rousseau) to discuss some suggested changes to a possible lease with the Wood Islands and Area Development Corporation (WIADC). That lease at the Wood Islands Village would start on April 1, 2021. Mr. Rousseau discussed the changes with the WIADC Board of Directors, and noted that they could accept all the suggested changes, with the exception of the built-in sink in the office space, due to significant plumbing expense. Mr. Rousseau also confirmed that the Municipality would be able to have FREE access to the upstairs hall for its meetings/gatherings as required. The itemized list that would be included in the lease, would contain the following:
- Negotiation for a long-term lease (two years or more) to start April 1, 2021 at a cost of \$725/mth + hst;
 - Included within the monthly Lease payment:
 - Electricity, Heat and Air Conditioning,
 - Use of the Upstairs Hall and Kitchen Facility,
 - High Speed Internet,
 - 24/7 access to the Public Washroom Facility,
 - Snow Clearing (parking lot and sidewalk), and
 - A negotiated Exit Clause, should the Government of PEI no longer require a public office for the Municipality, or, if either party wishes to dis-continue with the lease arrangement.

The CAO also looked at various separate coffee/clean-up stations in lieu of a built-in sink. The CAO would recommend a set-up that would include:

- A Watercooler for filling coffee, tea and water,
- A Keurig Coffee Machine and an Electric Kettle, and
- A Cabinet/Counter/Storage Unit (with space for supplies, a garbage can, a recycling container, and cleaning supplies). (CAO would take care of the recycling)
- Estimated cost is between \$1,000 and \$1,500.

If Council is agreeable; Council can direct the CAO to negotiate a long-term lease with WIADC under the criteria as noted above.

Moved by Councillor Henry and **Seconded** by Councillor Docherty to direct the CAO to negotiate/finalise a long-term lease (two years or more), with the WIADC for a new Office Space location for the Municipality, using the criteria as noted above.

Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0

Result: **Carried Unanimously**

7. **CAO Report**

a. **Financial/Variance Report:**

i. Provincial Credit Union Account Balances at August 05, 2020:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| a. Share 00001 | \$5.29 |
| b. Chequing 00010 | \$22,768.77 * |
| c. Gas Tax Acct 00011 | \$135,887.12 ** |

* **Starting September 1, 2020**; it is the intention to **Open a Reserve Savings Account**, specifically to start transferring **\$7,500** per month for six months (= **\$45,000**), so that we may start to receive (some) interest on what will serve as our initial **Reserve Account** – these transfers will come from the **Operations Chequing Account**.

** **Also starting September 1, 2020**; it is the intention to **Open a Gas Tax Savings Account**, specifically to transfer **\$50,000** to start, so that we may start to receive (some) interest on the Gas Tax Funds, that at the end of the 2019/2024 Gas Tax Program cycle; we will see the gained interest, available to the Municipality, for additional Gas Tax funding availability – this transfer will come from the **Gas Tax Chequing Account**. Additional Transfers may be considered at a later date until program funds are utilised.

8. **Gas Tax Funding Update (CAO):** – On Wednesday, July 22nd, the CAO received the revised agreements from the PEI/Canada Infrastructure Secretariat, that now includes the Wood Islands and Area Development Corporation (WIADC) approved funding. Additionally, the Secretariat allowed the uncommitted funds to be added to the WIADC project, which brought up their total amount to be almost exactly what the Municipality had approved for WIADC back in February 2020. As of August 3, 2020, all 2019/2024 Gas Tax Programs Funds have now been Committed.

9. **Resolution # R2020-03 - 2019–2024 - Transfer of NA-GTF to Not-For-Profit Groups:**

As per Item 8. above, the PEI/Canada Infrastructure Secretariat now requires an additional Resolution for the WIADC Project. The Rural Municipality of Belfast now adds the WIADC Capital Investment Plan to their 2019-2024 Gas Tax Funding (GTF) Notional Allocation (NA) spearheaded by not-for-profit groups; specifically, **Project 31.2.9 Infrastructure Improvements at Wood Islands Village in the amount of \$24,983.94**. Resolution # R2020-03 is **attached** for Council approval.

Moved by Councillor Vessey and **Seconded** by Councillor Gamble to approve **Resolution # R2020-03: 2019–2024 - Transfer of NA-GTF to Not-For-Profit Groups** as presented.

Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0

Result: **Carried Unanimously**

10. **New Business for the Agenda (as per Item 4 above) –**

- a) **Xplornet Communications Tower – Belfast Rec Centre.** An information sheet (**attached**) was provided in advance, about Xplornet intention to lease space from Belfast Rec Centre for a Communications Tower that could significantly boost the internet signal to the area – while Communication Towers are Federally regulated, the Rec Centre just wanted to keep Council informed.

- b) **Proposal for Belfast/Pinette by Ms. Lisa Hubley** – The CAO received an email from Ms. Hubley on Monday, August 17th to say that she is looking at the possibility of expanding her small horseback riding stable, currently operating on the Pond’s Road in Pinette. Ms. Hubley was not able to attend the meeting, but asked if the CAO would let Council know that she is looking at two options: (1) to expand her current operation on Pond’s Road, or (2) speak with the Board of Directors at Pinette Raceway about working out an arrange with them for the expansion. Ms. Hubley asked Council members if they knew the current contact for the Raceway. Councillor Vessey, provided the CAO with the current President’s contact information (Mr. Raymond White). Ms. Hubley noted that she planned to keep Council informed for their information.

11. **DISCUSSION ITEM - Community Grants Policy - Should Council remove Mosquito Abatement Programs from eligibility within the Community Grants Program?**

On March 11, 2020 the Community Grants Committee met to deliberate the allocations for the 2020/21 Community Grants and make a recommendation to Council. Within that recommendation was the following: *“That Council review the Community Grants Program Policy, prior to the 2021/2022 Community Grants Season; specifically, to consider whether it is appropriate to continue to include: Mosquito Abatement Programs, within the Community Grant Program Mandate.”* That recommendation to review the Policy was subsequently approved by Council on March 18, 2020. On June 17, 2020, Council discussed the possibility of making changes to the Community Grants Policy in regards to Mosquito Programs, discussing:

- Limitations of specific area coverage across the municipality and effectiveness,
- Whether there was a positive or negative environmental impact,
- Other funding mechanisms, such as Lot Improvement Levies and Resident Buy-in, Plebiscites, Donations, Sponsorships, and costs.
- Noting the lack of public attendance at the June 17th meeting, Council decided to **DEFER** the discussion/decision to the August 19th Council Meeting.

Residents were notified of the decision to defer, and the new discussion date by: Website, Belfast Newsletter, Posted Notices, and Office Bulletin Board.

As a consequence of the notices, the CAO received two expressions of support for Mosquito Programs of any kind, and no other comments. Per the June 17th deferral, this item is back to be discussed on today’s Agenda, for further consideration.

Discussion: There were a number of interested public in attendance for this meeting, all in support of keeping Mosquito Abatement Programs, within the Community Grants Program Edibility Criterion. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 meeting restrictions (per Health PEI), only a limited number were allowed in the meeting room at any one time (maximum 15 in meeting room allowed). Participants would swap out of the room/meeting once they finished speaking.

The Chair, Mayor Garth Gillis, opened the floor for public comment. There were nine public speakers, all of whom expressed their support of keeping Mosquito Abatement Programs within the Community Grants Program, and raised issues such as:

- Thanked Council for all it’s previous support,
- Refuted the notion that these Mosquito Programs were not for all residents, as a Mosquito infestation affects - Tourism, Business, Public Health, Local Quality of Life, Property Values, Outside Investment, the potential for causing the population to decrease, and more.

- How certain public spots were nightmares prior to spraying,
- The differences between Salt Water and Woodland Mosquitos and the different methodologies of spraying/spreading,
- The types of proven safe products used,
- The environmental safeness of current Mosquito Abatement measures and techniques and the lack of harmful effects on bees, birds and the like,
- The documented successes of previous efforts,
- Swallow boxes and other options,
- Democracy
- That “if we don’t spray, we don’t stay viable”,
- The recognition of limited Municipal resources and austerity measures, but that the Municipality could become the model by encouraging different types of proposals and helping to coordinate municipality-wide,
- How Municipalities would have access to other funding programs where individuals and organizations may not,
- “we have a very large area base, with a very small population base”,
- The suggestion to use the limited Municipal Resources in Public/Private/Partnership arrangements,
- Using an Eco-Tourism Approach,
- Stressed the need for the Point Prim area in particular and how they were unsuccessful this year due to funding and volunteer burn-out,
- Asked the Municipality to strongly consider a “Municipality-Wide Mosquito Abatement Program” of some type,
- Could look at other PEI models and Local Levies,
- Allowing applications, also brings forward those with other ideas,
- Stats were provided regarding health concerns: ***Mosquito borne diseases of increasing importance and spread since 2000***; and ***Emerging arboviruses in Quebec, Canada – Assessing public health risk by serology in humans, horses and pet dogs***,
- “if you don’t keep the long-view in mind, you are wasting your money”,
- In PEI, the Province regulates and hands out licenses for Mosquito Abatement, with Programs being handled by groups, or in some cases, Municipalities,
- Municipalities could facilitate - would need extra human/financial resources,
- “encouraged that the Municipality has provided this forum and are actually listening”,
- Raised health concerns again and the hospitalization of a young child due to mosquitos, and
- Concern was raised that public support was spotty.

The Mayor then opened the floor to Council for their comment. All six Councillors spoke to the issue, five spoke in favour of leaving the Community Grants Policy and Program as is, with one Councillor wanting changes. Comments from Councillors included (but not limited to):

- Thanked Council for deferring this item so more public could express their opinions,
- Had heard some comments about environmental concerns, mosquitos being removed from the food chain, affect on birds and bats, etc.
- Some Councillors spoke to the research that showed the types of Mosquito Abatement Programs being used in the area have been found to be safe and effective,
- Some personal backgrounds and experiences were given,

- Some noted the importance of the Tourism Industry and how the spin-offs it creates is important to the Municipality, businesses and residents,
- Some talked about a multi-option approach to Mosquito Abatement,
- Some liked the ability of residents to bring forward a variety of ideas during the call for proposals and that the Council-of-the-day, had the ability to judge each on their own merits and within the resources available to Council at the time,
- Talked about the limited resources and how the Program was always over-subscribed,
- “Guardians of taxpayers’ money”,
- “the best ideas, the best innovation, the best leadership comes from the people”,
- Some talked about the Vision expressed in the Municipality Strategic Plan,
- Many noted that they did not support changing the Policy/Program at this time and that they really liked the variety of proposals being received,
- That there seemed to be some good community support for Mosquito Abatement (support made even more evident with today’s attendance supporting and no detractors),
- Recognized that even with the support of the two programs, there would still be lots of mosquitos, but that the various programs do have a positive effect in certain areas,
- A concern raised was that the programs only affected a very small section of the municipality, and that there was not enough broad support, and
- Others commented that most of the programs receiving Community Grants, have a limited reach, but together, with all the grants given, we have a very broad reach for the Municipality.

As this was a Discussion Item Only, to determine whether or not Council should move to a formal process to Amend the current Community Grants Program and Community Grants Policy; Council was asked if they supported making changes to the current Eligibility Criteria of the Community Grants Program?

Council was not in favour (5/1), of making any changes to the current Program or Policy at this time; however, Council was in favour of the CAO looking into some of the other models in some other PEI Municipalities for future information.

Discussion Result: No changes to the current Eligibility Criterion of the Community Grants Program; Mosquito Abatement Programs remain eligible.

12. **Next Meeting:** – the next regular meeting of Council is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 7:00 PM at the Upstairs Hall at Wood Islands Village.
13. **Adjournment** – As there was no further business...

**Moved by Councillor Henry to adjourn the meeting at: 9:03 PM.
Meeting Adjourned**

Minutes Approved on: September 16, 2020

Mayor Garth Gillis: Signed & Sealed on File

CAO Bob Brooks: Signed & Sealed on File

Item 10.a (Attachment)

Xplornet Communications Tower @ Belfast Rec Centre

August 12, 2020

The Belfast Rec Centre was contacted (David Coopers specifically), by representatives from Xplornet, wishing to put up a Communications Tower at the Belfast Rec Centre. Mr. Coopers reached out to the Municipality to see if there were any concerns?

I touched base with the company for some information, and I also touched base with Municipal Affairs for any comments they might have: Municipal Affairs response: *"If Council wanted community comment they are welcome to request it; however, these Communication Towers are Federally regulated and the Municipality has no authority on where they are located. If you feel there is a more suitable location in the Municipality, you can ask the company to consider it. Souris and Charlottetown are examples of towers being proposed on sites NOT preferred by the Municipality."*

The range of the tower is up to a 20KM radius. As you get further out from the tower location - the level of service can degrade. I would say anyone within a 15Km range will be able to access reliable service. These sites are being constructed initially, to allow for a 50Meg Connection per user. In addition, Xplornet is building a fiber backbone in PEI. Once the fiber is operational, there will be greater opportunity for additional speeds and capacity in the network.

The CAO took a look at the satellite view, and it seems the location selected should have no impact on surrounding properties.

Bob Brooks - CAO



