

**RICHMOND COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**APRIL 13, 2004**

Location: Court House, Arichat

Warden Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The C.A.O. took roll call of Councillors.

The C.A.O. indicated that he received e-mail from Councillor Boudreau indicating that he was unable to attend tonight's meeting because of a previous municipal commitment.

Warden Johnson asked everyone to stand for the singing of O'Canada.

Items Added to the Agenda

Warden Johnson indicated that Deputy Warden Bourque wished to add a recognition and the CAO wished to add a loan for the L'Ardoise Fire Department.

Councillor Cotton indicated that he would also like to add correspondence from the ROC Centre.

It was the unanimous consensus of Council that this item also be included in the items added.

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Cotton that the items added be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Review of Minutes: (a) February 9, 2004 (Regular Meeting)  
(b) March 8, 2004 (Regular Meeting)  
(c) March 24, 2004 (Special Meeting)

Moved by Councillor Beaton, seconded by Councillor McNamara that the minutes of February 9, 2004 (Regular Meeting), March 8, 2004 (Regular Meeting) and March 24, 2004 (Special Meeting) be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Petitions and/or Delegations:

(a) Mr. Rodger Cuzner, MP re: Review of Federal Programs/Progress in Richmond

Warden Johnson welcomed Mr. Rodger Cuzner to the meeting.

Mr. Cuzner began by indicating that he will make some brief remarks and then entertain questions from Council.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that Richmond has had great success with the Canada Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, which is a funding agreement that was struck in 2000, investing in green projects and water and sewer projects, with projects for Arichat Water, as well as in St Peter's.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that the development of key pieces of infrastructure within communities is very important from an economic development standpoint, noting that communities in Richmond are willing to bring forward their concerns and community based organizations and the Municipality have been very proactive in initiating infrastructure projects for Richmond.

Mr. Cuzner noted that it is sometimes difficult to measure the effect of these infrastructure projects, noting for example the establishment of a call centre can be measured directly by the number of jobs created and the tax dollars generated, however infrastructure projects are the base for development.

Mr. Cuzner noted that the community, as well as ECBC, believes there is great potential for the tourism industry in Richmond which will further with the establishment of soft infrastructure, noting that he will continue to support the initiatives that are being put forth in Richmond.

Mr. Cuzner recognized the presence of representatives from the Literacy Network, noting that he is aware of their current struggle since HRDC has been unable to continue funding.

Mr. Cuzner noted that a problem faced by all rural communities is the migration of young people to the more urban areas, which is a great challenge for municipal governments, noting that the Prime Minister is committed to a more direct approach with municipal units.

Mr. Cuzner noted that he sees things as being very positive for Richmond, noting the recent GST rebate for municipalities.

Mr. Cuzner opened the floor for questions.

Warden Johnson thanked Mr. Cuzner for the support that he has shown for Richmond hoping that they can look forward to his continued support in the future.

Councillor Cotton recognized the funding that Richmond has received through Mr. Cuzner's support, especially his efforts for oil and gas, noting that breaking this new ground was made possible with help from Mr. Cuzner and meetings with ECBC.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that Councillor Cotton has been very committed to the oil and gas project, which began when he was Warden, and that Richmond brought forward a very strong case, noting that there is much potential and possibilities for the oil and gas industry in Richmond, however an anchor in the community was needed to put a face on these opportunities.

Councillor Goyetche indicated that he has been present at many occasions where Mr. Cuzner has been present to announce funding for many projects in Richmond, noting that he has been doing a very good job for Richmond.

Councillor Goyetche indicated that he is concerned with the road conditions in Richmond, noting that with the upcoming tourism season and the Congres Mondiale there will be increased travel and the road conditions alone is enough to deter anyone from re-visiting.

Councillor Goyetche indicated that he is also concerned with federal and provincial programs for seniors, noting that he is aware that transfer payments from the federal to provincial governments are based on population, but should be based on needs, noting that there is a great need for seniors housing in Richmond.

Mr. Cuzner noted that, as indicated in the Romano Report, more money is not necessarily the answer to improve many of these programs but rather a shift on how these programs are managed and funded.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that he is aware that seniors housing is an obvious problem in Richmond.

Councillor Goyetche indicated that seniors are getting frustrated, noting that they are aware of the programs available however when inquire they are often told that budgets have been expended, noting that municipal governments must be made more aware of the programs available in advance.

In response to a question from Councillor Goyetche, Mr. Cuzner indicated that programs such as the RRAP Program are provincial programs.

Councillor McNamara indicated that, as chair of the Literacy Network, she would like to thank Mr. Cuzner for all the support he has provided on their behalf and hoped that he will continue his support, especially with challenges they are facing with HRDC.

Councillor MacNeil thanked Mr. Cuzner for all the support that he has received in his community and commended Mr. Cuzner for his support with the broadband project for Richmond.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that access to high speed Internet is a very important piece of infrastructure especially when considering competition in industry.

Councillor Sampson welcomed Mr. Cuzner to Richmond, noting that Municipal Councillors are the first line of contact for residents and communication is very important with the other levels of government.

Councillor Sampson noted that costs of educations are significant and summer employment programs are very important for students, noting that he hopes the federal government support the funding if these positions.

Councillor Sampson recognized the recent expansion of Mr. Cuzner's constituency, noting that he hopes that Mr. Cuzner continues to provide exceptional support as he has done in the past.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that the federal government continues to try to assist students in funding their educations and stay at home through programs such as the Best and Brightest, grants, increasing the weekly deduction allowance and computer deduction allowance.

Councillor Beaton indicated that Mr. Cuzner has supported some great initiatives for Richmond, such as the broadband project.

Councillor Beaton indicated that there are many challenges faced by those living in eastern rural Nova Scotia, such as housing and healthcare, both very important considering the aging population of the area, as well as the deteriorating road conditions for which the federal government may have to be approached in search for improvements.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that there is currently infrastructure in Richmond, namely the Petit De Grat Wharf, that has great potential, however he is aware of the poor conditions of the roads and the negative effects on tourism, noting that with the federal government assuming a portion of the funding for 100 series highways, perhaps this can be addressed.

Deputy Warden Bourque thanked Mr. Cuzner for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting, noting that, as a representative of an area not serviced by water and sewer, his biggest concern is housing, noting that in some instances seniors are at the breaking point, unable to maintain their homes, further noting that all levels of government must work together on this very important issue.

Deputy Warden Bourque thanked Mr. Cuzner for his hands on approach to his job, noting that he is very accessible and this is well known by his constituents.

The C.A.O. indicated that Richmond has received substantial assistance for several projects including the Louisdale Tank Project (serving Louisdale and Evanston) and the Arichat Water Treatment Plant (serving Arichat and Petit De Grat) and currently working on a strategy for community economic development projects noting that there are two areas in particular that the Municipality has to put more work into including improvements to Route 4 from River Tillard to Sydney, which has been identified as part of the National Highway System and the growth of the Strait Area.

Mr. Cuzner indicated that in the past he has had the pleasure to work closely with Municipal Staff, Mr. Clifford Boudreau and Mrs. Cecile Hyland, through his work with Recreation, and he has recently appreciated the opportunity to develop a relationship with Mr. Digout.

Warden Johnson thanked Mr. Cuzner for his presentation, indicating that the Literacy Network has requested a moment with Mr. Cuzner and the Warden to take a picture.

Warden Johnson recessed the meeting for pictures.

Warden Johnson re-convened the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

(b) Richmond County Literacy Network re: Progress Report

Ms. Karen Malcolm and Mr. Glen Bennett joined the meeting.

Ms. Malcolm indicated that she will be providing an update on behalf of the Board of the Literacy Network.

Ms. Malcolm indicated that she will begin the presentation with acknowledgement of the contributions that the Municipality has made to the Literacy Network and show how the money has been utilized, then there will be testimonials from individuals that are benefiting from the literacy programs as well as some financial information.

Ms. Malcolm indicated that since the inception of the Richmond Literacy Network approximately 525 people have registered for Adult Learning, Youth Employability and Seniors Programs and approximately 30 staff have had employment with the Network, with five staff currently employed.

Ms. Malcolm highlighted many of the accomplishments of the Literacy Network including "Our Choices" (a handbook for youth), "Peer Into the Past; The History and Oral Traditions of Richmond County", the establishment of The Literacy Coalition in 2000, the establishment of a Youth Action Group in 2002, assistance in the establishment of the North Isle Madame CAP Site, the annual Drive Fore Literacy golf tournament, the establishment of bursaries for learners in Richmond that have completed their GED and are continuing to Community College/University.

Ms. Malcolm indicated that the success of the Literacy Network is a result of dedicated staff and the Board, the Chair (Shirley McNamara), the Literacy Coordinator (Millie Hatt), as well as the qualified instructors.

Ms. Malcolm indicated that there is a great need for literacy programs in Richmond, noting that the unemployment rate in Richmond is 26%, and employers are finding it difficult to fill positions.

Several learners presented testimonials as to the successes and continued need of the Literacy Network.

Ms. Janet Peters indicated that after her separation she found herself on welfare with a grade 5 education and children to support, indicating that the literacy program has given her hope and confidence that she needs to provide a better life for her and her children and has enabled her, after two years of hard work, to be writing her GED next month.

Mrs. Millie Hatt presented a testimonial on behalf of Bernadette Martell, who was unable to attend.

Mrs. Hatt indicated that Mrs. Martell after being out of school for 19 years has successfully completed her GED and has recently completed her first year of a two-year program to become a teacher's aid.

Mr. Chris Decoste of Arichat indicated that he completed his GED last year and is now enrolled in his first year of a two-year Electrical Construction program at the NSCC.

Mrs. Brenda Boudreau indicated that she left school in grade ten to work at Richmond Fisheries where she had a good job for 22 years, however with the downturn in the fisheries she was left unemployed and in an effort to better herself she enrolled in the GED program, obtained her GED, continued on to the NSCC where she graduated with honours in the field of accounting and is now employed by the Literacy Network as Administrative Support/Bookkeeper.

Maxine MacDonald indicated that she had been out of school for 42 years and returned to get her GED just for herself, noting that it is a great program and hopes it continues for many years.

Mr. Glen Bennett indicated that the Literacy Network has been informed by HRDC that they will no longer be able to provide funding to the organization, which results in a loss of 50% of the operating budget of the Network.

Mr. Bennett indicated that the Richmond Literacy Network is approaching Richmond Municipal Council requesting a three-year commitment of \$25,000 per year in order to maintain operations.

In response to a question from Councillor Sampson, Mrs. Hatt indicated for HRDC to continue to provide this funding would require a major policy change on their behalf, noting that they are no longer permitted to provide core funding to the Literacy Network, however the Literacy Network can apply to HRDC for contract funding for specific projects.

In response to a question from Councillor Cotton, Mrs. Hatt indicated that Literacy Networks in Antigonish and Guysborough, who had been receiving substantially more funding than Richmond, are also in the same situation, with a total of 9 Literacy Networks affected.

Mr. Bennett indicated that the province has provided bridge funding until June 2004.

Councillor MacNeil commended the Literacy Network on the great work that they have been doing as well as the adult learners for their presentations, which are often difficult for many people in such a setting.

In response to a question from Councillor MacNeil, Mrs. Hatt indicated that seeking support from other community organizations is not feasible because many of them are having the same financial difficulties as is the Literacy Network however with initiatives such as the Drive For Literacy, proceeds from book sales and other fundraising activities they hope to raise approximately \$30,000 for next years operations.

Councillor MacNeil noted that Council is very limited with its grant programs, noting the amount requested by the Literacy Network is approximately 1/3 of the Municipality's budget allotment for grants for the year.

Councillor McNamara noted that the Municipality and Council has played an integral role in the success of the Literacy Network and she hopes the support can continue.

Deputy Warden Bourque recognized the effort and initiatives of the Literacy Network and it's importance and thanked everyone for the presentation.

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor Cotton that Council accept the presentation of the Richmond Literacy Network and table the request until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

(c) Eastern Counties Regional Library re: Review of 2003 Regional Public Libraries Funding Review Report

Mr. Dave Cumby and Ms. Mary Landry joined the meeting.

Mr. Cumby indicated that they have approached 4 of 7 municipal units to review the 2003 Regional Public Libraries Funding Review Report, indicating that the Regional Libraries have their core funding, noting that most of the presentation deals with funding of operations.

Mr. Cumby proceeded with his presentation (attached).

Ms. Landry indicated that Richmond County Branches in Petit De Grat and Port Hawkesbury have high circulation of books.

Ms. Landry indicated that Mr. Kenneth David and his staff at the Petit De Grat Library are doing an amazing job, noting that they have initiated a family tree database and an adult book club.

Ms. Landry noted that other upcoming projects for the library included author groups, laptop access points and wireless Internet.

Ms. Landry indicated that the summer reading program is also very strong in Petit De Grat, for students as well as adults.

The C.A.O. indicated that Richmond only has one branch library, clarifying a comment from Ms. Landry that indicated that the Port Hawkesbury branch was located in Richmond, noting that Richmond should be next in line for the establishment of another branch considering the fact that Guysborough has 4 branches and 1 satellite and Inverness has two branches and 5 link sites.

Mr. Cumby indicated that Richmond was the second highest supporter of the Regional Library, noting that the costs of establishing a branch are significant and projects that involve instituting a library in a multi purpose building are more feasible.

Councillor McNamara noted that constituents in her area do frequent the library in Port Hawkesbury, because it is considerably closer than the Petit De Grat Branch, noting that Eastern Counties Regional Library has been doing a tremendous job on a shoestring budget.

Mr. Cumby indicated that the Regional Library will be working with the Oil and Gas project in the Strait Area, partnering in their economic development efforts.

In response to a question from Councillor Goyetche, Mr. Cumby indicated that library usage statistics are available, but they do not have them available for tonight's meeting, however the Petit De Grat Branch Library has very high usage considering the size of the community.

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that Council accept the report of the Eastern Counties Regional Library Board; and further moved that a letter be written to the Library Board noting that there are two branch libraries in Inverness County, and four in Guysborough County, yet only one branch in Richmond County; and further that it be noted to the Library Board that the request for a branch for St. Peter's has been outstanding for a great period of time; and further moved that the Eastern Counties Regional Library Board be requested to make the construction of a new branch library in St. Peter's as their highest priority for their next capital project. Motion carried.

Second Reading Approval: to amend the St. Peter's Land use By-Law re; Blair Stone, C & M Rentals, by rezoning the subject property, as outlined in the attached staff report (attached as Appendix "A") from Village Residential (R1) zone to Mixed Use (C-2) zone

The C.A.O. indicated that a public hearing was held tonight at 6:30 p.m. and there were no oral or written submissions received regarding this by-law amendment.

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor McNamara that Council approve the Second Reading to amend the St. Peter's Land use By-Law re; Blair Stone, C & M Rentals, by rezoning the subject property, as outlined in the attached staff report (attached as Appendix "A") from Village Residential (R1) zone to Mixed Use (C-2) zone. Motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Deputy Warden Bourque presented the Committee of the Whole Report for the month of April 2004.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Cotton that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and approve the tariff of fees and expenses for the 2004 Municipal and School Board elections, as attached in Schedule "A". Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Sampson that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and sell the former L'Ardoise School Property to the East Coast Credit Union Ltd., because they have agreed to pay fair market value (\$15,000) and also because of the economic development opportunities. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor McNamara that Council accept the Committee of the Whole report for the month of April 2004. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

- (a) Department of Justice re; Crime Scene DNA Analysis Costs

For information.

- (b) Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations re: Municipal Accounting and Reporting Manual

For information.

- (c) West Bay Road & District Volunteer Fire Department re: Fire Protection Rate

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor Cotton that the fire protection rate request from the West Bay Road & District Volunteer Fire Department be tabled until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

- (d) St. Peter's & District Volunteer Fire Department re: Fire Protection Rate

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that the fire protection rate request from the St. Peter's & District Volunteer Fire Department be tabled until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

- (e) Canadian Federation of Independent Business re: A New Deal for Municipalities

Moved by Councillor Goyetche, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that a letter be sent to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicating the Municipality's support for elimination of the business occupancy tax, indicating that the Municipality of Richmond has the lowest business tax rates in the province. Motion carried.

- (f) North American Occupational Safety and Health Week re: Occupational Health and Safety Week

Moved by Councillor Beaton, seconded by Councillor McNamara that Council proclaim the week of May 2-8, 2004 as Occupational Safety and Health Week. Motion carried.

- (g) Oceanview Wildlife Museum Society re: (i) Request for Tax Exemption  
(ii) Grant Request
- (h) Lakeside Community Association re: Request for tax Exemption
- (i) Richmond County Early Childhood Education Association re; Request for tax Exemption
- (j) Strait Richmond Health Care Foundation re: Grant Request
- (k) South Mountain Arm of Gold Community Association re: Grant Request

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that Council table grant requests from the Oceanview Wildlife Museum Society, Lakeside Community Association, Richmond County Early Childhood Education Association, Strait Richmond Health Care Foundation and the South Mountain Arm of Gold Community Association until budget deliberations. Motion carried.

#### Items Added to the Agenda

- (1) Deputy Warden Bourque re: Recognition

Deputy Warden Bourque indicated that Rev. Conrad Girrior has been recognized by Bishop Raymond Lahey, with the title of "Monsignor".

Deputy Warden Bourque indicated that Monsignor Girroir was ordained in 1945 and has since been serving Acadian communities in Richmond.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor McNamara that a letter of congratulations and thanks be written to Monsignor Girroir on his recognition as a Monsignor; and further moved that thanks be also extended for his service and dedication to the parishes and people of Richmond County. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Bourque indicated that he would like to incorporate this recognition as part of the Girroir family reunion that is taking place as part of the Congres Mondiale.

- (2) CAO re: Loan for L'Ardoise Fire Department

The C.A.O. reviewed his memo of April 12, 2004, which outlines two main issues with the loan guarantee requested by the L'Ardoise Fire Department being; that the Municipality will not be in the position to monitor payments and the additional costs to the fire department by not borrowing the money through the Municipality.

Councillor Sampson indicated that the L'Ardoise Fire Department recently held it's annual meeting, noting that he is aware, first hand, that none of their loans have even gone to full term, noting that L'Ardoise taxpayers are aware that there will be additional costs, due to the loan being arranged with the Credit Union.

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor McNamara that Council approve the request for a loan guarantee from the L'Ardoise Fire Department in accordance with the borrowing resolution provided by Service Nova Scotia. Motion carried.

(3) Councillor Cotton re: ROC Centre

Moved by Councillor Cotton, seconded by Councillor Sampson that the grant request from the ROC Centre be tabled until budget deliberations and further move that staff be authorized to clarify the previous commitments made to the ROC Centre by the Municipality of Richmond. Motion carried.

#### Fifteen Minute Question Period

There were no questions.

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

There being no further business Warden Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m.