

RICHMOND COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 12, 2004

Location: Council Chambers, Municipal Office

Warden Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the singing of O'Canada.

The Clerk took roll call of Councillors.

Items Added to the Agenda

Warden Johnson indicated the CAO wished to add correspondence from Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations regarding Bill 74; correspondence from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business regarding Business Occupancy Tax and correspondence from the U.N.S.M. regarding an appointment; Councillor Boudreau wished to add the Post Office Building petition; Councillor McNamara wished to add an invitation to attend the Richmond Players Concert at the Richmond Academy and Councillor MacPhee wished to add the River Bourgeois Community Services Society grant request.

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

Review of Minutes: September 13, 2004

Moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor McNamara that the minutes of September 13, 2004 be adopted as presented. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

(a) Committee of the Whole

Deputy Warden Bourque presented the monthly report of the Committee of the Whole (copy attached).

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that the Municipality

provide a letter of support for the application for the Partners for Climate Protection Program initiated by the R.D.A. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a letter of support be forwarded to the Village of St. Peter's indicating the Municipality's support for their PCAP application. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor McNamara that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that \$250,000 be taken from the Municipality's general operating reserves, with the condition that this money be replenished in 2007/08; in order to provide broadband services to Johnstown area and Evanston/Whiteside area, and investigate the Point Tupper area. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor MacPhee that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that the Solicitor be requested to search both titles of the lands in question at Grand Lake, Richmond County and that a written response be provided to Council, further requesting that the Solicitor be in attendance at the meeting in which this issue is discussed. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Cotton that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and the recommendation of the Director of Public Works and that the offer for second generation landfill services from the Municipality of the District of Guysborough be accepted and that the Municipality participate in the process of negotiating a final agreement through the Cape Breton Solid Waste Resource Management Committee and the Technical Sub-Committee. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Bourque gave notice that he would introduce a motion at the next Regular Council Meeting to give First Reading approval to adopt a new Taxi By-Law, as a By-Law of the Municipality.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor McNamara that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and of the Deputy Clerk Treasurer and that the firm of Pickup and MacDowell be retained as the municipal solicitors, for a three year period. Motion carried.

In response to a question from Councillor Boudreau, the CAO indicated information had been provided to each firm on the work that is involved, and they were provided with all information requested.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Cotton that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and of the Deputy Clerk Treasurer and that the firm of David Smith Inc. be retained as municipal auditor for a three year period.

In response to a question from Councillor Cotton, the CAO indicated the tenders were to be evaluated partially on the basis of costs (50%) and partially on the basis of services and the abilities involved (50%).

Councillor Goyetche indicated he felt it was important for staff to re-examine the proposals and he noted he would not support the motion to engage the firm of Dave Smith Inc. as he indicated at the last Committee of the Whole meeting.

Moved by Councillor Cotton, seconded by Councillor MacPhee that the recommendation to retain the firm of David Smith Inc. be tabled and referred back to the Deputy Clerk Treasurer in order to hold interviews with the firms that submitted proposals for audit services, requesting additional information regarding the services they provide, and the costs associated with these services; and that the Deputy Clerk be requested to bring back a further recommendation to Council after interviews have been held. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that a grant in the amount of \$9,473.38 be granted to the Petit De Grat Beautification Society, to be taken from the Municipal Infrastructure Fund for District #2; conditional on the applicant providing the information required in the policy and also conditional on the Municipal Solicitor providing written confirmation that the type of grant is authorized under the relevant Provincial Statutes. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Cotton that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that the Forchu Community Hall be provided a grant at a rate of 50% of the costs of the project to a maximum of \$3,000, under the Municipal Infrastructure Fund, with funding to be taken from the District #10 allocation, conditional on the Solicitor providing a letter indicating they qualify for funding; and conditional on the community group providing the necessary information required in the policy. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that the Framboise Community Hall be provided a grant at a rate of 50% of the costs of the project to a maximum of \$2,000 under the Municipal Infrastructure Fund, with funding to be taken from the District #10 allocation, conditional on the Solicitor providing a letter indicating they qualify for funding; and conditional on the community group providing the necessary information required in the policy. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Beaton that Council accept the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole and that Halloween be celebrated on Sunday, October 31st, with a 9:00 p.m. curfew. Motion carried.

Moved by Deputy Warden Bourque, seconded by Councillor Sampson that the monthly report of the Committee of the Whole be accepted as presented. Motion carried.

Correspondence:

- (a) Leader of the Opposition re: Economic Development Discussion Paper

The CAO noted the correspondence indicated that an economic development discussion paper was available on the Nova Scotia NDP website, which is designed to raise issues for consideration by the New Democratic Party, and Mr. Dexter is hoping that individuals will forward their views/comments.

- (b) Municipality of the County of Annapolis re: Herbicide Spraying “Vision”

For information.

Items Added to the Agenda

- (1) CAO/Correspondence re:

- (a) Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations re: Bill 74

The CAO noted that the correspondence confirms that regulations cited as “Bear Head LNG Plant Municipal Property Taxation Regulations” enabling the Agreement between The County of Richmond and Access Northeast Energy Inc. were passed by Executive Council on September 16, 2004.

- (b) Canadian Federation of Independent Business re: Business Occupancy Tax

The CAO indicated the correspondence received from their Executive Director last Friday requests the Municipality to support the elimination of the business occupancy tax and they are also requesting the Municipality to lobby the provincial government regarding the elimination of this tax. He noted several form letters from businesses in our county were attached to the correspondence indicating that they are frustrated with the current business occupancy tax that is levied on top of regular commercial tax assessments, and also noting that Nova Scotia is the only province that incorporates the business occupancy tax.

The CAO indicated a research paper carried out by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business was included and he referred to a table on page 11 of the survey, noting this was the most important piece of information in that it showed how much taxes small businesses pay in Richmond County as compared to other municipal units in the province. He noted the table shows Richmond as being the second best in the province.

The CAO suggested that Municipal Council respond to the taxpayers who wrote to the Municipality and point this information out to them, and also provide the same information to our major taxpayers.

Councillor Cotton updated Council noting that the U.N.S.M. had requested the provincial government to table the legislation this fall, but they had indicated that the other two Political Parties weren't on side, and unfortunately the legislation did not get tabled this fall, however the Province has indicated they will bring it forward in the spring. Councillor Cotton noted that he is hoping that this piece of legislation will be voted on prior to the budget.

Moved by Councillor Goyetche, seconded by Councillor Cotton that the correspondence and information received from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business be forwarded to the businesses who signed the action alerts, and also to our major taxpayers, noting Richmond's low tax rates and support for elimination of business occupancy tax. Motion carried.

Moved by Councillor McNamara, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that a letter be sent to all municipal units in the province indicating our support to the elimination of the business occupancy tax and further requesting that they officially indicate their support as well; and further moved that copies be sent to the Political Parties and the Province requesting that they move ahead with this legislation. Motion carried.

(c) U.N.S.M. re: Appointment

The CAO noted that the correspondence indicated that the U.N.S.M. Board of Directors appointed Councillor Cotton to the Office of Health Promotion Advisory Committee.

The CAO noted the U.N.S.M. has three Table Officers, and he indicated that Councillor Cotton had been elected as a U.N.S.M. Table Officer from the floor two weeks ago to serve as Vice-President/Secretary Treasurer.

(2) Councillor Boudreau re: Post Office Building Petition

Councillor Boudreau indicated he had circulated a petition in his district for residents to sign that demanded that the federal government would continue to own and operate the Arichat Post Office building located at 2541 Highway 206; and he noted that the petition contained 575 names.

Moved by Councillor Boudreau, seconded by Councillor Goyetche that WHEREAS the Arichat Post Office Building is in the process of divestiture by the Government of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the building houses Canada Post and other non-profit organizations;

AND WHEREAS the services received by Isle Madame residents in this building is valuable, accessible and desired;

AND WHEREAS the private sale of this building leaves the community without guarantees of continued services from the current tenants;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER MOVED that Richmond County Council write to the Federal Government, with a copy being sent to MP Rodger Cuzner and MLA Michel Samson, to request that the divestiture of this building be stopped and that the Federal Government continue to own and operate the building located at 2541 Highway 206, Arichat, Nova Scotia. Motion carried.

- (3) Councillor McNamara re: Invitation to Attend Richmond Players Concern, Richmond Academy, November 2, 2004

Councillor McNamara indicated she had been approached by Mr. Adam Cooke, who was extending an invitation to all Councillors and administrative staff to attend an evening performance by The Fleur-de-Lis Trail Players at the Richmond Academy at 7:30 p.m., November 2, 2004 at the Richmond Academy.

- (4) Councillor MacPhee re: River Bourgeois Community Services Society Grant Request

Moved by Councillor MacPhee, seconded by Deputy Warden Bourque that the River Bourgeois Community Services Society be provided a grant at a rate of 50% of the costs of their projects to a maximum of \$4,000, under the Municipal Infrastructure Fund, with funding to be taken from the District #7 allocation, conditional on the Solicitor providing a letter indicating they qualify for funding; and conditional on the community group providing the necessary information required in the policy. Motion carried.

Fifteen Minute Question Period

There were no questions.

Warden Johnson asked if any of the Councillors wished to say a few words.

Councillor MacNeil indicated he wished to extend his sincere thanks to Councillors for their cooperation extended to him over the past four years, noting he appreciated every effort which made his job easier than anticipated.

Councillor McNamara indicated she enjoyed her many years on Council, but noted that the last four years were particularly exciting for her. She noted that Richmond County has seen a lot of growing and expanding and the future looks even brighter.

Councillor Sampson indicated that serving the residents of District #9 during the past four terms has been both an honor and a privilege and noted to his fellow Councillors that what impressed him the most was the fact that everyone was such a lively group and always held ample discussions on many topics that affected the residents of Richmond. He indicated he always felt that “what was good for his area was good for the County”, and indicated this was the guiding principle that followed this Council.

Councillor MacPhee indicated he had the pleasure of representing two municipal districts over a span of 13 years and working around this Council table noting he feels that everyone around the table are not here to represent only one district, but rather all residents of Richmond County, and no matter if an issue affects one district or all of the county, Council works together as a unit.

Councillor Goyetche indicated it has been fantastic working with all of Council, and wished everyone the best of luck in the upcoming municipal election.

Councillor Boudreau indicated Richmond Municipal Council has accomplished so much in what they set out to do. He indicated that when he was first elected seven years ago, he remembered attending a session where visions were set out for Richmond County, and stressed that this is something Council has been working towards and it is finally at the point of realization for Richmond.

Deputy Warden Bourque indicated that there is no question that the last seven years since he was elected in 1985 have been the most rewarding as an individual representing a district, but more importantly as an individual working with a group of dedicated individuals who look at Richmond as a whole because what's good for one part of Richmond is good for all of Richmond. He indicated he wished to commend staff for their many hours of dedication that they have provided to Council and in return for the people of Richmond County.

Councillor Cotton indicated he worked on a lot of Committees over the last number of years and noted it has been a real treasure working around this Council table. He noted that when good projects came forth, all Councillors were able to support them, with most being passed by a unanimous decision, no matter what district the project was from.

Councillor Beaton noted that the last 4-7 years of his 17 years on Council had definitely seen the most success. He noted Municipal Council is here-marked by many of our neighboring and fellow units across the province and wished each Councillor all the best on election day.

Warden Johnson congratulated Councillor Beaton on his acclamation and indicated she wished to thank her residents and Councillors for the past 13 years and also thanked Councillors who gave her the opportunity to serve as Warden. She indicated it was a great honor to serve as Warden and see all the good things that have been accomplished during her term. She thanked Councillors for not being afraid to take chances for the betterment of the entire County.

Councillor Boudreau noted comments from the CORE Show reception he attended last week noting that many commented on how far Richmond County has come and how well we're doing recently and noted that a researcher from St. F.X. had approached him at the reception who made it quite clear that the whole focus of this past CORE Conference had changed and that it was no longer about exploration, but rather about Richmond County.

The CAO expressed thanks on behalf of municipal staff for the partnership that has resulted. He noted that most of our neighboring municipal units are very envious of our accomplishments and are aware of our low tax rates and they constantly request information about economic development and how we conduct our business. He noted that Municipal Council took a chance 5 or 6 years ago and invested money in economic development and it came through for our county.

Moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Boudreau that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

There being no further business, Warden Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.