

**TOWN OF DIGBY
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
May 19, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Ben Cleveland
Deputy Mayor Mike Bartlett
Councillor Peter Turnbull
Councillor Danny Harvieux

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer
Matthew Raymond, Director of Finance
Leslie Brinton, Executive Assistant
Ed McCormick, Director of Public Works

REGRETS:

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cleveland called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

B. AGENDA

B.1 Additions/Deletions
None.

B.2 Approval of the Agenda

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Agenda be approved as presented.

Motion Carried.

C. DELEGATION AND PRESENTATION

C.1 None.

D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

D.1 March 16, 2020

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Minutes of March 16, 2020 be approved as presented.

Motion Carried.

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1 None.

F. STAFF REPORTS

F.1 Chief Administrative Officer

a) Report

The Chief Administrative Officer report was presented and reviewed. There has been no permits issued in the planning department and the building department for the month of April. The Public Works Director has hired a term operator for seasonal maintenance for parks and gardens and green spaces as well as other general duties. The fire hall generator was serviced and load tested. The generator doesn't need replacing however they did identify that the transfer switch was not working correctly and that we should repair this now this will be a small cost compared to a full replacement at this time.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Harvieux and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Committee recommend to Council the replacement of the transfer switch for the fire department generator.

Motion Carried.

There is a Pre-Capital Budget funding request coming forward there is also a funding application going this coming week for beautification. The CAO is recommending the Pre Capital Funding as submitted.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Turnbull and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett that the Committee recommend to Council the Pre Capital Budget Funding Request 2020/2021

- ***\$20,000.00 Storm Drainage***
- ***\$3,000.00 for benches and picnic table concert pads***
- ***\$4,000.00 for banners and brackets***

Motion Carried.

The CAO provided an update to the practices that are in place at Public Works in regard to Covid-19. Nova Scotia Environment required that we provide them with a three step plan in the event the Operator in Direct Charge was to fall ill. The CAO provided an update on the seasonal closure of the VIC and all those involved have been notified. Councillor Turnbull suggested that we could direct visitors to the Museum for local information. The old Provincial VIC on Shore Road is having maintenance done to the floor, water service has been installed, a new steel roof has been installed and some crack fill. The contractor for the Waste Water Upgrades project is drafting a construction schedule. The Town Hall remains closed to the public as we continue to operate and provide essential services. The interim tax bill will be sent out the week of May 18 with a due date of August 31, 2020. The Application for the Low Income Property Tax Exemption has been extended until July 31. The Dangerous and Unsightly administrator is working on several active files most are to do with garbage and the others were related to chickens. The Vantassel Lake Trail Association was speaking to the Director of Public Works concerning some signage at the Vantassel Lake trail around the Covid-19 and the Director of Public Works will forward that information to the CAO.

F.2 Director of Finance Report

The Director of Finance report included some of the Financial Impacts of Covid-19 this list will likely grow as times moves forward. The Seniors Safety society received a \$20,000 grant from the Province from Department of Seniors the guidelines for spending the money are listed in the report if any Councillor is aware of any one who might be able to benefit from this support contact Dawn Thomas at Seniors Safety. The Director of Finance reported on the Provincial mileage rate increase effective April 1, 2020.

G. CORRESPONDENCE

G.1 Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

NSFM President Pam Mood correspondence to Minister Porter concerning October Municipal Election and the response from the Minister. President Mood also sent correspondence to MP Catherine McKenna concerning the NSFM support for the Federation of Municipalities request for Emergency financial Aid for Municipalities. President Mood also sent correspondence to MP Mary Ng concerning Covid-19 and the Municipal Elected Representatives that are now eligible for the Canada Emergency Business Account to support elected officials that are small business owners however it would be of benefit for these folks to be eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1 Covid-19 Property Tax Financing Program Policy

The Draft Covid-19 Property Tax Financing Policy was presented for review. The Committee was Asked to provide some direction on if Council intended to include Residential property that is rented to one or more tenant. Discussion ensued and the consensus was to remove this section from the Draft policy. The seconded discussion was does Council want to set an Assessment Value for Taxable Commercial Property the largest Commercial rate payer now would be Sobeys discussion ensued and a decision was made to omit the section where a Commercial Value must be inserted from the draft policy. The third discussion point was if Council wanted to set criteria for Commercial owners the point of the policy was to help everyone who needs help during this time and it was agreed to omit section 3.2.1 from the draft policy. The application deadline to participate was amended to be July 31, 2020. The Committee reviewed the payment amount that will be required in order to participate in the program the Committee suggested that this amount be \$50.00 per month. Schedule A page 7 the red section that talks about rental residential property will come out. With these amendments as discussed the policy should be ready to move forward to Council.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Harvieux and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Committee recommends to Council the Covid-19 Property Tax Financing Program Policy as amended.

Motion Carried.

H.2 Budget discussion

Nothing to add.

H.3 Credit Card payment options

Deputy Mayor Bartlett asked about the process to add credit card payments back when the credit card payment option was stopped it was costing the Town about \$16,000. The Director of Finance spoke about the ability to pay online with your credit card however it would be treated like a cash

Advance and therefore subject to higher interest. The Municipality of Digby is still accepting credit cards as a payment option they have never stopped that process. However there are systems that can revert the charges back to the customer we have looked into this in the past.

H.4 Highway 303 4 way intersection

Deputy Mayor Bartlett asked for this to be added to the Agenda he noticed that on Facebook was an online petition to have the road paved at the 4 way intersection at the Super Store entrance in Conway. Mayor Cleveland will voice our concern to Warden MacAlpine on this matter but it could also be brought forward at a Joint RCMP Police Advisory Committee meeting.

I. In-Camera

I.1 None.

J. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Turnbull and seconded by Councillor Harvieux that the meeting be adjourned at 7:24 P.M.

Motion Carried.



Mayor



Clerk