

**TOWN OF DIGBY  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
March 18, 2024  
Council Chambers**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Ben Cleveland, Chair  
Deputy Mayor Mike Bartlett, Vice Chair  
Councillor Peter Turnbull  
Councillor Paul Saulnier

**STAFF PRESENT:** Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer  
Leslie Brinton, Executive Assistant  
Ed McCormick, Director of Public Works  
Matthew Raymond, Director of Finance  
Laura Lee Milner, By Law Enforcement Officer

**REGRETS:** Councillor William McCormick

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Cleveland called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

**B. AGENDA**

**B.1 Additions/Deletions**

Two additions to the Agenda one under Correspondence G.1 Letter from Richard Parry and one under New Business H.5 Visitor Information Centre.

**B.2 Approval**

**Motion:**

***Moved by Councillor Turnbull and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett that the agenda for March 18, 2024, be approved as amended.***

**Motion Carried.**

**C. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**C.1** None.

**D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**D.1 February 20, 2024**

**Motion**

***Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Minutes of February 20, 2024, be approved as amended.***

**Motion Carried.**

**E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**E.1 Vacant Building By law**

The By Law Enforcement Officer has done some research into what others are doing there are some units using a vacant property registry however that could become an administration function and that likely won't help address the vacant properties. There seems to be no clear answer. Fines can be issues however some properties will remain in that condition and we can try and adjust the by law definitions and continue to work with property owners. The definition of vacant, seasonal, and abandoned might be a place to start with a clear understanding of the terms. The Council directed the By Law officer to dig into the definitions of these terms and also see what a registry database would entail.

**E.2 Marshalling Yard/First Avenue**

Mayor Cleveland is still trying to arrange a meeting with our MLA regarding the letter to the Minister responsible for the properties.

**F. STAFF REPORTS**

**F.1 Chief Administrative Officer Report**

The Chief Administrative Officer Report was presented. The planning department issued one Development Permit for the month of February. There were five building permits issues for the month of February. The Fire Inspector conducted four site visits at 55/57 Water Street which did have deficiencies and they were given 30 days to remedy, 75 Queen Street also had deficiencies and they were given 30 days to remedy, 109-111 West Street deficiencies were found and 30 days to remedy were given, 27 Shreve Street was a follow up inspections all deficiencies were corrected and one inspection has been scheduled. Digby Fire Department has responded to 9 calls during the previous month 4 calls were in the Town and 5 calls were in the district. The Office of the CAO is reporting that the Mount Street upgrade project easements are required for the project and are currently being drafted. The 2024 Municipal Election we received three quotes for electronic voting services the lowest being Intellivote after a thorough review of the quotes received we have entered into an agreement with Intellivote at a cost of \$5,100 plus HST. There will be a REMO training exercise on Wednesday March 20, 2024 at 2 PM the Town Hall staff will all be taking part with the exception of Joy Robbins who will remain on the property to answer the phone but the Town Hall will be closed to the public from 2 pm for the remained of the day. Budget control there are five accounts that are either over budget or projected to be at year end these have all been discussed with the Council at various points. Senior Management Team met on March 12 Cyber Security was discussed a meeting the IT Department to further discuss has been arranged. Budget Control procedures were discussed and also timelines for the 2024/25 Capital and Operating Budgets a target date for completion is June 3 Council Meeting. There will be a Community Grant meeting review on April 8 at 5:30 PM followed by a Capital Budget review and discussion after that at 7:00 PM on April 15, 2024 we will be holding a Public

Consultation Meeting to discuss the Road Trail Designation By-Law followed by the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

## **F.2 Director of Public Works**

The Director of Public Works presented his report. The Fire Hall Capital repairs are almost completed, which include a water main, washer hook up, eye wash station and laundry sink. The fire whistle that was upgraded is now completely rebuilt and will be installed in the spring.

## **F.3 Director of Finance**

The Director of Finance report was distributed in the package. The Mount Street upgrade project analysis of the costs was prepared and will be discussed later on the agenda. Insurance slip and fall written claim received on a previously reported incident that occurred in January was forwarded to the insurance broker. Policy renewal for insurance was received it looks like about 12% increase on insurance costs. Employee benefits rates are up 13% overall with the Town paying the larger costs of the increase. Interim tax bills for this year for the first time we will be including the garbage rate and fire rate we will be including this notice in the upcoming newsletter. Low income property tax exemption application are now being sent to the previous year's applicants and a notice will be coming out shortly the deadline for application is May 31. Spring Debenture given that only two projects were completed and designated for financing since the two projects completed were \$125,000 and \$35,000 the recommendation is to refrain from borrowing for these two items and use reserve funds. Covid expenditures the reserve balance currently is \$30,000 left. Mayor Cleveland inquired to see if the washing machine at the fire department could be covered with this Covid expenditures the Director of Finance indicated that as long as Council was ok with the expenditure coming from the reserve we can process it. Rental units at 53 Mount Street and the residential property are up to date on the rental payments. Elected Officials will be covered under the Town's EAP program effective April 1, 2024 all EAP updates will be sent along to the Councillor as they arise. The Financial Information Return was completed. A PVSC webinar was attended by the Director of Finance there is a trend towards using a sales-based approach vs cost base in determining market value.

The Statement of Operations was provided by the Director of Finance as we come closer to the year end it appears like we will be over budget and in a deficit position once again. Currently we are estimating that we have about \$118,500 in a budget overage due to housing deficit, truck and equipment maintenance at Public Works, Repairs and Maintenance at Smith's Cove STP, Fire Hall Repairs and Maintenance and Fire Truck Repairs and Maintenance.

## **F.4 Special Constable**

### **a) Dangerous or Unsightly Premises Reports**

The Dangerous or Unsightly administrator report was presented. The Administrator is working on three files 10 Carleton Street, 6 First Avenue and 140 Water Street all three are showing progress and will continue to be monitored.

**b) Protective Services Reports**

Protective Services report was presented. The CCTV report remote viewing for the Town Hall and Digby Station are now being monitored. We have one additional camera available for STP or Public Works. The RCMP requested one video of an incident on Water Street and one for an incident on the boardwalk. Parking Control there was a report of a trailer parked along Shore Road the vehicle owner complaint was that faded signage was not properly informing the public where to park. The Civic address 1 point change was done in the NSCAF system, one discrepancy was noted in civic information surrounding a multi-unit apartment building required verification the information will be adjusted once the number of units can be verified. And one discrepancy in a civic address for Church Street required the NSCAF system to be updated. A RCMP Officer held a crosswalk initiative to educate the public on safe use of the crosswalk the By Law Officer was not aware of the session and would like to be involved in future sessions. Taxi Licenses one application request for a taxi driver was received and one for an owner/operator. A new sticker design has been done for rear window of the taxi for a cost of \$100.00 plus HST. There are currently five files being worked on for Solid Waste Management 14 Birch Street, 87 Warwick Street, 190 Queen Street, 88 Warwick Street and 91 St. Mary's Street.

**G. CORRESPONDENCE**

**G.1 Letter from Richard Parry**

A letter was send to Council regarding the Administrative Policy #2020-03 Community Grants asking to petition the Town Council to repeal the by Policy. Council will discuss this further during the Community Grants process. And send letter of acknowledgement to Richard Parry for his letter.

**H. NEW BUSINESS**

**H.1 Mount Street Project**

The Director of Finance reviewed the cost analysis for the Mount Street Project. Council received this report a few weeks ago to allow proper time to review and consider the options. The spending needed for the Mount Street Project will require debenture borrowing. The Director provided a debt service ratio analysis for the borrowing it was determined that if the contract for construction was accepted in full the debit service ratio would remain just within the "green" category. This assumes a borrowing rate of 4.5% that no additional significant borrowing would be done in the next few years. The options being presented tonight are 1. Not accept any tenders and postpone to a future year. 2. Proceed with project but delete King to West St. section and complete that section in a later year as a second phase. 3. Proceed with bid with small to no changes to the project. The CAO suggested that a special Council Meeting be held after the Committee of the Whole to ratify the decision made here tonight.

**Motion:**

***Moved by Mayor Cleveland and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Committee recommend to Council the awarding of the Mount Street Tender to Dexter Construction***

*In the amount of \$3,881,520.25, with change work order to reduce the sidewalk from 3.5m concrete to a 2m concrete sidewalk, and the landscaping and blend gravel driveways being done in house by Public Works department.*

**Motion Carried.**

#### **H.2 53 Mount Street- Request for decision**

The CAO has provided to the Council the background on the project and the Housing Accelerator Fund application that was not approved for funding. Therefore a decision on the Mount Street School is needed.

**Motion:**

*Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett that the Committee recommend to Council to put the second floor of the former Mount Street School project to renovate the upper level of the building and have six bachelor apartments on hold until other funding opportunities have been found and operational plans have been put in place, and that Council be open to review any proposals from outside sources to accomplish the goal of providing housing.*

**Motion Carried.**

#### **H.3 143 First Avenue Rental-Request for decision**

The CAO provided to the Council the background on the 143 First Avenue Property. At the current time the roof needs to be replaced and the furnace as well. The costs for the roof will be \$5,300 plus HST and to replace the furnace will be \$9,400 plus HST. The Committee discussed options for the furnace replacement and is asking for other options to furnace replacement.

**Motion:**

*Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Saulnier that the Committee recommend to Council the entire roof at 143 First Avenue be replaced at a cost of \$5,300 plus HST plus contingency.*

**Motion Carried.**

#### **H.4 98 Carleton Street- Request for decision**

The property at 98 Carleton Street is nearing the end of completion the CAO is asking for Council direction on the future of the mini home so that interior finishing can be determined. The thoughts of Council from the beginning was to create an affordable housing option.

**Motion:**

*Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett that the Committee recommend to Council that we sell the 98 Carleton Street property for the purpose of affordable housing once renovations have been completed.*

**Motion Carried**

#### **H.5 Visitor Information Centre**

Deputy Mayor Bartlett would like to have a meeting to discuss the coming summer with the Visitor Information Centre with the VIC Committee.

I. IN-CAMERA

I.1 Contract

Motion:

*Moved by Councillor Turnbull and seconded by Councillor Saulnier that the Committee move to In Camera for Contract.*

Motion Carried.

Motion:

*Moved by Councillor Turnbull and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett that the Committee move out of In Camera for Contact.*

Motion Carried.

J. ADJOURNMENT

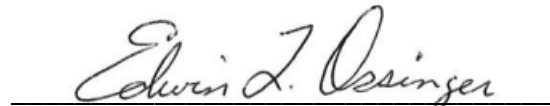
Motion:

*Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the meeting be adjourned as there is no further business at 7:46 P.M.*

Motion Carried.



Mayor



Clerk