

**Town of Digby  
Committee of the Whole  
July 15, 2024  
Council Chambers**

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

**STAFF PRESENT:** Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer  
Leslie Brinton, Executive Assistant  
Matthew Raymond, Director of Finance  
Laura Lee Milner, Special Constable  
Rob Hartmier, Grant Coordinator

**REGRETS:** Ed McCormick, Director of Public Works

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Cleveland called the meeting to order at 5:56pm

**B. AGENDA**

**B.1 Additions/Deletions**

None

**B.2 Approval**

**MOTION:**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Saulnier that the agenda for July 15, 2024 be approved as presented.***

**Motion Carried**

**C. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS**

**C.1 Allan Franklin - Vacant Building/Unsightly Properties**

Mr. Franklin wished to speak to Council about the numerous Vacant Buildings and Unsightly properties in the Town of Digby. He has gone through the previous meeting minutes to familiarize himself with historical information. He questions Council on where in the process the Vacant Building By-Laws is at? Mayor Cleveland communicates that there is research being done in order to make sure the bylaw meets all the requirements that the Province/Municipal Government Act allows. Agrees that there needs to be updates to the bylaw. The CAO notes that the previous bylaw is from 2013 and is dated. Mr. Franklin called Councillors a number of years ago and feels that nothing has changed and nothing has improved since then. Mr. Franklin does not understand why there is little to any action being taken on a number of properties in the town that are unsightly. He notes a property on Shore Road seems to always be unsightly. He finds this to be frustrating as this is a property that is in full view of tourists who arrive off the ferry and is looking to Council for answers. He questions whether fines have ever been levied against a number of properties. Mr. Franklin feels as though one specific

property owner is the main issue in the town and would like to see more being done to deal with those properties. Mr. Franklin is also frustrated with a property on Mount Street and why it apparently is not being addressed. Mayor Cleveland re-iterated the limitation set upon the Town by the MGA and that once a file/property has been cleaned up, any offending issue is the creation of a new file and a new timeline. Councillor McCormick communicated that when a report is filed on a property, bylaw does start a file and that he has seen positive changes to unsightly properties in town. Certain owners are prime offenders. Mr. Franklin asked if there is an option to add fines to property taxes. Mayor Cleveland communicated that that question is one of the research questions in updating the bylaw and an answer they are looking for. Mr. Franklin is looking to council that the properties in question, especially Shore Road and Mount Street, are going to be properly addressed and some action in cleaning them up. Councillor Saulnier has heard what Mr. Franklin is saying and wants to communicate that Council is equally as frustrated with the situation. The use of fire inspections has also been another tool that has been used in order to get properties into alignment. Mr. Franklin thanked the council for listening but is expecting some headway with this issue.

#### **D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**D.1 June 17, 2024**

##### **MOTION:**

***Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Saulnier that the Minutes of June 17, 2024 be approved as amended.***

**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 presented his report. A total of 5 development permits were issued. There were 6 building permits issued. There were 4 fire inspections completed. There was no Fire Department report received. The Visitor Information Center has 30-40 visitors per day. Mount Street project has started, focusing on King Street to Third Avenue. There is a second round now open for the Housing Accelerator Fund, which was an unsuccessful grant application from last year. Grant Coordinator will be following up and submitting a new application. The damages for the flooding are being gathered and a pre-evaluation form is being completed. The new staff sergeant, Grant Ryland, has made contact with the CAO and has communicated that he is looking at a long tenure with no plans for retirement or relocation. SS Ryland looks forward to working with the Bylaw officer and attending a Committee of the Whole meeting to introduce himself. Councillor McCormick will be seeing him quarterly for the RCMP Committee meetings.

**F.2 Director of Public Works**

a) Director of Public Works was not in attendance. Councillor Saulnier questioned why the side streets on the Mount Street project were closed so early. CAO communicated that the rationale was for the community to get used to the closures and thus full closure from the start of the project. Discussion with the legion on their events and that the contractor would do their very best to accommodate those events. Councillor McCormick asked for a cost estimate on 5-ton truck repairs however CAO did not have an answer on that.

b) Mount Street Project Update – Road Closure June 24 to June 28<sup>th</sup> – Hand delivered notices along with an explanation as this was the start of the project. July 2<sup>nd</sup> to July 5<sup>th</sup> – New Sanitary Main installed. July 8<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup> – start of new storm sewer installation.

c) Shore Road Culvert Project Update – Flooding in area of repair. Project will still begin on time however the washout of the area caused overtime work for Public Works staff to repair and unblock culvert. As per report, project contractor says work should still only take one week.

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

#### **a) Report**

Statement of Operations to date, nothing that stands out in the report at this present time. There are no overages in budget or significant issues currently. The Capital budget was passed on May 6<sup>th</sup> and the Operating budget was passed on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Audit should begin on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The water rate study is now complete. Workers' compensation will now start, as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, compensating for Gradual Onset Psychological Injury. Ransomware attacks are happening more frequently to Municipalities these days. Councillor McCormick asked if we send notices when rent is in arrears and that we should be doing that.

### **F.4 Special Constable**

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

The Dangerous and Unightly report was included in the package. Councillor Saulnier noted that 28 Montague Road is in bad shape again. A number of the properties are Provincial Housing and that needs to be followed up again. CAO noted that fencing is going up across the property for 43-47 Water Street.

#### **b) Protective Services Report**

The Protective Services Report was included in the package. All cameras are up and running. Parking signs will be coming and installed soon. Solid Waste – smells from 78 Second Street and 65 Water Street are particularly bad. Councillor McCormick communicated that we are a tourist town and that there needs to be more enforcement. Discussion was had on how to get restaurant buy in including adding another green bin pick up day.

### **F.5 Grant Coordinator Report**

The Grant Coordinator Report was included in the package. The Grant Coordinator explained the Rail Trail Grant Research Report that was done for the Director of Public Works and that after consultation with the CAO, a number of reports would be created for Council after October. They would be focused reports that will help create ideas for the direction the Town can take and the grants that are available. The Grant Coordinator would follow up with an email to Mayor and Councillors to show the way the report functions. This will allow Council to direct staff on events/activities and also guide the creation of next years budget.

### **F.6 Returning Officer Report**

The Returning Officer report was included in the package. Request was made for a recommendation for advanced polling day.

**Motion:**

***Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick that Committee recommend to Council that the first advance polling day for the 2024 Municipal Election for the Town of Digby be set for Saturday, October 12, 2024.***

**Motion Carried.**

**G. CORRESPONDENCE**

**G.1 Glen Squires – Digby Pines**

Chief Administrative Officer communicated that there has been nothing officially submitted to the Town of Digby Development department so it seems this letter is premature from Digby Pines. There is nothing in writing submitted to the Town of Digby so no comment can be made on an increase in waste water. Mayor Cleveland suggested that the CAO should respond with a letter addressing the fact that no plans have been submitted and that submissions should be made as soon as possible.

**H. NEW BUSINESS**

**H.1 Road Trails Designation**

The Chief Administrative Officer placed a draft of the bylaw in the package along with a map. There was research done on bylaw that looked at other municipalities. Decision was to create a bylaw using street civic number to street civic number. Councillor Saulnier asked as to whether there could a sunset clause for the bylaw in order to review it after a certain amount of time. Enforcement can be done by RCMP by opening the bylaw to the Motor Vehicle Act. CAO explained that like any other bylaw, you can review or repeal as is needed. Councillor Saulnier would like the bylaw reviewed in six months.

**H.2 Emergency Room Closure**

Deputy Mayor Bartlett communicated that the Digby Hospital ER was closed for the weekend while the Lobster Bash event was on. He wishes for a letter to be written to the local MLS, Hospital Administration that the ER especially needs to be open on our big event weekends. Mayor Cleveland also added that the letter should be addressed to the Provincial Health Minister.

**I. IN-CAMERA**

**I.1 Legal**

**Motion**

***Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the Committee move to In Camera for Legal.***

**Motion Carried.**

**Motion**

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

**Motion Carried.**

**J. Adjournment**

**Motion**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned as there is no further business at 7:45pm***  
**Motion Carried.**

---

Mayor

---

Chief Administrative Officer