

**Town of Digby
Committee of the Whole
December 16, 2024
Council Chambers**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Mike Bartlett
Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier, Chair
Councillor William McCormick
Councillor Rick Foote
Councillor Shane Weir

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, Special Constable
Rob Hartmier, Grant Coordinator

REGRETS:

A. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Saulnier called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

B. AGENDA

B.1 Additions/Deletions

H.4 Decorating Winners – Councillor Weir

B.2 Approval

Agenda approved my consensus.

C. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

C.1 Angeliq Leblanc – Western Regional Enterprise Network (WREN)

An overview of the WREN was presented. The presenter was the CEO. Economic and business development in the western region. Digby to Barrington is the area covered. Funding come from businesses as well as the Provincial Government. Occasionally, there is some Federal grants. Population for the area is now nearer to 50,000. Operational since 2013 (RENS across the province). The is a lot of communication between the RENS. The department of Economic Growth is who the WREN works with. Values: People are the regions core strength. Partnerships are the keys to success. Diversity of people is of the utmost importance. Natural Resources are the backbone of the region (fishery, forestry, green initiatives, renewables). Innovativeness is also a hallmark of the region. Strategy: heavily involved in the rural internet program. Cell infrastructure is very important right now. Demographic profile where the older population is very large however there is a new and younger population moving to the area. Increasing investment in the private and public sector employment. Private sector – supporting the heart of the region: Small Business. Business retention and expansion program for small businesses. Help to identify some of the opportunities as well as the barriers. Public Sector – helping to address needs for all businesses. Example is the energy issues within the region. Also looking at other energy savings options for all, specifically residential homeowners.

Current side project is to look at rail beds to trail beds. Looking at having rail traffic come off the trail and to enter and use local businesses.

Addressing talent needs – helping those who are new to the regions find gainful and useful employment instead of just work. Planning regionally for immigration increases over the next ten years. Supporting private sector to gain highly skilled workers to the area.

D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

D.1 November 18, 2024

Minutes approved by consensus.

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1 None

F. STAFF REPORTS

F.1 Chief Administrative Officer

a) The Report was submitted with the package. 5 Development permits issued. Development Agreement for the Thomas Road project has been drafted, waiting for final Site Plans. Further conversations done with Brighter Community Planning and Consulting over Multi unit residential development on Carleton Street. Correspondence will be addressed in camera.

4 building permits issued. No fire inspections to report. 9 Fire calls for November 2024. Council Meeting and Procedures Policy was reviewed by Council on Saturday, December 7th. Land acknowledgement policy was discussed, Staff will research the policy and will bring recommendations to the next Committee of the Whole Meeting.

GRID application for the Thomas Road Development Project has been submitted. Project estimated at 2.8 million with a Grant request of 1.17 million. CHIF application will follow in January to apply for more cost coverage.

Deputy Mayor asked about the 15% contingency fund and whether that had settled after Covid. The CAO felt that they have stabilized.

F.2 Director of Public Works

a) Public Works Report - The Report was submitted with the package. Cost estimate received for Thomas Road development project. Owner of KFC received an email on July 4th, 2024, that they have 6 months to remove blue steel sign. Winter parking is in effect. Some issues on Water Street so some warnings have been placed on a few vehicles. Turbo has been repaired on one ton costing almost \$5,000. Old backhoe is in Bedford for repairs. Seems the transmission is of issue currently. Public bathrooms have now been winterized.

F.3 Director of Finance

a) Report - The Report was submitted with the package. Discussion has been had with fees on the pension funds and how those fees are very, very high. Employee appointments with advisor one-on-one to help look at their portfolio. Deputy Mayor Saulnier inquired about transfer deed tax and whether it was high. DOF saw that those dollars would be above our budget.

b) Operating and Capital Budget Report – The Report was submitted with the package. Not much to report currently. Statements are available for you in the package.

F.4 Special Constable

a) Dangerous and Unightly - The Report was submitted with the package. 3 Maiden Lane – has had the porch rebuilt. 27 West Street – agreed to install a fence. 10 Carleton Street – hand delivered

Notice of Tax on November 26th, 2024. 53 Raquette Road – No date given for demolition at this time. 145 Victoria Street – email complaint on uncut grass and notice was given November 14, 2024. 132 Victoria Street – email complaint on uncut grass and notice was given November 14, 2024. 88 Victoria Street – Owner very upset with site visit on trailer near road being unsightly and possible hinderance with sidewalk. Owner agreed to move trailer and clean up property. 21 Maiden Lane – Notice to be delivered to owner on unsightly shed on property. 58 Water Street – informal complaint lodged about building. Inspection has forced owner to have engineer looks at property to give advice. 56 Water Street – after inspection, notice sent to owner (Nov. 29) requesting site be inspected by professional as there are a number of internal issues. Requested a response within 14 days. 128 Water Street – official complaint from tenant concerning condition. Investigated and found site violates Minimum Housing Rental Units bylaw, Solid Waste bylaw, and Dangerous and Unsightly policy. Needs a building and fire inspection. Investigation ongoing. 19 Warwick Street – siding has been repaired.

b) Protective Services – The Report was submitted with the package. Request for quote to camera technician for 24-hour notification. Vending application for craft shows and gothic Christmas shows. Continued feud with 2 taxi companies continues. Window tint of one vehicle seems to be the issue. 19 Prince William Street – complaint concerning waste left roadside. May be some language barriers. Site to be monitored. 45 Montague Row – Complaint about solid waste in yard. Notice given and clean up has begun. 59 Sydney Steet – Complain about solid waste. Notice given and material has been cleaned up. By-Law violations in the Municipality and complainants being directed by the Municipality to the Town. This causes a few work hours to be spent with non-town issues. Deputy Mayor Saulnier asked about if By-Law officer is directing the Municipality issues back to the Municipality. By-law states that the Municipality has directed them to her.

F.5 Grant Coordinator Report

a) The Report was submitted with the package. GRID application has been submitted as was the Celebrate Canada Grant. CHIF seminars were attended, and work begins on those in the new year. Spoke with NSCC about a possible co-op student for a four-month stint next summer to help support administration in the town office.

F.6 Senior Management

a) The Report was submitted with the package. Staff request motion to follow

MOTION:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that a recommendation is put forth to Council to support the application to the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund for the Thomas Road Development Project.

Motion Carried

MOTION:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Foote that the reports be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

G. CORRESPONDENCE

G.1 Crosswalk painting proposal

Request to have a crosswalk near the Legion painted in order to show support for veterans. Digby salvage has offered to cover this cost. There was a consensus that this is a great idea. There was a

question about putting Poppies on the ground to be walked and driven on. Request that the staff investigate this, communicate with the Legion and to thank Digby Salvage for the offer.

G.2 Letter – Zach Imrie, 3rd Eye gaming lounge

Councillor McCormick communicated that he has always found the business to be well within the limits of any noise or sound issues. He was surprised to hear the complaint. Deputy Mayor asked about issues with the noise to the By-law. By-law spoke to the business owner over the issue. CAO spoke to the fact that by agreeing to this, it would open the door to any or all businesses to ask for a variance on the noise bylaw. CAO sees this as being between the two tenants and the landlords not a town issue. CAO communicated that those variances that have been granted have been only for a one-time event, outdoors. Mayor concurred with the CAO. Councillor Foote commented that since the RCMP have not had an issue with two calls to this location, so it really is not a town issue. Request for correspondence from the Town and a copy of the By-law be sent to the business owner.

G.3 Saskia Geerts

DOPW commented that there was a mechanical breakdown which caused there to be no sanding/salting/cleaning as mentioned in the letter. Letter to business over the tree/correspondence. Councillor McCormick communicated that he did speak to her about the tree. He also wanted to add to the next COTW meeting for getting Wayfair signage on the go. DOPW spoke on what tree work he and the staff do. Task staff to look at different trees we could possibly be planting.

G.4 ATV Usage on Town Streets

DOPW communicated that 12 signs are on order for signage for the ATV trails. Councillor Foote asked if there was a speed limit to be posted. CAO communicated it was 20 km/h. Request that the office of the CAO respond this this letter regarding signage going up soon and the 6-month review that is coming soon.

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1 Streetscaping and Facade

Mayor Bartlett – streetscaping program. Communicating that he would like to see the streetscaping program reenergized. Getting input from the businesses is key. Streetscaping and Façade go hand in hand. Formally ask staff to request the creator of the streetscaping program to return and present to the new council. Try to coordinate the two programs together. Both streetscaping and façade have a few ideas. Councillor Foote communicating that the façade program looks quite expensive from a new business perspective. Getting input from the businesses is of the utmost importance.

H.2 Request for decisions – 5 Ton Plow Truck

CAO is requesting a decision to be sent to Council for the purchase of a 5 Ton Plow Truck and the purchase of the dump box, plow harness and plow. Purchase of each of these two recommendations would be spread over two budget years. Current plow truck has not been a good investment. Current truck always needs repairs, totalling \$85,000 so far and being out of service for 369 days. Thus, the request for a decision to be sent to Council for the two purchases to replace it. Councillor Weir requested to hear from the DOPW and if he agreed on this request. DOPW was 100% in agreement for the request. Council agreed on the decision request put forward.

MOTION:

Moved by Councillor McCormick seconded by Councillor Weir that a recommendation is put forth to Council for the purchase of a 2026 Peterbilt truck chassis in the amount of \$255,298.85 (including HST) from Peterbilt Atlantic in the 2024/2025 Capital Budget year.

Motion Carried

MOTION:

Moved by Councillor McCormick seconded by Mayor Bartlett that a recommendation is put forth to Council for the purchase of a dump box, plow harness and heavy-duty trip edge reversible plow in the amount of \$178,191.92 (including HST) from Peterbilt Atlantic in the 2025/2026 Capital Budget year.

Motion Carried

H.3 Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators

Mayor Bartlett wanted CAO to investigate becoming a membership and see if it is worth while. Requesting that the Office of the CAO research that information.

H.4 Holiday Decorating Winners

Councillor Weir announced the winners for the Holiday decorating contest.

First Place – 193 Second Avenue

Second Place – 160 King Street

Third Place – 29 Carleton Street

I. IN-CAMERA

I.1 Legal

MOTION:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole meeting be moved to in-camera for legal.

Motion Carried.

MOTION:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole meeting be moved out of in-camera for legal.

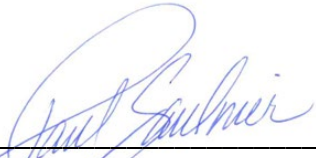
Motion Carried.

J. Adjournment

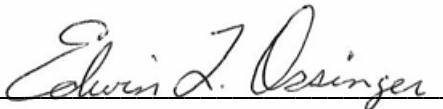
MOTION

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned as there is no further business at 8:34 pm

Motion Carried.



Deputy Mayor



Clerk