

**DIGBY TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, July 2, 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  
Rob Hartmier, Grant Coordinator

**REGRETS:**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Cleveland called the meeting to order at 5:58 pm

**B. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**B.1** None.

**C. AGENDA**

**C.1 Additions/Deletions**

None.

**C.2 Approval**

**Motion:**

***Moved by Councillor Turnbull and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the Agenda for July 2, 2024 be approved as presented.***

**Motion Carried.**

**D. DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

**D.1** None

**E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**E.1** June 3, 2024

**Motion:**

***Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the Minutes of June 3, 2024 be approved as presented.***

**Motion Carried.**

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

**F.1** None

## **G. REPORTS**

### **G.1 Chief Administrative Officer Report**

The recent meeting covered several key projects and updates. For Mount Street construction, the contractor is on-site, the control plan is approved, and temporary services, including water connections to outside taps, will be installed and are being tested. Residents' water bills will be averaged over six months, and those without outside taps will have them installed at no additional cost. Councillor Saulnier expressed disappointment that the Public Works Director did not present the project details, and the CAO acknowledged this, promising to request a brief for the council. The CAO noted that construction postponement minimizes school disruption, with road closures primarily affecting local traffic. For the Shore Road culvert replacement, the traffic control plan is approved, and the project will start once the culvert is delivered, with traffic disruption expected for about a week. Traffic will be managed to flow continuously, considering the ferry schedule. The municipality received additional summer job funding, allowing for four positions for eight weeks each. Future development plans for the Pines were discussed, focusing initially on condos across the road, with other developments deferred. A meeting with Bay Ferries was had to discuss municipal management of their water and wastewater treatment systems, following significant upgrades.

### **G.2 Waste Check Authority Meeting**

Mayor Cleveland raised concerns about the widespread presence of Japanese knotweed and how to address this invasive species. He suggested writing a general letter about invasive species management. Mayor Cleveland asked the CAO to draft a letter about this issue

### **G.3 Committee of the Whole**

There are two recommendations coming forward from the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

#### **Motion:**

***Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick that Council gives first reading of By-Law Respecting Certain Exemptions from the Fire Protection Rate By-Law #2024-02.***

**Motion Carried**

#### **Motion:**

***Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Saulnier the Change of hours for the public washrooms will now be open from 6:30am to 8:30pm daily and that the public shower facilities hours remain the same as originally discussed open from 7:00am to 7:00pm daily.***

**Motion Carried**

There was a discussion had about power outage and what happens with the automatic locking doors. Question to be put to Director of Public Works on what those options are if the facility has no power. Also unknown to Council and the CAO was that the Public Showers at Digby Station were not opened by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 as previously planned.

### **G.4 Digby Area Recreation Commission Reports**

Mayor Cleveland and the CAO discussed issues with the pickleball community, highlighting personality conflicts and disagreements over facility usage times. The CAO was confident that the issue would be dealt with internally. Councillor Saulnier expressed frustration with DARC's spending on conferences and programs, arguing that these are wants, not needs, and criticizing the continuous budget increases without added value. Councillor McCormick emphasized the need to save for infrastructure, suggesting cuts to some programs. Concerns were raised about the structural integrity of a building, with reports indicating it may be shifting. The CAO emphasized the need for a trustworthy structural engineer's

report as those reports can be a biased as experienced with the DFD building. Mayor Cleveland proposed sending a letter of concern to the DARC Board, drafted by the CAO. The facility manager's report was deemed unclear, and better reporting from DARC should be requested. Councillor McCormick made comment that Active Living Coordinators report was excellent and would like to see reporting detail of that nature in all reports. The CAO questioned the fairness of cost-sharing for programs, noting that the Town of Digby seems to pay more than its fair share. The council decided that each Councillor would send a list of concerns to the CAO and a letter would be drafted to be sent to the DARC board of directors.

## **G.5 Budget Committee**

### **a) Power point 2024/2025 Operating Budget**

The Director of Finance presented the 2024/2025 Operating Budget, highlighting minor adjustments that resulted in a balanced budget. Key changes include a 7% increase in revenue, a 5% rise in expenditures, and increases in garbage and sewer rates, attributed to higher tipping fees. Funds will be pulled from reserves to cover the prior year's deficit. Councillor Saulnier questioned the rise in garbage fees, while Mayor Cleveland and the CAO discussed the need for effluent testing and maintaining health standards. The significant cost of RCMP services was noted, with concerns about unfilled vacancies despite provincial claims of full staffing.

Discussions also covered the fairness of continuing grants during a deficit, with Councillor Saulnier suggesting reductions. The issue of residential leaf and yard waste collection was raised, proposing reduced pickups to cut costs. Mayor Cleveland highlighted a 14% increase in power costs, impacting operational expenses. The potential sale of the Mount Street lot and the Shore Road development were considered, with funds directed to reserves however there is no timeline.

The Director of Finance outlined that the residential tax rate is up 10%, RCMP costs have increased by 6%, and overall salaries are up by 5%. He emphasized that the current budget is sustainable, unlike previous years. Concerns about property tax revenue and the need for more commercial income were discussed. The Financial Condition Index (FCI) indicators show greater-than-usual capital spending, moving to yellow.

**b) 2024/2025 Non-Consolidated Budget**

**Motion: Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures**

***Moved By Councillor McCormick, Seconded By Councillor Saulnier,***

***THAT Council accepts the following estimates of the sums required by the Town of Digby for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2025, prepared in accordance with Section 72 of the Municipal Government Act:***

<b>Revenues</b>	
Taxes	4,302,668
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	170,180
Services Provided to Other Local Gov't	256,775
Sale of Services	175,675
Other Revenue from Own Sources	178,773
Unconditional Transfers	416,727
Conditional Transfers	18,512
Other Transfers	3,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>5,522,310</b>

<b>Expenditures</b>	
General Government Services	948,418
Protective Services	1,805,185
Transportation Services	818,522
Environmental Health Services	821,281
Public Health Services	28,231
Environmental Developmental Services	175,425
Recreation and Cultural Services	487,970
Finance and transfers	437,278
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>5,522,310</b>

**Motion Carried**

**Motion: General Tax Rates**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Saulnier that:***

***WHEREAS total estimated expenditures for the fiscal period are \$5,522,310 and***

***WHEREAS total estimated revenues, other than taxes to be levied are \$1,219,642 and***

***WHEREAS the balance of revenues required, \$4,302,668 must be rated;***

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT for the Town of Digby for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025:  
The general tax rates are as follows:***

***Residential / Resource \$1.91 per \$100 of assessment***

***Commercial \$4.20 per \$100 of assessment***

***AND THAT these taxes are due and payable on Taxes to be billed by way of interim tax bill (issued in April, due May 31, 2024) and Final tax bill (issued in September, due the October 31, 2024); with interest to be charged on all final tax accounts outstanding on Interest on overdue amounts to be charged at a rate of 19% per annum.***

**Motion Carried.**

**Motion: Fire Protection Rate**

***Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett:***

***WHEREAS Council is authorized under Section 80 of the Municipal Government Act to levy a rate on the value of all assessable property assessment in the area served by a water system in the town, as defined by the council by policy, in order to recover that part of the cost of the water system that is attributable to fire protection; and***

***WHEREAS the cost of fire protection (water supply and Hydrants) has historically been covered in the general tax rate of non-exempt residential, resource and commercial taxable assessment; and***

***WHEREAS the provision of fire protection (water supply and hydrants) is beneficial to all assessable property assessment within the Town of Digby serviced by Digby Water Commission the Council wishes to levy a rate over all assessable property assessment.***

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that it shall be the policy of the Council of the Town of Digby as of April 1, 2019 to separate the fire protection expenditures (water supply and hydrants) from the estimated expenditures to be covered by general rate of non-exempt residential, resource and commercial taxable assessment; and apply a fire protection rate to cover the estimated fire protection (water and Hydrant) expenditures to all assessable property assessment in the area served by the Digby Water Commission in the town; and***

***FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the total estimated fire protection (water and hydrant) expenditures for the 2024/25 fiscal year of \$219,146 be covered by a fire protection rate applied to all assessable property assessment serviced by the Digby Water Commission; and***

***That the fire protection rate for the 2024/25 fiscal year be set at \$0.12 per \$100 of Assessment; and be applied on the interim tax bill (issued in April, due May 31, 2024) and final tax bill in September are due and payable by October 31, 2024, with interest on overdue amounts to be charged at the rate of 19 % per annum.***

**Motion Carried**

**Motion: Solid Waste Management Uniform Charge**

***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Saulnier:***

***WHEREAS Council has included in its estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, the amount of \$415,251 to be expended for the purpose of solid waste management, a purpose for which the Town may expend funds; and***

***WHEREAS there are approximately 1,178 dwelling units within the boundaries of the Town of Digby; and***

***WHEREAS the Council may, under paragraph 75(4)(b) of the Municipal Government Act, in lieu of levying an area rate, levy a uniform charge on each property assessment in the area.***

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a uniform charge of \$353 be levied for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025 on each dwelling unit within the boundaries of the Town of Digby and that these uniform charges are applied on the interim tax bill in (issued in April, due May 31, 2024) and final tax bill in September and are due and payable by October 31, 2024 with interest on overdue amounts to be charged at the rate of 19 % per annum.***

**Motion Carried.**

**Motion: Sanitary Sewer Rates**

***Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Turnbull:***

***WHEREAS Council is authorized by the Town of Digby Sewer Charges By-law to set rates for sewer services;***

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the sewer service charge shall be \$7.34 per 1,000 gallons of water consumption; and***

***Residential and Commercial users shall pay:***

***Less than 1 million gallons annually 100% of the Sewer Service Charge, or more than 1 million gallons annually 50% of the Sewer Service Charge based on their annual water consumption of the previous year, and***

***Industrial Premises users shall pay:***

***Less than 1 million gallons annually 100% of the Sewer Service Charge, or more than 1 million gallons shall pay 10% of the Sewer Service Charge, or more than 10 million gallons shall pay 5% of the Sewer Service Charge based on their annual water consumption of the previous year; and***

***That the Sewer Service Charge shall be applied to the Water Utility's bi-monthly bill. All bills are due and payable under the same regulations as the Water Utility Bill.***

**Motion Carried**

**Motion: Tax Certificate Fee**

***Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor McCormick:***

***WHEREAS Council is authorized to set a fee for a tax certificate pursuant to section 132 (2) of the Municipal Government Act;***

***THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the tax certificate fee shall be \$40 per tax certificate.***

**Motion Carried**

## H. CORRESPONDENCE

H.1 None

## I. NEW BUSINESS

### I.1 Temporary Borrowing Resolution

Mayor Cleveland inquired about anything unusual in the capital budget and the funding process. The CAO outlined various projects including a fire rescue truck, other fire equipment, replacement of a tractor, a new 5-ton fire truck, and Mount Street upgrades. Mayor Cleveland asked about traffic solutions, particularly the exit for DARC and widening the intersection at Shreve and Victoria for a right-turn lane. Deputy Mayor Bartlett discussed moving the crosswalk to the far end, suggesting easy initial measures to improve traffic flow. DARC opposes another driveway, but safety solutions are necessary. The CAO mentioned the cost implications of the DARC parking lot exit on Shreve Street and the need to widen the intersection at Shreve and Victoria.

**Motion: Temporary Borrowing Resolution for \$2,600,000.00**

***Moved by Councillor Saulnier and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that Council approves the temporary borrowing resolution***

***THAT under the authority of Section 66 of the Municipal Government Act, the Council of the Town of Digby borrow a sum or sums not exceeding (Two million six hundred thousand dollars (\$ 2,600,000) for the purpose set out above, subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; THAT the sum be borrowed by the issue and sale of debentures of the Council of the Town of Digby to such an amount as the Council deems necessary;***

***THAT the issue of debentures be postponed pursuant to Section 92 of the Municipal Government Act and that a sum or sums not exceeding Two million six hundred thousand Dollars (\$ 2,600,000) in total be borrowed from time to time from any chartered bank or trust company doing business in Nova Scotia;***

***THAT the sum be borrowed for a period not exceeding Twelve (12) Months from the date of approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of this resolution;***

***THAT the interest payable on the borrowing be paid at a rate to be agreed upon; and***

***THAT the amount borrowed be repaid from the proceeds of the debentures when sold.***

**Motion Carried.**

### I.2 Request for decision-Loan for Zamboni Purchase

This amount is for a loan from both the Municipality of Digby and the Town of Digby in order to purchase a new Zamboni for the arena. Grants have been awarded to help offset the purchase cost. This is a loan similar to the vehicle purchase done previously for DARC.

**Motion: Loan for Zamboni Purchase**

***Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Turnbull that Council approve the issue of a cheque to DARC for \$48,030 representing 50% of the loan request from DARC to the Municipal units of \$96,059.50 and that a loan schedule be set up for a five year term with interest to be paid by DARC with the first Payment being due in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.***

***Ayes – Mayor Cleveland, Councillor McCormick, Deputy Mayor Bartlett and Councillor Turnbull***

***Nay – Councillor Saulnier***

**Motion Carried**


### I.3 Crime Stoppers

Councillor McCormick discussed the joint RCMP Police Advisory Committee's correspondence regarding the placement of Crime Stoppers stickers on town-owned property. The RCMP aims to encourage crime reporting through these stickers. Councillor McCormick noted that while the initiative might be beneficial, it needs careful consideration, including approving the specific locations. He mentioned that similar programs, like Citizens on Patrol, have faded over time. Councillor McCormick suggested inviting a representative to a Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting for further discussion and to gather

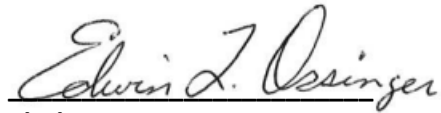
more details before proceeding. Councillor McCormick also highlighted the importance of a formal letter from the council to the Department of Justice to review the initiative. Mayor Cleveland supported the idea of inviting the RCMP representative to a COTW meeting to address questions and concerns before approving the sticker placements, and directed the CAO to send the invitation.

**J. IN CAMERA**  
J.1 None

**K. ADJOURNMENT**  
**Motion to Adjourn:**  
***Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett at 7:53pm***  
**Motion Carried.**



Mayor



Clerk