

April 2, 2024

The Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building by videoconference and teleconference on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Dist:

- 1 Clr. Don Butler
- 2 Clr. Deborah Wadden
- 3 Clr. Darla MacKeil
- 4 Clr. Mary Elliott
- 5 Deputy Warden Wayne Murray
- 6 Warden Robert Parker
- 7 Clr. David Parker
- 8 Clr. Larry Turner
- 9 Clr. Peter Boyles
- 10 Clr. Randy Palmer
- 11 Clr. Andy Thompson
- 12 Clr. Chester Dewar

IN ATTENDANCE

Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipal Clerk-Treasurer
Sueann Musick, Director of Corporate Services/Deputy Clerk
Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development
Evan Hale, Director of Emergency Services
Shellie Pettipas, Administrative Assistant
Adam MacInnis, Communications Officer
Heather Murphy, MacDonald & Murphy Inc.

CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Warden Parker called the meeting to order and invited Councillors to pray or reflect, as may be their preference, to help Council focus and properly do the work of the Municipality and to remember our Indigenous communities. He acknowledges that we are on the ancestral territorial lands of the Mikmaqi people and would like to thank the Mikmaqi people today for their ancestors sharing these precious lands with all our ancestors, whether they arrived here 400 years ago or four years ago. May we all live in peace and harmony together.

AGENDA

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Parker that the agenda be approved as presented. **Motion Carried**

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

There were no emergency resolutions brought forward.

REVIEW OF CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS MARCH 31, 2023

Heather Murphy, MacDonald & Murphy Inc. reviewed the Consolidated Financial Statements ending March 31, 2023, with Council.

Clr. Parker asked Ms. Murphy if there was evidence of misuse or misappropriation of funds during the auditing process. Ms. Murphy replied that through the auditing procedures, there was no evidence of either misappropriation or fraud occurring.

Clr. Parker asked Ms. Murphy if the Municipality of the County of Pictou follows its policy for collecting unpaid taxes. Ms. Murphy said through the procedures carried out, it was found there wasn't evidence to support the fact that those policies were being followed.

Clr. Wadden said that the deadlines for submitting finances to the province were still not met. Hopefully, with things being implemented, there will be a better handle on this for next year.

Clr. Thompson asked about the monthly operating costs for the internet project. Is that what the cost will be each year, or will there be more added to this? CAO Cullen said that the bulk of the charges are monthly fees for the internet service. These charges will go up as the project expands.

Deputy Warden Murray commented that the internet project is well scrutinized and seven people are reviewing the invoices. CAO Cullen said that a budget will be prepared for the internet project as a part of the general budget.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. MacKeil to approve the Consolidated Financial Statements as presented. **Motion Carried**

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Warden Parker asked if there were any errors, omissions, or corrections in the minutes for the March 4, 2024, Council Meeting. The minutes of the March 4, 2024,

Council Meeting were reviewed by the Municipal Council. Warden Parker proclaimed the minutes of the meeting of March 4, 2024, as the official record of the meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter regarding the Spring Bear Hunt from a resident was received by Council.

RECOGNITION

Lismore Wintertime Revue

The MOPC would like to congratulate the Lismore Wintertime Revue on its 25th Anniversary.

The foundation for what would become this annual show began in 1998 with a group of dedicated volunteers who produced a one-act play entitled “A Great Day for the Irish.” That play was an immediate hit and the start of what we now know as the “Lismore Wintertime Revue.” Tickets for the shows consistently sell out ahead of time, which goes to show just how popular and well done this event is.

None of it would be possible without the dedication of all those involved. We congratulate everyone involved throughout the years and thank them for the talent and time they’ve given to their community.

PRESENTATION

Mr. Wade Tibbo with the Pictou County Partnership gave a presentation to Council members.

Warden Parker said that it is very important to keep this work going. The Warden attended the conference last November and said it was one of the best conferences attended.

Clr. Parker asked Mr. Tibbo, from his experiences with start-up businesses, what is the single greatest obstacle to getting started. Mr. Tibbo said that based on the data from working with businesses, accessing capital and navigating that process is overwhelming.

Clr. Parker asked what the greatest asset is in getting businesses started. Mr. Tibbo said that having that support system in the community and if they can’t help them, then they will direct them to other resources.

Clr. Turner asked Mr. Tibbo what the value proposition would be if you were trying to sell and promote the county. Mr. Tibbo replied that it depends on the audience. Quality of life is the number one aspect; the county has grown and has had less people leaving the for Halifax or other areas of Nova Scotia.

Clr. Butler asked how much communication there is between Pictou County Partnership and the neighbouring RENs. Mr. Tibbo said they meet monthly as a group. They are working for longer-term funding and more consistent delivery. Mr. Tibbo said they are working more with REN networks across the province.

BUSINESS NOT REQUIRING ACTION

The New Scotland Business Inc. Report for the month of March 2024 was received as presented.

BUSINESS ITEMS OR ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION

MOTION

It was moved by Deputy Warden Murray and seconded by Clr. Palmer will approve the following high school bursary and graduation expenses:

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that it approve the following High School Graduation and Bursary Grants from the 2024-2025 Operating Budget:

a. North Nova Education Centre	\$2000.00	Grad. Expenses and Bursaries
b. Northumberland Reg. High School	\$2000.00	Grad. Expenses and Bursaries
c. Pictou Academy	\$200.00	Grad Expenses and Bursaries
d. Tatamagouche Reg. High School	\$200.00	Grad Expenses and Bursaries

Dated at Pictou, NS, this 2nd day of April 2024

(Sgd)

Deputy Warden Murray
Clr. Randy Palmer

Motion Carried

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Deputy Warden Murray to approve the following Recreation Sponsorship Grants.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that it approve the following Recreation Sponsorship Grants:

- a. CCREC Regional Science Fair **\$1000.00** Sponsorship of Fair March 27, 2024
- b. PC Crushers U15AA **\$250.00** Hosting Provincials March 28-31, 2024.

Dated at Pictou, NS, this 2nd day of April 2024

(Sgd)

Clr. Randy Palmer
Deputy Warden Murray

Motion Carried

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Turner to approve the Community Connectivity Grant.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that it approve the following Community Connectivity Fund Grant:

- a. Little Harbour Community Centre **\$1500.00** District 2 Year End Party

Dated at Pictou, NS, this 2nd of April 2024

(Sgd)

Clr. Deborah Wadden
Clr. Larry Turner

Motion Carried

LETTER REGARDING LACK OF SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

Clr. Wadden said there have been several school buses cancelled when there are no spare bus drivers. The buses get cancelled early in the morning, which is causing a lot of problems with scheduling. Warden Parker agreed that this is becoming a big issue within the county.

Clr. Elliott agreed that the issue is of great importance. Drivers took a drastic hit during Covid, and many retired drivers didn't return. This issue has been increasing over the years. The county is short on bus drivers, mechanics, teachers, cafeteria workers, etc. Clr. Elliott said that the Education Act states that bus transportation is a privilege, not a right. CCRCE decided that the training being offered at the base was taken away. The criteria for being a trainer are limited and have changed drastically.

Clr. Elliott said that the Chignecto Central Centre for Education is talking to the province and working on the issue and the jobs are being advertised. Clr. Elliott said she is not certain that sending a letter to those who already know about the problem will help. Clr. Elliott said that support should be shown as a municipality by sharing the CCRCE information and getting the word out. The Municipality should work with the Communications Officer to share the post and to get the word out that there is support for someone who wants to get the training.

Clr. Dewar agreed that a letter should be sent to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, and this problem must be addressed from the top.

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Parker to send a letter to the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Becky Druhan, the Chignecto Central Regional Centre for Education: Karyn Cooling and Blair MacDonald urging them to relook at the hiring practices for spare school bus drivers and encouraging them to realize the stress of no school bus at all is causing many concerns for many families in the county and to include the information for bus driver training on the municipality website.

Motion Carried

CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

The New Glasgow Farmers Market requested a letter of support from the Municipal Council for constructing a new barn for the market. The project has a 7.1-million-dollar price tag.

Warden Parker said that at this time, they are not requesting any money but feel that if a letter of support is given, then most likely, it can be expected that they will be back to request money.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Thompson and seconded by Clr. Wadden to write a letter of support for the New Glasgow Farmers Market for the project.

Clr. Thompson is puzzled about why the Municipality is the last holdout in supporting this project. The market benefits the community and is a good project that deserves the Council's support.

Clr. Elliott said that because the market is seasonal, it works. The concern is that with a letter of support, there could be a large financial request down the road.

AMENDMENT

Clr. Elliott moved to amend the motion to add the clause that the Municipality is not financially obligated to fund the project.

Motion Defeated

Nay Votes: Clr. Wadden, Clr. Turner, Clr. Thompson, Warden Parker, Clr. Palmer, Deputy Warden Murray.

Clr. Parker stated that he has long supported the farmers' market but does not favour this proposal. This is a modern, clean, well-run market with diverse vendors. Clr. Parker said that the 7.1-million-dollar proposal is beyond what they can do at this time, they need to grow more gradually.

Clr. Butler has been a vendor at the Antigonish Farmers Market for 10-15 years. The market has constructed a new building that they are very proud of, serving their needs. Clr. Butler supports the New Glasgow Farmers Market but has problems supporting this large project they have been asked to vote on.

Clr. Turner said the letter is very generic, and they are asking for endorsement of the initiative. The cost details will all come to the Council and be decided later. Clr. Turner said that the ask for support and the details of the project's cost should not be combined, and each one should be voted on its merits. The merits of this request are worthwhile.

Clr. MacKeil said the presentation was on the building proposal, which is what the Council has to do. It is a very large building that is a much grander project than supporting the Farmer's Market. There are many ways to support the market that would not need that price tag. This proposal given to the Council is a big endeavour.

Clr. Wadden supports sending the letter of support for this project. The presentation showed enthusiasm, and the community needs people like that to make plans. All five towns support the project, and over 20% of the vendors are from the county.

Warden Parker said that farmer's markets are good, but the concern is for the market's future if they get in too deep. The Warden said that when somebody makes a presentation, they show the price tag, and if support is given, it is given as well as the cost. Warden Parker said that Council sits on behalf of the taxpayers, and if it is felt that something is too much money, the letter cannot be signed. Council said to have another look before spending too much money.

Clr. Thompson said this market will run 12 months a year and helps newcomers and women survive in Pictou County. The letter of support does not commit Council to anything; it is simply a letter of support. The market is now maxed out in space.

Motion Defeated

Nay Votes: Clr. Elliott, Clr. Parker, Deputy Warden Murray, Clr. MacKeil,
Clr. Butler, Warden Parker

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Clr. Parker said the current plan for the Climate Change Tree Planting Subcommittee is to plant the trees on May 4, 2024. An overwhelming number of applications were received for land to plant the seedlings. 5,000 trees, which would cover about five acres, are to be planted.

Clr. MacKeil said that the Go Green Get Clean will do a clean-up on April 27, 2024. Supplies can be picked up on the Saturday before then. Following the clean-up, there will be hot dogs and snacks at 1:00 p.m. at the Caribou Fire Hall.

Clr. Thompson said there will be a community meeting for residents in Plymouth at the Community Centre on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. regarding the new long-term care facility in Plymouth.

Clr. Palmer said that the Pictou County Lacrosse League will be playing out of the Ivor MacDonald Memorial Arena, and there are a lot of happy kids about this.

Clr. Palmer said that the District 10 clean-up will be held on April 27, 2024. Everyone will meet at Crossroads Country Market at 9:00 a.m., and a barbeque will follow the clean-up at 12:30 p.m.

Warden Parker said the Pictou County Home and Outdoor Show will be held April 5-7, 2024, and asked who would attend on behalf of the Municipality. Ms. Musick said the Switch Program and MOPC First Home Internet would attend.

Clr. Dewar said that Nova Scotia Power put a new pole in Hopewell, and somebody stole the streetlight. Clr. Dewar said it would be good to get the streetlight back.

MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION

There were no motions of reconsideration.

IN-CAMERA SESSION

It was moved by Clr. Elliott and seconded by Clr. MacKeil to go In-Camera session (8:50PM). **Motion Carried**

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the Warden declared the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

WARDEN

MUNICIPAL CLERK