

May 25, 2020

The Committee of Council as a Whole for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met by video/teleconference on Monday, May 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Robert Parker, Warden, Vice-Chair	Don Butler
Deborah Wadden	Darla MacKeil
Ronald Baillie	David Parker
Larry Turner	Peter Boyles
Randy Palmer	Andy Thompson
Chester Dewar	

**ABSENT**

Wayne Murray, Deputy Warden, Chair

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipal Clerk-Treasurer  
Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer  
Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk  
Sueann Musick, Communications Officer  
Jane Johnson, Recording Secretary

**MINUTES –MAY 19, 2020**

It was moved by Clr. MacKeil and seconded by Clr. Boyles that the minutes of May 19, 2020 be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

**COVID-19 – UPDATE**

The CAO reported that Administration has begun plans to provide counter service starting June 1<sup>st</sup>. In preparation for that the building has been sanitized and disinfected and janitorial hours are being altered to provide coverage in all high-touch areas mid-day. Additionally, a few modifications to the office have been carried out to provide separation between public and staff. Safety glass has been installed at the counters, signage has been ordered and seating removed. The number of customers will be limited at the counters and in the foyer and there will be no admittance beyond the counters. There has been a lot of focus the last number of days from a REMO perspective on the opening as well. Food security was discussed and there is a new service for the delivery of food for vulnerable people falling through the cracks. The Tearmann Society is doing OK and is appreciative of REMO's response with the help of messaging. They had a generator issue at their premise when there were power outages and that has been resolved with the New Glasgow Fire Department providing support. There is a predicted heat wave to hit the province in the next 2 weeks so this will be critical as an EMO item and not necessarily COVID related but it has the potential to increase forest fires and drain on resources.

## **RURAL INTERNET PROJECT – UPDATE**

The CAO reported that notification has been received from Bell that they can register through the online portal for make-ready. There are 25 steps to register and he completed the first 4 last steps and there is technical issues that need to be completed. Terry Dalton and Emmerich Winkler are working on the technical steps and hopefully they will be done this week.

Warden R. Parker asked about NSP and the CAO replied they are both part of the make-ready but NSP is not sophisticated like Bell so they use paper submission only. NSP has to sign off on their side corporately and that has not been done as yet. Warden R. Parker asked is there any perspective date on building the network and the CAO replied that once the applications are submitted for make-ready it could be mid-July when we start construction.

## **RECREATION REPORT – FEBRUARY, MARCH & APRIL**

The Committee reviewed reports from Recreation staff for the months of February, March, and April.

Warden R. Parker asked about the status of summer students and the Deputy Municipal Clerk replied that we did apply federally for funding to hire 4 students but we have not received any response to date. She informed the Committee that while we are not going to do any direct programming there is a possibility of hiring 1 or 2 students to do some work updating electronic databases. The Recreation Coordinator has been taking a lot of calls from the different communities on recreation activities and some are asking for guidance and she is assisting where possible and providing advice on how some activities could be adapted to the COVID protocols from Public Health.

The CAO reported he reached out to the Federal Government today and it will probably be another 2 week before decisions are made. It is unlikely that we will accept any funding for the GIS position if it is approved.

Clr. Wadden asked if there was any information on the play boxes and the Deputy Municipal Clerk replied we have purchased 2 boxes that will be equipped with a variety of play equipment and located throughout the County. There is a possibility of purchasing 2 additional boxes. Locations for the boxes have not yet been determine and under COVID conditions sanitation would be an issue that needs to be addressed if the boxes are to be deployed.

Clr. D. Parker asked about the Jump Start Program and the Deputy Municipal Clerk responded that the program is accessed through the Recreation Coordinator and involves a financial means test to determine eligibility. Applications are then advanced to Canadian Tire for funding.

## **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

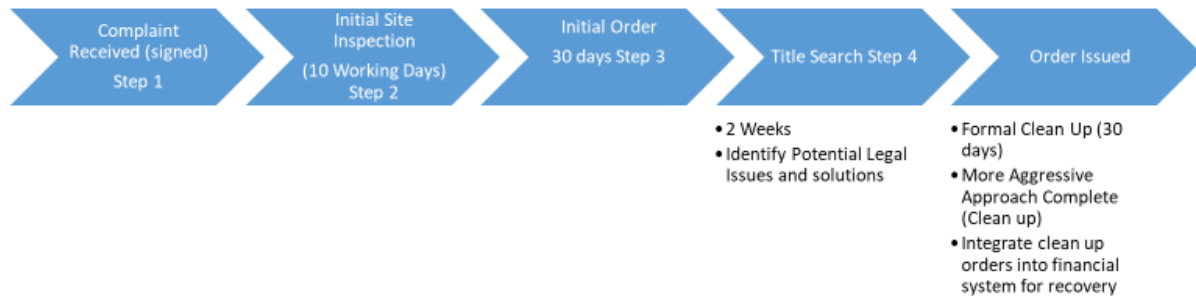
The Committee reviewed communications reports for the months of February, March, and April.

The Communications Officer informed the Committee that there has been an increase in numbers with people following us since the COVID-19. Messaging will continue on COVID-19 and REMO and updating our social media pages as we move forward.

## DANGEROUS & UNSIGHTLY PREMISES PROCESS

The CAO reviewed the administrative process for dangerous and/or unsightly premises complaints as follows:

### Dangerous and Unsightly Premises



Modifications have been made over the past several weeks to remove all of the impediments for the By-Law Officer to be able to move complaints forward. The first step is the By-Law Officer receives the signed complaint and an initial inspection is done. The goal is to have that done in 2 weeks. Once the By-Law Officer goes out and assesses the property to determine if the property is dangerous or unsightly, or both. An initial order is issued to the property owner and they have 30 days to rectify the situation. There are no time frames in the MGA so the municipality puts the time frame of what we expect in the order. If they do not reach out to you then they are probably not going to comply. The By-Law Officer will determine a reasonable amount of time to carry out the work and in some cases she wouldn't give more than 2 weeks. The title search step will proceed to ensure that we capture all the people that need to be notified of the official order. Last week the By-Law Officer did a follow up inspection on Tuesday and sent for title search on Wednesday and it was returned on Friday. The order would then be prepared and proper notice given to individuals and in some cases that will require a hearing before Council. Property owners have to be given 7 days' notice of a hearing but the Solicitor has suggested a minimum of 10 days' notice. The orders are issued and the property owners are given 30 days to clean the property up and if that does not happen then tenders are issued to clean up the site. The CAO pointed out from a process standpoint we are looking at responsibility until the order is issued. All of that rests with the By-Law Officer so the complaint and site visit will be determined whether the site is unsightly or not.

The CAO shared a listing of outstanding dangerous and/or unsightly premises files with the Committee and asked that any missing information be forwarded along to him so that it can be added to that list.

The CAO emphasized that it is the By-Law Officer's role to determine if a property is unsightly or not. There is a test regarding neighborhood standard that compares to other properties in the vicinity. The Act does not contemplate an appeal unless the Municipality is taking action against someone and the internal process does not have that type of appeal process. The CAO reported you can file a new complaint if the condition of the property has changed.

Warden R. Parker pointed out the By-Law Officer has the authority to make the final decision and not Council.

Clr. Butler reported this is good to see and it has to stay on the front burner so we see every month how the complaints are progressing.

The CAO reported that the report will continue as you see tonight on the spreadsheet. Once files are closed they will only be on the report for 1 month and then removed. The By-Law Officer should not allow these files to drag out but set the goal for the end standard and be firm on that decision. The By-Law Officer should not have any interference from anyone until a final order is issued.

Clr. Boyles had a complaint from District 9 on a property but it was deemed OK but if someone gets hurt on the property is the Municipality responsible.

The CAO replied that if children are on the property they are trespassing.

Clr. D. Parker reported that he has a concern when he read the definition of trespassing. He pointed out we are debating the process but the problem is the By-Law Officer. He circulated pictures of properties last year but the By-Law Officer indicated she would need the RCMP to go with her to these properties. In his opinion the form for reporting a complaint is very intimidating; furthermore, he did not like receiving this report 10 minutes before the meeting when he did not have sufficient time to absorb its contents before the meeting convened. He pointed out that we need to deal with the real problem and get away from the process. This is not acceptable and performance is not acceptable.

Clr. Wadden asked why we are streamlining the issue now and the CAO replied that there was not good direction given with the process compared to legislative authority.

Clr. Butler asked whether or not we can get a monthly update and the CAO replied the report would come in this format on a monthly basis.

Clr. MacKeil asked are we giving the By-Law Officer more authority and the CAO replied the Dangerous & Unsightly process will be the responsibility of the By-Law Officer to carry out.

Clr. MacKeil asked will the By-Law Officer be filing her own title searches instead of waiting on Administration and the CAO replied yes.

Clr. D. Parker reported the process says if an order was issued for 30 days and it went beyond the 30 days he would not be interfering. He pointed out that he has asked repeatedly for an update on a case in his district but has never received any response for several month.

Warden R. Parker recommended that we let these new guidelines play out to see if we get the results we want.

Clr. Thompson pointed that we are saying things about personnel in this meeting and he feels uncomfortable doing that.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT APPLICATION DIST. #2**

- |                      |         |                         |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------------|
| 1. Woodburn Cemetery | \$3,000 | Deck Repairs & Painting |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------------|

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Wadden and seconded by Clr. Palmer that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve a Municipal Service Grant in the amount of \$3,000 for the Woodburn Cemetery.

Motion carried.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT APPLICATIONS – DIST. #9**

- |                           |          |   |
|---------------------------|----------|---|
| 1. Hillside Cemetery      | \$ 2,000 | Stone Repairs, Brush cutting & Road Work    |
| 2. Priestville Cemetery   | \$ 2,000 | Mowing, Brush Cleanup & Stone Repairs       |
| 3. Linacy Fire Department | \$10,000 | Bay Floor Improvement & Electrical Upgrades |

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Boyles and seconded by Clr. Palmer that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve Municipal Service Grants in the amount of \$14,000 for District 9.

Motion carried.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICE GRANT APPLICATION - DIST. #5**

- |                             |          |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| 1. Lyons Brook Hall Society | \$11,000 | Upgrade of Washrooms |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------------------|

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. MacKeil and seconded by Clr. Boyles that a recommendation be forwarded to Council to approve a Municipal Service Grant in the amount of \$11,000 for the Lyons Brook Hall Society.

Motion carried.

**PICTOU COUNTY PIZZA DAY PROCLAMATION**

Warden R. Parker reminded Committee members last week there was discussion on Pizza Day in memory of the late Alice Xiros. Since that time, we have become aware that Pictou County Pizza Inc. holds a Registered Canadian Trademark on the name “Pictou County Pizza”. Consequently, our proclamation will need to be altered for the June Council meeting. As an alternative, the CAO has suggested the day be proclaimed “Pizza Day” in the Municipality.

**2020/21 BUDGETS**

Clr. Butler asked when we are going to start our budget process and the CAO replied that we are working through the internal process at present.

**DEED TRANSFER TAX**

Clr. Dewar asked if there was any information on the Deed Transfer Tax over the last few months and the CAO that he did not have that information at present.

Clr. Dewar pointed out that the Wellness Center will not cost that much to run with the ice surfaces out of the building.

**SWIMMING POOL BY-LAW**

Clr. Boyles asked if there was further information on the Swimming Pool By-Law and the CAO replied that he went back through his files and did not find a document or opinion quickly and he emailed the Solicitor and asked him to review and send the information to him.

**MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

Clr. Thompson asked that an update on the impending municipal election and electronic voting be put on the next agenda.

The CAO reported they had a discussion last Friday with the Returning Officer on that issue and there is another session this Wednesday on the electronic piece. Halifax has awarded the contract to Intelli-Vote who provided the electronic voting for the last municipal election. The CAO informed the Committee that there is another internal session this Friday on moving forward.

**DRIVE-IN RE-OPENING**

Clr. Wadden acknowledged the efforts of Linda and Eric Barker to re-open the drive-in for the enjoyment of Pictou County residents.

**ADJOURN**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Boyles that the meeting adjourn.

Motion carried. (8:40 p.m.)

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CHAIR

*Brian Cullen*

MUNICIPAL CLERK