

November 29, 2021

The Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building, and by video-conference, on Monday, November 29, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Dist.	1	Clr. Don Butler
	2	Clr. Deborah Wadden
	3	Clr. Darla MacKeil
	4	Clr. Mary Elliott
	5	Deputy Warden Murray (by video-conference)
	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 (by video-conference)
Logan McDowell, Director of Public Works & Development (by video-conference)
Karen Cornish, Deputy Municipal Treasurer
Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk
Sueann Musick, Communications Officer
Jane Johnson, Recording Secretary

BY APPOINTMENT

Heather Murphy, MacDonald & Murphy Inc.

Sue Arsenault & Dominic Boyd, Pictou Co. Community Health Center

CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Warden R. Parker called the meeting to order and acknowledged that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

2020-21 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Ms. Heather Murphy, MacDonald & Murphy Inc. reviewed the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality for the period ending March 31, 2021 as recommended by the Municipal Audit Committee. In respect to the report Ms. Murphy advised it is the opinion of the firm that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Municipality and the results of its operations and cash flows.

In reviewing the Consolidated Statements of Financial Activities, Ms. Murphy reported that the total revenue for the reporting period was \$18,495,077; total expenditures for the period were \$17,395,788 and the change in the fund balances for the year was \$1,099,288, bringing the accumulated surplus to \$62,624,040.

Clr. D. Parker asked if there was any evidence of misappropriation of funds and Ms. Murphy replied that they have tested internal controls and found them to be appropriate

Clr. D. Parker asked if our collection rate is abnormally low, and Ms. Murphy replied that it has been consistently between 87 and 88% annually but there is always room for improvement. Ms. Murphy pointed

out that this would be an opportunity to look at the policies for enhancements that would achieve a stronger collection, however she would not characterize the County' collection rate as "abnormal".

Warden R. Parker asked about the 13% of taxes that is never collected, and Ms. Murphy replied there are resources available through tax sales to recover taxes for those who never pay.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. MacKeil and seconded by Clr. Palmer that the 2020/21 Financial Statements be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

Warden R. Parker thanked Ms. Murphy for the presentation of the 2020/21 Financial Statements and excused her from the balance of the meeting. (7:27 pm)

PICTOU CO. COMM. HEALTH CENTER PRESENTATION (7:30 PM)

Ms. Sue Arsenault and Mr. Dominic Boyd presented a Power Point Presentation to Council on behalf of the Pictou County Community Health Centre Working Group as follows:



What Do We Want to Do?

- Goal is to establish a Community Health Centre in Pictou County.
- This is a long-term goal that will take several years to accomplish, and this project is at the very early stages.
- Currently we are working to research and develop operational models and a business plan to guide the next few years of our project.
- We are gathering information and resources about the health care needs of Pictou County that can help inform our plans.
- We are also building partnerships and awareness.

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What is a Community Health Centre?

- Community Health Centres (CHCs) are not-for-profit organizations owned by the community, making them flexible and responsive to changing community healthcare needs.
- CHCs extend healthcare services beyond primary healthcare. They focus on keeping people and community healthy by addressing underlying social issues impacting peoples' health.
- CHCs also provide access to doctors, nurse practitioners, and other healthcare professionals like dietitians and counselors.
- In addition to primary care, CHCs focus on Social Determinants of Health, Public Health, community building, and programming.
- It's important to distinguish between Community Health Centres and collaborative care models which are becoming more common in our province.

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What Have We Done So Far?

- Held regular meetings of our group.
- Developed and implemented a community engagement plan to begin gathering information about key health care needs in the county, and on delivery models.
- Opened conversations with all municipalities in Pictou County about community health care needs.
- Begun conversations and relationships with new partners and supporters throughout the county, such as Viola's Place and the John Howard Society, as two examples, as well as key contacts at Nova Scotia Health.
- Developed a partnership the Research, Innovation, & Development Division at Nova Scotia Health.
- Committed to developing a business and operational plan for the group for 2022 and beyond by early 2022.

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What Do We Want to do Next?

- Complete Fall 2021 Engagement.
- Continue to develop partnerships.
- Develop Business Plan for 2022 and beyond.
- Secure next round of support funding for 2022.
- Implement the 2022 Business Plan.

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Questions for Council

What are the health care needs and gaps in your community?

How would health services best be delivered in your community?

How do you see your town collaborating with us on this project?

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Thank You!

Anne Simmonds, Project Steering Committee

Dominic Boyd, Project Steering Committee

Contact Us:

pictoucountychc@gmail.com



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Clr. Boyles commented that there are waiting in the ER for prescriptions because of the shortage of family physicians.

Ms. Arsenault replied that if you do not need to see a doctor but want to get a prescription refilled, these are the types of issues they are looking at.

Warden R. Parker cautioned that we do not want to duplicate services because our health care dollars are already stretched and asked the number of staff there would be in a community health center and if government be willing to share in the funding.

Ms. Arsenault replied that it depends on the community and what a community requires. Going forward they are visiting the different communities to see what they need and if there is a different way for them to deliver health services.

Clr. Dewar asked how often does mental health come up in their meetings and Ms. Arsenault replied it is discussed quite often.

Mr. Boyd explained that they are doing research on mental health so if a health center had a mental health component that would not duplicate services.

Clr. MacKeil expressed support for the idea of a mobile unit because there are a lot of people who do not have transportation. She asked how the health centres would be staffed and Ms. Arsenault replied that we must look at what kind of services we need and possibly employ more nurse practitioners. People are going to these centers for prescriptions and not everyone needs to see a doctor or a nurse.

Clr. MacKeil reported there is an opportunity to provide information to residents and asked why NS Health does not look after this issue.

Mr. Boyd replied that this is about community taking control of their own health and needs. Instead of waiting for the government this is a way for communities to feel empowered. People who come to the center become members of the center, they can sit on the Board and become a member of the center.

Ms. Arsenault reported that the Premier has visited several health centers to see what they are about. In other provinces the Department of Health is very engaged and helping to develop community health centers. We are starting at the bottom and are trying to get educated ourselves. Nova Scotia has the potential to look at our community systems and some of our needs may be more unique.

Warden R. Parker acknowledged that we have different needs in the rural communities, and it is not the same everywhere.

Clr. Turner noted that poverty is a major factor in accessing health care and there is no such thing as universal health care. In terms of your model, if you come as patient to the health center and have no insurance or coverage will they still be able to access the service?

Mr. Boyd explained that community health centers have accepted donations from companies to help with the gap. The actual business model would need to address those questions.

Clr. D. Parker reported it is frightening the state that health care is in and there are huge gaps such as poverty and providing information.

Clr. Elliott expressed interested to see how this might work and asked what is going to stop people from travelling from other areas to a community health center and Ms. Arsenault replied that they are looking at Pictou County as a whole and are trying to make health care as accessible as possible.

Mr. Boyd reported if we can help people with their problems then that may prevent them from going to the hospital. This would decrease the burden on the health care system.

Ms. Arsenault reported that the center may provide an opportunity for education on various diseases. Transportation is also a huge issue so moving services around the county may provide better service to residents.

Clr. Palmer asked if a doctor pays to use the facility and Ms. Arsenault responded that the doctor would get paid by the province but how the center is set up is yet to be determined.

Clr. Palmer asked about the budget for a health center and Ms. Arsenault replied that is something that is yet to be discussed. She informed Council that they reached out to the Premier, the 2 local MLAs and the Minister on this issue.

Clr. Palmer pointed out that to help contribute to a facility would increase the taxes and that would put more burden on the taxpayers. We have the same problems in Pictou East as the West so you would have to look at the County as a whole.

Clr. Thompson suggested that there are a lot of opportunities for this service and there a lot of vacant building available. He asked what Yarmouth was doing and Ms. Arsenault replied that they were collaborating with the Women's Center, and they have been able to expand the building they are using.

Clr. Thompson asked if contact had been made with Nicole LeBlanc about these needs and Ms. Arsenault replied that she is on their list of resources to contact. Ms. Arsenault reported that they are at the stage to see what exists as far as nurses, and they are also working with Michelle Ferris.

Clr. Wadden reported that she would be interested in seeing the business plan and asked if the group is looking for committee members and Mr. Boyd replied that they did not see any issue if someone wanted to contribute. Mr. Boyd asked if community meetings could be organized in Councillors districts.

Warden R. Parker explained that Councillors have ratepayers' meetings in their respective districts where this information can be provided.

Ms. Arsenault reported that they really want to hear from our communities, but we need to hear from those people who are really struggling.

Warden R. Parker noted that there is a group of people who fear doctors and if you had something local in the community, they may be encouraged to see a doctor.

Warden R. Parker thanked Ms. Arsenault and Mr. Boyd for the presentation. (8:35 pm)

Deputy Warden Murray reported that he was able to access the County's internet service to join tonight's meeting and was very impressed with the quality of the connection.

MOTION

It was moved by Clr. MacKeil and seconded by Clr. Boyles that the meeting adjourn.
Motion carried. (8:40 p.m.)

Robert Parker
Warden

Brian Cullen
Municipal Clerk