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MINUTES OF THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING - JULY 16, 1996

Present:

Chairman

Mayor John W. Rainforth

Deputy Mayor Michael J. Munday Councillor Bruce H. Morse Councillor John P. Prall

Councillor Michael E. Trinacty Councillor Ronald G. Reeves Robert Stewart, Solicitor

Judith Mitchell /Town Clerk

,Absent:

Councillor Gary W. whittier

In attendance:

Sara White, Berwick Register

Dwight Johnson, School Board Representative

1.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7: 00 p. m.

2.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

(a)

Hearing of no errors or omissions the Chairman approved the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of June 11 /1996 as circulated.

3.

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT

Mr. Johnson briefed Council on current issues relating to the School Board as follows:

(a)

The budget of \$78 million has now been approved; down \$3 million from last year. with amalgamation, it was anticipated that in future there may be savings of \$11 million, to be channelled back into the classroom. Not evident so far, and if provincial government cuts funding again next year, cannot be sure that there will be significant savings to pass on. Cannot afford another \$3 million cut.

(b)

Mr. Johnson extended thanks to Council for the School Board's use of the Town I s facilities. This has resulted in

very positive comments by new school board members from Annapolis and Hants: easy to access, easy to park, lunch facilities within walking distance, and so on. The Site Selection Committee will start working on a new site in September, with a possible decision, early 1997. Mr. Johnson discussed the suitability of situating the school Board offices in the WKMHC building: ample room for Teacher's Centre and any other departments; central location geographically, relatively modern building. Of course, it will probably depend upon what kind of proposal the WKMHC makes to the School Board; in the end it will come down to dollars and cents.

4.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Any items to be discussed will arise under Committee Reports.

,5.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a)

Planning Advisory Committee

Deputy Mayor Munday reported that the Clerk had advertised Notice of Amendment for the re-zoning application of the Berwick Electric Commission for Parcel B. E . C. from R1 to M1. The appeal period will expire on July 24th, 1996. No other planning items at present.

(b)

Building Bylaw Amendment

Deputy Mayor Munday announced first reading of an amendment to Building Bylaw No. 135 and circulated copies of the amended bylaw to indicate the new fee structure for Building Permits and Development Permits. It was requested that each Councillor retain their copy of the amended bylaw for future reference until the amendment procedure has been completed.

After discussion, it was moved by Deputy Mayor Munday and seconded by Councillor Reeves that Council approve the first reading of An Amendment to Bylaw No. 135 - Town of Berwick Building Bylaw and agree to move to second reading at next session of Council.

Motion Carried

(c)

Fire Department

Councillor Prall updated Council on the Fire Department: refurbished sign has been finished and put up on front of building;
new well has been drilled, needs to be plumbed in to the building.
There are 400 Club Tickets available if anyone wishes to purchase some.

(d)

Solid Waste Management Committee

The Valley Region Solid Waste- Resource Management Committee met to short-list consultants; four were interviewed with Vaughan Engineering being the successful applicant. Peter Jacobs was a close second! making the final selection difficult. However, Vaughan Engineering has familiarity with current issues facing the Committee through associations with the LURA Group, and connections to the land siting study being conducted for Annapolis County. December 31st will be the deadline for filing a Final Report: no time extensions will be granted.

, Vaughan Engineering did a group presentation in early July for the Committee to show how they plan to proceed over the next few months. They also plan to set up a website on the Internet to provide direct access to local solid waste information.

(e)

Recreation

Councillor Trinacty reported that the new sign for Corner of Cottage and Commercial Streets should be received and erected soon. The new ballfield had its first ballgame last Friday evening.

Berwick is defending the "Summer Active Challenge" title from last year. Need participation awareness levels raised: many people don't know about it this year. Summer programs are well underway.

(f)

Finance

councillor Reeves informed Council that the Finance Committee had met quite a few times in the last month to both finalize the 1995/96 Fiscal Year and work on Budget Drafts for the 1996/97 Fiscal Year. After discussion and review of the highlights, the following motions were made:

(i)

1995/96 Financial Statements

It was moved by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Deputy Mayor Munday that the audited Financial Statements for the period of 1 April 1995 to 31 March 1996 be accepted as presented. It was noted that the Town had a surplus of \$1602 from the previous year's operations.

Motion Carried

(ii)

1996/97 Budgets

It was moved and seconded by Councillor Reeves and Deputy Mayor Munday that on recommendation of the Finance Committee, Council approve the following 1996/97 Budgets:

Operating Capital

\$2,009,933 \$ 241,309

Motion Carried

.(iii)

1996/97 Tax Rates

It was moved by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Councillor Morse that on recommendation of the Finance Committee, Council approve the following tax rates for the 1996/97 Fiscal Year:

Residential (general)	Commercial (general)	Sewer (residential)
		Sewer (commercial)

- \$1.33 - \$2.18 - \$0.12 - \$0.12

Motion Carried

(iv)

Rate of Interest on Tax Arrears

It was moved by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Deputy Mayor Munday that the rate of interest on overdue taxes be set at 15% per annum, same as last year.

Motion Carried

(v)

Tax Exemption Resolution

The following resolution was put forward by Councillor Reeves, seconded by Councillor Prall, and was approved by Council in the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Berwick

THAT an exemption from taxes for 1996 be granted pursuant to Section 112A of the Town Act in the amount of \$170.00 (ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY DOLLARS).

THA T the exemption be granted to every person assessed with respect to taxable property in the Town of Berwick whose total income from all sources (and including the income of all other persons of the same family residing in the same household as the applicant ratepayer) for the year preceding the year for which the exemption is sought (Le., 1995) is \$16500 or less (SIXTEEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS) excluding War Veteran's Allowance or War Pension, and who is a resident of the Town of Berwick;

THAT the exemption be granted only in respect of property occupied by the application ratepayer as his/her home;

,WHERE property is jointly owned, only one tax exemption shall be allowed;

THAT no application for an exemption will be considered unless made on or before the 15th day of August A. D. 1996.

Motion Carried

It was noted that it is necessary to submit proof of income this year, (i. e., photocopy of Income Tax Return, page 1).

(vi)

Tax and Zoning certificate Fees

On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the following resolution was put forward by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Deputy Mayor Munday and was approved by Council in the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Berwick

THAT the fee for issuing Tax certificates and Zoning certificates be set at \$50.00 respectively; effective immediately and without further notice.

Motion Carried

The following points are noted from the discussion of Council on the above motions:

The Finance Committee Chairman asked the Clerk to prepare an information package for Property Taxpayers with facts, figures, and charts (copy attached to minutes) . This will be available for the public at the General Office (on the counter). Anyone with questions is encouraged to call either the Clerk or Finance Committee Chairman.

The Preliminary Assessment Notices issued July 1, 1996 relate to the next fiscal year of 1997/98, not this one. The new tax rate will apply to Assessment Notices received in January 1996.

The Recreation Department and Recreation committee in conjunction have flexibility to decide how they wish to allocate their approved Capital Funds.

,On a positive note, the Mayor reminded Council that it is easy to criticize the Province when funding is cut, we should also be quick to acknowledge our gratitude for receipt of a provincial Capital Assistance Program Grant in the amount of \$85100 towards this year's Sewer Treatment plant Upgrade. without the grant, only \$112700 worth of work would be carried out; not the full \$170200. As well, the Town's debenturing requirements are now reduced.

For fiscal year of 1995/96, actual expenditures resulted in \$15000 being allocated into reserves at year end. Any other remainder was put back into general operations of the Town. Excellent record of tax collection: within 99 percent.

Credit for meeting the budget goes to Department Heads and Committee Chairmen for working so hard to meet difficult budgetary guidelines. This is one of the biggest keys to meeting the budget goals outlined by Council. Should mention that all services were maintained last year, and continue to be maintained at the same level of service in the upcoming year, as well.

Compliments to the Clerk for creating an atmosphere where the Department Heads work co-operatively together. Also noted: the Peat, Marwick auditors had no recommendations for accounting changes this year: Town was given a clean slate.

(g)

Police Commission

The Mayor reported that the Police Study on Regional Policing is still ongoing. Discussions and negotiations are taking longer as complexity levels become apparent; schedules have been extended to allow more preliminary work to be completed.

(h)

Berwick Electric Commission

The Mayor advised Council that the Berwick Electric Commission had recently hosted a meeting of all of the Municipal Electric utilities in the Province (with the exception of Canso who was unable to attend) .

Discussed ways to work together collectively and possibilities of cooperative buying of specialized equipment. A very successful meeting, enjoyed by all who attended: a cohesiveness as a group is starting to emerge. The next such meeting is scheduled for November in Kentville.

,(i)

B . E . C. Steering Committee

The B . E . C. Steering Committee met several times in the past month. A consultant was chosen after working from a long list to a short list

of four, followed by presentations.

The successful applicant was

Neill & Gunter, with Mr. Bryan King, P . Eng. being the contact person; the work of preparing data and statistics for a Study Report is now underway. Once the report is ready, the Steering Committee will. meet to hear the findings; likely before August.

(j)

Streets Committee

Councillor Prall reported in Councillor whittier's absence. Streets Department is busy with painting lines, mowing, hanging & planting plants, looking after dogs, and working on the Sewer Treatment Plant. The foundation for the new Electrical Consolidation Building will be poured using sonotubes. All of the aerators are installed and operational. Vacations will soon commence.

There is a person working at Public works on a fine repayment program through the Justice System, at no charge to the Town. For interest's sake, it was noted that on Canada Day, there were 87 Canadian flags flying on various properties throughout the Town.

(k)

Licensing

Councillor Morse reported that Taxi Licenses had been issued for

Star Taxi and C&S Taxi, after complying with vehicle inspection standards from the Police Department. The Licensing Committee had

also received a request from Mrs. Cynthia Palmer of the Gala Days Committee seeking a special festival license to prohibit other vendors from encroaching on Gala Days Vendors. After discussing the matter at length, and reviewing practices from other municipal units, the

Licensing Committee agreed to suggest that Gala Days Committee issue an attractive sign to each of their Vendors stating that the Vendor supported the Gala Days Committee. Such a sign could be displayed prominently at the Vendor's site. Then the public could knowingly support those Vendors that are working with the Gala Days Committee's approval.

(l)

Social Services Committee

The Social Services Committee met on July 3, 1996 with Mr. Wayne Hyson, Director of Social Services for Municipality of County of Kings, in attendance. As an outcome of that meeting, Councillor Morse moved that the 1996/97 Projected Operational Plan be approved in the amount of \$179289. Total estimates for 1996/97 Social Services costs to be set at \$207825 for expenditures and \$148794 for

6.

recoveries; net cost projected to be \$59031. Reeves.

seconded by Councillor

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

(a)

Received a letter from Mayor David McCrindle of Town of Parrsboro, seeking the support of Council to lobby the Provincial Government, to reinstate the two grants for Ice & Snow Removal, and for 50% cost sharing of Arterial Highways. The letter states in part, that, "our cost shared roads form an integral part of the Province's road network and the responsibility for maintaining them should be borne by the provincial Government. We consider this a very serious downloading of fiscal responsibility onto the municipal units in N. S . and we strongly petition the provincial Government to re-evaluate its decision to discontinue this necessary funding or to come up with some other funding scheme to replace it." Council agreed to send a letter of support to Town of Parrsboro with a copy of Town's letter on Equalization Grants which covers many of the same issues.

(b)

Received notification from Department of Municipal Affairs and subsequently from the Western Regional Assessment Office advising that a Preliminary Assessment Roll would be released on July 1st, 1996. Four "fact" sheets were also received to be given out to the public and these are available on the front counter in the General Office. For the information of Council.

(c)

Received a letter from Andrea Bishop of the Alternative Transportation Committee, a newly formed Committee which has been struck to examine the need for alternative services to tie in with existing transportation services and make recommendations as to how to improve accessibility within Kings County. For the information of Council.

(d)

Received the 1996 Directory for Meals on Wheels printed by the Senior citizens Secretariat, with information and contact names throughout the province. For the information of Council.

(e)

Received a letter from Dr. Jim Smith, the newly appointed Minister of Department of Housing & Municipal Affairs, advising that the Town of Berwick's application for funding on the 1996/97 Sewer Treatment plant Upgrade project of \$170200 had received funding approval for 50 cent dollars, or \$85100. A very welcome letter. For the information of Council.

(f)

Received a letter from Chairman Janet Newton of the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board expressing thanks for the use of facility space

,in the Town Hall, and indicating that in response to a letter from the Mayor supporting the efforts of the Western Kings Memorial Health Centre to be selected as the permanent location of the Board office;
that, "Your letter was highlighted at the Board meeting held July 10 and has been referred to the Board's Site Selection Committee for consideration. The Committee shall be in contact with you when discussions commence concerning a permanent site for the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board office". For the information of Council.

(g)

Received notification from Department of Municipal Affairs that the Municipal Legislation Review Committee have filed their Discussion Paper, and enclosed both the Short Version and the Longer Version. The Shorter Versions have been circulated to all on Council. please advise the Clerk if there are any comments or concerns that should be passed on to the Municipal Legislation Review Committee.

The balance of the correspondence was of a routine nature or passed to Committees for action.

7.

BILLS AND ACCOUNTS

It was moved and seconded by Councillors Reeves and Morse that the attached list of bills and accounts in the amount of \$152062.28 be approved for payment.

Motion Carried

8.

NEW BUSINESS

(a)

Summer Break

It was moved by Mayor Rainforth and seconded by Councillor Prall that Regular Council not meet during the month of August. Next Council will be scheduled for September 10, 1996.

Motion Carried

(b)

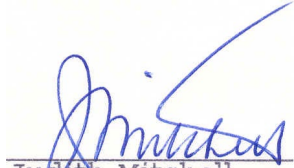
UNSM Conference

Councillors are reminded that deadlines are approaching for registration at the UNSM Conference; please advise the Clerk whether you plan to attend or not.

,9.

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:23p.m.

John W. Rainforth Chairman



Judith Mitchell
Town Clerk