

## MINUTES SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 16 JULY 1997

Present:

Chairman

Mayor John W. Rainforth Deputy Mayor Michael J. Munday Councillor Bruce H. Morse Councillor John P. Prall Councillor Michael E. Trinacty Councillor Gary W. Whittier Councillor Ronald G. Reeves  
Judith Mitchell, Town Clerk

In attendance:

4 members of C.H.A.R.G.E.  
(Citizens Helping Addicted Recovering Gamblers Everywhere)

1.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and noted that there were members of C.H.A.R.G.E. present to listen to Council's follow-up discussion of the VLT issue.

2.

### VL TISSUE

The Chairman introduced the VL T issue, which was brought to the Regular Council Meeting of July 8, 1997 by Mr. Jake Hatfield; and asked for each Councillor to state his opinion on the matter, if he so wished. The main points of the ensuing discussion were as follows:

Councillor Reeves: Personally, not in favour of VLT's. But there are a couple of factors at stake here, not just one issue. As a Municipal Councillor, not sure what can be done. The Province has implemented their policy (governing use of VLT's); not sure what the municipal responsibility/authority would be in this matter. As far as people, that's one thing. As municipal government, that's quite another.

Councillor Prall: Against VL T' s, but not certain that this is the route to follow. I share Councillor Reeves' views: what good will a plebiscite do where it is a Provincial matter? Not sure that it is a municipal responsibility, or that we should be treading on the ground of the Province.

Councillor Whittier: Not sure what a plebiscite can achieve. It's frustrating, especially if the Municipal Unit incurs the expense and then the Province fails to act.

Deputy Mayor Munday: Perhaps the Municipal Units should ask the Province to hold the plebiscite, and that's where it goes. I think it's up to the Province to decide whether or not a question is included on the Municipal Election Ballot to decide the issue. I'm against VLT's personally.

Councillor Trinacty: I would agree with some of the comments on responsibility as for dividing the line between Provincial/Municipal responsibilities\_ over the last several years, Council has tried to delineate which items are Provincial and which are Municipal. Here we are, crossing that line, after trying to separate it with the Province in the past. Some of the issues, however, are broader than that. The problem with VL T' s is also a moral issue. If we, as Municipal Units, start to get into morality wars, I would fear a real coming forward of other morality issues to ban smoking, or abortions, etc. If we're not careful, Municipal Units can be caught in the middle of a situation we don't wish to find ourselves in. I think we need to be careful of the consequences. Regarding VLT's specifically, the difficulties with some people are evident. However, many people do use them on an enjoyable basis without addiction.

Councillor Morse: We need to consider the fact that this is a "Provincial mandate" and it's up to them to regulate. As a Municipal Unit, we have many other municipal issues which are within our mandate to deal with.

Mayor Rainforth: Everyone has had a piece to say, does anyone wish to make a motion?

Therefore IT WAS MOVED by Deputy Mayor Munday and seconded by Councillor Whittier, to put forth a motion to request that the question of VL T' s be included on a plebiscite with the Municipal Election in October, subject to Provincial approval. (The motion was then debated, and later defeated at the conclusion of the discussion).

Mayor Rainforth: I tend to agree with most of the comments made earlier. I don't think we should do this; there is a place for everything, and just as we were elected to look after certain issues, there is also a wider group of people who were elected to represent wider provincial issues.

In the last six years, Municipal Units have spent a great deal of effort trying to separate provincial matters from municipal matters. We, as people, can write letters to our MLA; but we, as Councillors, need to know that we've adhered to the same line we've been insisting that the Province respect these past six years.

Municipal Councillors could also be accused of "grand-standing", coming into an issue this late in the matter; especially with a Fall Election at hand. By going ahead with a plebiscite, we would be publicly interfering into a provincial matter and will lack credibility in the future.

Councillor Reeves: Wouldn't it be more practical for the public to approach the Provincial MLA's directly to ask for a plebiscite?

Mayor Rainforth: To my understanding, a Municipal Unit can have a plebiscite whenever, but it does require provincial permission. And while plebiscites on municipal issues may be binding, the Province does not necessarily have to be held to the outcome of a municipal plebiscite.

There being no further discussion on the motion, it was unanimously agreed to defeat the motion. (At this time, members of the C.H.A.R.G.E. group left the meeting: 7:20 p.m.)

3.

### **PROPOSED 1997/98 OPERATING & CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The chairman of the Finance Committee, Councillor Reeves, introduced the Budget and outlined the various cuts that had been made since each Department had initially submitted their Budgets for approval. The Chairman then analyzed the various calculations that had been taken to arrive at the tax rates that were used in tonight's budget documents. Basically, an attempt had been made to hold the increase in taxes to approximately 5% of residential assessment, on average, and to cut all Departments as evenly as possible.

After discussing the proposed Budgets at length, in particular some of the Capital Equipment cuts, the following motions were made:

(i)

1997/98 Budgets

IT WAS MOVED and seconded by Councillor Reeves and Deputy Mayor Munday that on recommendation of the Finance Committee, Council approve the 1997/98 Budgets:

1997/98 Operating \$2,122,058    1997/98 Capital\$    60,852

Motion Carried

(ii)

1997/98 Tax and Sewer Rates

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Councillor Prall that on recommendation of the Finance Committee, Council approve the following Tax Rates and Sewer Rates for the 1997/98 fiscal year:

Residential (general) \$1.18 Commercial (general) \$2.16 Sewer (residential) \$0.12 Sewer (commercial) \$0.12

Motion Carried

(iii) Rate of Interest on Tax Arrears

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Councillor Whittier that the rate of interest on overdue taxes be established at 15% per annum, the same as last year.

Motion Carried

(iv) Tax Exemption Resolution

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

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Town of Berwick **THAT** an exemption from taxes for 1997 be granted pursuant to Section 112 A of the Town Act in the amount of \$170.00 (ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY DOLLARS);

**THAT** 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 (i.e. 1996) is \$16,500.00 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 31 st day of August AD. 1997 Motion Carried

It was noted that it is necessary to submit proof of income with the completed Tax Exemption application.

4.

**NEW BUSINESS**

(a)

Summer Break

IT WAS MOVED by Councillor Reeves and seconded by Councillor Morse that Regular Council not meet during the month of August. The next regularly scheduled meeting of Council will be held on September 9, 1997.

Motion Carried

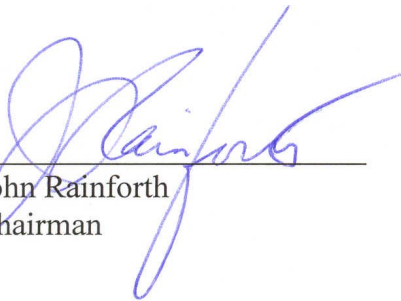
(b)

Regional Policing: Consultant's Study

Mayor Rainforth indicated to Council that their okay had been given some time ago to participate in a Regional Police Study, subject to all four Towns taking part. However, Town of Kentville no longer appears to be interested in participating in such a study, and some interest is now being expressed by the Towns of Annapolis Royal and Middleton. At any rate, the Nova Scotia Police Commission is offering to provide a consultant and pay for the full cost of the Study. Do we wish to participate? All agreed, in unison.

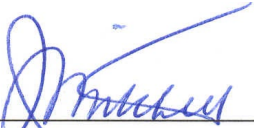
5.

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.



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John Rainforth  
Chairman



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Judith Mitchell  
Town Clerk/Treasurer