

MINUTES OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 8, 2005

Present: Chairman Mayor John P. Prall
 Deputy Mayor Donald E. Clarke
 Councillor Gary W. Whittier (left the meeting at 6:53 p.m.)
 Councillor J. Richard Horsburgh
 Councillor Beth Easson
 Councillor Anna Ashford-Morton
 Councillor Michael E. Trinacty
 Mr. Bob Ashley, Chief Administrative Officer
 Ms. Michelle Millett, Recording Secretary

In Attendance: Mrs. Sara Keddy, Berwick Register
 Mr. Dwight Bishop, Provincial Ombudsman
 Chief Stephen Palmer, Berwick

1. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m. and moved into an In Camera Session.

The In Camera Session ended at 6:47 and Council reconvened at 6:58 p.m. Mayor Prall welcomed Mr. Dwight Bishop, the Provincial Ombudsman and Mrs. Sara Keddy to the meeting.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

The Agenda was amended to add an Update from Kings CED and an Assessment Board Update under Committee Updates and Recommendations as Items #6 (c) and (d) respectively. Under Correspondence a letter from the Chair of the Town's Caucus regarding the Town of Antigonish was added as item 8 (b). The Agenda was approved as amended.

3. **Approval of the Previous Minutes**

The Chairman approved the Council minutes of October 11, 13, 24, and 25, 2005 as circulated.

4. **Presentations**

- (a) **Provincial Ombudsman ~ Mr. Dwight Bishop**

Mayor Prall welcomed Mr. Bishop, a retired member of the RCMP who had been appointed the Provincial Ombudsman in 2004. He noted that he was the Ombudsman for Municipalities, Towns and Counties in the Province. He distributed brochures for use in the Town Hall and indicated his mandate fell under the Ombudsman Act of Nova Scotia. Mr. Bishop relayed that originally, the concept had been brought from Sweden and evolved since 1970 in Nova Scotia. He relayed that the function of the office was to provide an arching function between the public and administrative public servants. Mr. Bishop reported that

his office responds to complaints regarding public servants and the services provided by administrators of government bodies.

Mr. Bishop spoke to Council tonight in an effort to educate the public regarding the existence of the service of the Office of the Ombudsman. The office receives about 1800 complaints per year of which 20% involve municipal enquiries. He indicated that the focus of the office is to facilitate informal resolution of conflict.

Mr. Bishop relayed that the Ombudsman Act had been amended to include schools and correctional facilities. He indicated that the Ombudsman reports to the Provincial Legislature.

Mr. Bishop responded to questions by Councillors and Mayor Prall thanked Mr. Bishop for appearing before Council and commended him on his fairness and integrity that led to his appointment as the Ombudsman.

5. Accolades

(a) Mr. Craig Burgess and Chief Stephen Palmer

Mayor Prall noted that this portion of the Agenda was a new addition to Council Agenda items.

Mayor Prall praised Mr. Burgess for his outstanding efforts in the completion of another successful year with the Haunted House put on by the Recreation Department in conjunction with Halloween. He relayed that this had been the fifth successful season and commended Carol Boylan and Shannon Bishop who had assisted Mr. Burgess and Ms. Jane Martin who had played a witch on both days of the Haunted House.

Mayor Prall next praised Chief Palmer for his efforts with the Fire Department as well as community input to the Town of Berwick for a twenty year period. He relayed that Chief Palmer would be presented with a prestigious medal from the Governor General during a November 19th, 2005 ceremony. Mayor Prall indicated that Chief Palmer had contributed significantly to the Fire Department during his tenure as Chief and to community life in Berwick. Mayor Prall also recognized Gary Galley and Alan Huntley who had served on the Berwick and District Fire Department for 25 and 20 years respectively. Mayor Prall indicated that each of the three individuals had provided exemplary service to the Town over the years and noted how fortunate Berwick was to have these dedicated firefighters.

(b) Mr. Ron Reeves ~ Berwick Electric Commission

Mayor Prall congratulated Mr. Ron Reeves on his lengthy service to the Town as a Commissioner on the Berwick Electric Commission and as a Councillor in the 1980's. Mr. Reeves was recognized as a Town leader and Mayor Prall sincerely

thanked him for his service and efforts provided to the Town over a twenty year period.

Mr. Ashley requested that Councillors forward the names of any citizens or groups deserving of Accolades to his attention for future Council recognition.

6. Committee Updates and Recommendations

(a) Committee of the Whole

Mr. Bob Ashley read the motions.

(i) Public Works Equipment Purchase

IT WAS MOVED and seconded that Council approve the purchase of one sidewalk machine at a price of \$67,450 + HST from LaHave Equipment.

Motion Carried

(ii) Committee of Council Citizen Appointees

IT WAS MOVED and seconded that Council appoint Jim Keith, Jamie Allen, Randy Holmesdale and Karen Haggarty to the Police Services Advisory Committee; Donna Conrad, Nya Parker, Theresa Steadman, Bill Walsh and Katrina Gould to the Recreation Advisory Committee; John Rainforth and Howard Hall to the Berwick Electric Commission; and Ashley Logie, Joan Levak, and Elizabeth MacBride to the Planning Advisory Committee.

Motion Carried

(b) Recreation Advisory Committee

Councillor Horsburgh reviewed the report. Councillor Easson reported that the Open Space Committee would be meeting again November 9, 2005 and had a successful public input session recently.

Councillor Clarke noted that at 9:00 p.m. on November 10, 2005 Council would meet with the St. Mary's group for input to the Century Centres Organizational Study.

(c) Kings Community Economic Development (Kings CED) Update

Mayor Prall relayed that Erin Beaudin, the new Executive Director of Kings CED was working hard to take the agency to a new level of service and was moving the agency towards proactive initiatives. Mayor Prall indicated that the KPSC Economic Development Workshops had been successful and that all organizations had become more aware of other groups roles and discovered how they may best work together. He relayed that there would be a follow up economic development work shop in the spring.

Councillor Easson noted that the sessions pinpointed the need for a “one stop shopping area” that businesses could utilize to coordinate groups with a vested interest in economic development. Councillor Easson relayed her desire to have Berwick develop a Fall tourism draw such as Kentville with it’s “Pumpkin People”.

(d) Assessment Board Update

Mayor Prall provided Council with an update on activities of the newly formed Assessment Board that sought to ease the transition from the provincial Assessment department with municipal input and accessibility. Mayor Prall reported on the individual make up of the new Assessment Board.

Mayor Prall relayed that the Assessment Board considered it a priority to assemble a significantly reduced budget. He indicated that a software program had been presented to the Board that could take aerial pictures that allowed viewing of front, side, rear and top views of individual buildings to detect any changes to structures that may increase assessments and negate the need to send individual assessors to perform reassessments.

Mayor Prall relayed that the Provincial Inspection Assessment Program (PIAP) would continue to update assessments. He noted that property values had been brought to par in 1998 and 2004. The program had generated a huge amount of funding through the reassessment in those years. Mayor Prall indicated that a number of municipalities have initiated independent re-assessments in their areas if they thought that current assessments were outdated in order to increase the Assessment Roll.

7. New Business

(a) Election of Deputy Mayor

Mayor Prall called for nominations and Councillor Clarke was nominated. There were no other nominations and Deputy Mayor Clarke was declared Deputy Mayor by acclamation.

IT WAS MOVED and seconded that Council elect Councillor Donald E. Clarke as Deputy Mayor in accordance with the Town’s Meeting and Procedure By-law for a term of one year ending October 2006.

Motion Carried

(b) Federal Gas Tax Agreement

Mr. Ashley reviewed Mr. MacLean’s report and relayed that there would be administrative costs to the Town by providing accountability through a number of required reports to qualify for the gas tax funding. He noted that a Sustainability Plan, an Outcome Report and final audited reports would be required by each municipality applying for funding. Mr. Ashley noted that cleaner water, cleaner air and lower emissions would be required goals for

municipalities and he encouraged Councillors to keep these type of projects in the forefront during their upcoming Priority Setting Exercise.

Councillor Trinacty noted that according to the report, the Sustainability Plan would be required after funding had been received. He encouraged staff to initiate the Sustainability Plan prior to the required date of 2010 and investigate templates and criteria for the report in a timely fashion. Mr. Ashley agreed to investigate guidelines for the Sustainability Plan in an expedited fashion. Mayor Prall reported that Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) was close to completion of their Sustainability Plan and agreed to investigate the guidelines used in its completion.

Mr. Ashley relayed that he had specifically requested that the Economic Development Committee include long term sustainability in it's Economic Strategic Plan for the Town in terms of the four pillars of sustainability. Deputy Mayor Clarke asked if the funding specifically should be spent on green initiatives and if they could be utilized in the construction of the new Fire Department. Mr. Ashley was asked for a list of projects that the gas tax funds could be utilized for and he agreed to investigate specific qualifying projects.

IT WAS MOVED and seconded that Council approves the Gas Tax Agreement and authorizes the Mayor and CAO to sign the document.

Motion Carried

(c) Kings Transit ~ Councillor Representative

Mayor Prall relayed that Kings Transit Board members had requested Council representation at their table. He relayed that the Board meets once per month on the third Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. Mayor Prall relayed that Councillor Whittier had volunteered to fill this position.

IT WAS MOVED and seconded that Council appoint Councillor Gary Whittier as the Town of Berwick representative on the Kings Transit Authority Board.

Motion Carried

(d) Year of the Veteran ~ Wooden Carving

Mr. Ashley reviewed his report. He noted that this type of initiative may spur economic realizations, as happened in the Town of Truro with the "tourist draw" to view the 47 carved statues in existence there.

Mr. Ashley relayed that cost may range from \$1,500 to \$3,500 for a carved statue depending on the complexity and portability of the statues commissioned. Mr. Ashley reported that another carver, Mr. MacMahon, had been discovered who was stationed in Gold River. He indicated that maintenance must be considered for fixed statues as they could decay from the inside up. Mr.

MacLean had indicated that between \$1,000 and \$2,000 would be an acceptable level within our budget.

Discussion ensued as to the timeframe to complete the statue, legion enthusiasm level and input, statue location and design of the carved statue. Mayor Prall suggested that the first carved statue be commissioned and funded by the Town of Berwick. Council was in agreement that the Town should fund the first statue. Deputy Mayor Clarke suggested that a Committee be formed to direct this initiative.

IT WAS MOVED and seconded to approve the project of a carved statue in honor of the Year of the Veteran, in principal, and to strike a committee consisting of staff, Councillors and members of the Royal Ortona Legion Branch #69.

Motion Carried

Mayor Prall appointed Councillor Whittier and Councillor Ashford-Morton and Deputy Mayor Clarke volunteered to be on the Committee.

8. Correspondence

(a) RCMP ~ D.A.R.E

Discussion ensued regarding the request for funding.

IT WAS MOVED and seconded that Council approve funding of \$250 to the D.A.R.E. program under the Grants to Organization Policy.

Motion Carried

(b) Town Caucus Update

Mayor Prall distributed a letter from Deputy Mayor Bob Wrye to the Minister of Environment responsible for the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board regarding annexation and amalgamation of the Town of Antigonish. The letter was in support of no forced amalgamation and noted that the NSURB was ignoring the municipal governing body.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of Council would be held December 13, 2005.

10. Hearing of no further business the Chairman adjourned the Council meeting at 8:55 p.m.

John P. Prall
Chairman

Michelle Millett
Recording Secretary