

**Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
March 28, 2024, 4:30 p.m.
W.H. Steeves House Museum
40 Mill Street, Hillsborough, NB**

Present: Mayor Rochon
Deputy Mayor Ereaux
Councillor Land
Councillor Jonah
Councillor Coates
Councillor Ward Russell

Staff Present: Jillian Hutchinson, Treasurer
Kim Beers, Director Community Services
Linda Sabourin, CAO/Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rochon called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- a. There is one addition to the agenda which was to add Mr. Jeff Cooke for a 5-minute presentation on the topic of the Golf Club Road culvert. Mr. Cooke had provided the CAO/Clerk sufficient notice.

Mayor Rochon also mentioned that item #7 on the agenda, Public Comments and Statements requires consent from Council to be added. Council consented.

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Jonah** and SECONDED by **Councillor Land** that the agenda be approved, as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None

Councillor Elderkin entered the room at 6:03 pm.

4. PUBLIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS

- a. Chipoudie Monument

Mr. Wilfred Savoie addressed Council by thanking them for having flown the Acadian flag at the Chipoudie monument in Riverside-Albert last summer. He presented some information on the historical significance of the presence of Acadian settlers in the area, and what led up to the installation of a monument. Mr. Savoie has concerns with its current location, and the lack of signage which results in visitors often driving by, without seeing it. When asked, Mr. Savoie indicated that he would be prepared

to sit on a committee tasked with reviewing possible solutions to the concerns. Members of Council thanked Mr. Savoie for his presentation and committed to following up on his request.

b. Golf Club Road and other miscellaneous matters – Mr. Jeff Cooke

Mayor Rochon welcomed Mr. Cooke. He expressed concerns over the closure of Golf Club Road over the culvert collapse and the implications in the event of a closure of Route 114. Mr. Cooke expressed concern for the new owner of the golf course and potential loss of business, as well as for overall reduction in tourism traffic. He feels that it needs to be repaired quickly. Mr. Cooke also explained that there is a washout on the old railbed that he and members of the ATV club are working on and commented that he believes there will be increased traffic by ATVs coming off the trail near Fairview Avenue.

Councillors shared Mr. Cooke's concerns, especially as it relates to if Route 114 becomes impassable. Members of Council thanked Mr. Cooke for his presentation.

c. Fundy Albert Rural Plan By-Law Consolidation – Mr. Kirk Brewer – Plan 360

Mayor Rochon welcomed Mr. Kirk Brewer with the Southeast Regional Service Commission's Plan 360 to speak on the topic of the Fundy Albert Rural Plan By-Law Consolidation. Mr. Brewer's presentation is not restricted to a time limit.

Mr. Brewer explained what the new rural plan incorporates, such as zoning, policy statements, development of land, and land uses, and renaming of zones. The plan specific to Fundy Albert removes the requirement for drainage plans for development in the community of Alma. Overall, it incorporates the former three municipal plans with the rural plan to form one plan for the new municipality. Mr. Brewer then reviewed the types of zones included in the plan. In order to move the proposed plan along, Plan 360 needs responses from Council in relation to three questions, including whether there is to be an exemption to the requirement for a building permit for buildings smaller than a certain size; whether to allow small hobby farm exemptions within certain residential areas; and whether recreational vehicles would be permitted within residential areas.

Mr. Brewer responded to questions from Council. He was thanked for his presentation.

Councillor Coates left the room at 6:06 pm.

Councillor Jonah exited the room at 6:07 pm.

d. Fundy Albert Administration Report

CAO/Clerk Linda Sabourin spoke about the community grants program; that six applications had been received for the tendering process for the Shoreline trail that closed at 3:00 pm today, which is to be subject of an assessment;

Councillor Coates re-entered the room at 6:08 pm

Ms. Hutchinson, the Treasurer, provided an update of the application to the Municipal Capital Borrowing Board for the Alma Phase II water project and an update on the former Village of Hillsborough 2022 audit.

Councillor Jonah re-entered the room at 6:09 pm.

The Treasurer indicated that based on the time of year, our expenditures should represent 17% of budget spent and we are below that. **CAO/Clerk Sabourin** clarified that administration will be working on a more robust forecasting system. Building permits were also reported on.

Director of Community Services, Mrs. Beers informed Council of a \$50,000 grant application for a community public art program, \$1,000 from Trans Canada Trails for interpretive signing, \$50,000 to DELG for transitional funding relating to legal reviews for new by-laws. Received confirmation from DELG for an additional \$8,000 for the logo and branding exercise. Mrs. Beers also informed Council that the municipality is pursuing the possibility of 3 fast chargers for the community.

CAO/Clerk Sabourin reported that the water reports for all three communities have been completed and submitted. Certificates to operate have been received. Other matters that are being worked on are recommendations for Canada Day Celebrations, Rec Council, RTTIPA, FA Lease and Rental Policy. Policy for CCT, work progressing on finance processing. Staffing. Asset Management Plan report to be presented by Englobe at April 16, truck part April 19, license upgrades. Site visits by CAO and DOO, planning session to review structure and process. Meeting with RCMP Sgt. Bylaw review update. Strategic Plan process update. Alma water update and temporary water line. Riverside-Albert water treatment plant upgrade update. DTI to upgrade Forestdale Road and Pound Hill work.

There was clarification sought on the notion that the Hillsborough water exploration would not begin until 2025, but rates were increased in both 2023 and 2024 in anticipation of beginning with Phase I water exploration.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. SNB Property Tax Insert

Mayor Rochon commented that the Union of Municipalities of NB recently sent the Minister of Service New Brunswick a letter out of concern about the department including an insert with property tax bills and the impression this has left the public that municipalities are solely responsible for the content of the bills. UNMB is asking member municipalities to send letters to the Minister, highlighting the importance of collaborating us and providing the complete information. Council's approval to send the Minister a letter will be sought.

Councillor Ereaux indicated that he does not support our local government sending the Minister a letter. **Councillor Coates** indicated his support.

b. Council Committees

Mayor Rochon indicated that at the March 5, 2024 regular meeting, Councillors were asked to consider the various council committees, whether these are required, and your interest in sitting on these committees. A discussion about these committees and followed.

Generally, Council felt that there should not be standing committees, other than the Personnel Committee and the Emergency Measures Committee.

c. CCRC Request for ATV By-Law

Mayor Rochon commented that the Chipoudy Communities Revitalization Committee approached Council at the regular meeting on March 5th to outline their interest in developing an ATV trail from Hillsborough to Alma. One of the elements of that is the creation of a bylaw that would permit the operation of ATVs on certain roadways in Fundy Albert. If Council is going to pursue this request, **Mayor Rochon** suggested that there should be consideration given to consult with CCRC, the Albert County Trail Blazers, Quad NB, and the public. In the end, a by-law would need to be developed following the approval process set out by Justice and Public Safety, and DTI.

Council generally supported the development of an Ad Hoc Committee to work with the requesters.

d. Request for glyphosate testing

Mayor Rochon indicated that Council was provided a presentation by a concerned citizen on February 20th, followed up by a public presentation at the regular meeting on March 5th. The presenter is requesting additional testing for the Riverside-Albert municipal water supply. The CAO/Clerk circulated a Council report form on the issue referring to Health Canada's position on the use of the herbicide. The recommendation is that testing not proceed without scientific guidance from federal or provincial authorities that it is recommended or necessary.

Discussion ensued where a majority of Council supported testing the Riverside-Albert water supply after a major rain event.

e. Update – Codiac Cycling Trails request

CAO/Clerk Sabourin had previously commented on this matter in the administration report. A draft agreement is being worked on and is currently in for a legal and insurance review.

f. Request for Rate Review – Alma Water

Mayor Rochon commented that at the March 5th regular meeting, Councillor Ereaux introduced a motion to provide temporary rate increase relief for residents of Alma who are not connected to the Alma water supply. Council had asked for additional information, in part, to determine how many water or wastewater users could possibly be impacted by such a decision. The CAO has prepared a Council report form for discussion this afternoon. The CAO report circulated to members of Council points to the need for a review of how water and wastewater charges need to be assigned to various categories of resident/businesses. As well, the provision of temporary relief to residents could be precedent setting, and have financial implications for the municipal utility budget for 2024. The CAO appears to be

recommending the creation of an ad hoc committee to look at the various components of the water supplies, including the development of a Fundy Albert water and wastewater bylaw.

Council supports the creation of an ad hoc committee to examine the issue of a water and wastewater by-law for Fundy Albert. **Councillor Ereaux** stated that if residents petition the municipality because they feel the by-law is not being followed, we owe them a review. There was also general agreement that the nature and types of users should form part of a review.

g. Community Grants Program

Mayor Rochon commented that administration has conducted an analysis of the various requests submitted by organizations to the Community Grants and Contribution program. The CAO recommended not processing some of the requests through the Grants and Contributions program as, in her opinion, these fall into other expenditure categories.

There are others that while they have been identified in the requests, are considered in-kind contributions by the local government. There are others that reference additional funding for Canada Day activities that are not included in the recommendation until additional information is known.

Mayor Rochon mentioned the list of requests, which amounts to less than 80% of the overall funding of \$44,400, is being recommended for approval. There were questions about how the remaining 20% of the funds would be distributed. **Councillor Jonah** expressed concern over the appearance that the community of Hillsborough is being treated unfairly with the distribution of funds for Canada Day celebrations. **Councillor Ereaux** asked that Fundy Albert continue to respect the policy on the use of municipal resources for the benefit of third parties as it relates to in-kind contributions. **CAO/Clerk Sabourin** concluded by saying that Council will need to address the list of other requests that do not fall under the grants and contributions program through funding from other sources, or through cost reductions.

6. MAYOR AND COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

Councillor Ereaux asked about the possibility of providing more granular detail on the Village website in relation to the budgets that were presented in the wards. Treasurer Hutchinson cautioned that providing too much granularity in the budgets could trigger unnecessary questions. Councillor Ereaux also inquired about whether our municipality has confirmed signing on to the EMO mutual aid agreement. Mayor Rochon mentioned that conversations are still ongoing at the SERSC level to ensure that all municipalities are included in the development of a regional plan.

Councillor Coates raised concerns that residents are finding drug paraphernalia in areas of the community and are concerned by this. **Councillor Coates** wondered if the RCMP would be responsible for this. He also inquired about the possibility of a dirt bike track being developed in the Stoney Creek. Also mentioned the municipality signs should be removed on former municipal buildings.

Councillor Land congratulated the organizers of the Fundy Blades event, and also echoed concerns in relation to the road closure on the Golf Club Road.

Councillor Ward Russell raised concerns about the deteriorating road conditions. She has informed residents to contact DTI at the number that is available for complaints. As well, **Councillor Ward Russell** and the CAO have met with representatives of the Department of Environment and Local Government about the Greensboro Subdivision lagoon project. A public meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2024. Councillor Ward Russell concluded by stating that she is hearing that there needs to be more accountability in terms of the cost of policing and the service being provided by the RCMP. Councillor Ward Russell feels that we should convey our concerns with the news that the RCMP will be moving their office to Salisbury.

Councillor Jonah commented that Karla Street in Hillsborough requires attention. Councillor Jonah also mentioned stop sign at the end of the School Lane because of safety concerns. He concluded by stating that he had consulted with Fire Chief Collins about the proposed location for a monument and a request that he speak with the other Chiefs. This has been done and it appears everyone is in support of the proposed location.

Councillor Elderkin thanked Mayor Rochon for the budget presentations and administration for organizing the sessions. Councillor Elderkin then read a letter from a rescue technician with the Canadian Armed Forces who was recently involved in a rescue in the Waterside area involving firefighters with the Riverside-Albert Volunteer Fire Department. The letter commended two members of the department for their professionalism, and remaining calm in a very stressful situation.

Mayor Rochon commented that he attended a Union of Municipalities Advocacy Days conference in Fredericton on March 20th and 21st. The conference included a discussion by UMNB member representatives about the importance of proceeding with fiscal reform in the Province of New Brunswick as it relates to municipal governance reform. Representatives from the municipalities in attendance heard from the leaders of the three political parties. The leaders of the Green and Liberal parties indicated an openness to fiscal reform, while the provincial government was reluctant to commit until after 2024. The UMNB will be developing communications material on behalf of municipalities, which will be shared in the coming weeks and months leading up to the next provincial election, scheduled for the fall of 2024.

Mayor Rochon also mentioned that he and Councillor Ereaux attended a meeting of the SERSC board of Directors on March 26th where UNB professor Trevor Hanson presented a proposal for an agreement UNB and the SERSC to partner with them to help the region develop a regional transportation plan, which will include mobility transportation, and the needs of rural communities. The proposal was approved by the board.

7. PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND INQUIRIES

None

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Coates** and SECONDED by **Councillor Land** that Council move into closed session.

MOTION CARRIED

8. CLOSED SESSION

Section 68(1)(d) Local Governance Act, SNB 2017 c-18 Proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land.

9. ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Jonah* and **SECONDED** by *Councillor Land* that the meeting be adjourned at 8:31pm.



Robert Rochon, Mayor



Linda Sabourin, CAO/Clerk