

Minutes

Committee of the Whole Meeting
W.H. Steeves House Museum, 40 Mill Street, Hillsborough
March 21, 2023, 4:30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Robert Rochon – Mayor

Loretta Elderkin – Councillor, Ward 2

Jeff Jonah – Councillor, Ward 4

Hanna Downey – CAO/Clerk

Scott Reid – Director of Operations

Absent: Heather Ward Russell, Councillor Ward 6

John Ereaux – Councillor, Ward 1

Jeff Land – Councillor, Ward 3

James Coates – Councillor, Ward 5

Jillian Hutchinson – Treasurer

CALL TO ORDER

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Coates* and seconded by *Councillor Elderkin* **THAT** the amended agenda be approved as circulated. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

Amendments: Addition of Public Questions/Comments

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflict declared at this time.

PUBLIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS

- (a) Director of Operations – Quote for Malfunctioning Transformer. Council discussed the quote received for a malfunctioning transformer at the Alma Activity Centre. The CAO stated that there is funding available through the Community Investment Fund, and that she has spoken with the MLA's office to let them know she will be applying for the funding. The CAO advised that, if awarded, the funding would cover 100% of the cost because the work would be under \$5000. Council asked that Englobe Corp. be engaged to perform an overall assessment of the electrical distribution within the two buildings and review the existing generator and provide options for a fit-for-purpose replacement/out findings.
- (b) Director of Operations – Quotes for lift stations (Riverside-Albert) and booster station (Alma). Mr. Reid stated that the current lift stations in Riverside-Albert do not meet the current needs/demands on the system and should eventually be upgraded to handle the demand. Mr. Reid stated that one concern is infiltration from stormwater to the lagoon increasing the demand on the system. *Mayor Rochon* reviewed the quote for an auxiliary power source for the School Street booster station to reduce the amount of future boil water advisories resulting from power interruptions at the booster station. The quote provided includes a generator that could be later repurposed for the Foster Road lift station. *Councillor Ereaux* asked how much is in the Alma Utility Reserve Fund; per the Treasurer, she will check and let *Councillor Ereaux* know tomorrow. Mr. Reid said he

can work with the engineering firm to determine if there are any possible cost savings such as public works doing preparatory work.

- (c) Treasurer's Report – Ms. Hutchinson stated that she has forwarded a job description posting to hire a shared assistant along with a spreadsheet displaying the funds available to pay for the assistant to the CAO. Ms. Hutchinson advised she received an estimate from Southhampton Computers to set up a computer network to allow a second user in Sage. Ms. Hutchinson said she has broken down the expense section of the General Operating budget to display what each line represents and has sent it to the CAO for review. Ms. Hutchinson stated she continues to work on the balance of the sections. Ms. Hutchinson state she created a credit card policy and provided it to the CAO and the Finance Committee Chair for review. Ms. Hutchinson stated she will have January's financials for April's council meeting. **Councillor Jonah** asked if online payments have been set up; Ms. Hutchinson stated the banks are slowing coming on board. **Councillor Ereaux** asked if Council will receive a budget presentation; Ms. Hutchinson stated she will provide an overview of January's financials in April. **Councillor Ereaux** stated he met with the Alma Fire Chief and Deputy Chief, who indicated they have not yet received their operating budget. The CAO stated that the Fire Department's operating budgets were provided by the province and are very similar to what they were last year. However, the CAO stated that inflation and the increased insurance costs need to be calculated before the budgets can be provided to the Fire Chiefs. **Mayor Rochon** asked that this be broken down by April 1.
- (d) Director of Community Services Report – The CAO had circulated the report to Council. The CAO noted a correction to the report whereas the CIF would cover 100% of the cost of a project having a cost less than \$5000. The report states the village was successful in receiving \$1250 for the 2023 Spring Trail Care from the Trans Canada Trail. The CAO stated that the requirements to acknowledge the funding will follow. **Councillor Elderkin** asked if there has been an update on the Horizon Health Coin-G grant application; per the CAO, no.

Councillor Ereaux asked if the Director of Operations has any updates on the Salmon River Bridge "hole" at the bridge entrance. The Director of Operations will look at a possible solution. **Mayor Rochon** cautioned against performing any work that may be the responsibility of DTI.

NEW BUSINESS

- (a) Hillsborough Water Source Exploration Phase 1 – **Mayor Rochon** stated there was an error on the Hillsborough Utility budget documents provided by the Province and that he will be approaching the Department of Local Government to seek their assistance to remedy an error.
- (b) Riverside-Albert Water Main Project Update – **Mayor Rochon** stated that additional funding from RDC was not approved resulting in a reduced scope in the water main update project including the removal of the Water Street portion and the hydrant for the fire department. **Mayor Rochon** stated that he understands the contractor is ready to go, however we are waiting to receive the former village of Riverside-Albert's 2021 finalized audited financial statements (to be provided to the Municipal Capital Borrowing Board) before proceeding. **Councillor Elderkin** and **Mayor Rochon** will reach back out to the auditor for an update.

(c) CCRC Housing Initiative

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Elderkin* and seconded by *Councillor Land* **THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Village of Fundy Albert Council to extend its full support of the Chipoudy Communities Revitalization Committee (CCRC's) efforts to have the Province of New Brunswick transfer ownership of the existing NB Housing units in Riverside-Albert to CCRC. Once transferred, CCRC, in partnership with a Local Development Group, would manage the existing residential units and explore the construction of an additional twelve-unit complex in the community of Riverside-Albert. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

(d) CCBF Memo – *Mayor Rochon* stated that a memo was received from the Department of Local Government and Local Governance Reform to confirm additional funding through CCBF (formerly known as Gas Tax Fund) for Fundy Albert in the amount of \$143,696. *Mayor Rochon* stated these funds are in addition to funds received for the former incorporated municipalities. *Mayor Rochon* stated one project that comes to mind is the replacement of the generator for the Alma Activity Centre. *Councillor Land* asked if some of those funds go towards the Hillsborough community pool; per *Mayor Rochon*, the pool would be eligible. *Mayor Rochon* stated that further information is required on the former incorporated municipal CCBF available funds and anticipated payments. *Mayor Rochon* suggested that the CAO, the Director of Operations, and the Emergency Measures Committee work collaboratively to present a suggestion to Council.

(e) Hillsborough Public Library Board Member Appointment

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Ereaux* and seconded by *Councillor Jonah* that the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Fundy Albert Village Council that **WHEREAS** there are openings on the Hillsborough Public Library Board, **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT** Kelly Beaman, Shannon Gaythorpe, Jessica Hatfield, and Danica Sherry be appointed to the Hillsborough Public Library Board based on the recommendation of the Hillsborough Public Library Board Chair, Melody Land, and Library Manager, Victoria Stroud-Arsenault. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

(f) Gift Cards – *Mayor Rochon* stated that when the credit cards were cancelled belonging to the former village of Hillsborough, the CAO directed the Director of Community Services to use the accumulated points to order gift cards. The CAO is looking for direction from Council how to use the gift cards and suggested they be used to offset operating expenses, used for prizes for community contests (logo/rebranding contest), or as donations to the Shepody food bank. *Mayor Rochon* stated the following gift cards were purchased: 2 x \$500 Staples, 1x \$200 Walmart, 2x \$150 Walmart, and 4x \$100 Petro-Canada, totalling \$1900 in gift cards. *Councillor Land* stated that because the points belonged to the former village of Hillsborough, that the points be used for the Hillsborough community. *Councillor Land* asked the gas cards are to be given to the Director of Operations, and the remaining cards be kept and later used for 62 Academy Street.

(g) 2023 Graduate Bursary

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Elderkin* and seconded by *Councillor Jonah* **THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Fundy Albert Village Council to proceed with providing two (2) bursaries of \$125 each to Caledonia Regional High School and two (2) bursaries or \$125 each to Riverview High School, to be awarded to graduates based on criteria determined by the schools. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

(h) Travel Allowance for Council – *Mayor Rochon* stated that during the March 7, 2023, Regular Meeting of Council, *Councillor Ward Russell* introduced a Notice of Motion

indicating her intent to table a motion at the April 4, 2023 Regular Meeting of Council related to travel allowance for Council. Council reviewed the recommendations presented by **Councillor Ward Russell**, including a travel allowance for members at the Provincial rate (\$0.50/km) for their attendance of Council duties, or by establishing a monthly travel allowance. Additionally, **Councillor Ward Russell** suggested in her report that council consider cell phone allowances for Councillors. Following a brief discussion, Council will support a future motion for travel allowance at the Provincial rate, within budget constraints, and paid retroactive to January 1, 2023.

- (i) Photocopier Lease – Council reviewed the quotes obtained for a photocopier lease for the Hillsborough municipal office. The CAO will proceed with the lease, as proposed, with Innovative Copier Systems Inc.
- (j) Anticipatory Staffing – The CAO stated that there is a need for additional office support staff for administrative and treasurer duties; currently staff are not able to keep up with the workload. The CAO stated that since January 1, she has been doing front end reception duties, answering the phone, doing photocopies, taking water payments, issuing dog tags, and this has taken a significant amount of time away from the duties of a CAO/Clerk. The CAO is prepared to post an employment opportunity for a nine-month term position (until the end of 2023) with the place of employment being at the Hillsborough office. The employee would have access to Sage, allowing them to perform duties related to the finances which would alleviate the treasurer from some of those duties. **Councillor Elderkin** stated she would like to see a full job description. **Councillor Elderkin** expressed her concern with the CAO working from the Alma office performing Clerk duties and not there in the capacity as the CAO. The CAO stated that she would meet with **Councillor Elderkin** to discuss the position of an assistant further.
- (k) HR On Call

IT WAS MOVED by **Councillor Coates** and seconded by **Councillor Jonah** **THAT** the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Fundy Albert Village Council engage the services of HR On Call at the rate of \$60 monthly. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

- (l) Cell Phone Allowance for Staff – **Councillor Land** stated that staff are receiving varying levels of reimbursement for cell phones due to the former villages offering differing compensations. It is the recommendation of the CAO that the Director of Operations is compensated for the use of his personal cell phone at a rate of \$115 per month, and the balance of the public works employees are compensated for the use of their personal cell phone at a rate of \$45 per month. **Councillor Land** stated he was speaking with the public works employees, and reported the employees are not interested in having a village-owned cell phone issued to them. **Councillor Elderkin** asked why there isn't a request for the Treasurer or the CAO; the CAO advised that the budget is limited, and she suggested it be considered during 2024 budget deliberations. The CAO advised she will provide Council with a motion to consider for the April regular meeting of Council.
- (m) Commemorate Canada Reopening Fund – The CAO advised there remains a value of \$11,885 in grant funds that need to be spent before March 31. The CAO stated the working group was not able to reach consensus on how the remaining funds should be spent, however the CAO stated if the funds are not allocated by March 31, they need to be returned to Heritage Canada. **Councillor Ereaux** stated that whereas benches were included in the original funding application, that benches be his preference for the balance of the funds. **Councillor Land** asked where the funds are; the CAO stated the funds would need to come

from the Fundy Albert general operating account because of the shortfall of funds in the former village of Alma's general operating account. **Councillor Land** stated his concern that he is only finding out about the need for this decision ten days before the deadline and not knowing what else Council is going to be surprised with regarding Alma's financials. **Councillor Jonah** stated he agrees with **Councillor Ereaux** on ordering benches. **Councillor Elderkin** stated she agrees with **Councillor Jonah** and expressed concern on why this information is just coming to Council now for decision, three months into the fiscal year. The CAO stated that the Council is just now finding out about this because of her workload, stating she is currently working seven days a week. Council is in agreement for the CAO to pursue ordering benches.

MAYOR & COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS & INQUIRIES

Councillor Elderkin stated that the Finance Committee is still working on the terms of reference. **Councillor Elderkin** advised that the Personnel Committee has met and provided the CAO a copy of the draft terms of reference and draft CAO Bylaw (policy). **Councillor Elderkin** provided a Riverside-Albert Fire Department Report, including updates of expenditures (pump truck repairs, pressure washer repair) and upcoming purchases, including bunker gear sets, air packs, air bags, and jaws. **Councillor Elderkin** stated that members are taking part in 2-3 training sessions a month, and that five members will be writing their Level 1. Council had a brief conversation on the need for a hydrant. The Director of Operations will obtain a cost for a hydrant.

Councillor Coates stated the Emergency Measures Committee met to work on the terms of reference. **Councillor Coates** stated there is a meeting on March 28 on PSAB that he will be taking part in.

Councillor Land stated he has the terms of reference for the Public Works Committee to present to Council at the April meeting. **Councillor Land** stated he will have the quote for repairs for the Hillsborough community pool for the April meeting.

Councillor Ereaux announced that he is soliciting members for the Land Use Planning Committee. **Councillor Ereaux** stated that anyone interested in participating in the Land Use Planning Committee can provide their contact information to him or to the CAO. **Councillor Ereaux** stated there is good news on the Alma Water Exploration project, whereas confirmation was received from the MCBB that the funding application to complete Phase 1 was approved at the March 13 hearing. **Councillor Ereaux** shared a suggestion he received from a constituent to install a community bulletin board.

Mayor Rochon stated that he will be attending a Strategic Planning Retreat with the SERSC in Miramichi this coming weekend. **Mayor Rochon** stated that he has noticed a series of late payment charges on invoices and his concern is as these accumulate, the late charges are bore by the taxpayers.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

There were no public questions or comments.

CLOSED SESSION

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Land* and seconded by *Councillor Coates* **THAT** the meeting enter Closed Session at 6:48 P.M. per the NB *Local Governance Act*, SNB 2017, 68 (1)(f) information concerning legal opinions or advice provided to the local government by its solicitors or privileged communications between solicitor and client in a matter of local government business. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Land* and seconded by *Councillor Land* **THAT** the Closed Session cease at 7:17 P.M. **MOTION CARRIED** (unanimously).

Council returned to regular session at 7:17 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED by *Councillor Land* **THAT** the meeting be adjourned at 7:18 PM.

Robert Rochon, Mayor

Hanna Downey, Clerk