

## Minutes

### Special Meeting Fundy Albert Council

Hillsborough Village Office

January 6, 2024, at 9 AM

#### PRESENT

Robert Rochon- Mayor

John Ereaux- Councillor, Ward 1

Loretta Elderkin- Councillor, Ward 2

Jeff Land- Councillor, Ward 3

Jeff Jonah- Councillor, Ward 4

Jim Coates, Councillor, Ward 5

Heather Ward Russell- Councillor, Ward 6

Tammy Rampersaud- Assistant Clerk

\*Note ***Councillors Ereaux and Ward Russell*** participated virtually

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

***Mayor Rochon*** called the meeting to order at 9am.

#### 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

**IT WAS MOVED** by ***Councillor Land*** and **SECONDED** by ***Councillor Jonah*** to accept the agenda.  
**MOTION CARRIED**

#### 3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

None

#### 4. RESOLUTION- GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the sum of \$5,985,121 be the total operating budget of the local government, that the sum of \$4,975,033 be the Warrant of the local government for the ensuing year, and that the tax rates for the local government be as listed above:

<b>Taxing Authority</b>	<b>Residential Rate</b>	<b>Non-residential Rate</b>	<b>Heavy Industrial</b>
681-0	\$1.5669	\$2.6637	\$2.6637
681-1	\$.5799	\$.9858	\$.9858
681-2	\$.5799	\$.9858	\$.9858
681-3	\$.5361	\$.9114	\$.9114
681-4	\$1.3936	\$2.3691	\$2.3691
681-5	\$.5799	\$.9858	\$.9858
681-6	\$1.3936	\$2.3691	\$2.3691
681-7	\$.5799	\$.9858	\$.9858

The Council orders and directs the levying by the Minister of Local Government of said amount on real property liable to taxation under the Assessment Act within the Local Government of Fundy Albert.

Moved by: ***Councillor Elderkin***

Seconded by: ***Councillor Coates***

### **MOTION CARRIED**

Discussion: ***Councillor Elderkin*** noted that this was the first year going through the budget process for the Village of Fundy Albert. Job well done.

***Councillor Coates*** asked for a public explanation of the rate for 681-3. Mayor Rochon explained that he will be providing a clear breakdown after council has had the opportunity to speak.

***Councillor Ereaux*** asked to confirm that the budget as well as all details would be shared with the public. ***Mayor Rochon***- most definitely. Along with posting the information and having it available in the offices, he would like to ensure that all the areas making up Fundy Albert receive an in-person session.

***Councillor Ereaux*** expressed that he will be supporting this budget, with some reservations: He noted that normally the budget process should be completed in November. He also noted that this budget was being formulated without all the outstanding audited information. ***Councillor Ereaux*** pointed out that for this budget the maximum 1.7% premium was imposed on non-residential and he would like to see that lower in the future. Expenditures have a 15.5%

increase for new services and in the future, there is an opportunity to see more efficiencies. There remain large differences in tax rates throughout the village, but it is getting smaller with noting the 65% higher tax rate in Alma. **Councillor Ereaux** expressed concern for when the province decides what road work will need to be completed in the LSD areas through DTI. He suggests residents speak to their MLAs.

**Mayor Rochon** noted that council had met on seven different occasions to deliberate what would make up the 2024 general operating and utility budgets. He shared that there was a focus on striking a balance between limiting the impact on taxpayers while still ensuring that the municipality has the resources to meet the service delivery expectations. This proposed budget strikes that balance. It was highlighted that there continues to be a difference in how shared costs are shared throughout the entire village, noting that the costs are shared with all subunits, but the cost-sharing is through an inside rate of 100% for the former villages and 90% for the former LSDs.

**Mayor Rochon** continued with a breakdown of the budget and where we see increases:

The general operating budget includes expenditures of \$5,985,121 and a tax warrant of \$4,975,033.

	2023	2024	
GENERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES	827,360	1,021,626	23.4%
Police Protection	1,029,819	1,060,714	3.0%
Fire Protection	622,407	727,007	16.8%
Emergency Measures	7,500	25,000	233.3%
Other Protection	80,326	80,028	-0.4%
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES	1,096,957	1,501,435	41.3.0%
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	437,743	562,345	28.5%
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES	21,582	6,664	-69.1%
ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	349,503	354,470	1.4%
RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES	515,847	454,813	-11.8%

FISCAL SERVICES	190,658	191,020	0.2%
OTHER SERVICES	0	0	
	5,179,702	5,985,121	805,419

**General Government Services: (shared service)** The budget is increased by 23.5% - largely the result of the increase in wages related to two new positions; an Assistant Clerk position and a full-time accounting clerk. The experience of governing the village this past year showed areas that need more support- these newly created positions will be a great help.

**Police Protection: (local service)** Costs are up by 3% compared to 2023.

**Fire Protection: (shared service)** Costs are up by 16.8% - There have been increases in the cost of fuel, training and firefighting equipment. Prior to 2024, volunteer firefighters were not all provided honorariums for their volunteerism. Departments will also need to consider migrating from the current analog radio system to the trunked mobile system.

**Emergency Measures: (shared service)** The budget has been increased from a very low \$7,500 to a more reasonable \$25,000. If not used, these funds will be placed in a reserve fund that can be used for future projects.

**Other Protection: (local and shared service)** Down slightly from 2023. -0.4%. This includes bylaw enforcement for matters such as unsightly and dangerous premises enforcement throughout Fundy Albert, for more local enforcement (parking), animal control (PAW), and for Fundy Albert's share of RSC costs related to the Public Safety Committee.

**Transportation Services: (shared service municipal)** Costs increased by 36.9% - some of which is the result in how the costs are apportioned in the budget. In 2023, some public works personnel costs were attributed to various services such as solid waste collection, parks, recreation and culture. These costs are now all shown in transportation services. In addition, the cost of public works buildings is now shown in Transportation Services. Hillsborough snow removal has increased from \$96,538 to \$181,666 an increase of more than 88%. An amount of funding has been allotted for ditches and culverts in the community of Alma in 2024 in recognition of the significant investment required. There is a need for two new positions (Works Superintendent and Laborer) resulting from the vast amount of work responsibilities and geographical distances between the former incorporated municipalities. This was a definite struggle in 2023.

**Environmental Health Services: (local service)** There has been a 28.5% increase related to Environmental Health Services, including increases in costs of solid waste collection throughout Fundy Albert, costs of handling the solid waste by ECO360, as well costs related to planning services through Plan360.

**Public Health Services: (local service)** There is a 69.1 reduction in projected costs resulting in the elimination of lease payments for medical service locations in the community. This now includes only costs related to a municipal cemetery and mosquito control in the former Coverdale LSD.

**Environmental Development Services: local and shared service)** Includes planning, community development, economic development and tourism. Overall, there is a 1.4% increase from 2023

**Recreation and Culture Services: (shared service)** There has been a reduction from 2023 of - 11.8% most of which is the result of no longer apportioning general public works employee salaries to this service. These services include funding for parks, playgrounds, arena, the cost of arena attendant salaries during operational months, museums, pool.

**Fiscal services: (local and shared)** There is a 0.2% increase in this budget. Includes the cost of borrowing for a new fire truck for Riverside-Albert Fire Department.

The impact on tax rates is as follows:

	2024		2023		Difference	
Taxing Auth.-Community	(Resid.	Non-resid.)	(Resid.	Non-resid.)	(Resid.	Non-resid.)
681-0 Alma Village	1.5669	2.6637	1.5669	2.6637	0.0000	0.0000
681-1 Alma LSD	0.5799	0.9858	0.5223	0.8879	0.0576	0.0979
681-2 Harvey LSD	0.5799	0.9858	0.5616	0.9547	0.0183	0.0311
681-3 Hillsborough LSD	0.5361	0.9114	0.4661	0.7924	0.0700	0.1190
681-4 Hillsborough Village	1.3936	2.3691	1.3026	2.2144	0.0910	0.1547
681-5 Hopewell LSD	0.5799	0.9858	0.5226	0.8884	0.0573	0.0974
681-6 Riverside-Albert Village	1.3936	2.3691	1.3936	2.3691	0.0000	0.0000
681-7 Coverdale LSD	0.5799	0.9858	0.5001	0.8502	0.0798	0.1356

**Councillor Ereaux** highlighted the impact on the budget for the firetruck needed for Riverside-Albert as it is a large expense but needed. He also thought the public should know that there is a hold on the salaries for both council and staff in this proposed budget.

**5. RESOLUTION- UTILITY**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to subsection 117(4) of the Local Governance Act, the total budget for the Water and Wastewater utility for the ensuing year would consist of total revenues of \$1,321,874 and total expenditures of \$1,321,874.

Moved by: ***Councillor Land***

Seconded by: ***Councillor Jonah***

**MOTION CARRIED**

**Mayor Rochon** spoke to the utility budget noting that all three former municipalities are seeing increases in the cost of their respective water and wastewater utilities. The most significant of these is in the former Village of Alma where the water utility is seeing an increase in rates related to the beginning of the Phase II water exploration project and an increase in costs related to the wastewater lagoon that requires substantial investment.

**Mayor Rochon** read out the rates for the Utility Budget:

Community	Water/Wastewater/Total	Water Service	Wastewater Service	Total
Alma	\$153,638/\$154,770/\$308,480	\$694	\$666	\$1,360
Hillsborough	206,720/290,500/497,220	340	500	840
Riverside-	132,198/119,353/251,551	459	480	939

Both **Mayor Rochon** and **Councillor Ereaux** noted that in the community of Alma, the water rates include increased rates for the cost of borrowing related to the water exploration project, and the temporary water supply expected again in 2024 estimated at more than \$50,000. Wastewater costs include required repairs to the sewerage lagoon that are necessary to maintain the certificate to operate.

6. ADJOURNMENT

**IT WAS MOVED** by *Councillor Coates*

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**MAYOR**

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**CLERK**