

MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF PORT WILLIAMS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 15, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lewis Benedict, Kim Cogswell, Debbie Graves, Andy Nette, & Victor Peach

IN ATTENDANCE: Brock McDougall, Joe Keddy, Nichole Gilbert, Jason Stevens, and June Granger.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Lewis Benedict, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. REGRETS: Darlene Robertson

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a) It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Commission meeting of September 17, 2024, be approved. Upon discussion a typo was amended in section 6(D)III – replace “sighting” with “citing.” **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Municipality of the County of Kings:

- The building activity report for September 2024 was received from the Municipality Kings.

b) Other Correspondence:

- Kings County Amateur Radio Club sent a thank you for the use of the Visionary Family Park area for their annual radio event.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

a) **Municipal Proposal on Infrastructure Funding** – CAO McDougall reported:

- Draft letter circulated to Villages – all Villages are reviewing
- Kings County is requesting feedback by October 15th, 2024
- It was moved and seconded to direct the CAO to send the infrastructure funding letter as drafted to the Municipality of Kings. **MOTION CARRIED.**

b) **Commissioner Code of Conduct** – CAO McDougall reported:

- As discussed in August, Minister Lohr has directed Villages to develop a Commissioner Code of Conduct.

- The legislative provisions require villages to adopt a code of conduct consisting of the model code of conduct as outlined in the regulations. The Code must be adopted by December 19th, 2024. Failure to comply will result in grant funds being withheld.
- Staff have prepared a Draft Code of Conduct but are waiting on further information from Municipal Affairs before bringing the draft forward for initial consideration.
- The legislation requires the Village to appoint a third-party investigator, who is experienced with conducting investigations and the principles of natural justice. Due to conflict of interest the investigator cannot be our regularly retained solicitor. This person will have to be retained immediately as they must be prepared to accept complaints directly from a complainant as soon as the Code is adopted.
- Staff have been promoting to the Province the idea of assigning the investigative responsibilities to a provincial body as we expect the associated costs of even one code related complaint could be incredibly burdensome to the Village, but so far there has been no indication that the province will consider this option.
- Discussion with commissioners around the potential of a conflict of interest for with the villages paying for the lawyers for the complainant.
- After discussing the Commission directed the CAO by consensus to draft a letter to Min. John Lohr with their concerns.

c) Equity and Anti-Racism Plans – CAO McDougall reported:

- Similar to our legislative requirements to adopt Accessibility plans in 2022, the province is requiring Villages to adopt Equity and Anti-Racism Plans by April 1, 2025. As a component of developing the plans, the Village is expected to conduct meaningful public consultation.
- Staff are concerned that timelines are too short to conduct meaningful consultation with the public and believe the timeline should be extended to April 2026. This was raised during the ANSV meetings, but no action item resulted from those conversations.
- Despite the concerns raised, a plan will be developed using the tools provided by the provincial Office of Equity and Anti-Racism. A draft plan will be brought forward to the commission before April 2025.
- The Commission discussed: The villages to write their own plans – not jointly written with the Municipality, using the provincial template

- Councillor June Granger – noted that the Municipality has a diversity and inclusion committee that may help.
- It was moved and seconded that the Commission create an *ad hoc* committee for the development of an Equity and Anti-racism Plan with Commissioners Graves and Nette as members, and the CAO offering staff support. **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. REPORTS:

a) **Fire Department** – Chief Jason Stevens reported:

Alarms:

- Three alarms in the last month. A medical call here in the village and two Commercial structure fires in Kentville.

Training:

- Members have been working on Rope Rescue, Vehicle extrication, and pump training.

Membership:

- Gained one junior member last month.

Department:

- Busy with members finishing off their MFR course, Fire prevention visit to both the PW Elementary and Booker schools, open house and our upcoming Grain bin rescue course.
- Involved with Big Brothers big Sisters Spooktacular hosted by Willowbank Farms.
- The Firefighter Association has been busy over the last few months purchasing new structural firefighting helmets and boots for the members as well as a battery-operated set of Jaws of Life. Approx \$40,000 worth of equipment.
- Two requests for directed donations. One invoice is for the boots totaling just over \$5,000. And the second invoice is for our fob key system for just over \$10,000.

b) **Public Works** – Superintendent Joe Keddy reported:

Sewer and Water Utility:

- Water & sewer inspections
- Water and wastewater building maintenance.
- Daily inspections and reports on Collins Sidewalk – now complete meeting next week to go over any deficiencies.
- Working on high street sewer and water, met CBCL on site

and surveyed the storm water system.

- Repaired water shut off at noodle guy.
- Repaired water main shut off at Starrs Point and Collins

Alarms: none

Public Works General:

- Regular duties and general maintenance on buildings
- Fields mowed, trimmed, and lined.
- Building up the dyke (Excavator being used). Fill not available - on hold.
- Building up pond walls. (Excavator being used). Fill not available - on hold.
- Sidewalk repair at Terrys Creek/Starrs point road caused by a collapsed storm water culvert – NS Public Works said they were unavailable to do this repair
- Locates for NS power on Belcher.
- Working at the park, clearing land and ditch in front of park entrance.
- Site visit with Annapolis Royal to look at their solar system install. Met with skylit and went over the possibility of installing solar for our water, wastewater and maintenance shop locations. Collecting required info that is needed so they can give us a design and quote.
- Pavement costs has increased by 25% from last year, so may have to reduce the scope of the parking lot drainage project for this year.
- Need dumping options for brush, gravel, old pavement etc. – running out of places in the village to dump debris, will need to identify a new location within the next year.
- Fence along trail by storage building. – should the village invest in a fence along the trail where it abuts potential hazards on private property? – to discuss later.

- c) **Recreation and Community Development** – Nichole Gilbert reported.

Programming & Events:

- Fall Programming:
 - Chair Yoga with Aurora Scott on Wednesday mornings, attendance has increased from last year. We currently have 18 weekly participants attending.
 - Beginner/Improver Line dancing program began on September 23rd 9:30am – 11:30 am in the Auditorium.

Drop in fee is \$2 per person/class. 43 people have signed up to participate.

- Yoga with Lisa Quintin takes place on Monday and Thursday evenings at 7pm in the Community Centre Auditorium.
- The Fall Active for Life program is ongoing.
- Events
 - Grafton Street Dinner Theatre Bus trip is scheduled for November 20th, tickets are still available.
 - Fall Floral Workshop – 15 people were in attendance, planning to arrange a holiday workshop for late November early December.
 - “How to” Nordic Pole Walk Clinic taking place on October 10th from 10:30-noon at the Community Centre.
 - Halloween Prize Bingo – October 31st 1:00pm – 3:00pm Community Centre Auditorium
 - Partnered with the Fire Department for their open house. The Recreation Department provided the small bounce castle for the kids to play on during the event.

Facilities:

- Parking signs have been ordered for the community park.

d) **Municipal Report** - Councilor Granger bid farewell to the Village Commission as she will not be returning to Council and thanked the Commissioners for their work in the community and all that they do for the Village.

e) **CAO/Clerk Report** – Brock McDougall reported:

I. Collins Road Sidewalk

- Progress Billing #4 was received from Sheehy Construction
- We expect the final billing soon and will coordinate with the engineers regarding the release of holdback amounts. Final grant claims will follow.
- Once we receive our final bills from Sheehy Construction and CBCL engineers, we will prepare a summary report of final project costs.

II. Association of Nova Scotia Villages – Conference and AGM

- Overall, the conference and AGM was successful. On day one, a valuable session was a conversation with Municipal Affairs staff about the upcoming requirements for Equity and Anti-Racism Plans. We also discussed the Commissioner Codes of Conduct that we will be required to adopt by mid December. Several Villages, including Port Williams, pushed back on the timelines to roll out these requirements as well as raised concerns about the associated costs.
- There were also interesting and informative sessions on local entrepreneurs, the historical canal in St. Peters, and from work done in Cape Breton to develop the creative economy (film, arts, music, etc.).
- On Day two, the Villages heard presentations on wind power initiatives in the Canso Straight region and received remarks from MLA Trevor Boudreau representing MLA John Lohr.
- The AGM session was simple with the ANSV taking care of regular business such as board appointments and approval of the financials. There were no motions passed for any special initiatives, although the by-laws did receive minor updates. Most notably the changes reduced the number of annual board meetings from four to three as well as permitted an unelected member of the ANSV to act as treasurer.

f) **Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Report**

- 'Ramp up' program available to help with the installation of accessibility ramps.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT:

- a) A written report of the previous month's financial activities was distributed.
- b) It was moved and seconded that the Commission approve the Village General Operating and Water Utility financial statements for September 2024, as submitted. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- c) It was moved and seconded to accept two donations from the Fire Fighters Association into Fire Department income for boots \$5,188.23; key fob door entry system \$10,132.00 and to complete the necessary transfers to make the purchases. **MOTION CARRIED**
- d) Received the funds requested from the Municipality for the installation of an additional catch basin at the corner of Steeple view and Collins Road (\$6,321.50)


8. NEW BUSINESS:

- a) **Audit Committee recommendations for 2024:** The Audit Committee met on October 1, 2024, to conduct annual audit committee business. The following items were reviewed: Audit Management letter – update provided to members on controls since last meeting; Risk management / insurance coverage – no recommended changes; Financial policies – no recommended changes
- b) **Snow removal RFQ:** two bids received and reviewed by the Commission it was moved and seconded to approve bid #2 for snow and ice control services and the Port Williams Community Centre.
- c) **Other new business:** Commissioner Nette explained that he received concerns from a neighbor about two large holes in the road and asked where that person should file a complaint. Staff indicated that the road in question is a municipal road and maintenance concerns should be directed to the Municipality of Kings – Engineering and Public Works Department.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion being made the meeting adjourned at 8:25pm


Lewis Benedict, Chairperson


Brock McDougall, CAO/Clerk