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## **Minutes of Council Meeting**

**May 12, 2020 7 p.m. Via Zoom**

Present:	Mayor	Betty Clarke
	Deputy Mayor	Krista Freake
	Councillors:	Stephen Hollett
		Brian Hooper
		Kenneth Tucker
		Perry Pond
		Derek White
	Town Manager	Brian Peckford
	Town Clerk	Elaine Bursey
	Supt. Public Works	Todd Champion
	MHA	Derek Bennett

### **1. Call to Order**

Mayor Clarke called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

### **2. Agenda**

20-083 Hollett/White

Resolved to adopt the agenda as presented.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

### **3. Minutes**

#### **3.1 Council Meeting April 21, 2020**

20-084 Pond/Hollett

Resolved to adopt minutes of the April 21, 2020 regular Council meeting as circulated.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

### **4. Economic Development**

#### **4.1 Economic Diversification Strategy**

Inserted below is a copy of the report read by Councillor Pond regarding the closure of the Labrador Coastal Service:

“The Official End of the Coastal Labrador Service and Government’s Lack of Commitment and any Formal Response

This issue really goes back to 1986 and the implementation of the Roads to Rails agreement. Communities like Bishop’s Falls and Port aux Basques were compensated with economic diversification funding to offset the loss experienced from the removal of the Provincial rail network.

Lewisporte was omitted from this package because we continued to play a role in the Labrador Marine Service, previously operated by the Federal Government. The expectation was when and if this service were to cease, compensation would be forthcoming. The service continued to be operated by the Federal Government for the next 10 years.

In 1996/1997 the Provincial Government accepted responsibility for the operation of the Labrador coastal service in return for \$344 million and 2 vessels, the Sir Robert Bond and the Northern Ranger, valued at approximately \$25 million. It was at this time that a focus was placed on the development of the Labrador road network, contributing to a significant economic loss to Lewisporte and surrounding area. As the road network expanded, Lewisporte became less and less involved in the delivery of goods and services to Labrador, and the economic impact intensified. A significant impact was felt from the elimination of the passenger service in 2010/2011. Previous studies have put this loss in the \$30 – \$40 million range.

At every opportunity, the Town of Lewisporte reminded Government of their obligation to compensate the community for these losses - understanding the impacts were the direct result of Provincial Government policy – Ferries to Roads. Fully in support of the decision to enhance the Labrador road network, the economic impact has been significant. It has been the Town of Lewisporte’s position that if the ferry service had been operated by the Federal Government, compensation would have been provided as done with other communities in 1986. The Provincial Government essentially inherited this responsibility when they accepted the service in 1996 and our economic diversification funding was included in the \$344 million agreement. This has been held in trust. This conversation has occurred with each administration for the past 20 years (I have participated in many over the last 15 years), always with an acknowledgement that we will be protected when Lewisporte is no longer required as a Port of Call for the Labrador coastal service – our time will come.

In the summer of 2018 when the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador issued an expression of interest for the operation of a reconfigured Labrador coastal service, potentially without Lewisporte as a port of call, a meeting was convened with Premier Ball, Minister Crocker, MHA Bennett, the Lewisporte and Area Chamber of Commerce, and other officials to remind them of previous government commitments with respect to economic diversification. This decision was the final chapter in the downgrading of Lewisporte’s role in the delivery of the Labrador Coastal service. It has essentially been a slow economic bleed, with substantial loss over the years, and compensation is finally warranted.

Several follow up meetings occurred between then and December 2018, when the final configuration was announced eliminating Lewisporte. The Premier recognized our situation but acknowledged the days of blank cheques are over and any diversification funding would need to have merit and based on concrete deliverables – meaning we would not be getting a pot of money to spend as desired but based on project specific opportunities. The Premier challenged the Town of Lewisporte to develop an economic diversification strategy, one that the Province could endorse and help move forward. The Town of Lewisporte accepted the service reconfiguration without confrontation, based on the Premier’s, and Government’s, commitment to help us move forward. We accepted their word with little or no fanfare.

Over the next several months, through considerable cost and effort, we compiled an economic diversification strategy based on our marine attributes, including marine transportation; marine servicing, marine training, marine safety, and marine offshore services; using the existing port infrastructure as the catalyst to move these initiatives forward. The

strategy was finalized and submitted to Premier Ball in March 2019. We didn't look for chocolate factories or what some would consider wish washy opportunities, but things with strong merit based on our marine history, existing infrastructure and associated marine attributes.

Discussions continued with various officials and the report was officially accepted by Premier Ball prior to the 2019 General election. The Premier reiterated Government's commitment on several occasions, including having outstanding port maintenance issues addressed – the foundation of our strategy. The report has also been endorsed by Mr. Crosby and Mrs. Coffin has been briefed on its content on a couple of occasions.

Several follow up meetings with Minister Crocker, Minister Bragg, Minister Davis, Minister Osborne, and various officials have not resulted in any formal commitment to move our strategy forward. Each meeting has ended with participants shedding responsibility and delaying any financial commitment until appropriate budget allocations have been secured. Meeting requests with Premier Ball have not been granted.

Since the spring of 2019, a Port condition report held by the Province since the fall of 2018 has identified outstanding maintenance issues that extend well beyond that originally understood with considerable financial investment required (\$12 - \$15 million). This report existed prior to Government's endorsement of our strategy and their commitment to address outstanding port maintenance issues.

Understanding the Province's fiscal realities, the Town of Lewisporte has expressed its willingness to accept (rightly or wrongly) – some would agree or disagree, economic diversification funding as investment in existing Government owned port related infrastructure. As a community we are confident economic development opportunities can be secured with the availability of a fully functioning port. Progress made in the oil and gas sector, a parallel project ongoing for the last 24 months, would confirm these beliefs. Interest has been shown, and we are confident, positive results will occur; however, port related issues have stalled any real progress. Synergy World Power being another such opportunity.

Prior to Covid-19 there was an indication that we might finally have success with a funding allocation in budget 2020. No formal commitment will be made, as protocol would prohibit such announcements (a policy we currently challenge and have provided examples to support) and we would have to essentially wait and see. It would appear everyone understands and supports our situation but do not have the mandate to implement our strategy, although they offer their support.

The most recent meeting occurred on Thursday, May 7, 2020, with Ministers Davis, Crocker, Osborne and MHA Bennett where the Covid-19 and plummeting oil prices were communicated as the reason our initiative has not been addressed. Our response – although unprecedented and extremely important, there is a life after Covid and this financial obligation didn't happen overnight – it has been a liability held by Government for at least 24 years that the current administration inherited and must appropriately address.

It was after this meeting the realization came that our initiative has not been properly advanced through the appropriate channels, Cabinet, Treasury Board, and no one Department has been tasked with ensuring implementation. We lack a departmental champion and Government's current commitment is essentially limited to the letter of endorsement provided prior to the last general election. We thank MHA Bennett for his continuous efforts on trying to advance this initiative forward. Our concern right now, is with potentially no budget prior to a change in leadership, Government's commitment will be lost, and our efforts will need to be reset – a time consuming task we currently do not have. We will continue to advocate on our community's behalf but ask the citizens of Lewisporte and surrounding area to keep this issue front and center and constantly remind those willing to listen. Working together we hope for progress.”

MHA Derek Bennett spoke after Councillor Pond recognizing the enormous efforts of Council and Town Manager Brian Peckford in formulating the Economic Diversification Strategy. He reassured Council and residents that he is fully

committed to working with Council to see this project through; and shared frustration that there has not yet been a formal financial commitment to the Town. MHA Bennett expressed this project is near and dear to his heart on a personal level and ensured that the new party leader would be fully briefed on this file.

Mayor Clarke thanked MHA Bennett, Councillor Pond and the Economic Development Committee.

## **5. Recreation/Tourism**

### **5.1 Updates by Deputy Mayor Freake**

- Mussel Bed Soiree – options still being explored to host a celebration within Covid-19 restrictions. Residents with any suggestions are asked to email [specialevents@lewisporte.ca](mailto:specialevents@lewisporte.ca).
- Community Garden applications are now available.
- The trailer dumping station is open for use.
- Maintenance plan is being discussed for all outdoor spaces.
- A new Recreation Manager will be in place for Jun 8, 2020.
- The Town Manager updated on the plan for Hann's Point – surveys and adjacent land ownership being identified, the Recreation Committee will bring a more detailed update in the near future, noting the plan is to recognize the significant history and to beautify the area as a potential tourist attraction.
- The Supt. of Public Works noted that to ensure areas of concern are identified, the boardwalk and all trails are being walked weekly by employees, and all facilities, whether opened or closed, are being inspected three times per week.

## **6. Lands**

### **6.1 Updates by Councillor Tucker**

- Noise By-Laws under review.
- Portable sawmills are currently permitted for residential use only, although a permit must first be obtained from the Dept. of Fisheries, Forestry and Agrifoods.
- Ongoing review:
  - Live chickens/hen regulations
  - Business signboard
  - Welcome to Lewisporte sign
  - Residential clean up orders.

### **6.2 Regulations**

Drafts are being finalized for regulations concerning Commercial Vehicle Parking, Accessory Building and Fencing.

20-085 Tucker/White

Be it resolved the Town of Lewisporte proceed to have prepared Town of Lewisporte Municipal Plan and Development Regulations Amendments for the Town of Lewisporte Accessory Building Regulations, the Town of Lewisporte Fence Regulations, and the Town of Lewisporte Commercial Vehicle Parking Regulations.

Be it further resolved that based on the requirements of the Urban and Rural Planning Act, the town will advertise and make available to the public the drafts of the Town of Lewisporte Accessory Building Regulations, the Town of

Lewisporte Fence Regulations, and the Town of Lewisporte Commercial Vehicle Parking Regulations from Monday, May 18, 2020 until Monday, May 25, 2020 to allow for public consultation on the proposed Regulations.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

### **6.3 Permit Application 20-015 / 221 Main Street**

Councillor Tucker declared a conflict for any discussion/voting and was removed from the virtual meeting through audio and visual disconnection by the moderator.

20-086 White/Hooper

Resolved to deny permit application #20-015 to construct a shed at 221 Main Street, as it contravenes the Town of Lewisporte Development Regulations.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

Councillor Tucker re-entered the virtual meeting.

## **7. Public Works**

### **7.1 Updates by Councillor Hooper**

- Ditching concerns near Industrial Park intersection being taken care of.
- Canada Post parking signage being looked at.
- Quotes being sought for new salt shed.
- Many streets are in a deplorable condition, recapping options being explored.

### **7.2 Trackless Tractor Attachments**

20-087 Hooper/Hollett

Resolved to purchase attachments (sweeper unit, water tank kit and cold planer) for the trackless tractor from Saunders Equipment Supply at \$37,575 (the lowest of three bids).

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

## **8. Protective Services**

### **8.1 Updates by Councillor White**

- Residents are still reminded to adhere to provincial government guidelines throughout this COVID-19 pandemic.
- Acknowledged Nurses' Week and appreciation extended to all our nurses.
- Letter read from Eric Perry who praised Lewisporte Fire Rescue for a recent fire call response.
- Central Waste Management recycling program has resumed.

## **8.2 Fire Protection**

20-088 White/Freake

Resolved to provide fire protection to provincial government buildings on the TCH, namely the Dept. Forestry, Dept. Transportation and Works, Notre Dame Park Building and Campsites, and the Tourist Chalet. Also resolved to provide fire protection to cabins situated on Junction Pond between the TCH and the pond. All pending approval from Lewisporte Fire Rescue and based on signed agreements and payment of applicable fees.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

## **9. Finance**

### **9.1 Cheque Register**

20-089 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to approve cheques 25-58, excluding cheques 35, 39, 42, 46 and 48.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

### **9.2 Cheques 39 and 42**

Councillor Tucker declared a conflict and was removed from the virtual meeting through audio and visual disconnection.

20-090 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to approve cheques 39 and 42.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

Councillor Tucker re-entered the virtual meeting.

### **9.3 Cheque 35**

Councillor Pond declared a conflict and was removed from the virtual meeting through audio and visual disconnection.

20-091 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to approve cheque 35.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hollett, Hooper, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

Councillor Pond re-entered the virtual meeting.

**9.4 Cheque 48**

Councillor Hooper declared a conflict and was removed from the virtual meeting through audio and visual disconnection.

20-092 Hollett/Pond

Resolved to approve cheque 48.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

Councillor Hooper re-entered the virtual meeting.

**9.5 Cheque 46**

Councillor Hollett declared a conflict and was removed from the virtual meeting through audio and visual disconnection.

20-093 Hooper/Pond

Resolved to approve cheque 46.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

Councillor Hollett re-entered the virtual meeting.

**10. Adjournment**

20-094 White/Pond

Resolved the meeting adjourn.

Time: 8:41 p.m.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Deputy Mayor Freake, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.  
None opposed. Motion carried.

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Betty Clarke, Mayor

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Elaine Bursey, Town Clerk/Treasurer