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Minutes of Council Meeting

December 1, 2020 7:00 PM. Via Zoom

Present:	Mayor	Betty Clarke
	Councillors:	Stephen Hollett
		Brian Hooper
		Kenneth Tucker
		Perry Pond
		Derek White
	Town Manager (Acting)	Todd Champion
	Recreation and Tourism Manager	Ashley Ivany
	Town Clerk (Acting)	Jake Turner
Regrets:	Deputy Mayor	Krista Freake

1. Call to Order

Mayor Clarke called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

The Mayor advised Council that our Town has been selected by Newfoundland Power to host an electric charging station. The information has been sent to the Chamber as a business opportunity and there is no cost to host this station.

2. Approval of Agenda

20-203 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to adopt the agenda as presented.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion carried.

3. Minutes for Approval

3.1 Regular Council Meeting November 17, 2020

20-204 Hooper/Hollett

Resolved to adopt the minutes of the regular Council meeting of November 17, 2020, as circulated.

Councillor Hooper asked that the Minutes be amended to reflect that Councillor White presented the Protective Services Report rather than him.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion carried.

4. Recreation/Tourism Committee

4.1 In the absence of Deputy Mayor Freake, the Director of Recreation presented an Administrative Report

- The Christmas Tree lighting will take place on Thursday, December 3 between 6:00 and 7:30 PM and will be a drive-by event. The Downtown will be transformed into a Christmas Wonderland. There will be loot bags for the children and Santa and Mrs. Claus will be waving from their sleigh. We ask that people stay in their vehicles and follow traffic signs.
- The Department is preparing for a 12 Days of Christmas event which will take place starting on December 10th. Further updates will be available on Facebook on how you can participate.
- Businesses and Residents are encouraged to decorate, and prizes will be presented.
- An application is being prepared to submit to the COVID Stimulus Fund to seek funding to upgrade the Town trails.

5. Economic Development Committee

5.1 Vendor Permit 20-001V / JPJC Holdings Inc.

20-205 Pond/Tucker

Resolved that the Occupancy Permit NO 20-001V for the sale of Fireworks by JPJC Holdings Inc. at 405-413 Main Street be approved, subject to inspection and approval by the Fire Department.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion carried.

5.2 Updates on Economic Development

- Councillor Pond advised that Economic Development has not met since the last Council meeting and provided an update on Economic Development activities.
- Woolfreys' Pond Park – Upgrades of the Park has been delayed but the initiatives that are planned to be completed by Town resources will proceed with completion anticipated prior to 2021 season opening.
- A meeting was held with our MP regarding the transfer of the Marina lands to the Town. A letter to the Federal Minister of Transportation is being drafted which will outline the Town's concerns with the proposed increase in the lease rate and requesting the transfer of the Federal land to the Town, or a Town entity, and outlining similar transfers that has occurred which the Committee feels has set a precedent on Federal transfers.
- Oil and Gas steering committee is continuing to investigate the opportunity being presented by the exploration of the area known as the Cape Freels. The activity is near Lewisporte and there should be opportunities available.
- The Oil and Gas Committee is also looking at opportunities presented by the current slowdown in the industry such as Vessel layover.
- The Town's website will be upgraded to reflect where we want to go with the Port.
- The Mayor advised that she has received an e-mail from our MHA, and he will be contacting the Town on several of these issues.

6. Lands

6.1 Updates by Councillor Tucker

- Councillor Tucker advised that the Lands Committee meeting has not met since the last Council Meeting and a meeting has been scheduled for next Wednesday.

7. Public Works

7.1 Updates by Councillor Hooper

- Councillor Hooper advised that the Public Works Lands Committee had not met but provided the following update:
- The projects that have been approved by Council, such as the New Water Tank and installation of Speed Reduction signs, are proceeding but there are delays as we await Government approvals.
- The Town's Snow Clearing Regulations take effect today.
- The snow clearing equipment is ready for the Winter season.

8. Protective Services

8.1 Updates by Councillor White

- The Protective Services did not meet since the last Council Meeting and Councillor White advised that the new Fire Vehicle has been delivered and training on its' use is planned.
- Councillor White reminded Residents that the Fire Department request that care be taken during this season and encourages the cleaning of chimneys to prevent chimney fires.
- The Fire Department also wished to remind everyone that care should be taken when decorating with electric lights.

9. Finance/HR

- The Committee met on November 30, 2020 at 8:15 PM with, the Chair Councillor Hollett, Mayor Betty Clarke, Councillor Brian Hooper, Acting Town Manager, Todd Champion and Acting Town Clerk, Jake Turner being in attendance.

9.1 Updates by Councillor Hollett

- There was a request for Council to review the Business Tax Category in which Greenhouses are taxed. Council has eight categories of Business Tax Rates and 77% of Business Tax Revenue is generated from the All Other Class in which the Greenhouse business is categorized.

The Town Clerk advised that he had contacted several Towns of similar size to Lewisporte and received information from five and most of them had Greenhouses categorized in their All Other Business Category. The Mil Rates ranged from 5.5 Mills to 18 Mills.

The Committee discussed the rationale behind the establishment of Mil Rates and determined that it would be very difficult to create a separate category for any business and is not prepared to recommend a change to the category in which Greenhouses are placed.

Councillor Pond stated that he felt that there were reasons to reconsider this recommendation and Council agreed to have further discussions during the upcoming Budget meetings.

- The Town Manager (Acting) reported that the Lands Committee had met with the owner of 122 Road to the Isles who has an outstanding amount of taxation on land that he has developed for resale. He claims that he is being treated unfairly since current Development Agreements exempt land from taxation that has been developed for resale and he is taxed on the unsold lots in his development. The Lands Committee agreed with the Developer and recommended that the Finance consider exempting the Development from Taxation.

Tax Exemption

20-206 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved that an exemption from taxation be granted to the Land Development located at 122 Road to the Isles, until such time that a development is begun, and that the taxes owing for 2018, 2019 & 2020, plus accumulated interest be written off.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion carried.

- The Committee reviewed a Circular from the Province which advised that Council is eligible to submit an application under the COVID Stimulus Program which is cost shared 90/10 with the Province paying 90 %. The deadline is December 7th and the Recreation Department is compiling an application for submission.
- The Committee reviewed a request from a resident to write off interest that had accrued on his outstanding Property Tax bill. The resident claimed that he did not receive an invoice. The Town Clerk advised that all invoices were sent out in January and could not see any reason that this bill had been withheld. The Committee is not prepared to recommend a write off of the interest and requested that the resident be written advising of the decision.
- The Town Clerk reported that notification has been received that the cost of the Town's Group insurance, which is cost shared with its employees, will increase by 12% in the upcoming year. The cost is \$381.00 and will be accommodated in Budget 2021.
- Workplace NL has released its rates for 2021 and the Town's Assessment Rate has decreased from \$1.73 per \$100 of Wages to \$1.63 per \$100 of Wages resulting in a savings of \$5,758 which will be accommodated within the Budget for 2021.
- The Committee reviewed a Financial Report which projected the Financial Position of the Town at December 31. The Report is based on the Actual Expenses from January 1 to September 30, 2020 and the last three months of the previous year fiscal period, with adjustments made for one-time expenditures and other known items. The Report projects a Surplus at Year End of approximately \$500,000. The Committee noted that this included an expense of \$242,000 for the purchase of a loader which Council had decided in Budget 2020 to pay for by borrowing, so the projected Surplus is approximately \$750,000. Councillor Hollett explained that approximately \$500,000 of this surplus is due to the Town consolidating its' loans and the amount budgeted will come due in 2021.

The meeting of Council to discuss Budget 2021 is scheduled for Monday, December 7th and the Committee looks forward to receiving recommendations from the Committees.

9.2 Cheque Register

Cheques 00450 - 00487

20-207 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to approve cheques 00450 – 00487 in the amount of \$429,271.84, excluding cheques 00454, 00460, 00466, 00472, 00480 and 00486.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion Carried.

9.3 Cheques 00454, 00460, and 00486

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

20-208 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to approve cheques 00454, 00460, and 00486.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond and White.

Decision: Motion Carried

Councillor Tucker re-entered the virtual meeting.

9.4 Cheque 00466

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

20-209 Hollett/Hooper

Resolved to approve cheque 00466.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion Carried

Councillor Pond re-entered the virtual meeting.

9.5 Cheque 00480

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

20-210 Hollett/White

Resolved to approve cheques 00480.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion Carried

Councillor Hooper re-entered the virtual meeting.

9.6 Cheque 00472

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

20-211 Hooper/Pond

Resolved to approve cheques 00472.

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors, Hooper, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion Carried

Councillor Hollett re-entered the virtual meeting.

10. Other Business

Councillor Tucker asked if Council intends to prepare reports at Year End on Committee activities for the past year and send them to Taxpayers when the tax bills are sent. It was the consensus of Council to do this again this year.

11. Adjournment

20-212 White/Freake

Resolved that the meeting adjourn.

Time: 7:45 PM

In favour: Mayor Clarke, Councillors Hooper, Hollett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Decision: Motion carried.

Betty Clarke, Mayor

Jake Turner, Town Clerk/Treasurer

