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Minutes of Council Meeting

December 12, 2023 4:30 PM

Present:	Mayor (Chair)	Krista Freake
	Deputy Mayor	Brian Hooper
	Councillors	Roxanne Haliburton
		John Mullett
		Perry Pond
		Ken Tucker
		Derek White
	Town Manager	Todd Champion
	Town Clerk	Coreen Colbourne
	Recreation and Tourism Manager	Ashley Ivany
	Superintendent of Public Works	Bruce Roberts

Mayor Freake brought greetings to those watching on Facebook, fellow Councillors and Staff.

1. Call to Order – 4:33 pm

23-158 White/Pond

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

2. Approval of Agenda

23-159 Pond/Haliburton

Resolved to adopt the agenda, as presented.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Mayor's Notes:

Mayor Freake gave an update on the scheduled meeting with Scotiabank that was cancelled. She informed Council and the public that Scotiabank has requested a preliminary meeting, solely with her, another meeting will be scheduled with a bigger delegation from Scotiabank with all of Council. The Mayor has requested the Chair of economic development, Councillor Pond, to join her in the preliminary meeting, this will be held with the district vice-president on Friday, December 15th at 11:30 am.

Mayor Freake has just received word from Staff Sargent Larry Turner that the new Corporal will be in Lewisporte on January 25th, 2024. The Mayor indicated to him that the Council would like the opportunity to meet with the new Corporal to discuss where we are as a town and how we can collaborate with the Detachment moving forward.

3. Lands Committee

Update by Councillor White

Upon further investigation, the Town has realized that they did not have clear title to the land previously motioned for sale at the December 5th, 2023, public council meeting. Councillor White made a motion to revoke motion 23-152.

23-160 White/Hooper

The Town published a notice of land sale dated December 5th, 2023, in respect of a parcel of property located on the Western side of 8 Wildwood Street. However, subsequent due diligence revealed that the Town may not have marketable title to the advertised property. I therefore motion to retract the motion of sale 23-152.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

4. Finance/HR

Councillor Haliburton brought forward two donation motions.

To help bring support to those in need during the holiday season, the Town of Lewisporte will be donating to support the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal and the Kinsmen Club Happy Tree.

23-161 Haliburton/Pond

I so move to donate \$100.00 to the Salvation Army Lewisporte Christmas Appeal.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-162 Haliburton/Pond

I so move to donate \$100.00 to the Kinsmen Club of Notre Dame Happy Tree.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Councillor Haliburton started the Budget Adoption procedure with a budget speech as follows:



Budget Speech 2024

Presented by Councillor Roxanne Haliburton, Chair of Finance and Human Resources

Your Worship, esteemed members of the council, and fellow residents, it is an honor on behalf of the Finance Committee to present Budget 2024. This carefully crafted budget reflects our collective commitment to sustaining the Town's progress and fortifying vital investments in equipment, infrastructure, programs, and services that enhance the quality of life for all residents. As stewards of the public trust, we have diligently adhered to Section 78 of the

Municipalities Act 1999, ensuring that the proposed expenditures correspond thoroughly with anticipated revenues. This budget not only demonstrates our unwavering dedication to fiscal responsibility but also signifies our commitment to building a resilient and thriving community that meets the diverse needs of our residents. We look forward to jointly working together as we embark on this journey toward a prosperous future for our town.

Operating Budget

It is anticipated that the total operating funds required to operate our Town in 2024 will total \$6,601,847.00, it is an increase \$864,868.00 from last year, however, budgeted in 2024 are expenses from 2023 that we are carrying forward, and therefore using the funds saved from the 2023 budget to pay for those expenses, this amounts to \$818,626.00. These expenses will be explained later.

The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs breaks the operating expenses into seven (7) main categories: these include general government, which include expenses such as, salaries, employee benefits, and other payroll burdens, council remuneration, supplies, professional services, and insurance, to name a few. The second category is protective services, which is the public's fire protection and emergency preparedness and response. Transportation services include vehicle repair, street and sidewalk maintenance, snow removal and street lighting. The environmental health category includes water supply, sewage disposal and garbage collection. Planning and development take in planning and zoning, municipal plan review, and resource development. Recreation and cultural services include expenses associated with the stadium, bowling alley, Woolfrey's Pond Park, the playgrounds, boardwalk, train park and train park trails, multiuse trail, Craft and Trade Show, Mussel Bed Soiree and all the other special events put off by the Town. Lastly, the fiscal services category covers loan and interest payments that the Council has decided to borrow for, for capital projects and other major projects in the Town, discounts offered to our residents and businesses, and bank charges. These expenses still do not cover all the responsibilities of a Town but will give the public an idea of the magnitude of what needs to be considered at budget time. All these expenses of course, must be covered off by the revenue produced by the Town namely residential and business property taxes, water and/or sewer tax, business taxes, fees for services, our Municipal Operating Grant, federal and provincial gas tax revenue, and other grants the Town is successful in obtaining.

With that being said:

The 2024 Estimated Budget is presented as follows:

OPERATING BUDGET

REVENUE

Taxes	\$4,172,667
Sale of Goods and Services	477,068
Other Revenue from Own Sources	223,250
Federal and Provincial Grants and Subsidies	558,348
Reserve Surplus from Prior Year	<u>1,170,514</u>
Total Revenue	<u>\$6,601,847</u>

EXPENDITURES

General Government	\$1,592,185
Protective Services	221,850
Transportation Services	778,128
Environmental Health	682,382
Planning and Development	44,000
Recreation and Cultural Services	866,080
Fiscal Services	<u>2,417,222</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$6,601,847</u>
Surplus/Deficit	<u>\$0</u>

RATES AND FEES

During the Budget process, Council reviewed the schedules of rates and fees:

In the spirit of fiscal responsibility and community welfare, the Town Council is proud to announce a notable decrease in the property millage rate, reducing it by 0.5 mills for the upcoming fiscal year. This decision stands as a clear testament to our commitment to easing the financial burden on our residents and businesses. As stewards of public funds, we recognize the importance of prudent financial management, and this reduction in the millage rate emphasizes our dedication to enhancing the economic well-being of our community. It is our hope that this adjustment will contribute to a more favorable financial environment for all, fostering growth and prosperity in our town. We aim to create an environment where businesses can thrive, residents can enjoy an improved quality of life, and our community, as a whole, can flourish.

In 2023, the Town of Lewisporte implemented changes to various rates, and we are pleased to share that the only increases applied for 2024 are to the minimum tax rate. Importantly, these adjustments will have minimal impact on most of our residents. The decision to raise the minimum tax rate is a strategic move intended to encourage property owners to consider consolidating smaller land parcels into larger lots available for sale. This cooperative approach to land use aims to streamline the development process, making it more appealing for potential buyers and investors.

Additionally, the Town has introduced a new fee for commercial inspections. This fee reflects the time and commitment of our volunteer-based firefighters, who are trained in fire inspections and dedicate their efforts to benefit both the Town and local businesses. We appreciate their invaluable service and believe that this fee appropriately acknowledges their expertise and the importance of maintaining a safe and secure environment for our community and its businesses.

CAPITAL BUDGET

As part of the capital budget, the Town has budgeted capital from reserve, this is the \$818,626, carried over from 2023 to 2024. The Town is committed to the continued improvements to the softball field, and the multi-use courts, the Council is also proud to announce the commencing of the new splash pad, these facilities will enhance the recreational opportunities for families in our town. These initiatives underscore our commitment to providing safe and enjoyable spaces for families to gather, fostering community bonds, and ensuring that our town remains a desirable place to live, work, and play. As we embark on the journey into the new fiscal year, the Town Council remains dedicated to pursuing initiatives that prioritize the best interests of our residents and businesses alike. All these projects may not be completed in 2024 but be assured of our commitment to these new or improved recreational resources. The Town will also be moving forward with upgrades to Woolfrey's Pond Park Comfort Station.

Each year Council makes substantial investments in buildings, upgrading and replacing roads, and upgrading water and sewer, sometimes the scheduled projects are delayed for various reasons, in 2024 the Town is hopeful that the upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure through the extension of the outfall consolidation at King Street, will go ahead. The addition of the water tank bypass line and intake repair will ensure the Town will still have accessible water, in the event of repairs or construction to the water tank, a crucial piece of equipment.

The Town has secured funding, or has submitted application, for the King's Street Outfall and the Water Tank By-pass Line for these projects and the Town's share of funding is expected to be approximately \$189,436.62 with the remainder being obtained through cost shared arrangements with the Provincial and Federal Governments.

Other capital purchases include the replacement of its backhoe; replacing its speed bumps, to ensure the safety of our children; and the Town will be committing to the O2 Club once again to help them reach their goals of upgrading their existing trails to facilitate a year-round experience. To make some of its other recreational facilities more comfortable the Town will be adding heat pumps to the bowling alley. The Town has been very diligent in its budgeting process and plans to pay for these expenses out of its surplus. The Town will not be borrowing for any of its investments in the Town's equipment, recreational facilities, programs, or services this year, reducing its debt servicing ratio.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as we wrap up this discussion on our municipal budget, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated team and the finance department for their tireless efforts in crafting a budget that reflects our community's needs and aspirations. This financial roadmap is a testament to our commitment to responsible governance, fiscal prudence, and the well-being of our residents. As we move forward, let us work together to implement these financial priorities, ensuring a brighter and more prosperous future for our beloved municipality. Thank you for your attention, engagement, and continued support in building a stronger community for all.

ENABLING MOTIONS

23-163 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall adopt the 2024 Schedules of Rates and Fees established within this budget, as attached.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-164 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve May 31, 2024, as the due date for payment of taxes.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-165 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve a 3% discount to be applied to tax payments received on or before March 31, 2024.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-166 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve a 15% discount to be applied to seniors receiving the Guaranteed Income Supplement (showing in Box 21 on the T4A OAS) providing his/her/their account is paid in full by the due date of May 31, 2024, this discount is for his/her/their principal residence only. Any adjustment for the current year can be applied for until December 31, 2024. There will no adjustments for prior years missed.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-167 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve that all taxes in arrears after May 31, 2024, be charged a compound interest rate of 15% per annum and be charged at the first day of each month on the outstanding principal. All other invoices, including those issued because of supplementary property assessments, are due 30 days from the date of issue and all invoices in arrears at the end of the month following issuance will be subject to compound interest charges of 15% per annum.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-168 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve payment of taxes by credit card, but anyone wanting to pay by credit card will have a 2% fee applied to the payment amount.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

2024 TAX EXEMPTIONS

23-169 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve, pursuant to Section 111 of the Municipalities Act 1999, the properties owned by the Kinsmen Club of Notre Dame located at 47 Centennial Drive and Loyal Orange Lodge located at 230-232 Main Street be exempt from property tax for 2024.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Deputy Mayor Hooper was in conflict and left Chambers at 4:54:52.

23-170 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve, pursuant to Section 111 of the Municipalities Act 1999, the property owned by the Lions Club located at 18 Bowater Avenue be exempt from property tax for 2024.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Deputy Mayor Hooper re-entered Chambers at 4:55:29.

23-171 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve, pursuant to Section 111 of the Municipalities Act 1999, the property owned by the Calypso Foundation located at 45 Centennial Drive be exempt from property tax and business tax for 2024.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

23-172 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve, pursuant to Section 111 of the Municipalities Act 1999, the Interfaith Goodwill Centre be exempt from the payment of 2024 business tax.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Councillor Tucker was in conflict and left Chambers at 4:56:44.

23-173 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall approve, pursuant to Section 111 of the Municipalities Act 1999, the property owned by the Masonic Lodge located at 12 Tizzard Street be exempt from property tax for 2024.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Councillor Tucker re-entered Chambers at 4:57:17.

ADOPTION OF BUDGET

23-174 Haliburton/Pond

Be it resolved that Council shall adopt the 2024 Operating & Capital Budgets, as presented.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

At this time, I would like to wish my fellow Council members, management and staff, and the residents of our community, a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with happiness, success, and new opportunities. May the festive season bring joy, warmth, and cherished moments with your loved ones.

5. Other Committees and/or Business

Mayor Freake thanked Council, management, and staff, through their committee work and the finance department, for a shared understanding of our vision of sound fiscal responsibility. She said as Mayor, she is beyond proud of the work that Council and staff have done and is quite pleased with the 2024 budget.

Mayor Freake took time to remind residents of the Train Park Trail opening this coming Thursday night.

She wished the residents of Lewisporte and surrounding communities, on behalf of herself and the rest of Council, a happy and healthy holiday season. She hoped everyone got time to reflect on all that they have to be grateful for and look forward to seeing growth in the 2024 year ahead.

Councillor White felt that congratulations were in order for Councillor Haliburton in doing a fine job, presenting her first budget. Those in attendance shared the sentiment and shared in the applause.

6. Adjournment

23-175 Pond/Hooper

Resolved that the meeting adjourn.

In favour: Mayor Freake, Deputy Mayor Hooper, Councillors Haliburton, Mullett, Pond, Tucker and White.

Opposed: None

Decision: Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 5:00 PM.

Next Public Council Meeting to be held on January 16, 2024.



Krista Freake, Mayor



Coreen Colbourne, Town Clerk/Treasurer