

MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF LUNENBURG  
Minutes of a Meeting of  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
Held in Council Chamber, 210 Aberdeen Road, Bridgewater, NS  
**Tuesday, February 5, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.**

**ATTENDANCE**

Councillor Claudette Garland, District 6, Chair  
Councillor Eric Hustvedt, District 1, Vice Chair  
Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson  
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2  
Councillor Lee Nauss, District 3 (arrived at 9:10 a.m.)  
Councillor John Veinot, District 4  
Councillor Wade Carver, District 7  
Councillor Michael Ernst, District 8  
Councillor Reid Whynot, District 9  
Councillor Errol Knickle, District 10

Regrets: Deputy Mayor Moore, District 5

Staff: Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Sherry Conrad, Municipal Clerk  
Elana Wentzell, Director of Financial Services  
Angela Veinot, Manager of Accounting  
Sarah Kucharski, Communications Officer  
Rachel Hiltz, Recording Secretary

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Councillor Garland called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. ANNOUNCEMENTS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/RECOGNITIONS:**

**2.1 Broad Cove Community Association Parents/Babies and Tots Playgroup**

Councillor Hustvedt recognized the Broad Cove Community Association for their Parents/Babies and Tots Playgroup at the Broad Cove Hall. He noted that the group meets weekly and is facilitated by the Better Together Family Resource Centre. **The Resource Centre** received a grant from the Lunenburg County Community Health Board and **while the Broad Cove Community Association received** infrastructure funding for improvements to the Broad Cove Hall building from MODL. (amended March 5/19).

**3. PUBLIC INPUT: (Nil)**

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Moved by Mayor Bolivar-Getson, seconded by Councillor Whynot that the Finance Committee Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 4, 2018:**

Moved by Councillor Hustvedt, seconded by Councillor Carver that the Minutes of the December 4, 2018 Finance Committee meeting be approved as circulated. Carried.

**6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES (Nil):**

**7. AWARDING OF TENDERS/RFPs (Nil)****8. PRESENTATIONS/SCHEDULED TIMES:****8.1 Brian Keizer, FESC Chair re Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

Brian Keizer, Fire and Emergency Services Committee Chair; Chris Kennedy, Fire Services Coordinator; and, Ms. Kucharski, were present at this time and gave a presentation on the Draft Recruitment and Retention Strategy (circulated with Agenda, presentation attached to original set of Minutes).

Mr. Keizer noted that the Recruitment and Retention Strategy focuses on attracting new members to the fire services and the retention of current fire service individuals. It is important to point out that fire departments can use volunteer assistance in various ways, not just fire fighting. They require assistance through auxiliary members by helping with fundraising functions, providing food/water and other logistics during events, and expertise in finance or secretarial functions.

A discussion was held, and the following points were noted:

- The Strategy noted fire service responsibility, which included individual departments throughout the communities and a regional responsibility.
- The budget should show a range as the additional staff resource line has an annual expense of \$5,000 to \$22,500. The budget total of \$58,900 is the highest possible budget. Also, the total includes one-time costs, which should be removed from the annual total. This would represent the total annual budget more fairly.
- The Strategy shows a true picture of how the fire service feels about recruitment and retention. There are currently over 600 volunteer firefighters. Each community is unique, but they all work together.

The Fire and Emergency Services Committee members, Mr. Keizer, Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Kucharski were thanked for their work on this document, and it was noted that it was very well produced.

**9. CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE (Nil):****10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES & BOARDS:****10.1 Fire Services Committee****10.1.1 Fire Department Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

**Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Whynot that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council authorizes the Fire & Emergency Services Committee to conduct public engagement with fire services on the amended Recruitment and Retention Strategy.**

Concern was raised regarding the timing of the financial commitment. Mr. Dumaresq noted that the Fire and Emergency Services Committee, through focus groups and audience research, drafted the Strategy to provide potential budget implications.

**The motion on the floor was voted on and carried unanimously.**

Mr. Keizer and Mr. Kennedy left the meeting at this time.

**10.2 Region 6 Inter-Municipal Committee****10.2.1 2019/2020 Budget**

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the letter from Region 6 Solid Waste Resource Management requesting approval of the 2019-20 Budget (circulated with Agenda). She reviewed the budget as it was presented.

In answer to a question, it was noted that Kirk Symonds, Regional Educator, previously had an office, but it was felt that since he works offsite so often the office was no longer required, resulting in a reduction in cost for rentals.

**Moved by Councillor Ernst, seconded by Councillor Hustvedt that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the Region 6 Solid Waste Resource Management Budget for fiscal 2019-2020 in the amount of \$829,018 with the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg's contribution being \$20,413.39.**

Councillor Ernst noted that diversion credits are provided back to municipal units within Region 6. MODL receives the largest credit, as it is based on population.

**The motion on the floor was voted on and carried unanimously.**

**11. STAFF REPORTS:****11.1 Finance Department****11.1.1 Operating Fund Variance & Capital Status Report**

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the Operating Fund Variance Report (circulated with Agenda).

A discussion was held and the following points were noted:

- MODL receives a farm acreage grant from the Province of Nova Scotia. The grant is based on the properties assessed as farmland by Property Valuation Services Corporation.
- There are anticipated savings in the budget for Internet Service Provider projects as they will not all occur in the current fiscal year.
- The paving of South Side Road came in at a cost of \$199,500. This will reduce the total budget of \$559,000. The bill has not yet been received from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

**11.1.2 Proposed Area Rates – Street Lights and Hydrants**

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the report titled "2019/20 Proposed Area Rates for Streetlights and Hydrants" (circulated with Agenda). She noted that the changes in the proposed rates for street lights are because of the previous reduction in rates due to the surplus that was in the accounts. The accounts are now balanced and the new rates should remain stable over the next few years.

**Moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Nauss that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve:**

- **The 2019/20 Fire Hydrant Rate at \$0.1358 per \$100 of assessment; and,**
- **The 2019/20 Street Light Rates as presented. Carried unanimously.**

### 11.1.3 Municipal User Fees – Proposed Amendments

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the report titled “Municipal User Fees” (circulated with Agenda). She noted that the increases proposed are the result of a three-year cumulative CPI index, which is 5%. Staff is recommending that the fees be included in the User Fee Policy, so when Council reviews the fees every three years, the only change will be to the Policy, and residents can find all fees in one place. There are some remaining fees in By-laws, which will be brought over to the User Fee Policy at a later time. The By-laws will then refer to the Policy, rather than stating individual fees. This will make it easier to amend the fees in the future.

A discussion was held and it was noted that consideration needs to be given to utilizing the Nova Scotia CPI rate or the Canadian CPI rate. MODL should be using the rates consistently.

**Moved by Councillor Knickle, seconded by Mayor Bolivar-Getson that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve proposed amendments to MDL-58 Fee Policy, as presented, and hereby gives seven (7) days’ notice of its intention to approve the proposed amendments to Policy MDL-58 at the February 12, 2019 Council meeting. Carried unanimously.**

### 11.1.4 Tax Relief – Damaged Property, Branch LaHave

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the report titled “Tax Relief – Damaged Property” (circulated with Agenda). Ms. Wentzell noted that the property was damaged by fire and meets the requirements of the Policy.

**Moved by Councillor Veinot, seconded by Councillor Bell that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve tax relief in the amount of \$191.27 as per the submitted application for the property located at 8 Oakes Road, Branch LaHave, #04868358, and as per Section 2(b) of Policy MDL-12 Tax Exemption/Reduction. Carried unanimously.**

## 11.2 Administration Department

### 11.2.1 Adopting a Community Incentive Clean-up Program

Ms. Conrad reviewed the report titled “Community Litter Clean-up Incentive Event Grant” (circulated with Agenda). She noted that Council previously discussed this item and staff was asked to do further research.

There are three options available:

1. MODL can provide grants to non-profits and community groups. The groups will apply to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (DOTIR) for a permit to do the cleanup, and if approved, the Department provides materials. The permit can be through the Adopt-A-Highway Program or another option the Department offers.
2. MODL can provide grants to non-profits and community groups and implement the program. The groups would still be required to get the permit from DOTIR, but MODL would provide the materials and guidelines. The group would need to obtain their own insurance and name MODL as an additional insured. The group could ask another non-profit to sponsor them to assist with the insurance requirement. This program will require MODL staff to inspect the area before and after the cleanup occurs. This is the program the Region of Queens utilizes.
3. MODL can reach out to the Municipal Joint Services Board or Region 6 to determine if a partnership can be reached to provide a litter cleanup program. This program could

include public properties such as beaches or parks, as well as roadsides. The community group/non-profit, as well as the individuals, would be required to sign a waiver saying they are an independent contractor and carry their own liability.

A discussion was held and the following points were noted:

- In order for MODL to provide funds, the group must be a non-profit.
- MODL holds no liability if it is only providing a grant, and does not implement the program or give any direction. The insurer would still want the inclusion of a liability waiver on the application form.
- If Council undertakes its own program, MODL should require a minimum of \$2 million in liability insurance by the non-profit group and that MODL is named as an additional insured.
- There are some areas outside of the Town of Bridgewater where there are higher accumulations of litter from fast food restaurants. There should be a request for the police service to provide litter prevention in these noted areas.

**Moved by Councillor Ernst, seconded by Councillor Bell that staff be directed to contact Region 6 and the Municipal Joint Services Board to see if they would be interested in undertaking a community litter clean-up incentive program for their respective municipal units; and further, that if they are not interested, staff bring back proposed amendments to Policy MDL-43 to incorporate a Community Litter Clean-up Incentive Event Grant. Carried unanimously.**

### **11.3 LaHave River Project Team**

#### **11.3.1 LaHave River Straight Pipe Project – Inspection Fee Discussion**

Maria Butts, LaHave River Project Manager, was in attendance at this time.

Mr. Dumaresq reviewed the report titled “LaHave River Straight Pipe Project – Year 1 Report” (circulated with Agenda). He noted that since some people are not voluntarily willing to sign up for the LaHave River Program, or do not have the required paperwork to confirm that they have a septic system, an inspection program is required to confirm whether septic systems are installed on these properties. The total anticipated cost for the inspections is \$80,200 and is based on a total of approximately 764 inspections at a cost of \$120 per inspection. This charge currently includes HST, but staff are asking Canada Revenue Agency for a ruling to determine if MODL must charge HST for this cost. Staff was directed at the last Policy & Strategy Committee meeting to bring back options for recovering the inspection fee.

The following options were provided in the report:

1. To include the cost of the inspection program in the administration fee applied to replacement program participants. Ensuring that only those who are not currently complying with Department of Environment requirements will have costs associated with the program. The administration fee would increase from \$1,200 to \$1,566 per installation.
2. Exclude inspection fees for the homeowners who have an acceptable system. This would mean that the cost would be recovered under the general tax rate.
3. Council can leave the Policy the way it is and each homeowner would be required to pay the \$120 per installation. This would be charged whether a satisfactory system was found on the property or not. This option is not recommended as the inspection fee is causing resistance from the property owners, who would otherwise be willing to voluntarily have the inspection done.

Councillor Nauss declared a Conflict of Interest, as his property is located in the Wastewater Management District and may qualify for an inspection, and left the table.

Councillor Bell noted that although he does live within the Wastewater Management District, he has provided all necessary paperwork and therefore, will not be declaring a Conflict of Interest.

Discussion was held and the following points were noted:

- Option 1 is preferred, as there is no interest in having residents outside of the Wastewater Management District, or those who are within the District but are complying with the requirements, to have to provide any funding toward the program. The program should be fully funded by those who are not complying.
- Records of installed septic systems were not kept by MODL prior to 2001 and the Department of Health/Department of Environment only keep their records for 15 years. Therefore, there may be approved systems in place that homeowners cannot prove they have due to lack of paperwork. It would be unfair to charge these residents the inspection fee.
- The inspection is to determine if a septic tank and field are in place. There should be no raw or partially untreated sewage being released from the system. The inspection will not verify that a perfectly functioning system is in place. It will prove there is a system in place.
- In December, a test bundle of 17 inspections was completed. The preliminary report has been received and staff are waiting for a final report. No homeowners have been invoiced for this cost yet.
- If, during an inspection, it is determined that a system does not meet the requirements and needs to be replaced, the homeowner will be notified. They can choose to voluntarily sign up for the Replacement Program. If the homeowner does not sign up for the Program, staff will provide the information to the Department of Environment for further enforcement. Any residents who choose to not enter the inspection program and cannot provide proof of a proper system, will also be forwarded to the Department of Environment.
- Council would like to have the Department of Environment attend a meeting for an update. Mr. Dumaresq noted that once some properties have been sent to them for enforcement, staff will ask them to report to Council on their processes to handle them.
- The inspection program will help staff determine exactly how many systems will need to be replaced within the District.
- It was noted that front counter staff, Ms. Kucharski and Ms. Butts have had a lot of involvement in the program and have received many complaints and concerns. The feedback received from residents regarding staff has been that they have conducted themselves very professionally.

**Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Whynot that the proposed amendments to the inspection fee section of Policy MDL-72 “LaHave River Wastewater Management District Cost Recovery”, as presented, be included with the proposed amendments going forward to Council for approval on February 12, 2019. Carried unanimously.**

Councillor Nauss returned to the table. Ms. Butts left the meeting at this time.

## **12. MAYOR’S/DEPUTY MAYOR’S/COUNCILLORS’ MATTERS:**

### **12.1 Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre Financial Statements (M. Ernst)**

Councillor Ernst advised that, due to the timing of the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre (LCLC) Board Meeting, he would prefer to provide the LCLC Financials at the Finance Committee meetings, rather than the Council meeting.

He noted that the statements now show receivables owing and income for the month. The income includes the receivables, and is not based on cash received. Ms. Wentzell advised that this meets Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and staff will be looking at the revenue collection policy currently in place.

**Moved by Councillor Ernst, seconded by Councillor Knickle that the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre Update and Financial Statements be included on the Finance Committee Agenda on the first Tuesday of each month, under “Mayor’s/Deputy Mayor’s/Councillors’ Matters”. Carried unanimously.**

### **12.2 South Shore Regional Library Board Update (E. Hustvedt)**

Councillor Hustvedt advised that the South Shore Regional Library Board, as well as the other Library Boards, recently received a grant of \$50,000 to recognize the fact that the Boards are under funded. The Province recently held a meeting with the Boards to discuss library funding and presented a proposal going forward. He will bring this proposal to the Policy and Strategy Committee meeting. The South Shore will also be hosting the Library Conference in October, at White Point Lodge.

### **13. IN CAMERA**

**At 11:00 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Hustvedt, seconded by Councillor Carver that Municipal Council go In Camera to discuss the following items:**

**13.1 Contract Negotiations re Solid Waste Management under Section 22(2)(e) of the *Municipal Government Act***

**13.2 Contract Negotiations re Fixed Wireless Internet under Section 22(2)(e) of the *Municipal Government Act***

**Carried.**

Municipal Council In Camera in session.

**At 12:10 p.m., it was moved by Mayor Bolivar-Getson, seconded by Councillor Nauss that Municipal Council come out of In Camera and return to open session. Carried.**

Municipal Council in session.

### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further business at 12:10 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Nauss that the meeting adjourn. Carried.**