

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Minutes of a Meeting of Finance Committee

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, NS
01, December, 2020 – 9:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson
Deputy Mayor Martin Bell, District 2
Councillor Leitha Haysom, District 1
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Sandra Statton, District 6
Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7
Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8
Councillor Reid Whynot, District 9
Councillor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Sherry Conrad, Municipal Clerk
Sarah Kucharski, Communications Officer
Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance
Angela Veinot, Accounting Manager
Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation
Dave Waters, Director Business Development, Tourism & Infrastructure
Byung Jun Kang, Planner
Darren Schupe, Senior Planner
Rachel Hiltz, Executive Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Elana Wentzell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. NOMINATION AND ELECTION BY BALLOT [MDL-02 – Committee Policy, Section 3.5]

Ms. Conrad called for nominations, by ballot, for the position of Chair. Those nominated were: Councillors Moore, Haysom, Statton and Hubley.

Councillors Haysom, Statton and Hubley declined their nominations.

Councillor Moore was declared the Chair.

Chair Moore, called for nominations, by ballot, for the position of Vice Chair. Those nominated were: Councillors Greek, Haysom, Statton and Hubley.

Councillors Greek and Hubley declined their nominations.

On the first ballot, Councillor Statton was elected as Vice Chair.

Moved by Mayor Bolivar-Getson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Bell that all ballots be destroyed. Carried unanimously.

Councillor Moore acknowledged that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/RECOGNITION

Councillor Haysom acknowledged Councillor Moore and Councillor Veinotte's recent Birthdays.

Councillor Greek and Councillor Moore recognized the Parkdale/Maplewood Livewire 4H Club and the New Germany Area Promotional Society (NGAPS) for their work on the New Germany Countryside Forest, which will be on display until January 2. She thanked MODL for providing a community tree and the Recreation Department for providing funds so the NGAPS could give each elementary student a treat bag, as they were unable to hold their annual Christmas Festival.

4. PUBLIC INPUT (Nil)

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 6, 2020

Moved by Mayor Bolivar-Getson, seconded by Councillor Whynot that the Minutes of October 6, 2020 Finance Committee meeting be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

7. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES (Nil)

8. AWARDING OF TENDERS/RFPs (Nil)

9. PRESENTATIONS/SCHEDULED TIMES (Nil)

10. CONSIDERATION OF CORRESPONDENCE (Nil)

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES & BOARDS (Nil)**12. STAFF REPORTS****12.1 Finance Department****12.1.1 Operating and Capital Variance Report**

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the report titled “2020/21 Operating Fund Variance Report & Capital Project Status & Gas Tax Investment Update” (circulated with Agenda) and answered questions posed by Committee members.

The following points were noted:

- MODL received a grant from the Province of Nova Scotia to offset revenue losses and increased expenses due to COVID-19.
- Deed Transfer Tax revenue has increased due to the increase in the real estate market.
- Recreation Programming revenue has decreased.
- Expenses increased for Personal Protective Equipment and signage related to COVID-19.
- MODL Council gave residents a tax break by not charging interest, resulting in a loss of interest revenue.
- The insurance renewal occurred on October 1. Insurance costs have increased due to low interest rates and merging of insurance companies. MODL uses a Request for Proposal process to obtain competitive insurance rates.
- 2020 Election costs came in below budget, as the budget was for a paper and electronic vote and included costs for staff, polling stations, paper ballots, etc. Since the Election was fully electronic, there is an estimated savings of \$54,900. There are some final costs coming.
- The Municipal Joint Services Board (MJSB) noted a deficit of \$300,000. It was noted that a Councillor from MODL is designated to the Board, and they receive the financial statements and report back to Council after the meeting
- New vehicle purchases are procured through MODL’s procurement process. All RFP’s, Tenders, etc., are posted to the Nova Scotia Procurement Website. Staff will also ensure local dealerships are aware of any vehicle related procurement. Once proposals are received, they are reviewed by staff and brought forward to Council for approval.
- Electric Vehicle Charge Stations – Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning and Development Services, was in attendance at this time. The charging stations are located in the staff parking lot only at this time. They are not yet set up for use. Council will need to create a Policy to determine if charging stations will be used by the public, and if so, if there will be a charge for it. Usage could be free, cost recovery based on usage, or cost recovery with a mark up. The stations do track electricity usage.
 - Councillors requested that information be brought forward during the policy-making process including: best practices from other municipalities and businesses, research on costs to charge electric vehicles, encouraging existing

businesses to install chargers, requiring new commercial developments to include chargers (or be charger ready), and providing grants for installation.

- Councillors requested an update from the Recreation Department and local trail groups regarding work being completed on trails.

12.1.2 Property Tax Exemption Applications – Late Application Update

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the report titled “Property Tax Exemption Applications – late applicants update” (circulated with Agenda).

The deadline for Property Tax Exemption Applications is usually August 1, however, on September 22, Council decided to allow late applications until the entire budget has been used. To date, 33 late applications have been received. The Treasurer is able to approve these applications. Any residents with an outstanding tax balance will receive a credit on their account. Any accounts that are paid off will receive a reimbursement.

12.1.3 Tax Relief – Damaged Property – Mount Pleasant

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the report titled “Tax Relief – Damaged Property” (circulated with Agenda). An application was received for fire damage to a property located at 1032 Mount Pleasant Road. These applications write off taxes owing after a property was destroyed by fire. Any amount over \$500 requires Council approval.

Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Whynot that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve tax relief in the amount of \$551.05 as per the submitted application for the property located, or formerly located, at 1032 Mount Pleasant Road, Mount Pleasant, AA# 04818199 and as per the Municipality’s Damaged Property Relief Property. Carried unanimously.

13. MAYOR’S/DEPUTY MAYOR’S/COUNCILLORS’ MATTERS

13.1 LCLC Update

Mr. MacEwan provided a financial update from the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre (LCLC) as of October 31, 2020, which was presented at the last LCLC meeting.

- Budgeted Revenue: \$165,932. Actual: \$142,879. Variance: \$22,063.
- Budgeted Expense: \$134,607. Actual: \$127,582. Variance: \$7,025.
- The forecast is based on conservative numbers throughout winter as it is unknown what impacts COVID-19 could have. At this time, there is no significant loss being forecasted.
- The Lumberjacks hockey team extended their contract until the end of the season, and continues to be a regular source of revenue. Attendance at games is about 400 people, which is down from about 700 people per game. This could change with COVID-19.

- The LCLC took over operation of the concession stand. It is showing a slight loss as staff are required to maintain aspects of the stand, but they are not permitted to sell food or beverages at this time.
- The Aquatic Centre is continuing to operate, but was slow over the summer.
- The new Chair is Councillor Andrew Tanner. The Co-Chair is Mayor Bolivar-Getson.

13.2 Deputy Mayor's Update**13.3 Mayor's Update**

These items will be discussed at next Council meeting.

14. ADDED ITEMS (Nil)**15. IN CAMERA (Nil)****16. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business at 10:08 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Haysom that the meeting adjourn. Carried.