

## **Municipality of the District of Lunenburg**

### **Minutes of a SPECIAL Meeting of the Finance Committee**

Held in Council Chambers, 10 Allee Champlain Drive, Cookville, NS

And Via Video/Audio Teleconferencing

**Tuesday, April 19, 2022 – 9:00 a.m.**

#### **Attendance**

Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3, Chair

Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson

Councillor Leitha Haysom, District 1

Councillor Martin Bell, District 2

Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4

Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5

Councillor Sandra Statton, District 6

Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7 (via Teams)

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

April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance

Angela Veinot, Accounting Manager

Dave Waters, Director of Economic Development

Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation, Parks & Tourism

Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning & Development Services

Abhi Jain, Sustainability Planner

Stephen Pace, Director of Engineering Services

Rachel Hiltz, Recording Secretary

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

Councillor Oickle noted that she will be chairing this meeting as Councillor Greek is attending via Teams.

##### **1.1 Mi'kma'ki Territorial Acknowledgement**

Councillor Oickle called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and acknowledged that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

#### **2. Announcements, Acknowledgements, Recognitions**

Mayor Bolivar-Getson acknowledged that April 18 and 19 was the anniversary of the tragic events where 22 lives were taken in Portapique, NS.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

**Moved by Councillor DeLong, seconded by Councillor Veinotte that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.**

### 4. Staff Reports

#### 4.1 Finance Department

##### 4.1.1 2022/2023 Draft Operating Budget

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the presentation titled “Draft Operating Budget 2022/2023” (attached to original set of Minutes). The following points were noted:

Mr. Dumaresq reviewed the Legislative & Administration and Protective Services Sections:

- A new Corporate Services Department has been created, which resulted in increased staffing costs as staff from other Departments have been moved to the Administration Department, under Corporate Services.
- Salaries across all departments have increased by 4.8% relevant to the Consumer Price Index increase. Council approved a Salary Administration Policy, which defines that staff will receive CPI increases. There is a requirement to review this policy every 4 years to ensure salary scales remain competitive. This budget includes the cost of this review.
- RCMP costs are up by 11% and there is a possibility all municipalities across Nova Scotia will also have to make a retroactive payment for these services.
- Council directed staff to do a comparative analysis for Councillor remuneration. The analysis will gather information from several comparable municipal units to MODL. The results will be brought forward to the April 26 Council meeting. The operating budget includes an estimated increase in Councillor remuneration.
- MODL is working on its own Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiative and includes training for staff and Council. Once MODL’s training and auditing is complete, we will then work with community groups.
- The Election budget will accommodate both in person and e-voting. A decision can be made at the time whether we will have a full in person election, a full e-vote election, or a combination.
- Policing costs are based on the number of officers allocated to a municipal unit. Population and crime rates are two factors that are considered when determining the appropriate number of officers. MODL has a contract with the Province of Nova Scotia for policing services, and the Province has a contract with the RCMP. Council can write a letter to the Province requesting a review of policing coverage. Council can request a review for just MODL, but it is unknown if this can be accommodated as the detachments do not follow municipal boundaries. The last review was completed in 2013, at the request of the Town of Mahone Bay. A copy of that review will be distributed to Council.
- Council requested a report from the Animal Control Officer on the services provided, as well as the cost for services compared to the other unit that shares the service.

Mr. Pace reviewed the Engineering Section:

- There was a decrease in revenue as there will be fewer co-op students this year, and therefore less grant money.
- There are fuel surcharges in many of the contracts, including the solid waste collection contract. With the current price of fuel the budget reflects anticipated fuel cost increases.
- The addition under the wastewater treatment plant includes the increase of the Manager of Wastewater Services to a full time position, which is currently vacant. Also, all costs for wastewater services are reallocated back to each unit and are covered through user fees.

Mr. Merrill reviewed Planning, Building, Inspection and Zoning Sections:

- Staff are working with the Nova Scotia Community College forestry program to administer the tree planting program. The plan is to work with community partnerships, through the Recreation Department, to teach families how to plant trees.

Mr. Waters reviewed the Economic Development Section:

- The Economic Development Department now has the Director, Business Development Officer and an admin position. The other position has been moved to the Tourism & Recreation Department.
- The Economic Development Strategy will include a Request for Proposal. Staff will work with experts in the business to complete a scope, do comparatives and look at growth sectors.
- Year 2 of the Wayfinding Strategy will include signage for parks in identified priority locations. Staff will also look at doing six gateway signs and some additional wayfinding if possible. The submissions from the Expression of Interest will be brought forward to Council in a few weeks. Council will pick several companies for the standing offer list, then staff can move forward with signage.

Mr. Schurman reviewed the Recreation Section:

- The Lahave Sunset Park recently had a port-a-potty and garbage receptacles installed. Residents were extremely grateful. The budget includes new garbage receptacles at all parks, as well as other upgrades including benches and dog waste bags. Some funding for this is coming from Safe Restart. There may also be funds available for the garbage receptacles through Region 6 Solid Waste Management.
  - The Trails & Open Space Coordinator will work with community organizations to offer municipal group pricing, and possibly grant funding, to provide garbage receptacles at their facilities.
  - The Grant Coordinator is working on a grant through Develop Nova Scotia for further funding for park upgrades.
- The municipal reserve funds are not significant enough to cover all capital projects over the next 5 years, however, there are general reserves that can be used for various capital projects. These funding decisions can be made as projects proceed.

Ms. Wentzell reviewed the Finance Section.

## **4.2 Administration Department**

**4.2.1 Letter from Kingsburg Community Association re Bill 149 Financial Measures Act**

Mayor Bolivar-Getson received a letter from the Kingsburg Community Association regarding Bill 149 Financial Measures Act (circulated with Agenda). Several Councillors have received phone calls and emails from residents raising concern about the proposed amendments to the Act.

The following points were noted:

- The Province has not shown how this funding will directly help solve the housing crisis, or how the proposed taxes will be collected and administered.
- Councillors would prefer to see a short and long-term impact study based on the proposed amendments.
- Seasonal residents support their communities while they are in the area.
- Some residents have expressed they are in favour of the proposed amendments.

**Moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Bell that the Finance Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council write a letter to the NS Premier, Ministers of Finance and Treasury Board and Economic Development, with a copy to the local MLA's on the need to undertake a full analysis of the short- and long-term impacts of Bill 149, Financial Measures (2022) Act on both the supply and affordability of housing in Nova Scotia and on individuals, families, communities, businesses and the economy of MODL, rural areas and all of Nova Scotia. Carried unanimously.**

**5. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters**

**6. Added Items**

**7. In Camera (Nil)**

**8. Adjournment**

**There being no further business at 10:50 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor DeLong that the meeting adjourn. Carried.**