

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Strategy Committee

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, N.S.

Tuesday, January 16, 2024– 9:00 a.m.

Attendance

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

Regrets

Councillor Sandra Statton, District 6

Staff

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO (via Teams)
April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk
Joanne Powers, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

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

2. Acknowledgements/Recognition - Nil

3. Public Input – Nil

4. Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Haysom that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2023

Moved by Mayor Bolivar-Getson, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Minutes of November 21, 2023, Policy & Strategy Committee meeting be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

6. Business Arising from Minutes – Nil

8. Referrals from Council – Nil

9. Staff Reports

9.1 Finance Department

9.1.1 Proposed Amendments to MODL Policy 076, Signing Authority

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, reviewed the report entitled, “Amendments – MODL Policy 076, Signing Authority.” (circulated in the agenda) The existing policy contains outdated references that need to be updated and staff recommends a change in the third “elected official signatory” should be made.

Section 3 of the Policy references the Assistant Treasurer; that position is now referred to as the Manager of Accounting and should be updated.

Section 4 details what existing positions are signatories on municipal bank accounts. It is being recommended that a third signatory designate be considered. The outgoing Deputy Mayor would have experience as a signatory, therefore, is recommended.

Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Policy and Strategy Committee recommend to Municipal Council that Council approve the amendments to MODL Policy 076, Signing Authority and give 7 days’ notice of the proposed changes. Carried unanimously.

9.1.2 Low Income Property Tax Rebate Budget Request

Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance, reviewed the report entitled, “Low Income Property Tax Rebate Budget Request.” (circulated in the agenda). She explained that Council approved \$20,000 in additional budget for the low-income property tax rebate program. That additional budget has been almost fully utilized with 61 property owners benefiting from the rebate, bringing the total to 725 property owners who have received the rebate in this fiscal year.

Staff are aware of more applicants who have verbally asked about the rebate, but to date, no new applications have been received. To continue processing applications as they are submitted, staff estimated that an additional \$10,000 may be required. The additional monies could be taken from the Council Approved Contingency or General Operating Reserve, if required at year end.

Moved by Councillor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Moore that Municipal Council approve \$10,000 in additional funds for the low-income property tax rebate program and further, that these funds come out of the General Operating Reserves if required at year end. Carried unanimously.

10. Mayor's/Deputy Mayor's/Councillors' Matters

10.1 Two-year Deputy Mayor Term (Councillor Hubley)

Councillor Hubley brought forward the idea of changing the term of Deputy Mayor to two years rather than one. She felt it would provide a deeper understanding of the position. Committee alternate members' terms were discussed as well, and it was a general consensus that alternates should be considered as permanent member when terms of full members expire and that the Nominating Committee consider this during their review and recommendations to council annually.

Moved by Councillor Hubley, seconded by Councillor Whynot that the Policy & Strategy Committee direct staff to prepare draft amendments to MODL Policy 011, Deputy Mayor, by revising the term of office from one year to two years and bring back for consideration. Opposed: Deputy Mayor Oickle. Motion carried.

The Committee recessed at 9:43 a.m. and resumed at 10:01 a.m.

7. Presentations/Scheduled Times

7.1 Old Growth Forests, Dr. Peter Bush, Old-Growth Forest Coordinator, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables

Dr. Peter Bush, Old-Growth Forest Coordinator, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, reviewed the presentation entitled, "Old-Growth Forest Policy" (included in the agenda package). It included the following:

- How We Got Here?
- Key Highlights
- Old-Growth Forest Areas
- Old-Growth Forest Restoration Opportunity Areas
- Private Land Old-Growth Forest Conservation
- Other Information
- Summary

There were questions and discussion including the impact on the forestry industry, on municipally owned properties, and crown owned land.

Dr. Bush left the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

11. Added Items - Nil

12. In Camera - Nil

13. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.