

APPROVED – APRIL 28, 2008

COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 31, 2008 – 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor David Corkum (left at 6:55 p.m.), Deputy Mayor Mark Pearl, Councilor Dennis Kehoe (arrived 5:50 p.m.), Councilor Nola Folker-Hill, Councilor Bernie Cooper (left at 6:55 p.m.), Councilor Larry Honey, Councilor Eric Bolland, CAO Bill Boyd, Solicitor Peter Muttart, Town Clerk Carol Harmes.

Director Debra Crowell, Director Hal Henderson

CAO Bill Boyd reported that all Council members were present, except Councilor Kehoe who was stuck in traffic and will be late.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Councilor Larry Honey and seconded by Councilor Nola Folker-Hill

that the Agenda be approved with the addition of:
7(l) Energy Audit Update
Move Agenda # 10 - In Camera - to 6:00 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Nola Folker-Hill and seconded by Councilor Eric Bolland

that the Minutes of February 25, 2008 be approved, as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

(a) Blue Cross Survey

Director Debra Crowell reported that a report has been circulated to staff and Council regarding the options proposed to help mitigate the rising premium costs. Of those who responded, the majority selected the proposed rates with an approximate 10% increase, with a cap put on the price for hearing aids and an increase imposed on the co-pay amount. The new rates will come into affect on April 1, 2008.

FINANCE

(a) Projections

Director Crowell stated that the projections to the year ended March 31, 2008, indicate that overall revenue is projected to be over budget by \$38,000, overall expenditures to be under budget at \$18,500, with the Town Operating Fund currently reporting a yearend surplus of \$56,000. She proposed a surplus of \$56,500, however, cautioned

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about further snow removal costs, which have already increased since the writing of this report. Also, the PANS settlement will mean 2 years of retroactive pay and this will influence the budget substantially.

Following a detailed explanation of the various accounts and some questions, it was moved by Councilor Bernie Cooper and seconded by Councilor Larry Honey

that the report by the Director of Finance regarding projections be received.

MOTION CARRIED

Points from Discussion

- Although some reserves have been set up to cover costs associated with the PANS settlement, some funds will have to be transferred to cover the retroactively paid salaries.

(b) Temporary Borrowing Resolution – Renewal Land - \$500,000

Director Crowell submitted a report, noting that this TBR is nearing expiration and must be replaced to allow the Town access to short term borrowings related to the Kentville Futures Site.

Therefore, it was moved by Deputy Mayor Mark Pearl and seconded by Councilor Bernie Cooper

*Recommendation to
Town Council*

that a recommendation be made to Town Council that the attached Temporary Borrowing Resolution – TBR -6/07-04 – Land, in the amount of \$500,00, be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

(c) CPI Salary Increases – April, 2008

Director Crowell noted that in accordance with the Personnel and Policy Manual for the Town, cost of living increases must be granted at the first of each fiscal year and in accordance with that information released by Statistics Canada.

As the period between March 2007 and February 2008 saw an average cost of living at 2.1%, she recommended that this figure be used.

Therefore, it was moved by Councilor Bernie Cooper and seconded by Councilor Larry Honey

Recommendation to

that a recommendation be made to Town Council that cost

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of living increases be granted to non-union employees of the Town, effective April 1, 2008 and further that the rate to be applied to non-union employees be based on the Statistics Canada calculation, which from March 2007 to February 2008 would be 2.1%

MOTION CARRIED

Points from Discussion

- The 2.1% increase does not seem appropriate with the increases in goods to consumers.
- The percentages are averaged over the year, and some months are higher due to fuel costs, food costs, etc.
- With the Blue Cross premium increases alone, staff will earn less than last year.
- Last year consideration was made to increase the percentage to be a little closer to the union increases.
- In the past a subsequent motion had been made to increase the CPI as part of budget deliberations.
- Most municipal units use the Provincial cost of living, not the federal cost of living data.

IN CAMERA

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Mark Pearl and seconded by Councilor Bernie Cooper

that the meeting adjourn and go “In Camera” to discuss Land Negotiations and Personnel.

MOTION CARRIED

C.A.C. MEETING RESUMES

It was moved by Councilor Eric Bolland and seconded by Councilor Dennis Kehoe

that the In Camera Meeting adjourns and that the regular meeting of Council Advisory Committee resumes at 6:53 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

CHANGE OF CHAIRPERSON

Deputy Mayor Mark Pearl assumed the chair at 6: 55 pm and noted that Mayor Corkum and Councilor Bernie Cooper had left the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

(a) Kings Partnership Steering Committee (project updates, joint workshop)

CAO Boyd gave an update on the work carried out on the Fire Study and the Recreation Study. He added that the issue of the over-all funding formula review has continued to be debated at KPSC

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meetings, and that the joint meeting for all council members of KPSC has been scheduled for the Old Orchard Inn for April 10th, from 5:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. He gave an overview of some other items which will be included on the agenda. Those councilors who plan to attend should notify the Administration Office.

(b) CAO's Report – Policy Review

A report from CAO Bill Boyd identified the need to review several Policy Statements, as updated information should be considered, regarding the remuneration of Council, the term of service for the Deputy Mayor's position and the student bursary which is granted annually by the Town of Kentville.

(c) Review of Policy Statement G5-Council Remuneration and Benefits

CAO Boyd reported that this policy has not been reviewed and updated since its initial implementation in 1999. He further noted that whereas other municipalities are also updating their own policies, it might be timely to do the same here in Kentville.

Therefore, it was moved by Councilor Larry Honey and seconded by Councilor Dennis Kehoe

***Recommendation to
Town Council***

**that a recommendation be made to Town Council that staff, through the CAO's office, do a comparison with other units, and prepare a report for Council's consideration on the remuneration and benefits of Council, and further,
that the implementation date be for November 2008, following the installation of the newly elected Council**

MOTION CARRIED

Points from Discussion

- Council determining its own remuneration is inappropriate, as it could be viewed as self-serving.
- There is no better group to determine these benefits, than those who have served in the capacity of council, as they would know the true costs.

Council felt that public perception of councilors establishing their own remuneration and benefits might appear self-serving. In addition, they noted that a great many differences exist amongst the various municipalities, and issues such as population served, rising costs, responsibilities and community expectations must all be considered, along with the range for remuneration.

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It was further moved by Councilor Nola Folker-Hill and seconded by Councilor Eric Bolland

***Recommendation to
Town Council***

that a recommendation be made to Town Council that a resolution be prepared for UNSM, asking that this organization establish guidelines to help determine a range of remuneration for councilors serving their respective communities.

MOTION CARRIED

Points from Discussion

- UNSM should lobby the province to impose standards and guidelines.
- The Province would not be in the position to make good judgments on what fair remuneration should be.
- The population of the municipal unit, along with increased costs like gasoline, must be considered.
- A public notice that Council will be considering its own remuneration at an upcoming Council meeting, would give citizens the opportunity for input.
- Any information regarding Council honorariums, expenses etc., is available through the FOIPOP process.

(d) Review of Policy Statement G19- Appointment of Deputy Mayor

CAO Boyd reported that although it was noted that the current policy indicates that the Deputy Mayor be appointed yearly, Council may wish to consider other options at this point in time. He noted that as alternatives, some municipal units appoint the Deputy Mayor for the term of council (4 years), while others schedule those councilors interested in serving in this capacity, for a 1 year term of office over the four years.

Points from Discussion

- The current system should be maintained, whereby there is an annual election.
- This allows Council to elect the best person to serve as Deputy Mayor should the Mayor not be available.

(e) Review of Policy Statement G18 – Student Bursary

CAO Boyd reported that the bursary committee felt that the amount of this bursary has not increased since its implementation in 2000 and that it should be increased to \$2000 per year.

Therefore, it was moved by Councilor Eric Bolland and seconded by Councilor Larry Honey

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***Recommendation to
Town Council***

that a recommendation be made to Town Council that amendments be made to Policy Statement G18-Student Bursary, to increase the annual amount paid from \$1500 to \$2,000, subject to budget deliberations, and further, that 4 bursaries in the amount of \$500 each be given, instead of 1 for the full amount.

MOTION CARRIED

Points from Discussion

- The school distributes the applications which are reviewed by the Selection Committee.
- There are seldom more than 6 applicants who apply.
- The amount of \$2000 is appropriate, however, this amount should be disbursed to 3 or 4 students to allow more than one person to benefit.
- One bursary of \$2000 is recommended by the Selection Committee.

(f) Review of Policy Statement G9 – Ice and Snow Control Procedures

Director Henderson reported that the Transportation Services Committee reviewed the current policy as it relates to sidewalk plowing on Sundays following snow storms. Members felt that Sunday shopping and increased vehicular and pedestrian travel around Town has placed expectations on the Town to provide clear streets and sidewalks at all times. He added, however, that there would be additional costs of approximately \$15,000 per year to provide this service. Director Henderson submitted a written report in which he made suggestions for amendments to the current policy, should Council wish to increase this level of service.

Therefore, it was moved by Councilor Dennis Kehoe and seconded by Councilor Larry Honey

***Recommendation to
Town Council***

that a recommendation be made to Council that consideration be given during budget deliberations, to increase the budget by \$15,000, which would allow for additional snow and ice removal if required on Sundays, should it be deemed necessary by the Public Works Department, and further, should this service be extended, than an amendment be made to Policy Statement G9 – Ice and Snow Control Procedures, to include the following wording:

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“The Town will clear some sidewalks along the main thoroughfares, seven days of the week, with plowing restricted to the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.”

MOTION CARRIED

(g) Email Discussion / Meeting

Councilor Larry Honey wished to have a discussion on the need to have a policy regarding email etiquette. His concern was to enter discussion on an issue which might be construed as a private meeting.

Points from Discussion

- A future strategy session for Council should include email etiquette.
- Council members must use their own discretion, common sense and courtesy.
- A policy should be developed, following some research from other municipal units and resources.
- A disclaimer (indicating private use only by the recipient) would not be effective, although lawyers respect the “without prejudice” status, as professionals.
- An email is a record and can be brought before the courts as evidence.

(h) Anti-Racism Motion from UN

A member of Council wished to have this issue placed on this agenda once again, as Council chose to receive it only during the CAC meeting of January, 2008. The solicitor felt that as it was only received at the time, it was eligible for reintroduction.

Points from Discussion

- This coalition has existed since 2004 and has the potential of creating a considerable amount of work for staff.
- This is a worthwhile initiative and additional work to staff may be manageable.
- There is no point in signing this resolution, if there is no opportunity to do the work.
- The FCM has asked municipalities to look at this and it is supported by UNESCO.
- It appears that the most progressive municipalities in the province have supported this initiative.
- The Town can be racially diverse, without signing up to undertake projects which require extra resources.
- Specific examples of discriminatory tactics can be seen in the day-to-day decisions of Town Council. A recent example being the 2.1 % increase for CPI, approved by Council for

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non unionized (female) staff, whereas, unionized (male) staff will received substantially more of a cost of living increase.

(i) UNSM Municipal Property Tax Relief Policy for Low Income Home Owners.

CAO Boyd noted that a report (attached) from UNSM on the *Assessment Capping Legislative Review*, identified the need to make current tax relief measures more progressive in light of the financial hardships incurred by some homeowners because of rising property taxes from rising assessments.

CAC members felt that although this report established its own criteria, the town of Kentville currently supports an exemption from taxes, as granted pursuant to Section 69 of the Municipal Government Act, and that this is reviewed and established annually, to ensure that it is fair and equitable to those needing assistance.

Therefore, it was moved by Councilor Dennis Kehoe and seconded by Councilor Nola Folker-Hill

***Recommendation to
Town Council***

that a recommendation be made to Council that the UNSM Draft Policy regarding Municipal Property Tax Relief for Low Income Homeowners not be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

Points from Discussion

- If the current economics of the Town change, this proposed policy could dictate a huge increase to the Town in the future.
- Kentville has the lowest number of households which would be impacted by this policy.
- Homeowners unable to pay their taxes should buy a home they can afford.

(j) UNSM Spring Workshop – May 8, 9th

CAO Boyd reported that both Mayor Corkum and Councilor Folker-Hill have registered for this workshop which will take place in Antigonish this year.

(k) Parking Committee – Recommendation re Side Walk Cafes

It was noted that the Parking Committee has addressed the use of parking spaces for sidewalk cafes during the warmer months of the year. The Parking Committee felt that a survey should be done among the businesses to evaluate the impact of the sidewalk cafes.

The permits run from May 15 to October 15th however, the Parking

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Committee is asking that this time be shortened to expire after Labour Day. Other amendments on the size of the space for the sidewalk cafes, the number of parking spots lost, etc. will be proposed as possible amendments in subsequent years. The Parking Committee is also suggesting that a survey be done with downtown businesses.

Points from Discussion

- A written recommendation from the Parking Committee should have been submitted which would have specifically requested amendments to be considered.
- Sidewalk Cafes are economic initiatives supported by Town Council and are not Parking Committee responsibilities.
- Few formal complaints have ever been received regarding the loss of a few parking spots in front of Paddy's Pub.
- Sidewalk cafes have become popular in Wolfville, Halifax, and other urban areas, and add a great vitality to their downtown areas.
- A response should be made to the Parking Committee that positive steps have been made to increase parking.
- Council should advise the Parking Committee that it is not their mandate to conduct a survey on the impact of sidewalk cafes.

It was moved by Councilor Dennis Kehoe and seconded by Councilor Larry Honey

*Recommendation to
Town Council*

that a recommendation to Council that the Policy Statement G-29 – Sidewalk Cafes remain in effect as approved on April 9, 2003.

MOTION CARRIED

(Note: Council agreed that the CAO should advise the members of the Parking Committee that this committee does not have the mandate to undertake a survey.)

(I) Energy Audit Update

Councilor Eric Bolland reported that a \$10,000 grant has been received by the Town for an energy audit as a result of an application submitted by the Environmental Advisory Committee. The purpose of these funds will be to provide an energy audit on the Town Hall complex, Public Works building, arena, police department, etc. Items such as motion sensors for lights, solar energy, etc. could be energy saving recommendations.

Points from Discussion

- Usually grants are matched by the Town, and in this case

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would mean that \$10,000

CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Jim Thurber, Warden

CAO Boyd noted that a letter from Warden Thurber, Municipality of Digby County, identified the impact that the loss of the Digby-Saint John Ferry would have on the whole area. He asked that councils write a letter of support for this service and to also financially assist in the cost to support the lobbying affords. Based on a formula, the costs to Kentville would be \$1,420.

Points from Discussion

- The funding formula appears disproportionate to the County of Kings.
- The economic benefits to the Town are questionable.
- This should be a federal responsibility between provinces.

It was moved by Councilor Eric Bolland and seconded by Councilor Larry Honey

***Recommendation to
Town Council***

that a recommendation be made to Town Council that a letter of support be sent to support the ferry service between Digby and Saint John, New Brunswick, and that a copy of this letter be sent to Minister Peter MacKay (ACOA), MP Scott Brison, MLA Mark Parent and Warden Jim Thurber

MOTION CARRIED

(Note: Council agreed that no money would be contributed to this project.)

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Dennis Kehoe and seconded by Councilor Nola Folker-Hill

that the meeting adjourns at 8:10 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED