

REGULAR MEETING, TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN HALL
Monday, March 20, 2017

A regular meeting of Oxford Town Council was held on the above date at 6:00 pm. Mayor Stewart presided with Councilors Colborne, Wood, Thompson, Kay, Draper, and Adshade in attendance.

Town Council Meeting – Called to order by Mayor Stewart – 6:00 pm

Epilepsy Awareness Month – Mayor Stewart was asked by Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia to proclaim that it is Epilepsy Awareness within the Town of Oxford, so on this date March 20, 2017 Mayor Stewart declared this to be Epilepsy Awareness Month for the Town of Oxford.

Presentations

Cumberland Business Connector – Susan MacIsaac, David Hoffman and Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin - Susan MacIsaac is the Chair of the Cumberland Business Connector and she presented to the Oxford Town Council. The Cumberland Business Connector is a business led economic development organization moved to Cumberland County. David Hoffman is also a member of the board as is Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin. The CBC wanted to come back to the three funding partners (three municipal units of Cumberland County) and update the status of the CBC and where they are. She also wanted to present to those that were not at that meeting she had presented to before (about a year ago) at the Capital Theatre give them an opportunity to know about the CBC and to ask any questions. Currently they have seven board members and need three more people. Their mandate is set, and they have three broad areas and have developed actions under each of the areas to focus on decisions that drive economic development. They do this by influencing all levels of government and so they want to ensure that they know what various levels of government are doing and offering. They also want to learn what the concerns are for the businesses in Cumberland County. We want to assist and support existing businesses in Cumberland County. Supporting youth to create a job ready workforce. The board has met formally twice. Currently looking for a CAO. The funding from the three funding units will largely go to the salary and an office. Each of the municipal units will have a representative on the funding boards so that they are able to understand where the money is going.

Councilor Kay asked if they have spoken to the business and the youth, as in what the businesses need and letting the youth know this is what is needed. Susan comments, the second mandate was assistance support to existing businesses and some of that includes mentoring, and some of it is getting out to understand what the businesses needs. For the youth we want them to know what businesses are out there and what job opportunities are here in Cumberland County.

Councilor Draper commented to line up with the education side of it as well so they know the proper type of education the students need to fulfill the jobs in the local areas. That gap analysis would be helpful. Susan mentioned that education component has been recognized and that the students are not aware of the proper education. David Hoffman commented that working with the teachers to encourage the youths to get the education that they need.

Mayor Stewart mentioned that she can see an opportunity for the CBC to work along with the CO-OP program we have here. Mayor Stewart also asked how close you are to hiring an executive director. Susan commented that they are at the interview process hoping to have someone in place by early April.

The commitment for the Town of Oxford would be \$10,000 over the next 5 years. David Hoffman commented that he hopes this will build a stronger business community. All of council agreed.

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin – spoke about the changes of the Cobequid pass and the debt repayment schedule. She has a local business in the Town of Amherst called Manasseh Local Food. The suppliers told Elizabeth that they would not ship the goods pass Masstown due to the expense of the tolls. In June, she went to local chamber and asked them to look at the toll issue. They talked to other local business owners if this had a negative effect on their local business. Elizabeth then presented facts to Council about the agreements of the Cobequid Pass over the past years in a PowerPoint presentation. A concern that Elizabeth shared was the fact that the government has accepted to continue to collect tolls after the debt repayment for continued upkeep and maintenance. The reason she wanted to share this with Oxford Town Council is so they have all the facts and the knowledge of what has happened. If it is possible for the debt to be paid in 2019, she feels that we can all agree that we all need to advocate it and push for that to happen so that tolls can be removed and that extra tax can be

removed for the citizens and the businesses of Cumberland County. The only ways the tolls will be removed is if we push here in Cumberland County.

Councilor Adshade commented that 43 jobs would be lost. He also commented that maybe the government would be better off to reduce the tolls to keep those jobs up there and still generate some revenue and even put that revenue into the roads of Cumberland County. Elizabeth commented that as a business owner she would like to see that extra expense removed because we are all paying it. Councilor Adshade also commented his concern is that right now we have a really good and safe highway. If Cobequid Pass does not generate any more revenue, the road may go all to pieces and we just have another beat up four lane highway. This revenue is generating enough revenue to keep it in good shape.

Councilor Draper – just a couple of comments – he understood at the meeting on March 13, 2017, but he may be wrong, that the tolls would come off 2019 or 2020 depending the amount of money is collected. Another comment is that they are currently negotiating with the highway corporation to change the highway speed limit so that the old highway to make it more user friendly. His understanding is that the Act does not give them any option and that the monies that are raised they have the debt off, they have to pay that. Councilor Draper also mentioned that she did state the fact that it is acceptable not to remove tolls and they did not give us any indication that they wouldn't. Elizabeth replied that in the documents she gave Council, one of them says that they re-advertise the debt back to be paid in 2026, and they felt that is was acceptable to continue the tolls after the debt has been paid. That is not what they verbally told them on Monday, March 13, 2017. Elizabeth is not sure as of which is going to happen, tolls till 2026 or 2019/2020. This is why she was presenting to Council so they know all the facts. Councilor Draper's personal concern is the possibility of the loss of jobs as there are a lot of Oxford citizens that are employed there.

Approval of the agenda – Councilor Adshade wanted to add to the agenda Off Highway Vehicles. Mayor Stewart assigned that to 7.2 on the agenda. It was moved by Councilor Kay, seconded by Councilor Draper that the agenda be approved as amended.

Motion Carried

Approval of the Minutes – It was moved by Councilor Draper, seconded by Councilor Thompson that the minutes from the meeting held on February 21, 2017 be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

Reports

All Director Reports and Councilor Reports were distributed and/or discussed.

Public Works – Wes was present. General Discussion on Public Works Report that was submitted. There was discussion regarding the grease build up down by the Scott's Independent. This problem is due to grease being dumped down the drain. Restaurants should have a bin outside their facilities to dump their grease. Mayor Stewart asked the cost to clean up? The cost for us was about \$600.00.

Mayor Stewart will address to the residents and businesses the issue about dumping fat/grease down the drains as it is hard on the system in the mayor's corner for April, 2017.

A letter needs to be written to all businesses regarding when cooking with grease, letting them know what the rules are. To be added to the letter a name of a company that collects the grease they need disposed.

Needs to be checked out if all businesses are required to have their own grease traps.

General discussion about the water meter installations. Wes commented that we are down to less than 100 left to install. As some of the meters are built right into the walls, we may need to estimate those readings for now, till they can figure out how they can install the new meter.

Councilor Draper took a minute to commend the crew for all the work they have been doing and also the long hours they committed to the snow removal.

Arena – General Discussion of the arena report. The arena closed Sunday, March 19, 2017. It was a busy weekend for the arena. ***We have no tallies as of right now, Darrell will gather this information soon.***

Recreation – General discussion on the Recreation Report that was submitted. We had a happening March Break. Age Friendly Communities Grant awarded the Town of Oxford \$5000.00. The funding from this grant will

provide seniors of opportunities with fitness and computer/technical classes. Hats off to our Physical Activity Leader, Corey Skinner for working on this grant. Steve Nash Youth basketball is always really popular, each year it's growing bigger and bigger.

Fire – no report was presented.

Finance – Darrell was present. General Discussion on the Finance Report that was presented. Expenditure breakdown for the month of February - \$24,000.00 in expenditures and \$25,000.00 in capital. Capital is the recent purchase of water meters. Things are looking positive.

Councilors' verbal reports that were presented:

- **Councilor Colborne** – Arena – there is lots to talk about. Attended the Library Meeting, VON and the Animal Shelter meeting and they all are undergoing budget restraints.
- **Councilor Wood** – nothing to report
- **Councilor Thompson** – Attended the Strawberry Run meeting, registration is under way. New this year is a family rate offered as well. The strawberry festival (July 8, 2017) is still growing; she is working on the events throughout the day and the vendors for this event. She also attended the Volunteer Awards meeting and they are in the process of organizing the event in April 2017. Councilor Thompson attended the personnel meeting and the International Woman's Day event.
- **Mayor Stewart** – Attended the International Women's Day and said a few words on behalf of the Town there. International Women's Day was very well attended and she commented hats off to the organizers. This month had been a very busy month.
- **Councilor Kay** – Attended the Cumberland Joint Management Services Authority meeting the other night with Councilor Adshade. Also attended the Personnel Meeting and the Northern Region Solid Waste meeting. Councilor Kay also discussed about the arena – the committee has been looking hard at ways to cut costs for efficiency. The ice also comes out of the arena this week and need to start thinking about next season. The gentleman that was here from Irving the last meeting we had also gave a presentation to the Lions a couple of weeks ago, he felt it was very well received. The Lions will meet Wednesday, March 22, 2017 to discuss what is going to happen in the future and what kind of proposal can be made.
- **Councilor Draper** – Met with the Human Resource Committee. They are now on the final stages of developing an HR 2017/18 plan which will be directed through Darrell. Also met with the Community Economic Committee and they are now working towards their goals, it is a matter of just assigning responsibilities and making sure that those get carried out. We had our initial meeting with Oxford Frozen Foods regarding our liaison committee. That was very well accepted, they looked forward to the opportunity talk to us on a regular basis and look for issues and opportunities that we can talk about, and also hats off to the arena committee and for the work they are doing. Great cost savings and we all know how important that arena is to our community.
- **Councilor Adshade** – attended the Cumberland Joint Management Services Authority meeting the other night. The budget that was presented at that meeting. It did not pass. There is another budget meeting set up for April, 2017. Oxford Area and Trails Association – hope to have it all connected in another 1.5 year.

It was moved Councilor Kay, seconded Councilor Adshade that all reports be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

5.1 – Transportation Infrastructure and Renewal Information – Councilor Draper spoke with Bruce Fitzner who is the head person to talk to for Transportation Infrastructure and Renewal. Their discussion was about the highway interchanges and our responsibilities regarding the highway interchanges. Mr. Fitzner is retiring soon and had asked Councilor Draper to get in touch with Buffy White (area supervisor) regarding this matter. Ms. White contacted Councilor Draper and mentioned that the TIR is responsible for all the interchanges in the provinces. She has asked us to get in touch with her, prior to doing any paving in that area and they will send a survey crew down, with no charge to us, and mark off their area of responsibility.

6.1 - Correspondence

Nova Scotia Department of Seniors - We received a funding commitment letter.

New Business

7.1 – 2017/18 Budget Estimates – Operating and Capital

2017/2018 Budget and Tax Rates

Operating Budget Estimate of Revenue and Expenditures 2017/18

Moved Councillor Adshade, seconded Councillor Draper that Council accept the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures for the year ending March 31, 2018 as presented with total revenue estimated at \$2,428,391 and total expenditures estimated at \$2,428,391.

<u>Revenues</u>	
Taxes	1,879,606
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	48,380
Services Provided to other Governments	55,000
Sale of Services	- 0 -
Other own Source Revenue	109,535
Transfers from Other Government	189,200
Cond. Transfers from Other Governments	146,670
Other Transfers	0
Total Revenues	2,428,391
<u>Expenditures</u>	
General Government Services	307,171
Protective Services	812,882
Transportation Services	265,932
Environmental Health Services	202,480
Public Health and Welfare Services	35,000
Environmental Development Services	84,825
Recreation and Cultural Services	216,113
Fiscal Services	463,500
Total Expenditures	2,428,391

Motion Carried

2017/2018 Tax Rates

Moved Councillor Draper, seconded by Councillor Thompson that:

Whereas total estimated expenditures for the fiscal year are \$2,428,391

And Whereas total estimated revenues, other than taxes to be levied are \$500,405

Therefore be it resolved that the tax rates for the Town of Oxford for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 be as follows:

Residential/Resource	1.59 per \$100 of Assessment
Commercial	3.97 per \$100 of Assessment

And that Property Taxes are due and payable on **JULY 31, 2017** with interest to be charged on all final tax accounts outstanding on AUGUST 1, 2017 at the rate of 18% per annum.

And that Sewer Rates are due and payable on **JULY 31, 2017** with interest to be charged on all final tax accounts outstanding on AUGUST 1, 2017 at the rate of 18% per annum.

Motion Carried

Honorarium and Wage Increases

Moved by Councillor Kay, seconded by Councillor Adshade that the undernoted wages be increased effective April 1, 2016:

CAO – 1.8%

Deputy Clerk -1.8%

Office Clerk – 1.8%

Town Supervisor – Per Employment Contract

Public Works Employees – Per Collective Agreement

Rink Employees – Per Collective Agreement

Leisure Service Co-ordinator – 1.8%

Arena Manager 1.8%

Motion Carried

Yearly Borrowing Resolution

Moved by Councillor Kay, seconded Councillor Thompson that the Town of Oxford be authorized to borrow, if necessary, an amount up to \$963,993.00 from the Bank of Nova Scotia, for the purpose of covering regular operating expenses.

Motion Carried

2017-2018 Capital Budget Estimates

Moved by Councillor Adshade, seconded Councillor Thompson that Council accept the 2016-2017 Capital Budget as presented with a total Capital Expenditure estimate of \$861,887

<u>Capital Funding Sources</u>	
CWWWF Fund	414,553
Transfer From Reserve	32,000
MFC Borrowing – Water Utility	138,114
Withdraw from Water Depreciation Fund	52,000
Capital Lease	130,000
Gas Tax Fund	49,500
Transfer from Reserves	70,000
Capital/Revenue	7,650
Total Funding Sources	861,887
<u>Capital Expenditures</u>	
Water Street - Water Line/Repave	187,722
Duke & Waverly - Water Line/Repave	365,015
Generator	49,500
Meter Software	7,650
Water Service Truck	10,000
Supervisor Office	12,000
Paving Prince William/Outer Main	60,000
Salt Shed	30,000
Backhoe	130,000
LED Streetlights (4)	10,000
Total Capital Expenditures	861,887

Motion Carried

Water Utility Operating Budget & Withdrawal Authorizations

It was moved by Councillor Wood seconded Councillor Colborne that Council adopts the 2017/2018 Water Utility Operating Budget in the amount of \$ 613,807.

Motion Carried

It was moved Councillor Colborne seconded Councillor Wood that the Town of Oxford authorize the withdrawal of \$52,000 from the Water Depreciation Fund with respect to Capital Projects in 2017/18.

Motion Carried

It was moved Councillor Kay seconded Councillor Draper that the Town of Oxford authorize the withdrawal of \$70,000 from the Operating Reserve Fund with respect to Capital Projects in 2017/18.

Motion Carried

Mayor Stewart wanted to say a few more words and add that 2.5 million dollars is a lot of money to spend in a year, but she really feels like we are moving our community forward. We are getting a lot of work done when it comes to infrastructure, we are working on paving, sidewalks, running the arena, running great programs, and we are still able to have some money in the bank. She wants to commend all of council and Darrell for a great job.

Mayor Stewart also addressed the lower rate for the commercial tax rate that is something that Council had decided on. Darrell added that things changed structurally in a very significant way between the end of December 2016 and where we are going ahead this year. For the last 30 years, we were partnered with Oxford Frozen Foods in a tax agreement that provided a dual tax structure for the company which the Town supported fully throughout those years. The agreements terminated after December 31, 2016. The taxing structure mechanism that we used now is very much like every other municipality in Nova Scotia. Because of the structural change in the assessment in how it is rated we were able to move the rate from 4.98 to 3.97 without effectively reducing the total commercial revenue between this year and last year. Mayor Stewart added this will help to encourage other businesses to come to our community. We are being very competitive in the commercial tax right now. In the past years our commercial rates seemed quite high.

7.2 – Off Highway Vehicles – Councillor Adshade is on a committee in the County to promote ATV use and to try to update the off highway vehicle act. Councillor Adshade has a petition there for Council to sign. This petition asks the Legislation Assembly of Nova Scotia to update the off highway vehicle act and/or binding regulations that regulate the operation of the off highway vehicles to permit travel on the sides of roadways for the purpose of trail connectivity and for the access of amenities such as food, fuel and accommodations and eliminate the closed course for youth 13 years of age and under from the off highway vehicle act section 11 along with changes to the off highway vehicle act permit trained youth 16 years and under to operate off highway vehicles supervised in the view of someone who is 19 years of age on established trails. Councillor Adshade commented that this goes back to what we discussed last fall about making our town ATV Friendly. The experience that the USA and Quebec has experienced is positive, more traffic coming into town to use the amenities. This is for all of Nova Scotia. They are asking for all Council's to sign this petition. He believes that Nova Scotia and PEI are the only provinces that do not have any kind of legislation to allow for some of this to happen.

Councilor Adshade will get the petition to Darrell to get all of Council to sign.

Council made a resolution to support this petition.
It was moved by Councilor Draper, seconded by Councilor Thompson

Motion Carried

Adjournment

Next Council meeting will be Tuesday, April 18, 2017.
There being no further business, Councilor Adshade moved Adjournment

Motion Carried

Trish Stewart
Mayor

Darrell White
CAO