Municipality of Shelburne

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**REGULAR SESSION OF THE 52nd COUNCIL**
**OF THE**
**MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF SHELBURNE**
**WEDNESDAY, January 25, 2023**
**6:00 pm**

The Regular Session of the 52nd Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne was held on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, commencing at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Administration Building, Council Chambers.

**THOSE IN ATTENDANCE:**
Warden Penny Smith
Deputy Warden Dale Richardson
Councillor Doris Townsend
Councillor Sherry Thorburn Irvine
Councillor Anthony Gosbee
Councillor Heidi Wagner
Councillor Ron Coole
Warren MacLeod, CAO

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**
Erin Hartley, Deputy CAO
Adam Dedrick, Director of Recreation & Parks
Robin Smith, Community Development Coordinator
Marcia d'Eon, Director of Operations & Protective Services via Teams
Michelle Williams, Director of Finance via Teams

**REGRETS:**
Chana Ross, Executive Assistant
Val Kean, Director of Economic & Community Development

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Warden Smith.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**
   a. January 25, 2023

2(a) **MOTION: APPROVAL OF AGENDA – January 25, 2023**

Being duly moved and seconded, be it resolved that the Agenda for January 25, 2023, be approved as circulated.

— **MOTION CARRIED**

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
   a. January 11, 2023

3(a) **MOTION: APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 11, 2023**

Being duly moved and seconded, be it resolved that the Minutes of January 11, 2023, be approved as circulated.

— **MOTION CARRIED**

4. **BUSINESS ARISING:**

There was no business arising.

5. **PRESENTATION:**
   a. Sou'West Nova Transit Association – Renata Tweedy, Board Member
   b. PVSC Assessment 2023 Update – Paul Beazley, Regional Manager

Councillor Coole declared a conflict of interest regarding the presentation for the Sou'West Nova Transit Association and did not participate.

5(a) Renata Tweedy, Board Member for Sou'West Nova Transit Association, presented Council with a presentation regarding her organization.

Ms. Tweedy provided an overview of the organization and its work. This includes helping Shelburne County residents with transportation barriers related to age, health, mobility, and finances gain access to critical services and stay connected to their communities. The presentation also included an overview of current initiatives and budget details.

Discussion was held regarding how this organization provides essential services to the community, the importance of volunteers, compensation, and future goals.

Council thanked Ms. Tweedy for their presentation.

Councillor Coole returned to regular session.

5(b) Paul Beazley, Regional Manager, PVSC, presented Council with the PVSC Assessment 2023 Update.

The Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) provides property assessment services under the Nova Scotia Assessment Act. Further, they are responsible for administering the Capped Assessment

Program (CAP) and the Seasonal Tourist Business Designation Program on behalf of the Province. PVSC assessment notices were sent to property owners in January 2023. Property owners have thirty-one days to appeal the PVSC assessment.

Discussion was held regarding the PVSC assessment process, the CAP program, and communication with residents.

Council thanked Mr. Beazley for his presentation.

6. **FINANCE:**
    - **a.** Preliminary Assessment Role Update 2023
    - **b.** Write off AAN03937313
    - **c.** Financial Update January 2023

6(a) Michelle Williams, Director of Finance, presented Council with the Preliminary Assessment Role Update 2023 staff report for information purposes.

Property Valuation Services Corporation (PVSC) has released the 2023 preliminary assessment roll to all Municipalities. The Assessment Roll is the primary driver of our revenue and directly affects setting our tax rate. Staff has presented a report showing the total Assessment and percent change for the Municipality. The 2023 with CAP column is 7.7% (5.4% 2022).

Residential Assessment has increased in market value by 13.81%, and the importance of properties within the CAP program has risen to 10.39% from the 2022 taxable assessment. Resource Assessment has increased in market value by 8.46%, and properties within the CAP program have advanced by 6.81% from the 2022 taxable assessment. If the residential and resource tax rate remains unchanged at $1.26 per $100. In that case, residential and resource revenue will increase by approximately $515,394 in 2023/2024 (a similar comparison done in 2022/2023 was an increase of $350,974).

Commercial Assessment overall has increased by 11% from the prior year, which will increase approximately $61,491 in revenue if the commercial tax rate remains the same at $1.82 per $100 (a similar comparison done in 2022/2023 was an increase of $24,492).

According to PVSC, the Assessment for the 2023 role reflects market values as of January 1, 2022.

PVSC assessment notices were sent out to property owners in January 2023 across the Province. Property owners have 31 days from the date on the assessment notice to file an appeal.

Discussion was held regarding how the assessment amounts might change due to information changes and appeals. Additionally, Ms. Williams noted that the values might change, considering rate changes. This information will be finalized for budget planning purposes.

6(b) Michelle Williams, Director of Finance, presented Council with the Write off AAN03937313 staff report.

In the fall, when the solicitor sent the title searches for each of the properties on the March 2023 tax sale, it was discovered that the property owner was deceased and the mobile home AAN03937313 was no longer located on the land (the land does not form part of the AAN). As such, PVSC was advised, and they are in the process of "removing the mobile by way of a section change to our filed roll (in early January)." After a discussion with our solicitor, they have advised us to pull the property from the tax sale and write off the property taxes owing of $384.06.

**MOTION: WRITE OFF AAN03937313**

Being duly moved and seconded, be it resolved that the Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne write off the balance of $384.06 on AAN03937313 using GL 00-28211-000.

— **MOTION CARRIED**

6(c) The Management Team presented Council with the Financial Update for January 2023. The financial updates included:

1. CAO
2. Deputy CAO – Administration department/Human Resources
3. Reserves and Finance department
4. Shared Services, Public Works, and Protective Services (Inspection and Bylaw) departments
5. Economic & Community Development department
6. Recreation department

Ms. Williams noted that municipal staff strive to provide financial updates to Council at least six times per year, with the last update occurring last fall. The January 2023 update includes the proposed forecast with a surplus to come at the end of this fiscal year. Each director provided a detailed breakdown of their departments. All bank accounts are in a positive state. We are looking at approximately $432,000 in surplus.

Moreover, the reserves have been updated to indicate what projects have been completed, are still outstanding, or will not be completed this fiscal year. These projects will likely be included in the 2023/24 budget or fiscal year. Council is not aware of any unexpected costs associated with these projects. Due to timing, there is an overage of $200,000 in relation to the new building, which will be discussed further during budget discussions. This may be recouped through HST later in the year.
Discussion was held regarding the deed transfer tax and how it significantly exceeds the budgeted amount. Also discussed were reserves for $5,700,000 as well as non-earmarked expenditures. It was pointed out that expenses occurring in the new fiscal year will become more expensive due to the CPI.

Council expressed their appreciation to staff for the detailed reporting provided with the Council package.

7. **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**
   a. Fundraising Support for Community Group Request – West Green Harbour Recreation Association

7(a) Robin Smith, Community Development Coordinator, presented Council with the Fundraising Support for Community Group Request – West Green Harbour Recreation Association staff report.

The 2022/2023 Operating Budget includes $15,000 for the administration of Fundraising Support for the Community Organizations Grant Program. At July 27, 2022, and November 23, 2022, Council meetings, support totalling $4,000 was approved and distributed to eight organizations.

Staff have received one additional application, demonstrating fundraising efforts to support the guidelines of our grant program. It is recommended that Council consider approving the total $500 funding to the following organization: West Green Harbour Recreation Association.

**MOTION: FUNDRAISING SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUP REQUEST – WEST GREEN HARBOUR RECREATION ASSOCIATION**

Being duly moved and seconded, be it resolved that the Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne approve the recommended Fundraising Support for Community Organizations amount, totalling $500, to come from the ICSP, GL# 00-26621-500.

— **MOTION CARRIED**

8. **RECREATION:**
   a. Accessibility Coordinator Pilot Project Proposal – For Information Purposes

8(a) Adam Dedrick, Director of Recreation and Parks, presented Council with the Accessibility Coordinator Pilot Project Proposal staff report for information purposes.

Mr. Dedrick noted that a proposal had been prepared by the Eastern Shelburne County Accessibility Advisory Committee for consideration by the three Eastern Shelburne County Councils at their upcoming budget deliberation for the fiscal year 2023-2024. A one-year position for an Accessibility Coordinator will be established, which will serve as a non-union joint position of all three municipal units (TOS, TOL and MDS), and would be responsible for ensuring that the "year one" priorities of the Joint Accessibility Plan are implemented. In addition to core goals and actions identified by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, a draft job description has been prepared for Council to review as part of the staff report. A grant and cost-sharing would subsidize the position by all three units. An evaluation of the position will be conducted following its completion.

Discussion was held regarding timelines and whether the position could complete all its objectives within one year. It was mentioned that the position would be busy. The division of the costs between the three municipal units was also discussed.

9. **OPERATIONS & PROTECTIVE SERVICES**
   a. Region 6 Solid Waste - Resource Management – Budget 2023/24
   b. Fire Advisory Committee

9(a) Marcia d'Eon, Director of Operations and Protective Services, presented Council with the Region 6 Solid Waste - Resource Management – Budget 2023/24 staff report.

A letter was received from Region 6 Solid Waste – Resource Management requesting approval of the draft 2023/24 operating budget under obligations in the Region 6 Inter-Municipal Agreement. This budget has been discussed by Region 6 Technical Committee and Region 6 Inter-Municipal Committee. It is now being circulated to Councils for final approval.

The total 2023/24 budget is estimated at $861,578. Eastern Shelburne's estimated contribution is $8,490.14, representing 6.99% of the municipal billing contribution. The Town of Shelburne and Town of Lockeport Councils must review, approve, or refuse this budget.

**MOTION: REGION 6 SOLID WASTE - RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – BUDGET 2023/24**

Being duly moved and seconded, be it resolved that Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne approve the draft 2023/24 Region 6 Solid Waste-Resource Management Budget, as presented at the January 11, 2023, Council Meeting, in the amount of $861,578.00, with Eastern Shelburne County's contribution being $8,490.14, which represents 6.99% of the municipal billing contribution.

— **MOTION CARRIED**

9(b) Marcia d'Eon, Director of Operations and Protective Services, presented Council with the Fire Advisory Committee – Budget 2023/24 staff report.

The Fire Advisory Committee held their annual budget discussions meeting on January 10, 2023.

General Operating Grants

Each of the seven volunteer fire departments in the Municipality of Shelburne receives a CPI grant in addition to its annual operating grants. In addition to their annual grant, the Fire Advisory Committee maintains operating cost inflation by adding the CPI. Due to COVID-19, fire departments have had to incur additional expenses and substantial increases in gas, supplies, equipment, and insurance costs. As part of budget discussions, they wish to consider CPI plus $3000. Currently, a base grant of $34,349 per department is approved. The CPI plus $3000 increase will result in approximately $5000 per department increase. Annual grants are made quarterly to fire departments that provide the required documentation.

Capital Grants

The seven municipal volunteer fire departments receive $5,000 yearly as capital funds. These funds can be carried forward each year to make larger purchases. The budgeted amount remains the same.

Fire Services Assessment

The FAC committee is recommending that an independent contractor, preferably local, be hired to assess the fire services of Eastern Shelburne County.

Dry Hydrants

A subcommittee has been established to investigate and research the locations of dry hydrants and fire access roads. The FAC has asked for $5,000 to be included in the annual budget. The amount has been budgeted in previous years, but if a dry hydrant/fire access road was not necessary or a suitable location was not found, the funds could be used for maintenance. A special reserve was established to carry forward any excess funds.

WCB and Accident/Sickness Insurance

For the past four years, the Municipality has provided WCB and Accident/Sickness Insurance coverage for volunteer firefighters. As of October 2020, WCB coverage is mandatory. Based on previous discussions and presentations, the AIC and FAC committees and Council deemed that having both coverages would benefit the departments.

Training Funds

Last year (on a one-time request), the Municipality provided up to $14,000 ($2,000) per municipal department to partake in Level One training courses offered at the Town of Shelburne Fire Department.

There was a discussion regarding increasing to $3,000 per department for future training. Fire departments are also working with Barrington area departments to receive training for level two. The intent of these training funds would not be limited to specific training.

**MOTION: FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – BUDGET 2023/24**

Being duly moved and seconded, be it resolved that as recommended by the Fire Advisory Committee, the Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne approve the following fire items to be included in budget discussions for 2023/24:

- A third-party assessment of fire services.
- General Operating Grants are increased by CPI plus $3000 per department.
- Capital Grants be maintained at $5,000 per department; and
- Dry Hydrant/Fire Access Road budget be maintained at $5,000; and
- WCB and Accident/Sickness Insurance both continue as is.
- Fire training be set at $21,000.

— **MOTION CARRIED**

**10. OTHER:**

- **a.** Code of Conduct Consultation – Feedback
- **b.** Correspondence: Response from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change – Re: Roseway River Dam

10(a) Warden Smith advised that second-round consultations on the Code of Conduct have been announced by the Code of Conduct Working Group (COCWG). This round will focus on sanctions imposed for code violations and options related to the investigator model process. Mayors/Wardens and CAOs are informed in advance of this information. As we move forward with this critical issue, they request that this information be brought to the Council's table so that all elected representatives may express their opinions.

To ensure a robust discussion during the consultation, the COCWG is providing elected officials and senior administrators with the proposed sanctions and options in advance for their review. An overview of what will be discussed during the consultation was provided with the Council meeting package for Council to review.

Virtual and in-person consultation sessions will be organized to maximize the feedback the COCWG can receive. Though the virtual sessions are listed by region, the COCWG strongly encourages elected officials and senior administrators to attend as many sessions as possible.

Warden requested that if Councillors have any comments or concerns regarding this matter, to please provide them by email by Wednesday, February 1, 2023.

Discussion was held regarding the list of possible sanctions.

10(b) Warden Smith advised of the response received from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change regarding the Roseway River Dam.

Discussion was held, and it was noted that the study was extended for another year. Local fishermen were requested to refrain from fishing activities for the entire year to collect accurate data. The Province has also ordered that NS Power install an effective fish ladder. Council was happy to be able to assist in advocacy for this matter.

**11. COMMITTEE REPORTS/WARDEN'S UPDATE:**

- **a.** Committee Reports
  - i. Audit & Internal Control Committee Report to Council – Councillors Thorburn Irvine & Coole
- **b.** Warden's Update 2023

11(a)(i) Councillor Thorburn Irvine informed Council of the recent Audit and Internal Control Committee meeting and reviewed the report. It was noted that the Grant Thornton presentation would be presented to Council. As a result of the heavy workload of staff, the committee has agreed to reduce the number of meetings and reporting mechanisms.

Discussion was held regarding the implementation report, asset management, and committee terms of reference.

11(a) Councillor Wagner advised that she attended the RCMP Advisory Committee meeting on January 24, 2023. It was noted that Eastern Shelburne County requires a new police station. The committee has requested that a letter be sent advocating the need for a new station. Council gave staff direction in this regard.

11(b) Warden Smith advised that she attended the following events:

- Eastern Shelburne County Accessibility Advisory Committee – January 12, 2023
- Fisheries meetings in Halifax – week of January 16, 2023
- Health Care discussions – January 18, 2023
- Met with Sherm Embree – January 25, 2023
- NFSM meeting regarding organizational change – January 26, 2023
- Shelburne Area Chamber of Commerce – January 28, 2023

Discussion was held on health care, long-term care, and physician recruitment.

**12. <u>ADJOURNMENT:</u>**

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm. The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 8, 2023, in the Municipal Council Chambers.**

**Chana Ross**
**Recording Secretary**

Feb 9/23
Date

Penny Smith, Warden

Erin Hartley, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer