

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

April 10, 2024

Approved Minutes

DATE: April 10, 2024
TIME: 4:30 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.
PLACE: Council Chambers

ATTENDANCE: Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant; Councillors Jill Chandler; Jeff MacDonald; Ron Dowling; Jody Jackson; Jeremy Crosby, CAO; Dale McKeigan, Director of Planning, Development, and Heritage; Kim O’Connell; Director of Finance and Technology; Jeannie Gallant, Director of Infrastructure; Wendy Watts, Community and Business Engagement Manager; and Mary McAskil, Recording Clerk

REGRETS: Councillor Gordie Cox

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Steve Ogden called the Regular Monthly Council Meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance and those viewing via social media.

Mayor Ogden took a moment to acknowledge the land upon which we gather is the unceded territory of the Mi’Kmaq people, and we pay our respects to the Indigenous Mi’Kmaq people of this territory past, present, and future.

2. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Councillor Jeff MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Jill Chandler that the agenda be approved as circulated.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Jody Jackson and seconded by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant that the regular monthly meeting minutes of March 13, 2024, and the special council meeting minutes of March 28, 2024 be approved as circulated.

5. BUSINESS ARISING

Nil

6. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

Nil

7. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Ogden gave an overview of his report as follows:

- Chaired the regular monthly meeting of Council, a special meeting of Council, and the Committee of the Whole meeting
- Participated in a meeting of the Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM) Executive Board, the Finance Committee, and chaired a meeting of the FPEIM Policy Committee
- Enjoyed attending a ceremony at UPEI to mark the appointment of former Town Councillor Diane Griffin as Chancellor of UPEI
- Participated, along with Council and the management team, in a public meeting to present the draft 2024/25 budget for public input
- Participated in a Shape Stratford general meeting
- Participated, along with Deputy Mayor Gallant and CAO Crosby, in a meeting with RCMP Commanding Officer Chief Superintendent Kevin Lewis, to discuss policing issues in Stratford
- Met with several local businesses such as Starbucks, Jenn's Nails, and Khoaw Pon Authentic Thai, to present welcome gifts and thank them for locating their businesses in Stratford
- Attended a federal announcement by MP Lawrence MacAulay regarding the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funding of \$4.9 million to accelerate housing builds in Stratford, also attended another federal announcement regarding a new federal program to help renters
- Chaired the regular meeting of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Accountability Committee
- Attended meetings of the Planning Committee, Safety Services Committee, Finance Committee, Heritage Sub-Committee, Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee, and the Arts and Culture Sub-Committee
- Spoke and visited with several residents to discuss various issues; and
- Attended internal meetings and looked after the day to day affairs of the Town.

8. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CAO) REPORT

The report was included in the agenda package for Council to review. The CAO reviewed the highlights of his report as follows:

- Along with the Deputy CAO, attended a meeting with the president of Holland College to discuss the plans for the community campus and the proposed health and wellness facility

- Attended a meeting with KPMG for the weekly organizational review update
- Attended a meeting with members of Council to finalize the plans for the proposed health and wellness facility on the community campus property
- Attended the Shape Stratford Intermunicipal Committee meeting
- Attended the Immigrant and Refugee Services Association Conference 'The Way Forward'
- Attended a meeting to discuss the community campus implementation plan
- Attended a meeting to discuss Reddin Meadows development options
- Attended a meeting to review and discuss the renewal of the Public Schools Branch lease
- Attended and participated in the monthly Town Council meeting
- Attended the federal government announcement regarding funding through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund
- Attended the Town's public meeting on the draft capital, operating, and utility budgets for 2024/25
- Attended a meeting with the developer of the Irving Avenue development
- Chaired the monthly CAO department meeting
- Chaired the bi-weekly department head meeting
- Attended the monthly Charlottetown Area Development Corporation (CADC) meeting
- Attended a meeting with representatives of KPMG to discuss the preliminary findings of the staff compensation review
- Chaired the monthly staff meeting
- Attended the federal government pre-budget announcement
- Attended and participated in the monthly Committee of the Whole meeting
- Attended the special Council meeting to pass the 2024/25 capital, operating, and utility budgets.

In addition, I organized meetings with staff, prepared comprehensive agendas, and relevant materials for the various committee meetings to keep them up to date. In addition, I assessed infrastructure projects, reviewed several planning related matters, and effectively managed various HR related files. I responded to emails and letters from residents, stakeholders, government officials, and other entities.

9. SAFETY SERVICES

a) Report

The report was included in the agenda package for Council to review. Councillor Jackson gave an overview of his report. He noted that the committee discussed unsightly premises and unoccupied houses. A concern regarding unoccupied houses was that there may be people squatting in them.

Councillor MacDonald asked if there was any update on the lighting and Maritime Electric, and Councillor Jackson replied that we are hopeful that Jeannie will be able to negotiate with Maritime Electric. Councillor Jackson gave a bit of background information noting that we are enhancing our lighting along Bunbury Road. Jeannie added that in the beginning we didn't think there would be a cost. She noted that what had occurred essentially is that Maritime Electric proceeded with the work before issuing a quote to us. Jeannie stated that they missed a step internally. Normally they would issue a quote for us to approve and then they would issue the work order, but the work order got sent out before that step. Jeannie noted that after the lights went up and everyone was happy, we received an invoice for \$19,000 which was a bit of a shock. However, we were able to get that price down to \$8600 and we were much happier with the new price.

b) Street Lights

Nil

c) RCMP

The report for the month of March was included in the agenda package. Councillor Jackson noted that we continue to see a push for traffic enforcement with good results. We have also had a high number of tickets issued and there is very good visibility in key areas.

Councillor Jackson noted that the RCMP is very proud of their new initiative to engage with the youth in order to develop relationships and trust.

Councillor Dowling asked if there was any update on E-Watch and the CAO replied that several cameras have been installed on the Trans Canada Highway - more than we had expected. There are also cameras being installed at the Georgetown Road intersection. The CAO added that he and the deputy mayor had a conversation with regards to approaching the businesses in the Town to see if they want to participate in the E-Watch program.

Councillor Jackson noted that we have had some calls and emails about ATV's on the trails. A group met last night to try and help set up a legal trail system in the outskirts of Stratford, so we are working on a solution for ATV riders to have a place to go.

d) Humane Society Report

The report for the month of March was included in the agenda package.

e) Transit

The report for the month of March was included in the agenda package. Councillor Jackson stated that he would like to thank Deputy CAO Jeremy Pierce who gave a great overview of the public transit plan document at the last Safety Services Committee meeting. He

noted that this is the public transit plan for Cornwall, Stratford, and Charlottetown. The final copy of the plan will be presented to the three Councils for endorsement. Councillor Jackson also noted that there were 285 riders per day in the month of March and that is up from our previous high for March which was 181 in 2023.

Councillor MacDonald stated that while reviewing the Safety Services Committee minutes, he noted that for what Stratford is putting in, we are not necessarily getting the same return on our investment and he asked if there was anything to update on this issue. Deputy CAO Jeremy Pierce stated that the transit file is one we are constantly working on. We are currently going through the transit review and it has been beneficial, but we haven't completed it yet. The Deputy CAO stated that there will be a presentation to Council in the coming weeks and the plan will help shape us going forward. We are putting in a contribution of 15%, Charlottetown is putting in 75%, and Cornwall is putting in 10%. The Deputy CAO stated that we believe there are some inefficiencies within the routing with the amount of traffic that we see within our community. There is an upcoming meeting on April 22, 2024, with the other municipalities to start looking at the whole transit file and making improvements, so if we are paying 15%, we want to receive 15% of transit within our community.

f) Cross Roads Fire Department

The report for the month of March was included in the agenda package. Councillor Jackson noted that at the last Council meeting he had mentioned that there were a number of false alarms. He also mentioned an issue with new iPhones – what happens is if the phone was to fall (example – off the seat of the car), it would automatically alert the authorities. Councillor Jackson added that a person has 15 seconds to shut off the message/alarm or it will go straight to emergency and it will be responded to by emergency personnel. He stated that we may want to put out a message to let our residents know about this alarm with the new iPhones.

Councillor Jackson stated that there was a discussion about barbeques on apartment patios. He noted that he did see some information at the fire marshal's office regarding the fire code that does speak to the barbeque on patios issue.

It was noted that there was a recommendation put forward to appoint two new members to the fire company board. There was a special Council meeting on March 28, 2024, and Rick Richard and Bernadette Milner were appointed to the fire company board. Councillor Jackson stated that they are two great residents who have been very active in the community.

10. RECREATION, CULTURE AND EVENTS

Councillor Chandler gave an overview of her report as follows:

Committees – the Recreation, Culture, and Events Committee met on March 28, 2024. The committee reviewed the community campus plans, the 2024 operating and capital budgets, the waterfront park development phases, and the winter and spring programs.

Stratford Youth Centre and Council – March break was very busy at the youth centre. Activities/drop-in were planned for each day. The Stratford Youth Council planned and hosted an Easter event in Cotton Park on March 23, 2024. They decided to host this free event to give back to their community. The event included an Easter egg hunt, scavenger hunt, hot chocolate, and some art /colouring stations. They also had a youth member dressed as the Easter Bunny to take pictures with the kids. They had planned for 200 kids but were quickly overwhelmed as there were more than 300 kids in attendance plus their parents. The event was funded by the youth council from money they had raised (\$600). The group has already decided to make some changes to the format if they decide to host the event again next year.

The youth centre has been working on rehearsals for their upcoming drama production – Charlotte’s Web. They are planning on hosting multiple shows on the first weekend of May. The youth centre leadership group continues to fundraise for their leadership trip in July. They currently have \$35,000 raised and will need approximately \$46,000 to reach their goal. They are planning an online auction at the end of May / early June and have started to collect item donations. The youth centre will be hosting their annual kick off of the summer raffle again this year – running from mid-April to the end of June.

Arts and Culture – registration for the spring art programs opened on March 4, 2024. Programs will take place at the Town Centre and the Gertrude Cotton Centre, with some programs also being made available online.

Programs – spring and summer program offerings are open for registration online and in person, with the exception of the pickleball program which will open on April 15, 2024. The Stratford summer camp will be offered at the Stratford Youth Centre in July and August. The summer will only have eight weeks offered this summer, with a week in late July not being made available as a result of the youth centre tour to Toronto. Flag football registration is open and the season runs from May 5 to June 16, 2024. Full body fitness and post-natal fitness classes are being offered on the stage for 12 weeks.

Spring Planning – planning is underway for outdoor spaces, parks, and sport fields. The Town is planning ahead in the event spring comes a little earlier than normal. This year, the new mini field at Fullerton’s Creek Conservation Park will open for young softball and baseball players.

Many projects are slated to take place over the spring, summer, and fall months within the community including:

- The installation of bike racks and benches at selected Stratford trails, parks, and beaches
- The development of a multi-use court at Clearview Park
- Park upgrades at Lantz Park; and
- The development of four pickleball courts at Kinlock.

Retirement – we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Tanya Craig, our esteemed program coordinator, on her retirement after an incredible 20 years of service with the Town of Stratford. Tanya’s dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment has left an indelible mark on our community. Throughout her tenure, she has been instrumental in planning and delivering nearly every community event, enriching the cultural fabric of our Town with countless new programs, and spearheading the development of public art initiatives that have brought beauty and vibrancy to our community.

Tanya’s leadership, creativity, and tireless efforts have been invaluable to the Town of Stratford, and her presence will be greatly missed. We are profoundly grateful for her contributions and the lasting impact she has had on our community. As Tanya embarks on this new chapter in her life, we express our deepest appreciation for her years of dedicated service. Thank you Tanya for your outstanding contributions and congratulations on your retirement.

Councillor MacDonald noted that unfortunately there was some negativity expressed about the efforts of our youth Easter egg event and he wanted to address it. Councillor Chandler has already noted the excellent efforts that the youth undertook of their own initiative to put on the event and Councillor MacDonald wanted to make sure that we are doing everything we can to support their initiatives, and not just financially, but also to say we are always behind them and we appreciate everything that they are doing. Councillor MacDonald wanted to go on record to say that the negativity was totally uncalled for.

Mayor Ogden agreed that it is important because there were some negative comments online and to set the record straight, the youth planned for 200 people but more than 300 showed up. They had planned on each child being able to take 8 or 10 eggs for their basket, but some kids got over zealous and filled their baskets which left some kids with no eggs. Mayor Ogden stated that it is no one’s fault, it is just the situation and it was a learning experience.

11. FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

a) Councillor Dowling gave an overview of his report as follows:

- The budget was passed on March 28, 2024
- The Utility bills are being processed; the e-bills went out on April 5, 2024, and mailed bill should be received by April 12, 2024

- Updated billing information for the 'Fees Schedule'
- Met with staff for their performance evaluations
- Worked on updating the job position information for KPMG
- Working on the workplan for 2025
- Starting work on the year end
- Working on getting new budget information into our accounting system
- Staff is working on financial data for the community campus buildout; and
- Staff is busy with day-to-day tasks.

Councillor Dowling noted that a recurring theme for the Finance and Technology Committee meeting has been the revenue sharing agreement. Staff is working hard to establish meaningful dialogue with the province, and staff is working with the Federation of PEI Municipalities (FPEIM) with the potential for development of an overall negotiator. Councillor Dowling felt that it is important that municipalities not have to enter these negotiations on their own. The end result should be an equal agreement among all municipalities based on the resources that the municipality has. It will be slightly different, but fundamentally, the agreement should be the same across the board.

Councillor Dowling noted that staff has plans to engage with the business community to ensure a joint approach among the businesses, to ensure technology security awareness as a focal point, and the E-Watch program would be a component of that security.

b) Financial Statements

Included in the agenda package for Council to review.

12. PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND HERITAGE

- a) Report was included in the agenda package for Council to review. Councillor MacDonald took a moment to recognize our building official Sam Chace. Sam has done an enormous amount of training in a short period of time and has taken the responsibility of building official head on. Councillor MacDonald stated that development in Stratford is proceeding at a fairly quick pace and with Sam taking on the building official role, it has allowed us to meet our obligations to make sure that planning applications and permits are processed in a timely manner.
- b) Permit Summary was included in the agenda package for Council to review. Councillor MacDonald gave an overview of the summary. He noted that commercial permitting is driving our growth to date. He noted that we are holding steady on single family dwellings and we are holding steady on multi-family dwellings.

c) **Resolution PH005-2024 Bylaw #50-B General Amendments – Town of Stratford Building Bylaw #50 - 1st Reading**

Moved by Councillor Jeff MacDonald

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant

WHEREAS the Province of Prince Edward Island has adopted the 2020 National Building Code of Canada and the 2020 National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings on April 1, 2024, as per the provincial government's harmonization agreement; and

WHEREAS section 5.2 of the Building Bylaw, Bylaw #50 requires the Town of Stratford to adopt the 2020 National Building Code of Canada and the 2020 National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings in conjunction with the Province of Prince Edward Island as to not conflict with the more stringent provisions.

BE IT RESOLVED that Bylaw #50-B, a Bylaw to amend the Building Bylaw #50, be hereby read and approved a first time.

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Planning, Development and Heritage Committee.

Councillor MacDonald stated that he understands that the 2020 updates to the National Building Code include the following: technical requirements for large farm buildings that address fire protection and occupant safety. It also addresses ventilation air conditioning. It encapsulated mass timber construction that was introduced into the 2020 building code enabling the construction of wood building with up to 12 stories. Accessibility requirements are updated to reduce barriers relating to anthropometrics, plumbing facilities, signage, entrances, and elevators. Design requirements for equipment are revised to minimize the growth and transmission of legionella and other bacteria, and home type care occupancy is introduced to allow safe and affordable building care in a home type setting.

Question: **CARRIED**

13. INFRASTRUCTURE

a) Report - The Report was included in the package for Council to review. Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant reviewed the report noting that the infrastructure staff remain busy with the many projects underway as follows:

- Construction at the new water reservoir tower is mostly complete. The tower will be filled with water for pressure testing and commissioning in the next week or two

- LED lighting retrofit tender for the Town Centre complex continues with more than half of the new fixtures installed
- Reception centre upgrades continue at the Town Centre and Cotton Park
- The tender for the Community Campus Solar Array Project closed on March 20, 2024, and a resolution recommending awarding of the work is being presented this evening
- Tenders were received on April 4, 2024, for the restoration of Kelly's Pond. Three bids were submitted and will be discussed at the Infrastructure Committee meeting
- Work has resumed at the waterfront gathering and event space which the contractor anticipates will be complete by early July; and
- Work on the Corish forcemain extension project will begin along Kinlock Road in early May.

Infrastructure staff has also been busy with the following:

- Finalizing purchases and projects from 2023/2024 budgets
- Hiring process for casual seasonal positions has begun
- Procurement of new truck for the 2024 budget
- Planning and scheduling for spring and summer utility component maintenance – valve exercising, hydrant maintenance and repair, directional flushing, gravity sewer flushing, and station maintenance
- Assessments of buildings, parks, trails, sports fields, properties, and sidewalks to determine what needs to be addressed now that winter is over
- Maintenance and upkeep of vehicles and equipment is ongoing with preparations for transition from winter equipment to summer equipment
- Bylaw complaints and investigations continue to increase
- Water and sewer inspections and water turn-ons for new development is increasing
- Ongoing inspection and maintenance of water and sewer systems; and
- Managing ongoing customer and resident inquiries and concerns.

During the month of March there were no major incidents or emergencies. All sewer and water infrastructure performed exceptionally well during the recent heavy rain and now melt conditions. Well sample results immediately following heavy rain events met regulation guidelines.

b) Resolution INC003-2024 – Community Campus Solar Array

Moved by Deputy Mayor Steve Gallant

Seconded by Councillor Jody Jackson

WHEREAS the 2024 Town capital budget includes \$8,337,585.00 (excluding HST) for the completion of the Community Campus Site Servicing project, including the installation of a 100kW solar array; and

WHEREAS one tender was received on March 20, 2024, for the solar array project consisting of the design and build of a 100 kw photo voltaic ground mount solar array, including the supply and installation of all incidentals and appurtenances, fencing, driveway access and reinstatement, with results as follows:

Contractor	Bid Excluding HST
Hansen Solar Energy Ltd.	\$297,500.00

AND WHEREAS the engineer's estimate for the project was \$517,000.00 (excluding HST), displaying that the submitted tender represents acceptable value.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Community Campus Solar Array project be awarded to Hansen Solar Energy Ltd. in the amount of \$297,500.00 (HST excluded).

Discussion: This resolution bears the recommendation of the Infrastructure Committee.

Infrastructure director Jeannie Woodard stated that the 100 kw is essentially the restriction right now with the agreement for net metering with Maritime Electric.

Question: **CARRIED**

14. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Nil

15. SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Report was included in the agenda package for Council to review. In Councillor Cox's absence, Councillor Ron Dowling reviewed the report as follows:

- Water's Cool (Water School) finished up in March after another successful year. Students were engaged in sessions throughout the day focusing on topics such as water conservation and watersheds. Recognizing the limited accessibility of Water School to rural areas – fourth year UPEI students have initiated a project aimed at developing a curriculum and exploring methods to expand Water School across PEI. They will be presenting their findings and proposals in a forthcoming session.

- The Residential Tree Planting Program application deadline has been extended to Friday, April 12, 2024. The goal of this program is to help residents access low cost good quality native tree species. We encourage residents to get their application in by Friday.
- Staff is working on hosting a discussion this spring with the business community to receive further input from them as to how we can best support them. Staff is working to confirm a date and facilitator for this session.
- The Stratford Town Talk podcast continues on the alternative weeks to the Town's e-news. It has garnered some media attention as well as interest from other municipalities
- The Diversity and Inclusion Sub-committee met on April 4, 2024, and have a number of items in the works including:
 - A series of virtual presentations through a partnership with Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 (April 6, May 4 and 25). Residents are encourage to sign up early for these sessions as they are limited in the number of participants and it is a great opportunity to explore our immigration history.
 - The Diversity and Inclusion Sub-committee is leading an anniversary project which is just getting off the ground ahead of the Town's 30th Anniversary next April. The project looks to connect 30 youth with 30 older residents to capture their story of Stratford and produce a book of 30 stories to launch at the Town's celebrations next year. The committee will be looking for assistance from the Heritage Sub-Committee and the Arts and Culture Sub-committee, as well as potentially the Stratford Youth Centre. More to come as this project gets going.

16. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- a) Mayor Ogden noted that the committee had a good discussion about the Town's approach to revenue sharing. He noted that he shared some information with the committee about the work that is being done by FPEIM, as well as the work that is being done by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to lobby for all municipalities.

Mayor Ogden stated that there were a number of meetings with other levels of government, and he also met on two occasions with MP Lawrence MacAulay. He noted that we are also trying to set up another meeting with Mr. MacAulay sometime in May to go over our plans for the community campus, and specifically the building of a wellness facility, which is one of our top priorities.

Councillor Jackson noted that the Town was able to take part in the federal pre-budget

announcement, and the committee had a good discussion on some of the announcements. One announcement that he felt was a positive was that the federal government is looking at renters using their good payment history of their rent to help prove their credit worthiness. Councillor Jackson felt that this would be a good thing for a lot of people. Another item that the committee discussed was the national food program.

Councillor Jackson noted that the resident survey is now open to residents.

17. HUMAN RESOURCES

a) No Report

18. INQUIRIES BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

a) No inquiries were made.

19. OTHER COMMITTEES

a) Stratford Senior's Complex

Deputy Mayor Gallant gave an update on the Stratford Senior's Complex as follows:

- Unit 10 has been rented and the new tenant has moved in
- Unit 13 is still available for rent and we have advertised on social media that there is a unit available
- Capital work is planned for 2024
- Kitchen cabinets should be starting soon
- We will be advertising for gardening quotes for summer
- Year-end working paper file is in with the auditors; and
- Spoke to director at St. John House to find out what company did their building assessment review, as our quote came in very high last year, so we will be re-tendering soon.

The committee discussed heat pumps for the senior's complex and it was agreed that there will be further discussion on this issue at the Committee of the Whole.

20. APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMITTEE

Nil

21. PROCLAMATIONS

Nil

22. OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

23. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Mayor Steve Ogden

Jeremy Crosby, CAO