

COVID-19 COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes

DATE: March 31, 2020

TIME: 10:14 a.m. - 11:55 a.m.

PLACE: Zoom online platform

PRESENT: Deputy Mayor Gary Clow; Councillors Jill Burridge; Gail MacDonald; Steve Gallant; Derek Smith; Darren MacDougall; Robert Hughes, CAO; Jeremy Crosby, Deputy CAO and Director of Infrastructure; Wendy Watts, Community and Business Engagement Manager; and Mary McAskill, Recording Clerk

REGRETS: Nil

CHAIR: Mayor Steve Ogden

1. Operating Update

a. Development Activity

Robert stated that during the management team (Zoom) meeting, people were advised that we are not issuing building permits, but we are still accepting applications and processing them to the point where we can issue them. There was also some discussion about subdivisions and we decided, at least for now, we would continue to process them unless it required a public component. We will continue to process them and if we get a large one we will bring it to Council who can decide if they want to carry on with that particular one or not. This is a time when some developers may take the opportunity to get some of their leg work done so when things do get back to normal they are not waiting.

b. Outside Operations

Robert noted that the outside operations are being carried out as close to normal as possible. Jeremy added that our outside staff is getting ready for spring; and the sewer and water is being looked after as always. He noted that once the ground dries up they will be grooming the trails.

Jeremy added that Billy Ramsay is now out of quarantine and back to work as his daughter's Covid-19 test was negative.

We received a call from the contractor and they are still going to go ahead with the sludge removal, but to get through the border they may need a letter stating the sludge removal is essential. Staff is also able to get to some of the things they had on their to-

March 31, 2020 Zoom Meeting

do-list that they couldn't get to before. Jeremy stated that he will be checking in with the outside staff later in the week via Zoom, to see how things are going and see if everyone has all the tools they need.

Mayor Ogden asked if there was anything to report on the pipe to Charlottetown and Jeremy replied that the work continues because it is deemed an essential service.

Deputy Mayor Clow noted that there was a hockey net in the pond in his area, and Jeremy replied that they are aware of it and Billy Ramsay did try to get it out. However, it is frozen in the ice and Billy didn't want to break it, but once the ice thaws he will try again.

Councillor Gallant suggested that now that the budget is passed, it might be a good time to put out a tender to have our gym painted. Robert noted that we haven't discussed our budget implementation yet, but he will make a note of Councillor Gallant's suggestion. Mayor Ogden agreed that it would be a good idea, but there may be a safety issue; however, if it can be done safely, and we are not breaking any rules, this would be a good time to do it.

c. Online Operations

Robert noted that Jeremy Pierce has his staff working on a few online programs and Duane Pineau has a lot going on with the youth. They also have some cultural and fitness programs that they are posting online as well. They are trying to encourage people to stay active during this time by taking advantage of technology to keep some programming going.

Wendy noted that the first vegetarian online cooking class through Zoom with Chef Jen who has been doing some classes for us over the past winter.

Mayor Ogden mentioned the newspaper that was done by the youth and circulated by Duane. He noted that it was very positive and had a number of things in it that kids can do during this time.

Councillor MacDonald asked Jeremy about the email she sent him regarding Summerside temporarily removing their crossing flags, and she felt that Stratford should be doing the same. Jeremy replied that he can have that done today if it Council's wish to do so. However, he felt that when people are out doing their shopping they are touching door handles and cart handles, and they know they need to wash their hands when they get back home.

March 31, 2020 Zoom Meeting

Mayor Ogden asked Robert to check and see what Charlottetown and Cornwall are doing as we already know what Summerside is doing. After further discussion it was agreed that we will not remove them at this time. Mayor Ogden felt that Councillor MacDonald had a good point, but if we start removing things (even temporarily) where do we stop. It was agreed that Robert will contact Charlottetown and Cornwall to see what they are doing and then we will revisit the issue.

Councillor MacDonald felt that the best way to deal with this issue would be to contact the department of health. It was agreed that we will just follow suit with the other municipalities. Mayor Ogden noted that we don't want to wait another week for the next CAO's meeting and he asked Robert to contact Cornwall and Charlottetown right away to see what they are doing.

d. Operating Status Report

Robert stated that last week when we sent around the EMO situation report they included one from Miscouche where they are doing a daily update as well. We also started a daily update and we should have a draft by the end of the day to send to Council. We thought it would be a good way to chronologically keep track so we can go back later and say what did we do, and what can we learn from it. Also, Council and staff will be kept updated as things change. Mayor Ogden added that any information we have that we have that we can share with our residents should be shared.

2. Update on call with Big 4 CAOs

Robert stated that he invited them all to a meeting (via Zoom) and although Peter Kelly accepted, he didn't attend. Robert stated that they hope to have more CAO meetings so they can coordinate some of their actions.

There were two main issues discussed at their meeting - one was utility bills - water, sewer, and also electricity for Summerside, and the second item was staffing.

Utility

Everyone is going to waive the interest and not cut anyone off and Robert felt that the Town should do the same. It was noted that Summerside also has their own electricity and they are giving a \$25 credit for their water, sewer, and electric bills (not \$25 each, \$25 total).

It was noted that people are now home a lot more, so a lot more water is being used. Jeremy will have someone look at the consumption to see if we are actually seeing a difference. Robert added that once we know what the water consumption is we will bring the information back to Council.

March 31, 2020 Zoom Meeting

When we send out the April bills, we will tell the residents that we will not charge interest and no one will be cut off. We will also work with customers who are struggling to make their payments.

Staffing

Cornwall is laying off their casual staff as of April 3, 2020 except for their daycare staff, who will be funded by the government.

Summerside has not laid off any staff and is looking at the staff situation every two weeks.

Robert noted that some of our staff may have less to do than others, but we will make a recommendation to keep all our full time staff. At the next Zoom management team meeting, we will discuss what other projects staff can work on at home. There is one project that may be a bit of a challenge. We need to identify any gaps we might have, and what our Covid-19 contingency funds are going to be used for. We also need someone to do some research on what programs are available federally and provincially for individuals and businesses, and because things are changing all the time, the information would have to be kept updated. Robert will try to find someone who is currently being under-utilized.

Councillor Smith noted in reference to staff, if we lay people off they are free to look for another job. He added that it would also be good for morale if we kept everyone employed as long as possible.

Mayor Ogden noted that we now have an opportunity to do some planning on what we want to do over the next few years, and hopefully, by the fall we can get at least six months of solid work in.

3. April 1 Birthday Celebration

Wendy displayed the Happy 25th Birthday to the Town that is currently displayed on social media and our website. She noted that the Town will provide a list of 25 ways that residents can celebrate the birthday, and gift cards of \$25 will be purchased for prize draws for submissions received. Councillor MacDonald suggested doing some Stratford trivia for prizes and Wendy noted that she does have some prizes for the trivia. We also plan to have in person 25th celebration in the future when things return to normal.

Mayor Ogden is going to do a video for the webpage and he suggested that some of Councillors may also want to do one as well. Councillor Burrridge felt that it may fall to Councillors to do one of the activities if they see things starting to lag.

March 31, 2020 Zoom Meeting

Councillor Burridge wondered if we should call Island Morning Radio to let the know it is the Town's 25th Birthday, and Wendy replied that our media release is going out today and we hope that allows time for the media to pick it up and hopefully call the Mayor for an interview.

4. Council Meeting – Potential Items

a. Transit funding

Jeremy stated that we need to put in a new application in for the mini busses and it requires a resolution of Council. The cost of the busses came in higher than expected, but that was because they are more accessible than the other busses. We went back to our funding partners and they indicated that we should put in another application and we need a resolution to support the increase in funding. Robert stated that the resolution will have to be done at a public meeting.

After some discussion it was agreed that we would have a Council meeting on April 8, 2020 and it will be a Zoom meeting. A copy of the recorded meeting will be posted for residents at 430 p.m. which is our regular meeting time. Jeremy said he will have his resolution ready by the end of the week. Robert added that we should just do the meeting in the same format as the budget meeting. We can bring to Council whatever resolutions need to be approved, but because there were no committee meetings, there will not be any reports.

b. Library lease

At the last Committee of the Whole Council stated that they were okay with a five year lease as long as we could repurpose the building if we decided between now and five years to build another library. Jeremy sent around a copy of the revised lease yesterday and it did include a clause to that affect. Robert added that the clause is not wide open but it gives us the ability if we need it, for another municipal use. Robert noted that the lease will have to be approved by resolution and that could be brought forward to the online Council meeting next Wednesday. We also have the right of first refusal on the extra space in the building.

c. Summary Proceedings Bylaw Schedule Amendment re Building Bylaw

- d.** Robert noted that we have a Summary Proceedings Bylaw that was passed a while ago to allow us to issue tickets, but at that point the Building Bylaw was Bylaw #32. However, last month Council passed a new Building Bylaw and in order to enforce it, we have to change the schedule (Robert is going to check to be sure it is only the schedule of the Summary Proceedings Bylaw that has to be changed) and we may have to change the schedule which has the actual ticket form in it. These are technical changes and they can be done by simple resolution because it is an amendment.**Fire Company Lease (still waiting on HST answer)**

March 31, 2020 Zoom Meeting

Robert gave some background information noting that we have been back and forth for about six months regarding the lease. The fire company had some concerns and the smaller ones were addressed, but the big issue they had was that the lease payment to them is subject to HST – so they would have to pay 15% HST on it. They get input tax credit from the province and the federal government that is equivalent to 6% of the 15% that they pay. We have been trying to figure out if there was a way around the HST payment on the lease and the what we came up with was for the fire company could apply to become a para-municipal organization, but the fire company wasn't 'keen' on this idea.

Robert stated that his recommendation is to have the fire company declare themselves a para-municipal organization. Mayor Ogden noted that the Town appointed the members to the Board of Directors of the fire company so we should really be in the driver's seat.

e. Energy Code Update

When we talked about our Building Bylaw, we said we were going to go ahead and approve it because we didn't have a date from the province when they were going to release theirs. However, on Friday, the province sent out a notice stating that four days from the date they sent out the notice, the National Building Code will be enforced across the province except for residential single family because they have a one year grace period. They also said in the announcement that instead of adopting the 2015 National Energy Code - they are adopting the 2017 National Energy Code as the companion document. Robert stated that to be consistent with the province we recommend that we adopt the 2017 National Energy Code as well.

Councillor Burrridge asked if the rates are consistent with what they had proposed and Robert didn't know but he will check into it.

5. RCMP Members Gym Access Request

Councillor Gallant received a request from Constable Glen Dudley who wanted to know if the RCMP could access the Town gym because the fire company's gym is closed. Robert discussed it with the management team and they are against it because they are hard places to keep clean with the shared use of equipment, which is the reason the fire company closed their gym. Jeremy added that if we open it up it would be setting a precedent. After further discussion it was agreed that we would like to be able to help them out, but unfortunately, for safety sake we can't open the gym.

6. Committee Operations

Robert noted that we don't have to make any decision today; he just added this item to the agenda in case at some point we want to reinstate the committees by using Zoom. He felt that the Accountability and Engagement Committee may want to have a meeting on our regular meeting date in April. We could go through the kpi's and try to finalize everything

March 31, 2020 Zoom Meeting

so Council could approve the strategic plan. However, it was felt that it might not be the same for some of the other committees as some people are not technical.

Robert felt that this committee (Council and some staff members) we can use Zoom meetings in the short term to vet decision making.

Councillor Burrridge suggested we send letters to committee members to update them that in the short term, we are taking decisions directly to Council. Mayor Ogden noted it is also important to get input from committee members by email, teleconference or whatever method is possible. He asked each chair to think about how they could make it work and how to keep the business of the Town moving as much as possible. Jeremy agreed that emails have worked quite well in the past and it is also a good way to get information from the committee members.

7. Arts and Culture Committee – School Indigenous Instrument Program Request.

Robert stated that we just received this request yesterday. After a brief discussion it was agreed that Jeremy Pierce will take the request through the regular process and if it gets to Council they can weigh in on it at that time. Mayor Ogden stated that as time goes on we really have to look at our core mandate which is to provide programs and services for our residents.

8. Council Inquiries

Councillor Burrridge asked about the negotiations regarding the community campus and Robert replied that we are waiting on the province. Robert felt that the urgency has left because it would not be possible to build a rink for Canada Games at this point. He stated that he does need to have the two deputies sign off on it before we make an offer on the land and the amount we will pay. Mayor Ogden stated that he would hate to lose the momentum that we have now. Robert will contact the two Deputies.

9. Next Meeting Tuesday, April 7 at 10:00 a.m. The Council Meeting will be held via Zoom at 10:00 am on Wednesday, April 7, 2020 and posted online at 4:30 p.m.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.