

COVID-19 COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes

DATE: May 5, 2020
TIME: 10:02 a.m. – 12:23 p.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

Mayor Ogden called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

1. Operating Update

Covid-19 Ease Back – Operational Plan for Town Employees/Seasonal Staff

Jeremy stated that we are looking at all of our operations now that phase I has been implemented, but not a lot has changed with the exception of the construction being allowed to continue and the planning department is very busy. We are also coming up with an operational plan for when we start to bring our casual staff back. Jeremy felt that in the next week we could be in a position to start taking back some of our summer casual staff and go about our normal operations and he is looking for feedback from Council.

Mayor Ogden asked what he needed and what is possible for us to do at this time. Jeremy noted that in regards to the trails and gardening positions it was felt those workers could be brought back safely and there is a lot of work for them to do. He noted that in regards to the summer programs, he felt that would be a few phases away before anything opens, but Jeremy Pierce is working on a plan.

Mayor Ogden asked everyone for their input. • Councillor MacDougall supports management's position and he is sure they will take the necessary precautions • Councillor Gallant supports management's position • Deputy Mayor Clow supports management's position • Councillor Burridge gave her full support • Councillor MacDonald asked what the usual start date would normally be for our casual workers and Jeremy replied around the first or second week in May, so it will not affect the budget because it will be the same amount of weeks.

Councillor MacDonald asked when the playgrounds open is there a plan in place for extra cleaning and Jeremy replied that we do have a system where everything will be checked daily. Robert added that what we are going to need to do is an operational plan for every service that we put back. We have to look at the physical distance requirements, and extra cleaning is required. There will be a call later this week with the management team to go through the ease back plan from Dr. Morrison, the questions that were answered yesterday, and the operational template they have and start developing the plan for each

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service as we open it up. Jeremy added that we will also need to have some protocol for the office when it opens.

Councillor Burrridge noted that many people are taking the opportunity to use the trails now and she is glad to hear that staff will be getting out maintaining them.

Councillor Smith stated that he is all for getting the maintenance workers hired back. We have to take the proper precautions so there are no slip ups, but it will give people who are walking on the trails a little bit of hope when they see people working on the trails.

Mayor Ogden noted that he, Robert and Councillor MacDonald were on a call yesterday with Dr. Morrison and there is a requirement to use the template that is on the provincial website as a guide to developing our operational plan. He hopes we will have the plan started by the time the public gardens open. He also stated that he asked Melanie Bailey from the PEI Association of Newcomers how we can get information to newcomers and she is working on it.

Councillor Gallant asked if we would be having the venerable sector checks because right now they are not doing any. Mayor Ogden noted that they are looking into it. Jeremy's understanding was they were doing them. Robert noted that what Dr. Morrison said was that none of the police agencies are doing any checks right now but they are referring anyone asking to private companies that do them. Mayor Ogden asked Robert and Jeremy to look into it and get back to us on the call next week. Jeremy stated that he will have a conversation with Glen Dudley to see what the process is and see if the clerk is available to do what we need her to do, and he will bring the information back next week.

2. Waterfront Park Conceptual Design RFP

As was discussed at the last meeting, we are going ahead with the RFP but it will be a few weeks before it is ready.

3. Covid-19 Operational Status Report Status Report

Jeremy stated that we have been sending out the status report on a weekly basis and updating Municipal Affairs and EMO. He noted that he included the items that were noteworthy such as building permits are now allowed to be issued, and the planning department has already issued 21 with an additional 8 being processed.

A request was made by direct email to the Town's contact at the Chief Health Office for some additional personal protection equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer. It was noted that we do have some, but as staff members come back we could have situations where we might run out.

Mayor Ogden noted that Dr. Morrison mentioned that dog parks can be open as long as physical distancing is respected. Wendy mentioned that our dog park is closed right now for its annual spring maintenance. Councillor MacDonald's interpretation of what was said

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about the dog parks was that dog parks and playgrounds are one in the same, and she suggested we check to be sure before we open it after the maintenance has been completed. Deputy Mayor Clow noted that one of the problems they are having is enforcement in regards to the parks. Mayor Ogden noted that the issue came up yesterday on the call with Dr. Morrison, who said it would be enforced on a complaint basis, but there will be random checking of businesses.

4. Remuneration Bylaw Update

Robert noted that he sent the information to Council, and he displayed his screen and reviewed the numbers. He also sent a draft of the new wording of the bylaw. If everyone is okay with it, it can go to Council this month for approval.

Councillor Smith stated that he would no longer have to submit a quarterly expense claim and Robert replied that is correct. He also asked if part two of the Committee of the Whole meetings are being compensated for and Robert replied that the meeting stipend would be gone; however, it is being compensated somewhat because there are not 12 meetings a year for every committee.

Councillor MacDonald stated that with the new federal tax change last year Councillors lost \$2,421 which is quite a large amount. She felt that we should wait to open this bylaw and go ahead with the Remuneration and Allowances Commission and have them investigate to see if we should be back to where we were in regards to salaries.

Councillor Burridge felt this was not a priority at this time. Deputy Mayor Clow agreed with Councillor MacDonald that perhaps we should look at it because it would be done by an independent commission and we could move forward with whatever they decide. Councillor Gallant also agreed with Councillor MacDonald and Deputy Mayor Clow, and noted that we are losing approximately \$2,500 a year through taxes. He also noted that he doesn't understand why Councillors are not issued phones.

Councillor MacDougall stated that he understands with the other municipalities it was a budget issue, so as far as the remuneration is concerned, we should address it at our next budget deliberations as opposed to tasking someone to address it now.

Mayor Ogden stated that he is hearing that we can defer this issue for two or three months because it is not as high on the priority list as other items and suggested Robert could look at it when things quiet down in two or three months.

Councillor MacDonald stated that her position was not to make a change to the bylaw at this time and have to reopen it again in a few months when the Commission has a look at the salaries. She would also like to have a count to see how many wish to defer the issue. Mayor Ogden stated that the issue is do we deal with this now or do we defer it for a few months. Deputy Mayor Clow, Councillor Burridge Councillor Gallant, and Councillor Smith were all in favour of not opening the bylaw at this time. Councillor Smith noted that he is in

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support of Councillor MacDonald's suggestion on this issue. Councillor MacDonald further clarified that what we are deferring today is opening the bylaw and having it forwarded to the next Council meeting. However, she didn't feel there was a necessity to wait two months to have the Commission up and running.

Robert stated that he was somewhat confused. On the call last week Councillors had expressed concern about having to submit expense claims for their meeting stipend and it was agreed that it would be changed. He was asked to amend the bylaw so it could be part of Council's remuneration. It wasn't a big job and the work is already done and ready to go. Robert felt that the current discussion is a completely separate issue. Today's discussion is whether or not we appoint an Indemnities and Allowance Commission to review Council remuneration which he doesn't have a problem with, but added that it could have a budget impact. If there is a budget impact, it will need to be included in next year's budget or a resolution will need to be passed to amend the budget. Robert was confused because he felt that the direction given to him was to get rid of the meeting stipend claim form which will save Council time and staff time and have virtually no impact on the budget. He is not sure why we are throwing it out.

Mayor Ogden asked that we pull this item from the agenda for today because it is a big issue, and deal with it at a future meeting. Councillor MacDougall felt that the two issues could be handled separately. Councillor BurrIDGE stated for the record that we are wasting resources at a time when we need them, and to bring this again to a meeting next week and take time from the meeting for something that isn't time sensitive is wrong. We would be putting resources to this at a time when we are strapped for resources and she felt that we need to rethink this. Mayor Ogden stated that we will defer it for now.

5. Water Consumption during Covid-19

Jeremy stated that we looked at the wellfield data to see if there was some information that could tell us if people are using more water when at home during Covid-19. He noted that an email was received from a resident who would like to see some kind of break for residents during this time because they are confined to their home and they are probably using more water. The resident suggested that we look at the water bills from this time last year and compare the data. We compared the data from January to the end of March and based on that data, it showed there was actually a slight decrease in use. Jeremy felt that residents are using about the same amount of water, but in order to get a good picture we would need to wait and compare the next quarter. His answer to the resident at this time would be based on the information we have to date which is that the water usage is equal, but in order to get a true picture we would need to look at the next quarter. Mayor Ogden asked Jeremy to draft a reply to the resident.

6. Dog Licensing Program

Jeremy noted that normally, we would have dog canvassers go door to door with the dog tags yearly, but due to the situation we are in we are unable to do that this year. We were looking for an alternative and we were going to try an online version with an online

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payment option, but it is not as easy as we originally thought. Jeremy recommended that we honour the licenses that residents bought in 2019 which would also give our residents a little break this year and everyone agreed.

7. Work Alone Policy

Jeremy stated that we need to have something in place for employees working alone and he sent the draft Work Alone Policy to Council to review. He thanked Councillor Burrridge for sending him some information as it was a great help in drafting the policy. We had a complaint several months ago about a young girl working alone in the evening as a gym supervisor and someone wanted to know what protocols we had in place if something happened. Jeremy stated that we need to have a Work Alone Policy for any employee who works alone to address any concerns. He added that he would like to have it passed at the next Council meeting.

8. Public Meetings

Robert did speak with Samantha Murphy and John Dewey from FPEIM after our last meeting and asked if they could work together and work with us to come up with a process that would be acceptable to IRAC and they both committed that they would. We put it on the list of questions for Dr. Morrison yesterday in order to keep pushing the issue from all angles. Mr. Dewey indicated that they asked for an amendment to the Planning Act, to allow whatever changes are required, but he doesn't know how long it will take. If we let the process unfold we will be much more comfortable when decisions are made and will be upheld by IRAC. Robert suggested if Council can wait a week or two we might have more to report. However, if Council wants to go ahead the planning director Kevin Reynolds has followed the process that Charlottetown used, but added it would be taking a little bit of a risk on whether or not it would be upheld. Based on Dr. Morrison's comments there will not be any large gatherings this year. Mayor Ogden noted that if we had some direction within two weeks we would wait, but if not, he thinks we should go ahead because there are projects waiting. Councillor Burrridge thinks there should be a solution to this, but she doesn't think they will have something back to us in two weeks. She added that at this point she is not sure if the developer could capitalize on this season even if we got the go ahead to do a public meeting. Jeremy reiterated that Kevin followed the Charlottetown meeting and said it was okay, but there were very few questions asked, if any, by the public.

Robert noted that Mayor Ogden brought this up to Minister Fox who said he would bring the issue up at Cabinet, so we have made everyone aware that we need a speedy resolution to this issue. Robert added that he can speak to Samantha Murphy again to ask her how quick she can turn this around because we will need to make a decision.

Mayor Ogden would like to ask Kevin how big of a workload it would be to contact the people within 500 feet of the proposed development, but again he is not sure what the legal ramifications would be on this.

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Deputy Mayor Clow would like to wait the two weeks because he would not like us to go through all the work and have it struck down by IRAC – let's do it right. Councillor Burrridge would like to have a discussion with the developers to see what their thoughts are as stakeholders in the process. Deputy Mayor Clow agreed that we should speak with the developers. Mayor Ogden noted that we will revisit the issue at next week's meeting.

9. RFP for Bylaw Enforcement

Jeremy noted that we received three replies to our RFP and they are currently being reviewed and a recommendation will be coming forward.

10. DOTIE Stormwater Maintenance and Monitoring

Jeremy noted that he sent an email to Council that Kevin Reynolds had prepared. He had a meeting with the Director and Deputy Director of Highway Maintenance to discuss the stormwater systems that are located throughout Stratford and how the maintenance is going on the newer systems. They noted that because they weren't up to speed on the new systems, the required maintenance was not being done; however, they agreed to hire a consultant to come up with a plan and this is a good step forward. Mayor agreed that this is a great step forward. He also noted that we should raise the issue with Minister Jamieson as it is an environmental issue and it may not be on her 'radar.'

Deputy Mayor Clow asked for an update on the sludge removal at the treatment plant and Jeremy replied that unfortunately the contractor that was supposed to do the work is not going to be able to come to PEI at this time, and the sludge removal needs to be done seven days prior to the fishery opening. Deputy Mayor Clow felt it would be a good idea to put the information out to the residents that there will be some odour this year, but on a positive note it will be the last year for it. Jeremy noted that he and Wendy will discuss getting the information out to the residents.

11. Sustainable Communities Request for Expression of Interest (ROI)

Robert noted that the province issued an ROI for sustainable communities and we discussed the potential of putting in the community campus as a net zero as a potential project. He contacted Darren Chaisson who said May 1, 2020 was the deadline, but things have changed and we can consider it still open. Robert stated that he will develop a draft and send it to Councillors Burrridge and MacDougall for review and then bring it to Council, because we don't want to miss the opportunity. We may want to engage the Sustainability Committee and the Community Campus Committee to get their feedback and then send it in to the province. Mayor Ogden would like Deputy Mayor Clow involved with this file as well.

Councillor Gallant asked about the land negotiations and Robert replied that Turner Drake hasn't submitted the offer yet, but he expects they will make an offer this week.

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It was moved, seconded, and carried that the meeting resolve into the Business Park Corporation.

12. Business Park Corporation

Robert noted that he had forwarded an email to Council from Rush Transfer. He noted that the last time we talked about this issue was at the January Committee of the Whole meeting. At that time they asked for 50 feet of property of what we had set aside for future development of the maintenance building. There is probably between 150 and 200 feet of frontage between the end of the boundary of the lot and where the maintenance building currently sits. During that meeting we also discussed the fact that we needed to do a preliminary design for the next phase and for the connection of the two streets, and that we would defer the decision on Rush. However, Rush has gotten back to us to say they are still waiting for our answer. The engineering firm has been hired to do the preliminary design, but we don't have the answer back yet. Robert asked the transfer company why they needed the extra land and they sent back a copy of their plan which was then forwarded on to Council by email. What they need is room for two vehicles to pass in the isles. The minimum amount they need is 25 feet.

Mayor Ogden polled everyone and everyone was in favour of the sale. Councillor Smith asked who would be paying for legal costs and Robert replied that normally we would have the survey done and then it would be up to the purchaser to draft the deed. However, we could put a requirement in that they pay any extra legal costs that we have. Councillor MacDonald agreed that the extra legal costs should go to the client, but otherwise she agrees to the sale.

RESOLUTION

It was moved by Councillor Burrridge and seconded by Councillor MacDougall that Rush Transfer can purchase 25 feet of land in the Stratford Business Park, at \$2.50 a square foot plus legal/survey costs.

Discussion: Nil

Question: **CARRIED**

It was moved, seconded, and carried to come out of the Business Park Corporation Meeting and resume the Covid-19 Zoom meeting.

13. Unsightly Information Pamphlet

Jeremy stated that every year we get into a lot of issues with unsightly premises and we wanted to have something to give residents and newcomers something to refer to so they don't end up breaking the bylaw.

It was noted that the pamphlet was translated to Mandarin by Daniel Zhang who is on staff. At this time it is just Mandarin because it is the Chinese households who are the most likely not to have English capabilities. Wendy noted that in regard to other languages – we are

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told that other newcomers have at least one person in the households who knows English. We had it translated to Mandarin for this specific issue and once the new residents understand they are very quick to remedy the situation. Councillor MacDonald suggested that we have the Mandarin pamphlet checked for accuracy – perhaps someone from the Newcomers Association could help out. Wendy noted that the Newcomers Association doesn't perform that service, but would provide us with the name of a company that does, so there will be a cost. Mayor Ogden asked Wendy to see if there is a company that can review the pamphlet for accuracy. He also noted that there may be a complaint from the lack of French translation. Wendy noted that French is one of staff member Jade Veera's official languages, and if we send Daniel's out for verification we should also do the same with Jade's. Mayor Ogden noted that we wouldn't be asking for translation, we would be asking for verification and that might not cost as much.

Jeremy noted that this document was created especially for the Chinese population, so we could get this specific message out to them. Councillor Burrridge felt that if people called the situation could be explained. Mayor Ogden gave direction to go ahead with just the Mandarin as he felt that was Council's direction. Councillor Gallant felt that we should be looking to hire a bylaw officer year round at some point, because he felt that the complaints were just going to increase.

14. Covid-19 Contingency Fund

No report

15. Communications to Resident

Mayor Ogden would like to see something sent out on this week on the things we discussed today. Councillor Smith would like to include a piece regarding the fact that public meetings are being discussed. Robert noted that we can let residents know that we have sought direction on how to conduct public meetings in a social isolation environment from the province and the chief health officer.

16. Council Inquiries

Councillor MacDonald asked about the electronic sign at the bridge and Jeremy replied that the cord was severed during construction, but there is now clear direction on how to have it repaired and it should be up and running very soon. He added that he will ask our project manager Jeannie Gallant to follow-up on it.

Councillor Burrridge noted that yesterday she went through all the different places where funding was available to municipalities and she noticed that a lot of the deadlines for the Federation of PEI Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities were the end of March. She asked if that means that means that the deadline has passed and the next deadline would be the end of March 2021 and Jeremy replied that Jeannie was having a meeting with an FCM representative regarding funding but she hasn't got back to him yet. Jeremy Pierce is also looking at funding opportunities as well, so he will get back to Councillor Burrridge once he has more information.

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Councillor MacDonald noted that Mayor Ogden met with Minister Fox on March 30 and she asked if we gave him any indication of any operational shortfall that we may have as she understood the federal government was offering eight to nine million dollars due to Covid-19. Mayor Ogden replied that we did talk about the difficulties we are going to have with our budget with the loss of revenue in several areas. Robert added that we did indicate to the Minister all the areas where we were short on revenue and some expense areas and that it definitely has a financial impact. What is happening federally is FCM has made a proposal to the federal government that they distribute money via gas tax type of delivery method where it goes to municipalities based on population allocation, but he is not sure if they have responded to FCM yet. Councillor MacDonald stated that it would be a separate fund and Robert replied that is correct, it is for operating losses.

Jeremy noted that we do have a financial code for pandemic related expenses and we have already done some alterations and purchased personal protection equipment.

Councillor Gallant asked who is looking after complaints regarding social distancing and Robert replied that Dr. Morrison advised on our call was that they will be enforcing the assembly limitation requirements, but they will not be enforcing people standing too close to one another. They expect the businesses and employers to enforce those rules. So they are only looking for the people who are exceeding the number who can congregate. Councillor Gallant asked who would be doing the enforcement and Robert replied that we don't know yet. We have to look at our operational plan and see what is required. Jeremy noted that he was informed that while we are under a State of Emergency the RCMP is able to enforce the social distancing rules.

Councillor Smith noted that protocol states that after the funeral of the RCMP officer the flags can be put back up to full mast. However, seeing that we have a tragedy with the helicopter disaster over in Greece, he felt we should leave the flags at half-mast in memory of the armed forces members who lost their lives, and include the information in the newsletter. Jeremy noted that Robert had given him some information regarding the flags and that they would stay at half-mast until May 11 at sunset which is 22 days from the time the tragedy occurred and 22 people died. Councillor Smith would also like to include in the newsletter that the flag is at half-mast for the armed forces members.

Councillor Smith asked Jeremy for an update on the bridge and whether or not they are on schedule and what the traffic flow is like, and Jeremy replied that they are on schedule and the province is controlling the traffic.

17. Council Meeting Time and Agenda Items

It was agreed that the Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 10:00 am and the meeting will be broadcast to the public at 4:30 p.m. (usual Council meeting time).

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18. Other Business

Deputy Mayor Clow asked for an update on the fire hall lease and Robert replied that he received a call from Dave Swan yesterday to say they were waiting for a letter from their legal counsel. He asked him if he would be okay with a one year lease and Mr. Swan thought that would be fine, so the lease was modified to a one year term and sent to Mr. Swan. Robert is hoping to hear back from him this week.

Councillor MacDonald stated that these meetings are considered as mini Committee of the Whole meetings and Mayor Ogden replied that he would call them Committee of the Whole meetings. Councillor MacDonald stated that her point is that perhaps we should call the meeting to order, make mention of any conflict of interest that anyone might have, and she would also like to see the minutes from the previous meeting as part of the agenda package. Mayor Ogden stated that it is a week turnaround so maybe a summary of the meeting instead of the minutes we are used to receiving.

Robert stated that when we started out we established this as a Committee of Council (Covid-19 Committee) to keep operations moving. We haven't been approving the minutes but that could be done. He noted that we will need to bring forward all the minutes of the previous meetings for approval, but we can approve them on a go forward basis. Robert asked Mary if she could have the minutes ready each week and she replied that she should be able to, but added that there are a lot of items and a lot of information to take in so it does take time. Mayor Ogden stated that he will try to be more formal because it is a Committee of the Whole meeting.

Robert asked about publishing the video of the meetings if we are going to call it a Committee of the Whole meeting because it is technically a public meeting. Mayor Ogden asked about the in-camera portion of a meeting and Robert suggested leaving those items until the end of the meeting, but he is not sure how we would not record it. He noted that we will look at it and bring it back for next week. However, Mary would have to pay very close attention to those items because we record the meetings so anything that is missed can be picked up on the recording. Wendy added that these meetings are not being done through iCompass, and all we have been doing is putting the minutes on our website where we created a special folder for them. Robert agreed that we created this at the beginning and we would be switching in mid-course. Jeremy noted that a lot of the items on this agenda would normally go to our committee meetings, and with the committees not operating like they normally would that is why the agenda longer than usual. He suggested when things are able to relax a little more we might be able to get the committees more involved. Mayor Ogden didn't think anyone minded because it is good to be informed and he agreed that maybe we can figure out a way to get the committees back up and running even on a virtual bases.

19. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.