

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF VICTORIA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2023
6:30PM – OLD SCHOOL
730 VICTORIA RD, VICTORIA

Present

Deputy Mayor Shelley Trainor

Councillors Marly Anderson, Jamie-Lee Brown, Eric Gilbert, Tom Wright

CAO Anna Keenan

Finance & Administrative Assistant (FAA) Marsha Empson

Members of the public, via Zoom and in person

Meeting called to order by Deputy Mayor Trainor @ 6:34pm.

Deputy Mayor Trainor explained how public input would work for this meeting, with a specific amount of time being given at various points throughout.

Approval of Agenda

Motion moved to approve the agenda as circulated.

Motion moved by Councillor Gilbert, seconded by Councillor Brown.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Approval of Minutes

Motion moved to approve the minutes of February 27, 2023.

Motion moved by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Brown.

Motion carried unanimously (3 votes for, 0 against).

Councillor Anderson abstained, noting for the record that she was not in attendance for the February 27 meeting, but she felt that the minutes looked good.

Presentations and Input

No presentations were requested from the public in advance of the meeting.

10 minutes was given for public comments, to discuss matters not addressed elsewhere on the agenda:

- A resident commented that it was nice to see fresh faces and thanked the council for their civil tone. A question was posed to Councillor Gilbert in regards to the Draft Official Plan, and it was asked if a motion was made by council to put lots 4A & 4B back to their

original zoning. Councillor Gilbert informed that the Planning Board would be meeting on April 6. CAO Keenan indicated that while she had learned a lot about the properties in question since beginning work for the municipality 3 weeks ago, the Draft Official Plan and Bylaw would not be passed at that April 6 meeting, as there are 4 or 5 major issues to be addressed first. She clarified that the April 6 meeting would be used to discuss and schedule out the issues that need to be resolved. The resident asked if decisions from the previous board would be followed. CAO Keenan responded that the Planning Board had made a recommendation to council, but until the entire plan is accepted, the 2014 plan is still being observed. The Planning Board recommendations to council about these properties was decided in a past Planning Board meeting, and no motion to the contrary has happened since. The resident commented that the longer the issue stands unresolved, the more opportunity is allowed for activities that could cause concern in the community.

- A resident pointed out that the winners of the 2023 Heritage Awards were not named in the minutes of the last meeting, and asked that they be recognized for this outstanding accomplishment. Awards were presented by the Lt. Governor, awarded by the PEI Museum & Heritage Foundation, to Caspar and Monique Geurts (33 Nelson St.), Malcolm & Christine Stanley (142 Nelson St.), and The Gilbert Family, Linda, Emma and Eric (Island Chocolates, 7 Main St.). Congratulations to all of the recipients!

Motion moved to recognize the efforts of community members who received the 2023 Heritage Awards. Local winners of the award are Caspar and Monique Guerts, located at 33 Nelson St., Malcolm and Christine Stanley, located at 142 Nelson St., and the Gilbert family, Linda, Emma and Eric, located at Island Chocolates, 7 Main St.

Motion moved by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Anderson.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Resolution #2023-14

Brief presentation from Auditor Tara Wheeler from ABCE Accountants. Documents discussed are attached and form part of these minutes.

- Ms. Wheeler spoke to the various letters and tasks that would be the responsibility of ABCE, and reporting expectations. She outlined that one of the changes to standards was in regard to information technology, that may require more info gathering up front of the audit process. Another change that affects capital assets may complicate things for municipalities with older buildings. Future costs now need to be considered. She recommended talking to Municipal Affairs, knowing that the province hired outside consultants to assist with this aspect of the financials.

Public input

- A resident asked if the new regulations call for depreciation to be shown on the budget. Tara clarified that depreciation is shown differently on the budget compared to an audit. It was then asked what the purpose of the new standards were for. Tara speculated it may be an attempt to catch and properly report future obligations for asbestos removal and items

of that nature. Lastly, it was asked if liability insurance would already factor for such items. Tara replied that asbestos is not generally covered.

- A resident questioned if there were still wells in the central core. Another replied that all should have been filled.

Councillor input

- Councillor Wright asked if new standards would apply to all municipal assets. Tara confirmed yes, even old water pipes may be impacted.

Business Arising from Minutes

None

CAO Report

CAO Keenan spoke briefly on each of the points contained in her written report. Full report is attached and forms part of these minutes.

Public input

- A resident asked if the Water & Sewer Commission had authorized the financing that was in place for the generators, causeway and wharf projects. CAO Keenan confirmed yes, and that the only problem would be if quotes came in too high. She clarified that we are in the 5th and final year of CCBF allocated funding that she believes needs to be spent this year (2023/24), though she will confirm this with a former CAO. In any case, CAO Keenan expects that Victoria will spend its entire CCBF allocation this year, on necessary projects, so does not expect a roll-over.
- A resident asked if CAO Keenan was aware of statements made to residents by Minister Jamie Fox that the province would cover 50% of the generator costs. CAO Keenan confirmed that as CAO, she liaises with and applies to provincial staff for funding opportunities, rather than MLAs or Ministers, and noted that we are currently in an election period. The program she believes Jamie Fox has been referring to was announced by the department the Friday before the election was called. We are aware of and considering the funding opportunity, and whether our projects would meet the criteria.
- A resident asked if there was a priority list for top 3 water and sewer capital investment line items. CAO Keenan confirmed that first priority is the water generators, second is the Causeway work and the Wharf project. If quotes come in below budgeted amounts, a sewer generator could be completed this year as well, but currently the sewer generator is expected for Spring of 2024, in the next financial year. It was clarified that the wastewater treatment facility could function for a few days without power, but water supply can not, which is why that generator is a lower priority.

Deputy Mayor's Report

Deputy Mayor Trainor spoke briefly about her report, stating that she is encouraged with the forward thinking being brought to meetings. She also wanted to take a moment to acknowledge Mayor Ruben and his wife. She feels it's important to recognize what they are going through and

to offer them our full support. The full Deputy Mayor's report is attached and forms part of these minutes.

Reallocation of CCBF (Gas Tax) Funds to Priority Projects

CAO Keenan reviewed the list of projects, explaining how projects get listed and then changed based on priorities. As a result of changing priorities, funding needs to be transferred out of 3 projects that won't be completed this year, plus an additional small amount of unallocated funds, to the Causeway project.

Council input

- Councillor Wright asked if the funding source is already approved, and if the municipality can go back and reapply for projects being removed. CAO Keenan confirmed that the projects are included in capital funding, based on the reliable input of \$100,000/year for municipal projects. Other provincial streams could also be available for certain projects. Today's changes are about re-prioritizing projects, to identify the ones to be done this year. Removing funding from projects for now does not necessarily remove them from the list, they can have funds re-allocated in future years.
- Councillor Brown asked about reapplying for the next 5 year allocation of the CCBF, and if the list of projects would carry into the next 5 year allocation period. FAA Empson explained that projects stay on the CCBF project list unless council decides to remove them completely.
- Councillor Gilbert mentioned a tourism beach grant, which Deputy Mayor Trainor confirmed she is working on in a voluntary capacity, not in her mayoral capacity. CAO Keenan mentioned that she would like to create a standing list of grants to apply for and a schedule of applications, rather than the current approach which feels quite ad hoc.
- Councillor Brown indicated that she's unaware of the details of the bathroom project that was listed, and the needs associated with that.

Motion moved to transfer CCBF funds of \$45,000 from project #25.5.8 Public Bathroom Upgrade, \$75,000 from project #25.5.14 Gravel Road to Wastewater Treatment Plant, \$30,000 from project #25.5.13 Community Beautification and \$5000 from Uncommitted Funds to the project #25.5.10 "Redesign & upgrade to water equipment on Causeway Bridge".

Motion moved by Councillor Gilbert, seconded by Councillor Anderson.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Resolution #2023-15

Action item - submit request to reallocate CCBF funds as specified to the Causeway project.

Filling Council Roles

Deciding a by-election date to fill a vacancy resulting from a council resignation

- CAO Keenan indicated that due to Brian Clapson's resignation received on February 28, an election is required to be held no later August 28, 2023. To avoid a summer election,

dates of May 29 or June 5 were presented. An acclamation (if we have only a single candidate) would eliminate the need for an election.

Motion moved that a by-election to replace one councillor take place on May 29, 2023.

Motion moved by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Anderson.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Resolution #2023-16

Appointing an interim mayor to cover for an upcoming absence.

- Deputy Mayor Trainor appointed Councillor Anderson as Acting Mayor for the period of March 21 – April 6, 2023.

Appointing new members to the W&S Commission

As a result of 4 recent resignations from the Water & Sewer Commission (Ian Denison, Brian Clapson, Tom Wright and Sharlene MacEachern Steinberger), and due to bylaw requirements, a minimum of 2 more members are required, consisting of an equal number of councillors and residents. Pat Smith has volunteered to serve for a couple of months, to get through the budget period. It was discussed that Councillor Wright would consider moving to the Planning Board and Deputy Mayor Trainor volunteered to join Water & Sewer. Councillor Gilbert is willing to discuss moving to Water & Sewer after returning from a planned trip in April.

Motion moved to appoint Deputy Mayor Shelley Trainor and resident Pat Smith as members of the Water & Sewer Commission.

Motion moved by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Brown.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Resolution #2023-17

Scheduling Council Meetings

Special council meeting to approve the budget .

Motion moved to schedule a special meeting of council to approve the 2023/24 budget on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, with a storm date of March 29, 2023.

Motion moved by Councillor Gilbert, seconded by Councillor Brown.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Resolution #2023-18

Rescheduling the April regular council meeting to Wednesday, April 12, 2023.

Motion moved to move the Tuesday, April 11, 2023 council meeting to Wednesday, April 12, 2023, due to the meeting space being rented out.

Motion moved by Councillor Wright, seconded by Councillor Brown.

Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against).

Resolution #2023-19

Fire Department Report

None – Only 2 weeks since last meeting

Water & Sewer Commission Report

None – Only 2 weeks since last meeting

- A compilation of recent water testing results is attached and forms part of these minutes.
- Next meeting set for March 23, 2023

Planning Board Report

None – Only 2 weeks since last meeting

- Next meeting set for April 6, 2023

Public Presentation of the Financial Package (Budget 2023/24)

Budget process timeline to March 31, 2023

- CAO Keenan indicated that the municipality is required to submit a municipal budget, a water & sewer budget and a 5 year forecast. Budget details become public documents once submitted and are an important point of transparency. A deficit cannot be planned into future budgets, and any actual current year deficit must be carried into the next year. The draft budget being presented tonight is currently heavily based on last year's budget and actuals.

CAO Keenan completed a presentation of the budget documents, pointing out the rationale behind larger budget-line items and key changes from the past year. The draft budget documents are attached and form part of these minutes.

Residents are invited to provide input at this meeting, and in addition, by email to the CAO until Sunday March 20.

Operational budget

- Councillor Wright questioned if \$71,000 was the deficit for 2022/23. No, \$12,000-\$15,000 is the current estimated cash deficit. \$71,000 includes depreciation of assets.
- CAO Keenan indicated that she would love to receive ideas for cost savings from the public, during the 2 weeks of public consultation.
- A resident commented on the proposal received by VBA, stating that rental agreements are needed for the rental of municipal assets. It was mentioned that the new board of the Victoria Playhouse may need help getting organized and that the municipality should work with them to form a fair agreement.

- CAO Keenan pointed out that the Victoria Playhouse has a contract for the Community Hall rental and fixed terms until 2025. It's hoped to promote more rentals of all municipal assets in the off season.
- Councillor Gilbert asked about IRAC legal fees. FAA Empson explained which expenses the legal fee line items were referring to.

Water & Sewer budget

- No questions.

Capital budget

- CAO Keenan explained that no major decisions would be made on projects in the next two weeks and that this was an estimate based on known information.
- Councillor Wright commented on the large expense to address the Wharf issues and questioned if problems could arise from that project due to it being on federal land. CAO Keenan clarified that the land is federally-owned, but the infrastructure is municipal. She hopes to put forward 3 options for the Water & Sewer Commission to consider.

Introduction of New Business

None

Deputy Mayor Trainor acknowledged that a new face was present in the public gallery at the meeting, and invited Matt MacFarlane to introduce himself. He indicated that he has provided legal services for the municipality in the past and was willing to do so again if needed, and also noted that he is running in the current provincial election for the Green Party. He asked a question about ownership and zoning of Victoria Park. Explanations were provided.

Council Correspondence

Water system generator as priority

- Letter from a resident is attached and forms part of these minutes.

Local Choice PEI – advocacy group for municipal electoral reform

- Letter is attached and forms part of these minutes.

Public input

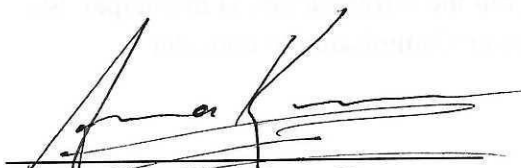
- A resident commended council for this meeting. The tenor of the group, enthusiasm, cordiality, allowing the public to express themselves and 'non lecturing' nature is very appreciated.
- A resident commended CAO Keenan and FAA Empson on the work they put into the budget and their teamwork in general.

***Motion to move in-camera at 8:52pm, to enable private discussion of HR and commercial issues. Moved by Councillor Anderson. Seconded by Councillor Brown.
Motion carried unanimously (4 votes 4, 0 against)***

***Motion to come out of Camera at 9:46pm.
Moved by Councillor Brown. Seconded by Councillor Wright.
Motion carried unanimously (4 votes for, 0 against)***

Report-out from in-camera session: the CAO shared information with Council, and Council gave advice to the CAO on the matters discussed. No formal decisions were taken.

With no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:46pm.



Submitted by CAO Anna Keenan



Approved by Deputy Mayor Shelley Trainor