

**Special Town Council Meeting
May 21, 2019
Town Council Chambers**

Present

Mayor L. Boucher
Deputy Mayor D. MacInnis
Councillor W. Cormier
Councillor M. Farrell
Councillor A. Murray
Councillor J. MacPherson
Councillor D. Roberts

Also Present

D. Wilson, Deputy Clerk

M. Barkhouse, Director of Human Resources
K. Proctor, P. Eng., Town Engineer
S. Scannell, Director of Community Development
L. Basinger, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator

Media

Absent with Regret

CAO J. Lawrence

Call to Order

Mayor L. Boucher called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Approval of Agenda

"It was Moved and Seconded to approve the Agenda as presented." Motion carried.

CAO J. Lawrence provided a preamble noting that it was his third and M. Barkhouse's first time presenting the budget.

M. Barkhouse noted a correction to the last column budget date.

M. Barkhouse provided presented a PowerPoint overview of the 2019-20 budget and responded to questions from Council on various sections of the budget.

She then reviewed the General Capital Water and Electric projects linked to general government projects.

Of note with regards to rates:

- The Residential and Commercial rates will remain unchanged
- There will be an increase to the Waste Collection rate of \$9.14 per equivalent unit to \$308.75

- There will be an increase to the sewer rate from 0.509 to 0.609 (\$8.19 increase to quarterly billing)
- The Town has started working on an Asset Management project

M. Barkhouse provided some highlights from the budget including:

- Recycling diversion rate decreasing
- Grants to Organizations set at \$157,000.
- Aligned salary budgets to proper departments.
- Transponders to be placed on all Town vehicles and motorized equipment
- Road work and snow removal budget updates were provided
- Economic development account has been set up (formerly Eastern Strait Regional Enterprise Network (ESREN)).

CAO J. Lawrence provided comment on the reasoning behind the increase in sewer rates and responded to a query from Councillor W. Cormier

M. Barkhouse noted that the Fire Department revenue has been increased due to an application for an additional external grant for specialized equipment.

Council was provided with a brief overview of Sales of Service and Other Revenue from the Town's own sources (most accounts updated to reflect actual receipts from previous years)

- Unconditional Transfer from other Governments - recycling – Divert Nova Scotia - Disbursements has been decreased to previous year actuals
- Alternative Resource Energy Authority (AREA) Dividend is higher than expected due to increased wind production in 2018-19. This will be reflected in the Capital program.

CAO J. Lawrence expanded on the fixed costs for AREA and an increase in wind across the province, generating additional income for the Town. Councillor W. Cormier expanded on the positive impact that the wind farm provides in aiding capital projects, and the value that it provides.

Brief discussion took place on wind generation.

M. Barkhouse noted the following from the General Government section of the budget:

- Mayor & Council stipend adjusted to reflect the full year stipend increase to offset the end of the 1/3 tax exempt policy.
- Deputy Clerk position consolidated to CAO budget account for consistency.
- An increase in budget expenditures (renovations, including new furniture costs, anticipated IT costs (laptops and software) and additional training for JOHS committee
- Bank & Interest Charges – no significant changes
- Conference Travel (Administration & Council) – adjusted to reflect previous years expenditure levels.

Expenditure Highlights:

- Principal payments (debentures) – no change
- Change in Term debt – clean-up of old internal debt

Expenditure Highlights – Engineering, Public Works & Sewer Treatment Plant:

- New Expenditures – Asset Management \$40,000, transponders for vehicles
- Increase in Street Maintenance
- Snow Removal, Salt & Hauling (Budget updated to reflect previous 3 years weather trends)
- Sewer Treatment Plant (Increase in Maintenance, Equipment and Maintenance & Chemicals)
- No significant changes in other accounts

Brief discussion took place.

Expenditure Highlights – Community Development:

- RCMP Contract \$1.155 million (\$50,000 increase from previous year)
- Firefighting Services – Honoria at full complement, increase in equipment due to increase in expected grant, fire hydrant increase per Water Study
- Economic Development Account (formerly ESREN) – no change
- EDPC - \$113,000. (less than anticipated)

Brief discussion took place on the former ESREN budget. CAO J. Lawrence spoke briefly to the Town's positive relationship with EDPC.

Expenditure Highlights – Community Development

Other Initiatives: MSP Review, Chisholm Park – future use assessment, Trunk 4 Active Transportation Plan, SMS/Email Alerts and Sport Collaboration

S. Scannell noted that at some point there will be an opportunity to apply for funding through Community & Culture Grants. Brief discussion took place on Chisholm Park.

S. Scannell spoke briefly to the SMS/email alerts program, as well as the sport collaboration program.

General Capital- Engineering/Public Works:

Council was advised there are three key projects – Hawthorne & Main St. Intersection, Main Street Parking Lot and the Sunflower Parking Lot

Other Additional Projects include:

Paving \$313,000 over 7 projects
Sidewalks \$220,000 over 9 projects
Public Works \$360,000 includes \$325,000 street sweeper
Traffic Systems \$75,000 over 2 projects
Storm/Sanitary System \$50,000 over 3 projects

K. Proctor spoke to replacement of infrastructure related to street lights and additional placement of cameras throughout the Town.

Brief discussion took place.

K. Proctor spoke to Hillcrest Street paving as it relates to in-ground infrastructure investigations that need to be addressed prior to paving.

General Capital – Community Development & Council:

The Sandlot Accessible Ball Field \$70,000 Town commitment - \$450,000 project

All Wheel Skate Park \$565,000 project - \$465,000 from external fundraising

Accessibility Ramp Town Hall \$100,000 - \$50,000 from federal funding

Tennis Courts - \$100,000 to move to capital reserves for next year

Other Projects - \$61,000 over 4 projects

Council Initiative Project - \$100,000

Mayor L. Boucher noted that the Council Initiative money should not be put into anything that requires ongoing budget requirements. She further noted that Council will meet to further discuss potential projects.

Brief discussion took place on the request for a raised sidewalk on Hawthorne Street. It was noted some discussion is required with the property owner.

In response to a query from Deputy Mayor D. MacInnis it was noted that there is \$15,000 in the Accessibility Budget, further the ramp will move forward this year, along with other improvements through other works being carried out.

S. Scannell noted that a position funded with Recreation would have to be reallocated to Accessibility.

Water Utility:

Revenue – Meter sales and fire protection as per water rate study for 19/20

Expenditures - Increase in chemical costs for 19/20, increase in water meter maintenance and an increase in asset insurance (James River Dam) and an expected Surplus of \$40,000

Brief discussion took place on the capital budget related to the water utility.

Water Utility – Capital – Linked to General Government Capital Projects

M. Barkhouse provided details on various projects including the Hawthorne/Main Street Upgrades, Brookland/College Corner, Hillcrest Street Water Investigation, and the Public Works yard servicing/new hydrant.

Brief discussion took place on discretionary funds related to Water Management.

Electric Utility:

Council was advised on Revenue – 1% increase from last years' sales, Commercial – 0.5% increase from last years' sales and Large General – 0.1T decrease from previous year

Expenditures

- NSPI Power Purchasing – decreased due to planned imports in 2020
- AREA Power Purchasing – increased due to planned imports in 2020

- Dividend expected to be \$500,000

Brief discussion took place.

M. Barkhouse concluded her presentation and called on any questions from Council. J. Lawrence provided comments on the budget.

Discussion took place on funding for the Heritage Museum. Brief discussion took place.

Mayor L Boucher vacated the Chair which was assumed by Deputy Mayor D. MacInnis.

Mayor L. Boucher then read aloud the following resolutions:

Resolution 2019-05-21A Re: 2019-20 Budget

It was "Moved and Seconded

WHEREAS the Town of Antigonish estimates the amount of \$10,670,500.63 as necessary expenditures for the lawful purposes of general Town operations, and revenue, other than taxation revenues in the amount of \$ 5,463,709.63 for the year 2019-20; AND WHEREAS the net amount required to be raised by taxation is in the amount of \$ 5,241,130.84;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the tax rate to be set for 2019-20 at the rate of \$1.09 for Residential and Resource and \$ 2.61 for Commercial properties per \$100.00 of taxable assessment; and a Fire Levy of \$ 0.0331 per \$100.00 of assessment.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the due date for 2019-20 taxes to be paid to the Town of Antigonish be June 30, 2019;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the interest charged on taxes be set at 9% per annum on the taxes outstanding after the aforesaid due date of June 30, 2019." Motion carried.

Resolution 2019-05-21B Re: 2019-20 Waste Management Collection

It was "Moved and Seconded

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town of Antigonish that the Waste Management Collection charge for 2019-20 be established as \$ 308.75 per equivalent unit;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the due date for 2019-20 charges to be paid to the Town of Antigonish be June 30, 2019;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the interest charged on charges be set at 9% per annum on the amounts outstanding after the aforesaid due date of June 30, 2019." Motion carried.

Resolution 2019-05-21C Re: 2019-20 Sewer Rate

It was "Moved and Seconded

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town of Antigonish that the Sewer Rate charge for 2019-20 be established as 0.609 of Water Base Rate and Total Water Consumption charge;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the due date for 2019-20 charges to be paid to the Town of Antigonish be June 30, 2019;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the interest charged on charges be set at 9% per annum on the amounts outstanding after the aforesaid due date of June 30, 2019." Motion carried.

At 4:33 PM Deputy Mayor D. MacInnis vacated the chair which was assumed by Mayor L. Boucher.

Mayor L. Boucher thanked staff for their efforts in completing the budget.

CAO J. Lawrence commended past administration and Council that were willing to invest in wind energy.

Council agreed to hold a special meeting to further discuss potential projects at 6:30, Tuesday, June 11th. Mayor L. Boucher requested that each Councillor give consideration to three items or projects and forward them her no later than June 3rd.

With there being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:41 PM.