

**Regular Town Council
September 16th, 2024
Town Council Chambers**

Present

Mayor L. Boucher
Deputy Mayor W. Cormier
Councillor S. Cameron
Councillor M. Farrell
Councillor A. Murray
Councillor D. MacInnis
Councillor D. Roberts

Also, in Attendance

R. Delorey, CAO
M. Fougere, Deputy Clerk

M. Barkhouse, Director of Corporate Services
S. Long, Communications
K. MacInnis, Director of Community Development
K. Proctor, P.Eng., Director of Public Works
L. Roy, Strategic Initiatives

Media
Members of the Gallery

Call to Order

Mayor L. Boucher called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Approval of Agenda

“It was Moved and Seconded to approve the agenda as amended.” Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

“It was Moved and Seconded to approve the Regular and In Camera Council Meeting Minutes of July 15th, 2024, ePoll Minutes of July 15th, 19th, August 8, 16th and September 5th.

Motion carried.

Diane Wilson – Mayor, L. Boucher

Mayor L. Boucher acknowledged the passing of our long-time employee, friend, and colleague, Dianne Wilson, who passed away on August 28th. In honor of Dianne, Mayor Boucher held a moment of silence. Dianne served as the Deputy Clerk for the Town, dedicating 40 years of her time to the Town and community. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Dianne’s family.

Presentations/ Proclamations Flag Raising

- **Antigonish Volunteer Fire Department**

Gerard Purcell took the podium to present the purchase of a new pumper truck featuring the SAM System. The current 2001 GMC Topkick pumper truck will be replaced as part of a vehicle replacement plan initiated by the Town Council in 2017.

- Key Points; SAM System: Automates pump operations and provides real-time data to manage equipment and firefighter positions.
- Operators can control functions outside the truck, reducing complexity.
- New truck improves response times and the department's ability to handle large emergencies.

Council supports moving forward with the RFP (Request for Proposal) and procurement process. Competitive bidding will be ensured.

Motion

“That the Town of Antigonish proceed with an RFP of a new fire truck as per the specifications outlined and presented to Council”

It was Moved and Seconded to approve the motion as presented.

Motion carried.

Discussion ensued.

Councillor M. Farrell acknowledged and thanked the Antigonish Volunteer Fire Department, and its members present for all their great work.

- **Antigonish Affordable Housing**

Colleen Cameron took the Podium to present – Addressing the Antigonish Housing Crisis. C. Cameron provided an overview of the Antigonish housing gap. The AAHS aims to triple its affordable housing units, focusing on sustainable development. While financial support was discussed, no specific request was made.

The council agreed to draft a letter of support for the new council, emphasizing the importance of affordable housing initiatives in the community and the successful collaboration between AAHS and The Town of Antigonish.

C. Cameron thanked the council for its ongoing support and expressed gratitude to Councillor W. Cormier for his service on the board, requesting that the new council continue to have representation on the board to maintain the strong partnership.

- **Proclamation Request: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Month**
Council received correspondence from Fetal Alcohol Nova Scotia (FANS), requesting a proclamation to recognize September as National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Month. Though the meeting occurred later in September, the council proceeded with the proclamation to raise awareness.

September 9th is the official National FASD Awareness Day

Proclamation:

Mayor L. Boucher, on behalf of The Town of Antigonish, officially proclaimed September as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Month on September 16th, 2024.

An official update will be shared with the community about the proclamation, and discussions will be held on lighting the Town Hall to raise further awareness during the month.

This proclamation is part of the town's effort to support FASD awareness and community involvement in preventing and supporting families impacted by the disorder.

- **Anti-Racism Statement**

In recent months, there have been incidents of racism within the town limits of Antigonish. Mayor L. Boucher addressed, as a council, we want to make it clear that racism has no place in our community. It is not reflective of who we are, and it is something we will not tolerate. The Town and County Councils, along with the Warden, have met with representatives from affected families and the broader community. During these discussions, it was decided that a joint letter from both the town and county councils will be issued in support of these families and to reaffirm the importance of community solidarity.

This letter will emphasize that racism and discrimination will not be tolerated in Antigonish, and we stand together against any acts that divide our community.

Antigonish is a community that prides itself on diversity and inclusion. These values must be upheld by every resident, and we, as a council, are committed to doing everything we can to foster a welcoming environment for all.

- **Flag Raising Request National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

This request comes from the town itself, as it is hosting the event, and the council seeks approval for the flag-raising.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Town's flag raising request for the Truth and Reconciliation Flag on September 27th.

Motion carried.

- **Flag Raising for 285 Royal Canadian Army Cadets and 875 Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron**

It was moved and seconded to approve the flag raising request for 285 Royal Canadian Army Cadets and the 875 Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron.

Motion Carried

Business from Minutes

- **Antigonish Community Transit Society (ACTS) Funding Request**

The Antigonish Community Transit Society has submitted a funding request to the Town Council to support its operations. ACTS provides essential transportation services to the community,

particularly for residents without access to private vehicles, seniors, and those with mobility challenges.

Council emphasized the critical role ACTS plays in ensuring accessible transportation for all members of the community, especially in a rural area where public transportation is limited.

The society has requested additional funding to maintain and potentially expand services to meet the growing demand in the region.

Council members acknowledged the financial constraints within the town's budget but recognized the importance of continuing support for community transit.

The Antigonish Community Transit Society (ACTS) funding request was approved, with the town committing to continue supporting its essential transit services. Further discussions with the county and potential funding sources will be explored to ensure the long-term sustainability of the service

“A motion was made to support the core funding for ACTS. To approve \$5,000.00 from the discretionary fund.”

Motion was moved and seconded.

Motion carried.

“A motion was made to direct staff to ensure that a presentation of the financials is provided each year.”

Motion was moved and seconded.

Motion carried

Discussion ensued.

Election Update – R. Delorey

CAO, R. Delorey gave council a brief overview, noting that the election process formally began with the opening of nominations at the end of August, and nominations closed on September 10th. There has been active interest in the election, with 2 candidates running for Mayor. 11 candidates running for Council (6 seats available). 2 Candidates are also running for the CSAP (Conseil scolaire acadien provincial) school board seat.

Town Council previously decided to conduct a hybrid election, offering electronic voting alongside traditional in-person voting. The town's election website is live, offering general election details. The website includes candidate contact information (for those who opted in) but does not promote individual candidate platforms.

Councillor M. Farrell extended a thank you to the Town staff for their hard work in managing the election process.

Discussions ensued.

- College Street

CAO, Randy Delorey provided council with a Project Update on College Street Bridge.

The project to repair the College Street Bridge has commenced, following delays due to the availability of specialized contractors. The engineering designs were received after the July 15th council meeting, and an RFP was issued to secure contractors. The work started the week of September 2nd.

Most of the work is expected to be completed by the end of September, with potential finishing work extending into early October.

Outreach to businesses in the area has been conducted to keep them informed. Social media updates have been posted, including notices about pedestrian access interruptions.

The current repairs are focused on reopening the bridge for vehicle traffic, but a more comprehensive project could be considered in the future.

- Sewer Treatment Plant Update

Councillor W. Cormier opened the discussion on the Sewer Treatment plan. It was discussed that there is a serious problem with the odor coming from the sewer treatment plant. On a positive note, W. Cormier addressed that K. Proctor, Town engineer and Town staff are doing a lot of great work.

Councillor W. Cormier recommended to have someone come to assess the situation, and to see whether the desludging of the Lagoon must happen more often. For the short term, what can be done.

CAO, R. Delorey provided an update on the context of the nature of odors. The treatment plant has historically produced odors, which are generally predictable and occur annually during spring and fall. These odors are tied to the bacteria's interaction with the fluctuating population.

Several Council members spoke to the affect of the smell, discussions took place with R. Delorey and K. Proctor speaking to the questions.

External experts were consulted to analyze the situation and provide recommendations. Staff are currently reviewing this feedback to identify actions that can be taken to improve the system's functionality.

Continued attention to equipment maintenance, water temperature management, and desludging schedules will be critical to addressing both seasonal and climate-related concerns effectively.

CAO, R. Delorey advised council that communications is under way, and that information will be shared in the forthcoming days.

Councillor W. Cormier put forward motion that staff proceed with the RFP to desludge the STP lagoon, and for staff to begin work as recommended by the preliminary consultant report to reconfigure equipment to increase oxygen levels through the movement of water (pumps) and air (blowers).

Motion was moved and seconded.

Motion carried.

New Business

- Unveiling of the new sign at Chisholm Park (Friday, September 27) for the National Truth and Reconciliation.

The Town of Antigonish is hosting an event on Friday, September 27th at 10:00 AM following the flag raising ceremony to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This event will serve two purposes:

1. Commemorating National Truth and Reconciliation Day, recognizing the importance of this day and its significance in honoring the history and legacy of residential schools in Canada.
2. Unveiling New Town Signage, which incorporates both the new town logo and Mi'kmaq language to acknowledge the region's heritage.

Approximately two years ago, a Tri-Council Meeting was held with representatives from the Town of Antigonish, Antigonish County, and Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation. During this meeting, one of the key action items discussed was how the councils could support Truth and Reconciliation efforts.

- AREA – Potentia update

A motion was passed by the council granting the AREA Board the authority to enter into an agreement with Potentia. However, this authority hasn't been acted upon yet because the board has not met to move forward. The other two municipal partners have passed the same motion, fully granting the board the ability to finalize the agreement, but no contract has been signed, and discussions are ongoing.

Once the board approves the agreement, the Town of Antigonish and other municipal partners will need to consider entering into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). A motion for the PPA will be presented to the new council once the Potentia deal is ready. At this stage, there's no urgency for the PPA, as the deal is still under negotiation. The council will revisit the matter when the agreement with Potentia progresses, and the PPA proposal will be brought for approval then.

- Funding Request from RCA Richmond Cheer Athletics

Richmond Cheer Athletics, Town member Grace Atkins will be travelling to the UCA All Star National Championship at Walt Disney World on March 8th and 9th, 2025. A donation was provided.

It was moved and seconded to accept the motion as presented.

Motion Carried

- Funding request from Old Scotia Heavy Weight Association.

Two Town members, Milton King & Ryan Kennedy will be travelling to the Lightweight Worlds Heavy events competition in Luzarches, France on Sept 29th, 2024, representing Canada.

It was moved and seconded to accept the motion as presented.

Motion Carried

- Antigonish Electric Utility Submission to UARB respecting flow through rates. Councillor M. Farrell put forth a motion to direct the staff to apply to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) to amend the approved "flow-through formula" within the current schedule of rates for electrical supply and services.

Motion moved and seconded.

Motion carried.

Correspondence

- Antigonish Arena Funding Request for Capital Work
CAO, R. Delorey spoke on behalf of a funding application for a Capital Grant that was submitted for provincial funding as part of a joint project between the Town of Antigonish and the County. This application was intended to support various renovation works at the arena.

The motion in question was for a joint commitment from both the Town and County to fund the project, contingent on approval from the provincial government. Unfortunately, the provincial government did not approve the funding application. This created a gap in the expected financial support for the project.

With the lack of provincial funding, the arena still needs financial support for ongoing capital works, including unforeseen repairs such as sprinkler replacements. There is frustration and disappointment regarding the province's denial of funding, particularly as it was expected that every region would receive some financial support.

Despite the lack of provincial approval, the County has committed to providing its share of funding, even though the province did not match the contribution.

A motion was made to provide \$47,500 in support to the Antigonish Arena, with the funds to come out of reserves.

The motion was moved and seconded.

Motion carried

Town staff have been proactive in exploring alternative funding sources. Strategic Initiatives, L. Roy identified potential federal funding, and an application is in progress with a deadline of October 16. An \$8,000 consulting fee was necessary to meet the technical requirements of the application.

The arena management was praised for their efforts in securing outside sponsorships and handling the facility's improvements.

Staff Reports

- CAO Report

"It was Moved and Seconded to accept the CAO Report as presented." Motion carried.

Committee Reports

- **Fire Committee**

Councillor S. Cameron reported that they held their last meeting on August 27th. The following motion was presented.

“That the Town of Antigonish proceed with an RFP of a new Fire Truck as per the specifications outlined and presented to council.”

Motion was moved and seconded.

Motion carried.

- **Community Enhancement Committee**

Flower Baskets: Councillor A. Murray reported that due to the ongoing water shortage for the fifth consecutive year, the flower baskets had to be taken down earlier than usual once again.

Town Flags: Councillor A. Murray also raised the issue of the Town flags, noting that there was a complaint regarding the poor condition of one of the flags.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining the five flags on the town's flagpoles and ensuring they are in good condition.

Motion:

The Town of Antigonish to adopt a flag replacement policy, requiring the replacement of the five town flags twice a year: on June 1 and December 1.

Motion was moved and seconded.

Motion carried.

Discussions ensued.

- **Waste Management Committee**

Councillor D. Roberts reported that there is currently one vacant seat on the Waste Management Committee. The committee is actively seeking a new member to fill this position.

Councillor Roberts also shared encouraging feedback from individuals she spoke with regarding the issue of cigarette butt disposal.

Councillor Roberts expressed her gratitude to the Council and staff for installing the new light on the Museum sign, noting that it looks very appealing.

- **Accessibility/Emergency Management**

Councillor D. MacInnis noted he had nothing to report.

- **Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC)**

Councillor M. Farrell reported that she had nothing to report.

- **Police & License (P&L) Committee**

Deputy Mayor W. Cormier had nothing to report.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 PM.