

Regular Town Council Minutes

October 7th, 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 (Director of Public Works)
- L. Roy (Strategic Initiatives)

Call to Order

Mayor L. Boucher called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 Minutes of September 16th and ePoll Minutes Sept 25th. Motion carried.

Presentations/Proclamations

- Plaque Presentation to the African NS Community to recognize Emancipation Day
Mayor L. Boucher acknowledged Emancipation Day by inviting Lorraine and Tara Reddick, grandchildren as well as Jennifer Desmond, to come forward to receive the commemorative plaque.

Mayor Boucher provided a brief explanation of Emancipation Day, celebrated on August 1st, which marks the abolition of slavery across the British Empire, including Nova Scotia. She emphasized that this day serves as an opportunity for reflection, learning, and honoring the struggle and resilience of African Nova Scotians.

A celebration for Emancipation Day was held at Chisholm Park, where a plaque was installed on a bench as a lasting tribute. Mayor Boucher noted the importance of having a symbol within the Town Hall to honor this day, explaining that the plaque being presented tonight will be displayed in the Council Chambers as a reminder of this significant occasion.

- **Arena Grant -Presentation**

L. Roy presented the Antigonish Arena Grant proposal and thanked the council for their continued support of various initiatives. The proposal centers around securing funding through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program for a "Low Carbon Resilience Project" at the Antigonish Arena. This project includes a comprehensive plan for both energy efficiency upgrades and climate resilience adaptations.

The grant targets upgrading the Antigonish Arena to be more energy-efficient and climate-resilient. The project includes measures for both climate change mitigation and adaptation to ensure long-term sustainability of the building. The arena will be equipped to withstand climate change impacts and recover quickly from potential system failures without major disruptions.

Scope of the project Includes all energy-efficiency measures outlined in previous retrofit studies but expands significantly to address low carbon resilience.

1. Budget and Funding:

- Total Project Cost: Up to \$3,000,000.
- Grant Contribution: If fully approved, the grant would cover \$2,400,000.
- Required Local Contribution: \$600,000, to be shared equally by the town and county (\$300,000 each).
- Further approval will be necessary once the grant decision is confirmed

Council members expressed support, commending L. Roy's initiative. Clarification on the financial split was discussed, emphasizing a 50/50 contribution between the town and county.

Duration and timeline were confirmed to span three years, with a focus on minimal operational disruptions.

Motion:

To submit the application to the Green and Inclusive Community Building Fund for the Antigonish Arena Low Carbon Resilience Project.

It was moved and seconded to approve the motion.

Motion carried.

Discussions ensued.

L. Roy to finalize and submit the grant application.

Await grant decision and schedule a follow-up meeting to confirm budget contributions from the town and county if the grant is awarded.

- Memo to Council on Banners and Banner request from the Naomi Society

The Town of Antigonish has received a banner request from the Naomi Society, which prompt a review of our current banner policy. R. Delorey spoke briefly to council outlining the request. Discussions ensued from council members and K. MacInnis, Director of Corporate Development spoke to the questions. In response, staff made recommendation on the banner policy to ensure alignment with budget constraints and community needs. This memo provides an overview of the current policy costs, the implications of fulfilling banner requests, and recommendations for addressing new requests in a sustainable manner.

Given the cost considerations and limited budget, staff recommends declining this specific request, however Council suggested offering a flag raising to the Naomi Society in replacement. Staff will follow up with the Naomi Society and offer the flag raising for this request.

Following recommendations were made; Council should consider formally amending the banner policy to provide clear guidance for staff and organizations seeking banner placement. This policy would prioritize longstanding events and core community organizations.

Council may revisit banner placement requests in three years to assess the impact of the policy and adjust as necessary.

- Flag raising request – AVFD

A flag raising request was submitted. Council approved to raise the flag for fire prevention from Oct 8 to Oct 31st, 2024.

Motion

To approve the Flag raising request from the Antigonish Volunteer Fire Department.

It was moved and seconded to approve the motion.

Motion carried.

Business from Minutes

- Antigonish Community Transit Society (ACTS) Funding update

R. Delorey advised that the funding update for the Antigonish Community Transit Society (ACTS) was processed following approval at the previous council meeting. While the funds have been released, some policy work is still in progress.

It was noted that although the funding went forward, the policy itself has not yet been formalized. There was discussion on aligning with provincial policies, especially in light of recent provincial announcements. However, it was acknowledged that further steps are needed to ensure full alignment once the policy is officially established.

- National Truth and Reconciliation Flag Raising

The National Truth and Reconciliation flag-raising event had to be canceled due to bad weather, despite strong interest and planned attendance from schools and students.

Positive feedback was received on the signage, and special thanks were extended to staff for their efforts in organizing the event and preparing the materials.

- AAHS (Antigonish Affordable Housing Society) Letter of Support

A check-in was made on the status of the letter of support for the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society (AAHS) to the incoming Town Council. The council discussed comfort with allowing the letter to proceed and confirmed readiness to support it.

Motion

To approve the letter as presented

It was moved and seconded to approve the motion.

Motion carried.

- Municipal Acknowledgement Policy

K. MacInnis gave a summary of recent amendments to the Municipal Acknowledgement Policy.

Community Nominations where members of the community can now submit nomination ideas by contacting a council member, who can then bring the nomination forward for consideration.

Conflict of Interest where Council and committee members must declare any conflicts of interest related to nominations.

Internal Tracking and Staff Responsibility where Town staff will maintain an internal record of nominations, including dates, details, and reasons for recognition. Once a

nomination is approved, staff will coordinate details for recognition, such as organizing ceremonies or posting on social media.

Repeat Recognition where individuals, groups, or businesses can be recognized more than once, provided each recognition is for a different reason.

Motion

To amend the policy as presented.

It was moved and seconded to amend the policy as presented. Motion carried.

Flag replacement Policy

The Flag Replacement Policy was discussed in the last meeting and was summarized by K. MacInnis. Policy applies only to flags owned by the town, specifically at Town Hall and Columbus Field.

A Replacement Schedule was discussed: Flags will be routinely replaced on June 1st and December 1st. Bi-monthly visual inspections by staff will be conducted, and any damaged flags will be replaced as needed, even if prior to the scheduled dates.

Disposal Protocol was discussed, the policy includes guidelines for proper flag disposal, in line with established protocols, and options for recycling flags when feasible.

Motion

To adopt the policy as presented.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the policy as carried. Motion Carried.

- **College St. Bridge Update:**

R. Delorey provided an update and addressed that significant progress has been made on the College Street Bridge repairs with the focus on the main decking to get the roadway open. Decking replacement is underway, with asphalt work planned, pending contractor selection. Safety is the upmost importance to get the roadway open.

Sidewalk Repairs: Original plans focused on decking, but sidewalk repairs are now being considered due to structural concerns with the support beams. Completing the sidewalk repairs now would add 1–1.5 months to the timeline, aiming for completion by Christmas, enabling two-way traffic and one functional sidewalk.

The overall project budget remains within the previously allocated, covering both the deck and sidewalk work.

Recommendation from Council was advised to proceed with the sidewalk repairs within the current project timeline to avoid future disruptions and ensure safe, completed access.

Motion

To proceed with extended timelines on the College St Bridge to complete the sidewalk repairs.

It was moved and seconded to approve the motion.

Motion Carried.

- Sewer Treatment Plant – Update

R. Delorey presented a comprehensive update on sewer treatment improvements, with a focus on oxygen levels, sludge, and aeration.

The main problem was identified as low oxygen levels due to high sludge and water temperatures. Consultants recommended desludging and enhancing aeration.

Staff have prepared the RFP for desludging, which will be released shortly. Samples were tested to identify appropriate disposal sites, with two potential locations confirmed in the province.

Desludging will increase oxygen flow, allowing existing aeration equipment to operate more efficiently. Staff are exploring additional aeration equipment to further enhance oxygenation, including options for portable units to support flexible use.

The consultant's final report aligns with initial findings, confirming desludging and improved oxygenation as primary solutions.

Overall, staff are implementing the consultant's recommendations, balancing budget considerations and operational improvements to address immediate and long-term treatment needs.

Discussions ensued with R. Delorey and K. Proctor speaking to the questions.

- Water Tower Update (Bethany)

R. Delorey provided council with an update advising that the project has progressed well, with only two minor scope changes. Early inspection recommended additional base repairs to prevent future issues. Reinforcement was added to the steel in the upper section to address ice scraping concerns from fluctuating water levels.

The filling process is expected to begin within 1-2 weeks, following a 24-hour sampling and testing period.

The project is on time and on budget. These repairs extend the water tower's life by 20-25 years.

No significant impact on water rates, as costs were previously approved by the Utility Review Board.

K. Proctor spoke briefly on the progress. This project has been a successful investment in essential infrastructure maintenance.

Discussions ensued.

- Hawthorne Street Paving

R. Delorey provided an update noting that the paving project on Hawthorne Street, from Brookland Street to Xavier Drive, consists of two phases:

Sidewalk and Curbing: This phase has been tendered and awarded, with work scheduled to begin within the next week.

Paving: The paving portion has also been tendered and will follow the completion of the curb work.

The project is on schedule and expected to progress smoothly.

Correspondence

- Seniors for Climate – Antigonish

Mayor L. Boucher spoke on behalf of the Seniors for Climate Antigonish Group. A well-attended presentation by Seniors for Climate – Antigonish was held at Chisholm Park on October 1st, featuring dedicated community members, university students, and local representatives. The group shared their climate initiatives, acknowledging some logistical challenges due to holiday timing but committed to smoother coordination in the future. After the presentation, the group marched to several offices, including Town Hall and MP Sean Fraser's office, where they shared their package and advocated for climate action. The event was positively received, and Council members have received copies of the materials provided by the group.

- Request from Catholic Women's League (CWL)

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) has requested sponsorship support for their annual fall bazaar, which is their primary fundraiser. Proceeds from this event help fund local organizations that have limited access to other funding sources. Over the past year, CWL has donated to various community groups.

Councillor M. Farrell removed herself from the table at 7:12 pm.

A request for a \$300 sponsorship from the Council to support this year's fall bazaar.

Motion

To provide \$300 from the discretionary fund.

It was moved and seconded to approve the motion.

Motion carried.

M. Farrell returned to the table at 7:14 pm.

Staff Reports

Councillor A. Murray wanted to acknowledge the Lighting on the clock Tower project that was awarded, so in the future Town Hall can be lit to accommodate community group requests.

Mayor L. Boucher noted a request that came through from the Violence Against Women to light up the Town Hall in purple. The Town will inform the group that this request can be accommodated next year, as the lighting project will not be completed in time for this year's request.

CAO Report

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

Committee Reports

- Police and Licencing

Deputy Mayor W. Cormier provided an update on the Homecoming weekend, noting the efforts between the RCMP, St. FX University, town officials, and other stakeholders led to a successful and safe homecoming event with only two open liquor incidents and no arrests. The RCMP's proactive approach included the Safe Drive Home program, offering rides to students as needed.

Town contributed towards the "Blue and White Tailgate Gathering" for students and alumni, featuring music, food trucks, and local entertainment, which was well-received. Council reaffirmed that supporting these events for residents, including students, helps ensure safety and positively engages the community.

Following homecoming, students participated in a town-wide cleanup, enhancing community relations and reflecting the importance of consistency in such community initiatives.

Deputy Mayor W. Cormier commended the Town's By-Law officers J. Pellerin and S. Smith for their continued support on the ground during these events.

- Fire Committee

Councillor S. Cameron noted he had nothing to report

- Community Enhancement Committee

Councillor A. Murray noted he had nothing to report.

- **Waste Management**

Councillor D. Roberts reminded everyone about the upcoming community clean-up on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Despite recent student-led clean-up efforts, volunteers are still needed. Due to a shortage of helpers, any additional support would be appreciated.

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

Councillor M. Farrell reported that a meeting was held on October 26th, expressing gratitude for council contributions and looking forward to upcoming changes.

- **Accessibility/Emergency Management**

Councillor D. MacInnis noted he had nothing to report.

Business from Minutes:

- **Councillor Reflections**

Mayor L. Boucher invited each councillor to take a few moments to reflect on their term on council, sharing experiences, insights, and memorable moments from their time on Council. Deputy Mayor W. Cormier began the reflections, and the conversation then moved around the table, allowing each councillor and finally the Mayor herself to express their thoughts.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.