

Minutes
Regular Monthly Meeting
In-Person at 27 Pleasant Street
Zoom ID: 935 442 9176 Password: 301715
Wednesday, October 12, 2022 – 7:00 pm

Attendance: Nancy Hatch, Commission Chair; Laura Mulrooney, Commissioner; Geraldine Pauley, Commission Vice-Chair; Randall O'Malley, Commissioner; Martin Hiltz, Commissioner; Jeff Conrad, Interim Clerk/Treasurer; Maxine Veinot, Recording Secretary

Regrets: Nil

Public Gallery: Brenda & Paul Mulrooney, Ray Cambria, Greg Conron, Deputy Fire Chief

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Hatch called the October 12th, 2022, Regular Monthly meeting of the Village of Chester Commission to order at 7:00 pm.

2.0 Public Forum

Brenda Mulrooney, Brunswick Street:

- (1) Mrs. Mulrooney asked if the various village properties are exempt from property taxes. Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated that the Village is exempt from paying property taxes for facilities used for the Village, however garbage collection fees are paid. Fire Hall, Jib Lot, Washrooms and Lido Pool does not pay property taxes, but pay for Municipal service fee, whereas the EHS building and former Windjammer property are considered commercial properties and pay taxes on the assessed rate. Brenda asked if the washrooms pay the sewer tax. Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad said he will have to check on this.
- (2) In reviewing the Grant Policy, Brenda asked if various sites, Library, Heritage Society, Chester Municipal Chamber of Commerce, are they eligible for grants? The Heritage society is non-profit and Municipal in name only meaning the municipal area.
- (3) Why is there no charge for the use of Lido, trails, boat moorings, wharfs. Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated the Village owns the Lido, but not the trails, moorings, or wharfs. Brenda Mulrooney stated that Mahone Bay, Hubbards, and other areas, have taken on the responsibility of those and then charge a user fee. Chair Hatch thanked Brenda and stated the Commission will take this under advisement.

Ray Cambria, Central Street:

(1) Mr. Cambria stated he is concerned that the Village does not use motions clearly when buying big ticket items such as Windjammer site, and now the fire truck. Ray would expect that a motion would be made stating purchase price, property civic and PID numbers, description of item(s) and motion number. Ray feels the current motions were not descriptive enough to be transparent to the electors. Chair Hatch thanked Ray and stated the commission will endeavour to be clearer in the future.

3.0 Review/Approval of Agenda/Additions to Agenda

8(f) New Business – Meetings and Procedures

8(g) New Business – Chester Village Christmas

5(a) *Street and sidewalk cleaning* to be postponed until the next meeting

Motion #22-113: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded:

The approval of the agenda with the addition of 8f and 8g, and the postponement of 5a.

Unanimously Carried

4.0 Review/Approval of Minutes

a) Regular Meeting: Wednesday, September 14, 2022

MOTION #22-114: Commissioner O'Malley moved; Commissioner Mulrooney seconded:

The approval of the Minutes of September 14, 2022, Regular Monthly meeting as presented.

Unanimously Carried

5.0 Business Arising

a. Street and Sidewalk Cleaning
Postponed item until next meeting

b. Rodent Control

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad spoke with Terminix regarding potentially adding some bait stations. A significant increase was suggested by Terminix representative. To increase by fifty stations, the cost would add approximately \$3000 to the budget costs. In reviewing the maps of locations and proposed locations, Interim Clerk/Treasurer suggested to reposition the stations presently in the Village and increase a modest number of stations on North Street and #3 Highway.

The Interim Clerk/Treasurer was asked to speak to MoDC Public Works/By-law enforcement of areas that need to be cleaned up to eliminate areas that are causing rodent issues.

c. Flower Basket – Colours

Chair Hatch had inquiries for the Village to consider having multi-coloured baskets, instead of purple. The purple wave petunias have proven to be hardier in the Village and the consensus of the commission was to have the purple petunias as in the past.

6.0 Correspondence

a) Notice of Application in Court

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated notification was received of an 'application in court', related to the last election, that Thomas Mulrooney asked the court to review the election, with regard to residency of commissioners. Documents have been filed and served to the Village office and November 22, 2022, in the Bridgewater Courthouse, the Village will be expected to appear and speak on this application. This paperwork was passed onto the lawyer and the information received back from the lawyer will be passed onto the commissioners, when received.

b. Insurance Renewal Notice

Interim Clerk/Treasurer stated that the Village has insurance that renews annually, and he discussed the policies held with the Andrew MacDonald representative. Insurance fees increased due to the insurance industry seeing more claims across the industry, higher rates of repairs, higher awards by courts, insurance companies invest monies and over the last few years, investment returns decreased significantly. Interim Clerk/Treasurer contacted other Villages and MoDC, and they are all seeing increases of 20-30% in insurance costs.

c. OHC Request – Tax Exemption

Interim Clerk/Treasurer received a request from Our Health Centre (OHC) to consider granting them a tax exemption of residential taxes, pursuant to By-law #02-2021.

Interim Clerk/Treasurer declared a Conflict of Interest as he is the Treasurer for the OHC board. Technically a conflict of interest is 'when personal/financial gain' take place, however, in this case it could be perceived as a conflict, and so Conrad will remove himself from the room for the Commission to discuss this request.

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad left the room.

Discussion continued.

MOTION #22-115: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Mulrooney seconded:

The approval of Our Health Centre's request of exemption from property taxes of this current fiscal year from the general government Village's tax rate, under By-law #02-201.

Discussion continued.

AMENDMENT TO MOTION #22-115: Commissioner Hiltz moved; Commissioner Pauley seconded; Commissioner Mulrooney agreed to the amendment of the original motion:

That approval be given to Our Health Centre, for a 50% exemption of the current fiscal year general government Village's tax rate, under By-law #02-201.

Unanimously Carried

The commission directed Interim Clerk/Treasurer to review By-law #02-201, to have the motion read of an exemption not associated with any organization, as it currently reads.

7.0 Reports

a) Clerk Treasurer

- The Government of Canada announced its call for proposals for the disability inclusion and access program, for up to \$100,000. Applications are due by the end of October. Interim Clerk/Treasurer will prepare a submission related to the Lido and Public Washroom upgrades.
- Accessibility staff from MoDC have conducted the onsite visits to the Lido Pool and Public Washrooms. Changes anticipated are modest, (door openers, mirrors, grab bars, etc.) They will also provide information on options for the Lido Pool.
- The new Fire Truck has been ordered and delivery is expected in early 2023. The Village and MoDC will explore registration and payment options under the new fire services agreement.
- VOC and MoDC have asked our insurance broker to formally explore with the insurance company options for providing insurance coverage to our joint Fire Services Advisory Committee.
- Work will begin on repairing the streetlights on Water Street which were out of service since December 2021. The main power controls were damaged following a winter storm. It was thought the sidewalk plow hit the post, but MoDC has advised that the sidewalks were not plowed the week it was hit, they expect that a truck hit it from the street. Estimated costs of repairs are \$5800.
- Hurricane Fiona brought relatively minor impact to the Village owned properties. The fire department, EHS, or Lido/Washroom building suffered no know damage. Two large tree limbs were down at the Jib Lot Park and one at the Windjammer property. The limb at the Jib lot was close to the Firefighters monument, the CVFD did an initial clearing to remove the risk. Both limbs have been removed at the Jib lot, and the one at the Windjammer property will be removed.
- Work is underway to brief the new Fire Services Working group on the background related to the fire department, capital needs, and construction approaches. In preparation for these discussions, the Clerk/Treasurer met with the Town of Mahone Bay to discuss fire station construction. Various presentations and background documents have been prepared for discussion by the working group.
- Interim Clerk/Treasurer and two Commissioners attended the two-day annual meeting of the Association of Nova Scotia Villages (ANSV) in Bible Hill. There were learnings sessions and discussions on future direction of the Association and how it can best serve the needs of Villages.

b) Financial

- The September bank statement has not yet been received. The balance online shows a new balance of \$311,638
- The Village is in good fiscal position for this time of the year.
- Discussion with the bank have confirmed that interest rates have risen on cashable GICs. The Village is currently holding one-year investments at 1.0% return, which mature at various dates in 2023. These funds can be drawn out without penalty. The same investment type currently pays 2.5%. A locked in 13-month GIC is paying 4.0% The Clerk/Treasurer recommends drawing these funds out and reinvesting in

new one-year cashable at the higher interest rate. At the same time approved funds for 2022/23 reserves can begin to be invested.

MOTION #22-116: Commissioner O'Malley moved; Commissioner Hiltz seconded:
The approval of cashing in the 1% interest rate cashable GICs and roll them into 2.5% cashable GICs.

Unanimously Carried

- Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reported that the Bank reconciliations have been completed for August and The Village & Fire Department insurance policy for 2022/2023 has been renewed. Policy costs are up approximately 20% overall. In addition to the premium, the Village will receive a bill for a 2.5% broker fee, and a 2.5% participation fee from the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities who are the holders of the municipal policy agreement.

c) Fire Chief

Chief Stevens was unable to attend and therefore Deputy Chief Conron read the report. Twenty-seven incidents were reported, and this included a structure fire and Motor Vehicle Accident (MVA) today.

During Hurricane Fiona, the CVFD staffed the station for 24 hours, with two crews clearing downed trees and debris off roadways, highways, and private properties to ensure safe access to the areas if needed. At CVFD's request, a common radio channel was dedicated for any inter-departmental operations between any of the seven departments in the municipality to ensure communications during Hurricane Fiona. Throughout the weekend typical calls of flooded basements and downed lines were received.

The annual live fire certification is almost complete, with this completion there will be sixteen interior firefighters. September's training was at Maibec Mill in East River. Fire Prevention week visit at Chester District Elementary School, was postponed by the South Shore Regional Education Centre, however, Saturday October 15th the department will be in Gold River participating in a municipal-wide fire prevention day. Commissioner Pauley questioned the high volume of calls. Deputy Chief Conron stated the increase is due to medical calls, as EHS has an issue with volume of calls and not able to answer the calls in a timely manner.

d) Committees

- Working Joint Fire Agreement Group

Chair Hatch reported that the committee is awaiting answers to insurance coverage issues.

8.0 New/Other Business

a) Village Promotional Items 2023

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated that historically the Village has had promotional items for tourists who drop in the office with questions re maps, etc. Discussion was held on several types of items that the village has had in the past and what MoDC has

now. Local entrepreneurs were favoured and as well sheltered workshops to make promotional items. Commissioner Pauley and Commissioner Mulrooney will bring contact information to the next meeting.

b) Low-Income Tax Exemption

The Low-Income Tax Exemption and the levels of coverage were discussed. Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reviewed the usage of the exemption over the last few years and stated that MoDC carries-out this process.

MOTION #22-117: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Hiltz seconded:

To approve the exemption rate levels to be \$20,000 or less - exemption shall be the lesser of \$500; \$20,001 to \$29,999 the tax exemption shall be the lesser of \$350; \$30,000 to \$40,000 the tax exemption shall be the lesser of \$250.

Unanimously Carried

c) Remembrance Day Wreath and Ceremony

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated that a large wreath for Remembrance Day service is \$100; does the Commission wish to purchase a wreath this year and who will lay the wreath at the cenotaph.

MOTION #22-118: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Hiltz seconded:

The approval to purchase a large wreath for \$100 and Commissioner O'Malley will lay the wreath on behalf of the Village Commission, at the Cenotaph ceremony.

Unanimously Carried

d) 2nd Quarter Financial Update

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reviewed the financial update for the end of the second quarter. Overall, the budget is at 54% at the six-month reporting period.

f) Meeting and Procedures

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad suggested that the agenda order be changed to allow the CVFD report to come after Public Forum, allowing the CVFD Chief or representative to give the report earlier and can then leave, as with the new Joint Fire Committee, there will be one more meeting to attend for the CVFD.

MOTION #22-119: Commissioner Hiltz moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded:

To approve changing the agenda order in the Meeting and Procedures policy to place the CVFD report after the approval of agenda.

Unanimously Carried

g) Chester Village Christmas

Commissioner Hatch stated the Chester Merchants are organizing a Village Christmas this year and they are looking for volunteers and they have a meeting tomorrow. Interim Clerk/Treasurer nor Commissioner Hatch are unable to attend and therefore looking for someone to attend the meeting, however no one was available to attend.

MOTION #22-120: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Hiltz seconded:
To authorize the purchase of a large tree up to \$300.00 for the Village Christmas Activities.
Unanimously Carried

e) In Camera

MOTION #22-121: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Hiltz seconded:
To move In Camera to discuss Clerk/Treasurer recruitment and Maintenance worker,
at 9:07 pm.

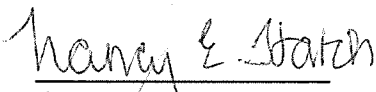
Unanimously Carried

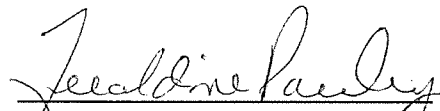
The meeting continued In Camera.

10.0 Adjournment

Regular Monthly Meeting – November 9th, 2022, at 7:00 pm

Chair Hatch ended the In Camera session and adjourned the meeting at 9:50 pm.


Commission Chair


Commission Vice Chair