



Village of Chester
Regular Monthly Meeting –Feb 9, 2011
Minutes

Present:

Bill Zinck Jr., Brenda Mulrooney, Mike Heisler, Tom Mulrooney, Jo-Ann Grant and Iris Tolliver

Regrets: None

There were 2 member of the public present.

Additions to the agenda.

Minutes from the previous meeting:

The minutes from Dec 15, 2010 were circulated and reviewed. *Brenda Mulrooney moved to accept the minutes*, seconded by Tom Mulrooney. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Old Business:

Scheduling of Budget Meetings

The Commissioners were presented with the Audited Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2010. These are now available to the public as well.

A year to date budget worksheet was distributed to the Commissioners to assist in preparing the budget for this fiscal year.

Auditor for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2011

Harry Davis of Chandler and Davis Chartered Accountants has agreed to perform the audit as usual for the current fiscal year. He was not present at the AGM last June, so Mr. Zinck called for a motion to approve using their services. He also commented that Mr. Davis may not be interested in continuing to perform the audits for the Village Commission and suggested that a new auditor be sourced for next year. *Brenda Mulrooney moved that the Commission used the Chartered Accountants, Chandler and Davis to be the auditors for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.* Motion was seconded by Jo-Ann Grant. All were in favor and the motion carried. The clerk treasurer advised that she has had a request from the Chandler and Davis firm to provide them with the books no later than the third week of April. There was no problem for seen with complying with this request.

Census

Jo-Ann Grant has approached EDM to obtain information and suggestions for a Village census. It was suggested that the census could be preformed by mail out, phone survey, door to door and a web site or a combination of all. Because it would be strictly voluntary, it may require some sort of incentive to encourage folks to participate, for instance holding Saturday morning seminars at the Fire Hall and offer refreshments to those who come to complete the census. Bill Zinck asked if it were possible to get at least three quotes for doing the Census. Jo-Ann suggested that the Commission clearly lay out what information they are looking to draw from the Census and then approach two other companies as well as EDM. Bill asked the group to comment on what information the Commission hopes to gain from the

Census. Jo-Ann summarized what had previously been discussed by saying that the hope was to ensure that programs and services that are provided in the Village match the demographics. Broad age brackets rather than specific ages are what is aimed for, for instance, pre-school, school age, seniors, etc. Brenda Mulrooney added that the number of year round and summer only residents should be known. It is hoped that the quotes from other firms could be obtained and available for March meeting. There was a reminder about the Canada Census being conducted in May. Jo-Ann Grant moved that a Census Committee be formed which included all member of the Commission. The motion was seconded by Brenda Mulrooney and all were in favor. Members were asked to formulate any questions they felt should be included in the Census. The Fire Chief was also asked to give it thought and was encouraged to add the Department's input.

New Business:

Formation of Committees for Commission Policy Manual

The Commission has an old policy which has been used for general guidelines. The manual is outdated and needs to be rewritten. Billy asked a Committee be formed and asked for volunteers to sit on the Committee. Tom Mulrooney volunteered to draw up a draft for approval and Brenda Mulrooney offered to assist.

Ownership of Village roads

Jo-Ann Grant spoke of the long standing issues around ownership of the Village roads. She reported that the Department of Transportation would no doubt be interested in turning over ownership of the roads, and that the Municipality is not interested. She suggested the Commission start looking at what is involved and whether it is even possible. There would be some benefits to the Village Commission having ownership of roads when it came to the size of sidewalks and setting different standards than the ones imposed by DOT. Also the speed limits could be reduced. Snow clearing, maintenance as well as the Farmers Market were also mentioned. Tom Mulrooney said that the DOT would do a study on what is needed to determine if it is even feasible. Bill Zinck suggested a study would say one way or another what the costs are, etc. Jo-Ann Grant hiring a consulting firm to review any study that is done. Tom *Mulrooney made a motion to contact the Department of Transportation to engage their services in determining the feasibility of the Village of Chester taking ownership of Village roads.* The motion was seconded by Jo-Ann Grant. All were in favor. Billy also suggested that the Commission wait to hear back before there is any forward movement.

Side Walks

Tom Mulrooney raised the concern that sanding the sidewalks does not work. Seniors have slipped and fallen. He checked with Lunenburg and Mahone Bay who both salt their sidewalks. Lunenburg has been salting for 30 years with no environmental issues. Brenda Mulrooney pointed out that Lunenburg has a town water supply. Tom Mulrooney pointed out that all their sidewalks have curbs and drains. The cost of sand versus salt, according to the Municipality, is around \$3000. However, rather than buy in bulk, the salt is purchased in small bags, which increases the cost. He pointed out that Hwy 103 is heavily salted and it recovers in summer. Bill Zinck suggested that the Municipality be approached to see about absorbing the extra cost of salting the sidewalks. He suggested that this item be added to the Budget Meeting discussions.

Village Property Tax

Tom Mulrooney asked the Clerk Treasurer to report on the information received from the Village of Kingston. She handed out copies of the web page and a news article that dealt with the Village taking over responsibility for collecting their property taxes. The stand cost for Municipalities to collect taxes in behalf of Villages is 4%; however, the Municipality of Chester does not impose any fee for the

service they provide to the Village of Chester, according to Steve Graham, Director of Finance with the Municipality. In speaking with the Clerk Treasurer from Kingston, Greg Towne, it was determined that the time investment for this project would be 70-90 hours a year. There would be no new software required since Simply Accounting and Microsoft Excel are the programs Kingston is using. Breaking down the actual costs included \$600 for advertising, \$1700 for postage, \$2700 for supplies, and miscellaneous other costs of \$2000 for a total of approximately \$7000. This does not factor in cost for additional staff of which Kingston employs 1 full time employee and 2 part time. The process is quite simple according to Mr. Towne which includes contacting PVSC of the intention to take over the function from the Municipality, various housekeeping functions such as seeking approval for tax dates and setting a tax rate, advertising by way of letters and the web, contacting the bank for a debit machine and setting up pre-authorized payments, and obtaining the assessment role on excel, which has already been provided by the Municipality. Twice a year the assessment file is converted to a PDF file, sent to a printing company who prints off bills, folds and stuffs envelopes. These are returned to my Towne's office where it is stamped and mailed. The savings realized by the Village of Kingston is in the vicinity of \$50,000. The biggest concern for Chester would be establishing a satellite office for accepting payments. Many of Chester's residents would not or could not pay on line.

Bill Zinck would like to be certain there is no fee or cost from the Municipality and to determine how they are generating tax revenues before proceeding further.

Rezoning the former RCMP site

Jo-Ann Grant wished to discuss the information from the public meeting on the plans for the old RCMP site on Duke St. While acknowledging that the Commission should not be involved with planning within the Village, she felt the Village Commissioners should be interested in what will be developed on this site. There are rumors of a Liquor Store being added to an expected expansion by Loblaws of the existing Save Easy. It was pointed out that the Planning Advisory Committee was set up to handle the planning matters of the Village and that the Commission is represented by Commission Michael Heisler who is a member. However all were in favor of ensuring the architectural controls are adhered to. There was brief discussion concerning the change to rezone the site to Highway Commercial instead of Village Commercial.

Correspondence

A list of correspondences were read by the Clerk Treasurer. *Mike Heisler moved to accept the Correspondence as read*, seconded by Tom Mulrooney. All in favor.

Fire Chief's Report

Since the last commission meeting on Dec 15, 2010, I have logged in 149 hours in callouts, meetings, practices and fire department business. We have had a very quiet Christmas with a few callouts over the holidays and plenty in the new year. In total we have had 22 callouts in the past 2 months, consisting of 7 motor vehicle accidents, 4 alarms, 2 garbage fires, 1 call to smoke in the curling club, 1 gas spill and 2 practices.

Basic firefighting training within the Municipality seems to be going well. On the weekend of Jan. 15/16m, Chester hosted approximately 30 members from all 7 departments in the Municipality. The courses will be spread over the next 4 months alternating between several of the departments. I have contacted Survival Systems about the MEDA3 course and have received a course outline and have scheduled the course around the fire school dates because some of the members taking the basic courses are interested in the boating course. This coming weekend will be the start of the course with approximately a dozen members registered. We will do the theory section at our hall and practical training at Oak Island Pool. Boat operations training will be scheduled for April when the weather improves.

As you probably noticed, we have made a few changes in the entranceway to increase our secure

storage area.

Thank you.

Duke Chafe

Fire Chief

After the Fire Chief had finished his report, Bill ZInck questioned him on the secure storage area. He pointed out that the Commission should have been contacted before any change is made in the building. He also pointed out that the MDF used to construct the storage area is not fire rated, nor is the door.

Truck Report

Nothing to report.

Fire Advisory Report:

There was discussion concerning the changes made to the Fire Advisory Committee, particularly the separating the Fire Commission from the Fire Department.

Financial Report:

A financial report for the past two months was presented by the Clerk Treasurer. There were no questions. *Tom Mulrooney moved to accept the financial report as presented*, seconded by Jo-Ann Grant. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Questions

There were no questions, but discussion from the audience concerning the property tax, and the RCMP site. Kerry Keddy voiced some concerns and suggestions.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30

William Zinck Jr
Chairperson

Iris Tolliver
Clerk/Treasurer