

Minutes
Regular Monthly Meeting
In-Person at 27 Pleasant Street
Zoom ID: 935 442 9176 Password: 301715
Wednesday, March 8, 2023 – 7:00 pm

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

Regrets:

Public Gallery: Chester Fire Chief Cody Stevens; Heather McCallum, via Zoom

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Hatch called the March 8, 2023, Regular Monthly meeting of the Village of Chester Commission to order at 7:01pm.

2.0 Public Forum

Nil

3.0 Review/Approval of Agenda/Additions to Agenda

Additions to agenda: 7d Correspondence – J Wentzell

9b MoDC Maintenance Agreement – not received

Motion #23-023: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded:
The approval of the agenda as amended with addition of 7d and deletion of 9b.

Unanimously Carried

4.0 Report of the Chief, Chester Volunteer Fire Department

Chief Stevens reported that there were twenty-four (24) incidents for the month of February 2023. The department evaluated a piece of equipment at Shaw's Island this past weekend, from Cumings Fire & Safety, to draft water in very low water conditions. The test was very successful and CVFD hopes to acquire one in the coming year. In the past month nine (9) members took Strategy and Tactics training from the NS Firefighters School. CVFD was invited by mutual aid partners, Western Shore & District Fire Department to tour Oak Island Inn and Marina to help develop a pre-plan.

Chief Cody Stevens expressed "the CVFD members and his 'heartfelt' thank-you to Jeff Conrad, Interim Clerk/Treasurer, for all he has done to work with CVFD." 'It was a real pleasure to work and learn from Jeff.'

5.0 Review/Approval of Minutes

- a) Special Meeting: Friday, February 3, 2023

MOTION #23-024: Commissioner O'Malley moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded:
The approval of the Minutes of February 3, 2023, Special meeting as presented.

Unanimously Carried

- b) Regular Meeting: Wednesday, February 8, 2023

One spelling error was noted and minutes will be amended.

MOTION #23-025: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded:
The approval of the Minutes of February 8, 2023, Regular Monthly meeting as amended.

Unanimously Carried

- c) Special Meeting: Tuesday, February 21, 2023

MOTION #23-026: Commissioner Mulrooney moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded:
The approval of the Minutes of February 21, 2023 as presented.

Unanimously Carried

6.0 Business Arising

- a) Village Stationery

<> Update and decision

Chair Hatch distributed several cards that Jim Barkhouse created. The cards would be \$3.00 per card and there are many different photos that could be on the cards. These cards will not replace stationery used in the Business office but will be used for special occasions and possibly for promotional purposes.

MOTION #23-027: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded:
To purchase one hundred (100) cards from Jim Barkhouse at a cost of \$3.00 each.

Unanimously Carried

Chair Hatch will pass a selection of photos to the Commissioners to have each Commissioner pick out their choice, which will be the stock cards that will be bought.

7.0 Correspondence

- a) Property Valuation Services Corporation

Income and expense request Windjammer Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad explained that the Property Valuations Services were aware that the property is no longer used as a motel, however, this change was not carried out through their system and a letter was received asking for income and expenses information for the Windjammer. Interim C/T Conrad wrote another letter to Property Valuation Services Corporation to have the property taken off as a commercial motel property.

- b) Ray Cambria - Property assessment increase/tax rate concern
Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated the copy of the letter was in the agenda package and that Mr. Cambria asked that with assessments increasing, he would like to see the Commission decrease the tax rate for Villagers.
The Commissioners discussed this issue and asked for Interim C/T respond in writing to Mr. Cambria advising that the Commission will take this information under advisement when reviewing the 2023/2024 budget.
- c) Managed Health Care Services (re: Telus Health)
(i) Possible Data breach
Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad advised the Commission that there was a potential data breach at MHCSI, may have affected Blue Cross services and its participants.
- d) Jane Wentzell
Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reported that Commissioner Mulrooney received correspondence from Jane Wentzell about several issues she is concerned about and that they be discussed at this meeting.
Commissioner Mulrooney spoke of the garbage being put in 'group' garbage boxes causing smells, but it is not to be put out until the day of pickup. Also, dog feces being left laying on sidewalks, parks ,trails, etc., but waste bags are offered free of charge. Ms. Wentzell also is concerned with parking in the Village being poor and yet some homeowners are blocking off the shoulders of the roads, creating a parking issue. There are by-laws against some of these concerns, yet they don't seem to be enforced. Commissioner Nauss stated to contact the Village Advisory Committee. Commissioner Mulrooney volunteered to speak to Public Works to get clearer information on the issues. Interim Clerk/Treasurer will respond to Ms. Wentzell.

8.0 Reports

- a) Clerk Treasurer
- The abuse prevention policy and associated application for coverage has been provided to the insurance broker. VoC Office staff and Crossing Guards have now reviewed the policy and signed the attestation forms. Commissioners will be provided forms for signature at the meeting.
 - The three Water Street lights that were not working have been examined by Black and MacDonald. Power has been confirmed at the base of each pole, so the issue is with the "fixtures". The LED bulbs are non-replaceable, so the fixtures themselves must be replaced. The last time a fixture was replaced due to damage the parts were approximately \$1500.
Once the maintenance agreement is signed with MoDC, this can be an issue they are asked to address. Service from Black and MacDonald on this issue has been very slow, with limited communications, and no proactive approach to addressing the needs of the Village.
 - Continued meetings and discussions with MoDC on implementation of fire agreement. An amending agreement is being developed to make changes that would allow for the provision of insurance and

- Participated in a video call held by Nova Scotia Municipal Affairs on February 16th along with Commissioner Hatch. The main topic was the upcoming draft of a Code of Conduct for Municipal Units, particularly with regard to penalties and investigations.
- Finalized the Request for Proposal document to be used to dispose of the old CVFD 551 Pumper. The RFP has been posted on the Village website and Facebook page.
- Audited the interview process for the new Clerk/Treasurer and supported the development and signing of an employment contract between the Village and the candidate.
- Advised the four companies that responded to the RFP for Executive Search services that the Village would not be proceeding with the process.
- Was advised by the insurance adjuster working on behalf of the Village that they have been in contact with the law firm representing an individual who fell and was hurt on a sidewalk in the Village. The adjuster denied any Liability for this incident on behalf of the Village on Feb 10, on the basis that the Village does not, nor have they ever maintained the Streets and Sidewalks of Chester for snow and or ice removal. As of February 23, no response to that denial letter had been received.
- Applied for a grant from NS Community Culture and Heritage for repairs to the Lido pool. If approved there would need to be a financial contribution from the Village towards the costs.
- Participated in a conference call with the Director of IT Services at Municipal Joint Services Board (MJSB). Rates have been the same since the Village contracted for services in 2018. A recent financial review has indicated that MJSB needs to significantly raise their rates, which is reflected in the most recent Village budget documents. Given the agreement between the Village and the MJSB the increase is approximately \$1000 annually. They are undergoing a review and in 2023/24 will be developing more formal contracts between MJSB and clients, which will provide a good review point for the village to make any decisions about future services.

b) Financial

- Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reported that January's bank statement is reconciled and at the bank balance was \$154,722.97
- The Village is in good fiscal position for the time of year.
- The final quarterly revenue payment from MoDC received February 28, 2023. The final year-end reconciliation payment in early March, which will include details on low-income property tax relief.
- On-line review shows since January 31st there have been deposits of \$249,221.44 and expenses of \$44,633.88 for the balance on March 1st, 2023 of \$359,310.53
- The fire boat bank account was reconciled. The opening balance was \$38,478.01, with deposits of \$7395.00 and expenses of \$3623.47 for a balance on March 1, 2023 of \$42,249.54
- The third quarter investment update was received from Scotiabank and the updated chart is attached
- The 2023/2024 budget is on the agenda for discussion at this meeting
- The Auditor will not be doing a pre-audit, instead a full year audit will be carried out in May or June.

c) Committees

Nil

9.0 New/Other Business

a) 2023/24 Budget Review

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reviewed the Village 2023-2024 budget with the Commissioners.

MOTION #23-028: Commissioner Mulrooney moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded: To approve the budget 2023/2024 as presented; to keep tax and fire rates for the Village as last year.

Unanimously Carried

Commissioner Hatch stated that she and Commissioner Nauss will be taking part in a webinar "On The Spot Community."

b) MoDC Maintenance Agreement

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated that the Maintenance Contract has not been received back. The contract is expected in the near future.

c) Appointment of new Clerk/Treasurer

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad stated that a motion is needed to officially appoint the Clerk/Treasurer.

MOTION #23-029: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded: That effective March 13, 2023, Heather McCallum is appointed as the Clerk/Treasurer of the Village of Chester, with all of the associated duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Municipal Government Act, Village policies and by-laws, and the job description of the position, and that on the same date the appointment of Jeff Conrad as Clerk/Treasurer is rescinded.

Unanimously Carried

d) Granite Street water right-of-way

Village Citizens have expressed their concern on the water right-of-way at the end of Granite Street. Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad explained the situation that the Village is in, where it is not the Village's authority to grant permits. Commissioners were concerned that permission was granted by DOTIR.

After discussion it was agreed Commissioner Pauley draft a letter expressing the Village's concern with this issue and any possible future permits.

e) Updating Boardroom Equipment

Interim Clerk/Treasurer Conrad reviewed the present equipment in the Boardroom. Several items were discussed to make changes to upgrade the equipment, electronics and furniture.

MOTION #23-030: Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded: That the Village approve the Clerk/Treasurer to purchase equipment to upgrade the boardroom in the areas of technology and furniture to a maximum expenditure of \$7500 + HST.

Discussion was held.

Amendment to Motion #23-030:

Commissioner Pauley moved; Commissioner Nauss seconded:

That the Village approve the Clerk/Treasurer to purchase equipment to upgrade the boardroom in the areas of first priority of technology; second priority of tables; and third priority of chairs, to a maximum expenditure of \$7500.00 + HST.

Unanimously Carried

f) Cell Phone, Clerk/Treasurer

Interim Clerk/Treasurer stated in the past a cell phone was not provided, however Conrad suggested that the Commission provide the new Clerk/Treasurer with a stipend.

Chair Hatch asked if it is necessary for Commissioners to have cell phones, as other municipalities have provided for the members. It was agreed that Commissioners did not need cell phones.

MOTION #23-031: Commissioner Nauss moved; Commissioner O'Malley seconded:

To provide the new Clerk/Treasurer with a \$50.00 stipend per month for a cell phone.

Unanimously Carried

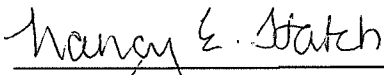
10.0 Commissioner Roundtable

Nil

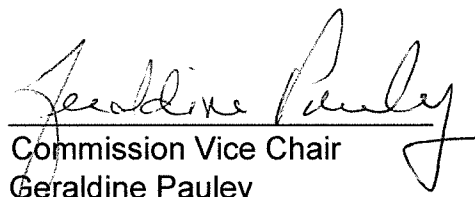
11.0 Adjournment

MOTION #23-032: Commissioner O'Malley moved that the meeting adjourn at 9:20 pm.

Next Regular Meeting – April 12th , 2023 – 7:00 pm



Commission Chair
Nancy Hatch



Commission Vice Chair
Geraldine Pauley