

Region of Queens Municipality Regular Council

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

9:00 A.M.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor David Dagley, Chair
Councillor Kevin Muise
Deputy Mayor Heather Kelly
Councillor Brian Fralic
Councillor Susan MacLeod
Councillor Jack Fancy
Councillor Raymond Fiske
Chris McNeill, CAO
Christine Watson, Admin Assistant – Planning & Development

REGRETS: Councillor Gilbert Johnson

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dagley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2.0 CHANGES/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Add: 9.2 – Unsecured Loads – Councillor Jack Fancy

Add: 11.2 – Cost of Living Adjustment – Councillor Susan MacLeod

It was moved by Councillor Fralic and seconded by Councillor Fancy that the Agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Grant Thornton 2019/2020 Audit Report

Mayor Dagley welcomed Kelsey Murphy, Manager, Grant Thornton to Council.

Some highlights included:

Section B – Supplementary Financial Information, Non-Consolidated Financial Statements and Section C – Trust Fund Financial Statements are unaudited and include an Advisory to Reader.

A4 – Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

- Financial Assets – Increase in cash; balance made up of numerous items, some of which are restricted and are reserves set up for specific and intended uses.
- Receivable balances are down. Taxes receivables are down mostly due to better collections.
- Total assets - \$22 Million

- Liabilities – Fairly consistent year over year. Increase in Long Term Debt; new debenture of \$730,000.
- Increase in solid waste closure and post closure liability – A calculation of what it will cost to close and maintain the landfill site after it is closed for a number of years. Liability will continue to increase as capacity is used in the cell.
- Total liabilities - \$8.9 Million
- Net Financial assets - \$13 Million – positive and healthy balance

- Non-Financial Assets - \$58 Million – majority is capital assets
- \$1.8 Million in capital additions, \$2 Million in amortization (aging of assets)
- Accumulated Surplus - \$71.8 Million

A5 - Consolidated Statement of Operations

- This is for revenue and expenditures on a consolidated basis. Budget is for the operating fund (Note 13 reconciles the difference in the operating budget that was approved and the budget demonstrated in this statement that is compliant with Public Sector Accounting Standards). Things such as depreciation are added and transfers eliminated because transfers between funds do not show in consolidation.
- Taxation revenue increased significantly from prior year, the majority for residential taxes \$417,000 additional, \$120,000 more for commercial, and a good year for deed transfer tax with \$66,000 over the prior year.
- Increase in Other revenue from own sources, higher than budget because interest income that is earned on the reserves is not budgeted in the operating fund or in the capital budget. Anything earned in reserves will look as a surplus on consolidated financial statements.
- Government transfers – capital contributions – A large increase resulting from gas tax revenue. The federal government doubled their allotment for fiscal 2020. This amount is not budgeted as it is transferred directly into reserves and can only be used on restricted projects that are approved in advance.
- Total revenue - \$20 Million

- Expenditures – Majority are fairly consistent year over year.
- Environmental health services – Increased as a result of an accounting adjustment relating to the landfill. The landfill liability between fiscal 2018 and fiscal 2019 went down. There was a new engineering report in 2019 that determined future closure costs were lower than the last engineering report, so there was a negative expense of \$725,000 in the prior year. This year, a positive expenditure of \$156,000 plus sludge removal added an additional cost that was not expected of \$125,000.
- Total expenditures \$18 Million
- Consolidated surplus \$2 Million

- The Statement of Cash Flow and Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets – Provide additional detail of how the cash balance changed because statements don't always show only cash items. Things like the change in landfill liability and amortization, purchases of capital assets are not necessarily shown on the Statement of Operations because a capital expenditure is not an expense on that statement, it's shown on the balance sheet only.

- The additional notes disclose the decisions supporting balances on the statements of financial position. The final note which is the Subsequent Event (A25) which relates to Covid-19, is a disclosure to allow readers to be aware of the potential impacts of Covid-19 virus on the Region for fiscal 2020. It has not had a significant impact on 2020 as year-end is March 31, only a small period of time of impact. This will likely have more of an impact moving forward.

- Independent Auditor's Report – Appendix C – Opinion of financial statements and everyone's roles and responsibilities.

- It is our opinion, the accompanying consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Region of Queens Municipality as at March 31, 2020, and its results of operations, its changes in its net debt, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

- Basis for Opinion – As the auditors, we are responsible to audit in accordance with our own standards.

- Other Matter – Supplementary Financial Information – Audit report indicates that Section B and C are supplementary and therefore are not audited. We take them into consideration for audit consolidation as a whole, but do not offer an opinion.
- Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Consolidated Financial Statements and Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Consolidated Financial Statements – Use the concept of materiality and feel the statements are free from material misstatement. We do not audit the financial statements for fraud and there is always a risk it would not be detected.

Mayor Dagley thanked Ms. Murphy for her presentation.

4.0 TABLING OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions to come before this meeting.

5.0 PUBLIC QUESTION/COMMENT SESSION

Leon Robertson – College Street, Liverpool – Mr. Robertson commented that the Jubilee Street project looks great. He enquired, with the impending storm, what EMO has in place, i.e. comfort stations. Mayor Dagley stated that Queens EMO are in constant contact with provincial EMO, who advise residents to be prepared for 72 hours to stay in their home, unless unsafe to do so. As part of the plan, a battery operated radio would be necessary for storm updates and provide any information on comfort centres. RQM provides information on Facebook, website and through radio stations.

6.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6.1 Regular Council – September 8, 2020

It was moved by Councillor Fiske and seconded by Councillor Muise:

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held September 8, 2020 be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.0 DANGEROUS OR UNSIGHTLY PREMISES

There were no items to come before this meeting.

8.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There were no items to come before this meeting.

9.0 CORPORATE SERVICES

- 9.1 Motion of Reconsideration – Request to Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

It was moved by Councillor Fancy and seconded by Councillor MacLeod:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality reconsider the motion lost at the May 26, 2020 Council meeting which reads as follows:

“AND THAT the Region of Queens Municipality make contact with Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to include ‘Exit to Highway 8 is at the set of lights.’”

Councillor Fancy stated that since erecting new signage at the entrance to Old Falls Road which states there is no exit to Highway 8, travelers who did not intend to travel on Old Falls Road, are now turning in a resident's driveway. The resident is not happy with the amount of traffic turning at their residence, and has now erected a sign asking that motorists not turn in their driveway as children are present. He is requesting to have additional signage stating the exit to Highway 8 is at the set of lights to help motorists avoid this road.

Councillor MacLeod concurred with Councillor Fancy and further stated that the no exit sign is positioned so that motorists are on the road before noticing the sign and that there is no exit. Motorists leaving QPEC use this road to avoid traffic at the lights.

Councillor MacLeod further stated the RCMP have patrolled the area and have issued tickets and warnings, therefore the signage is not working. There is an issue and RQM received a petition from the residents and that should be taken into consideration. There needs to be a resolution, i.e. barricaded, cul du sac, or something that works.

Councillor Fralic enquired if RQM can erect signage if Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal does not agree with request. Chris McNeill, CAO, stated yes, within bounds of Liverpool.

MOTION CARRIED with 6 in favour, 1 against.

9.2 Unsecured Loads – Councillor Jack Fancy

Councillor Fancy stated there have been meetings and there will continue to be further meetings on littering and waste. There was an incident on Saturday where a resident was following a half ton truck out around the landfill and a bag of garbage fell off, almost striking the vehicle. The driver stopped to remove the bag, but there was glass all over the road and they were unaware of who to contact for clean-up. Councillor Fancy suggested calling the RCMP and he in turn contacted the landfill to advise them. This is not only an issue of unsecured loads but a safety issue as well.

There is signage at the landfill indicating that loads should be tarped, but Councillor Fancy feels the sign should say secured, as not all loads can be tarped; i.e. leaf and yard waste.

He further stated he will bring these issues to the next Adhoc Litter Abatement meeting for a resolution.

10.0 ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS

There were no items to come before this meeting.

11.0 FINANCE

11.1 Adoption of Audited 2019/2020 Financial Statements

It was moved by Councillor Fralic and seconded by Councillor Muise:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality adopt the Audited Financial Statements and the Trust Fund Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020 as presented by Grant Thornton.

Jennifer Keating-Hubley, Director of Finance, thanked the auditors and finance staff for a job well done. The audit ran smoothly with staff providing the auditors information during Covid to complete the audit.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

11.2 Cost of Living Adjustment – Councillor Susan MacLeod

Councillor MacLeod stated at the previous Council meeting a discussion on the cost of living adjustment for staff was discussed and a direction to the Director of Finance from the Mayor was made to bring back a recommendation and noted that it is not part of the agenda package. Mayor Dagley stated the direction was that a recommendation could be brought back if it was decided to do so. It was decided not to bring back a recommendation for a number of reasons, the major reason being the policy we have for staff follows the Nova Scotia Consumer Price Index, and this year it was minus 0.5%, therefore there was no recommendation for an increase.

12.0 RECREATION AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

There were no items to come before this meeting.

13.0 PLANNING

- 13.1 Amend Land Use Bylaw to Rezone PID #70154695 – 9692 Highway 8, Caledonia

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Fralic:

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality give second reading to a bylaw respecting amendments to the Land Use Bylaw which sees the rezoning of PID #70154695 from Institutional (I1) to Highway Commercial (C2).

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning & Development, stated the property located at 9692 Highway 8 in Caledonia, former school bus garage, has been for sale and currently has a pending offer from an individual who wishes to establish an apple cider production business. As a former school bus garage, the property is currently zoned as Institutional (I1) under the Land Use Bylaw, as well the future land use under the Municipal Planning Strategy also has the property identified as Institutional. The use being proposed by the potential buyer would be considered under the Highway Commercial (C2) zone and fall under the classification of a microbrewery, which is a permitted use under that zone. In order for the business to be located at this location, rezoning would have to take place to go from the Institutional (I1) to the Highway Commercial (C2). Council must take into consideration those items set out in Policy 12.5.2 of the Municipal Planning Strategy in dealing with the amendment processes.

The property is fairly large in the core area of Caledonia, approximately 5.6 acres and the commercial building is approximately 3900 square feet which was erected in the mid-1980s. When it ceased to be utilized as a school bus garage, the province turned the property over to the municipality and has been vacant for the last two years.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

14.0 REPORTS

There were no reports to come before this meeting.

15.0 IN-CAMERA ITEMS

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Muise that the proceedings go In-Camera at 10:05 a.m. to discuss the following:

15.1 Contract Negotiations

15.2 Personnel Matter

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

Mayor Dagley announced a 15-minute recess at 10:05 a.m.

All staff left the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

It was moved by Councillor Fiske and seconded by Councillor Fancy that the proceedings exit In-Camera at 1:40 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

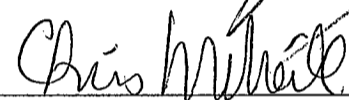
16.0 ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Kelly and seconded by Councillor Muise that the meeting be adjourned at 1:41 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.



Mayor David Dagley, Chair



Chris McNeill, CAO



Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

Date Approved: October 13, 2020