

**Region of Queens Municipality Regular Council
Tuesday, March 12, 2024**

9:25 a.m.

Minutes

Present: Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair
Deputy Mayor Jack Fancy
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Vicki Amirault
Councillor Kevin Muise
Councillor Ralph Gidney
Councillor Carl Hawkes
Cody Joudry, CAO
Christine Watson, Admin. Assistant – Planning & Development

Regrets: Councillor Maddie Charlton

1.0 Call to Order

Mayor Norman called the meeting to order at 9:25 a.m.

2.0 Changes / Approval of Agenda

Add Item 8.4 Greenfield Rec Community Investment Fund – Councillor Brown.

Add In-Camera Item 9.1 – Contract Negotiations

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Gidney that the Agenda be approved as amended.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

3.0 Presentation

3.1 Queens County Transit

Mayor Norman welcomed Alex Doggett, Chair, and Donna Croft, Manager, Queens County Transit.

Some highlights included:

- Reviewed Vision and Mission Statement
- Reviewed Board of Directors and Staff
- Currently have a fleet of 8 vehicles, including five accessible vans.
- Ridership increased significantly
- Reviewed success stories – Penny Lane clients transportation, medical appointments (currently assisting EHS with their medical transport services), accessibility rides, New Horizons for Seniors Grant held on Mondays.
- Bill Smyth, past Chair, received the Nova Scotia Community Transportation Network's 2023 Claredon Robichau Memorial Road Warrior Award for Excellence and Commitment in furthering Community Transportation in Nova Scotia.
- Celebrated 5th Year Anniversary

Challenges

- Resources – Provincial Community Transportation Program Funds have remained the same since 2018 (based on population and road kms in Queens County).
- Upkeep of vehicles – Every vehicle is inspected every 6 months. Costs incurred in 2023 – Fuel \$38,000, Insurance \$14,000 and Inspections and Maintenance - \$13,300.
- Wages – minimum wage increase

Why continue to support QCT?

- 37.4% of our population are disabled, the highest in the province.
- Addressing a need for affordable, door-to-door, accessible transportation.

What's next for QCT?

- More outreach to increase awareness and ridership
- Launch county wide fundraising campaign
- Continue to develop and strengthen Board and Organization
- Continue valuable partnerships with Home Care, Senior Safety Officer, Queens General Hospital Foundation, Liverpool Lions Club, Queens Association for Supportive Living, Private Wealth Management Freeman Group, and RQM while developing new ones.
- Transporting students to Community College.

The Ask

- An increase of \$12,000 in operating funds for 2024/2025 from \$38,000 to \$50,000.

Mayor Norman thanked them for their presentation and advised that their request would be discussed later on the agenda under Item 8.2. She urged them to have their Treasurer supply a copy of their current budget for the upcoming year.

4.0 Tabling of Petitions

There were no Tabling of Petitions to come before this meeting.

5.0 Public Question / Comment Session

1. Jeannie Gregory Adams, 361 Highway 8, Milton – Ms. Adams commented that any turbine over 100 meters should be a mile away from the nearest dwelling and noted that in the documentation that it states it is 970 meters, which is just over a half mile. She asked if Strum Consulting's data is accurate for the noise study. She also asked about the storm water management plan, indicating problems with the drainage behind West Street, along with the rest of Milton. She noted the proposal states they are not going to interfere with current water system and having a commercial company, she asked if they could do better than that, as their drains need to be fixed, and introducing another potentially high risk downstream, the effect will pretty much be a disaster on West Street.

Mayor Norman stated she cannot answer her questions and advised her to speak with the proponents. There have been many consultations, they have presented to Council, developed a website, and have been on the news. They can be easily contacted.

2. Gil Johnston, 64 Long Point Road, South Brookfield – Mr. Johnston stated he was involved with the Queens County Transit when it was first founded and it has surpassed expectations over the last five years.

Five years ago Queens County was one of the few jurisdictions within the province that did not have a transit system. Today we are recognized widely across the province with representation on the Nova Scotia Community Transit Board with our managers being part of the Rural Transit Authority. Bill Smyth has been recognized provincially for his efforts.

Queens County Transit were recognized to do a pilot project with EHS and has been able to alleviate some of the burden on those vans.

He urged Council to support their request.

3. David Huskins, 160 Church Street, Liverpool – Mr. Huskins requested that a clock be installed in Chambers.
4. Emily Adams, 424 West Street, Milton – Ms. Adams commented on accessibility issues she experienced during the meeting, i.e. not sufficient copies of agenda, unable to view the screen from the back of the Chamber and unable to hear presenters.
5. Calvin Adams, 361 Highway 8, Milton – Mr. Adams commented that the residents at the back of the Chambers were having difficulty hearing and unable to view the monitors at the front and suggested having a monitor on the sidewall.

He further commented there are issues within the community that need to be resolved and stressed the need for everyone to work together.

Council recessed at reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

6.0 Approval of Minutes

6.1 Regular Council – February 27, 2024

It was moved by Councillor Gidney and seconded by Councillor Amirault:

THAT the minutes of the Regular Council meeting held February 27, 2024 be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Large Scale Wind Farm Development

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Gidney:

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality adopt an administrative policy respecting entering into a development agreement with Mersey River Wind Inc. to allow for the establishment of a 33 turbine generator wind farm development on portions of properties identified as PID #'s 70247176, 70247192, 70247184, 70247200, 70264213, 70225420, 70225404, 70247218, 70247168, 70032982, 70260575, 70248695, 70248695 and 70166988.

Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning & Development, stated further to information provided in the Staff Report, and statements made by Mr. Underhay, Mersey River Wind Inc., there is the potential for an increased height of the turbine generators from 105 to 120 meters, which is an additional consideration for Council.

Mayor Norman pointed out the lease number in the Draft agreement within the package is blank as the proponent do not have their official lease from the province, and once that is formally obtained, the agreement can be moved forward.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.2 Accessibility Advisory Committee Flag Request

It was moved by Councillor Amirault and seconded by Deputy Mayor Fancy:

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality receive the report titled Accessibility Advisory Committee – Flag Request for information.

AND THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve the application made by the Accessibility Advisory Committee to have an accessibility flag flown on the special purpose flagpole located in front of the Town Hall Arts and Cultural Centre, Liverpool during the dates outlined in the attached application.

Angela Green, Administrative Assistant – Administration, stated Operational Policy 84 – Flags, allows for community groups to apply to have a flag representing their group flown on a special purpose pole for a duration of up to two weeks.

In January, an application was received from the RQM's Accessibility Advisory Committee requesting to have the Access Awareness Week flag flown from May 26 to June 1, 2024, and in the subsequent four years.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.3 Core Active Transportation

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

THAT Council receive the report titled Core Active Transportation Network Project for information;

AND THAT Council endorse the Core Active Transportation Network Project;

AND THAT Council provide direction for staff to enter into a partnership agreement with Cycling Nova Scotia for the Core AT Networks Project.

Kimberly Halliday, Physical Activity Coordinator, stated Cycle Nova Scotia will be do consultation and provide an engagement report. They will then do a design report for the RQM to move forward with infrastructure, which is at no cost to the Municipality. They will also provide a costing estimate which lays out a phasing structure of different active transportation projects for the RQM.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

7.4 NSFM Spring Conference Attendance

It was moved by Councillor Amirault and seconded by Councillor Brown:

THAT the Council of the Region of Queens Municipality receive the report titled 2024 NSFM Spring Conference Attendance for information.

AND THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality approve Councillor Brown, Councillor Muise and Councillor Charlton to attend the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities Spring Conference on May 8 – 10, 2024 in Baddeck, Nova Scotia.

MOTION CARRIED with 6 in favour and 1 against.

8.0 Discussions

8.1 Council Implementation Report

Deputy Mayor Fancy asked for an update for item dated January 23, 2024 – Direct staff to explore a partnership with Crosswalk Safety Society. CAO Joudry stated a report will be brought forward at the April 12, 2024 Council meeting.

8.2 Queens County Transit 2024-25 Budget Ask

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Amirault:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality consider the Queens County Transit request for the 2024/2025 budget deliberations.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

8.3 South Queens Outdoor Pool Project

It was moved by Councillor Amirault and seconded by Deputy Mayor Fancy:

THAT the Council of Region of Queens Municipality receive the report titled South Queens Outdoor Pool Project: Operating Costs Estimate for information.

CAO Joudry stated the information provided is an estimate and provides various range of what we expect to see. There are several unknowns.

He further stated Meaghan Roberts, Director of Recreation & Healthy Communities, in consultation with other departments, created a sample programming schedule in order to develop staffing estimates. Also included is a breakdown of estimated revenue and expenses. Staffing being the largest expense.

Discussions were held on water and sewer services, under Expenses – mechanical / electrical \$30,000, and this amount does include those services.

Councillor Muise asked if the estimated cost of \$112,000 included the cost to run the Milton Pool. CAO Joudry stated no, the data is for the new pool only and does not take into consideration for any expenses or revenue from any other pool.

Councillor Muise asked how much it costs to run the Milton Pool. CAO Joudry stated he will investigate. Councillor Amirault stated in the previous budget the Milton Pool costs were approximately \$38,000 - \$40,000.

Councillor Amirault further stated the figures in the report are a baseline. The costs and programs will change. Public consultation will be needed to see what programs the community are looking for. In addition, two more shoulder seasons are being added so extra costs will be incurred, i.e. staffing, supplies, heating, etc.

The pool is a service we're giving to Queens County much like Queens Place Emera Center and other facilities we run, so we will need to adjust the costs in the budget.

CAO Joudry stated as a follow-up to Councillor Amirault's comment on the costs to run the Milton Pool, it may not be a true calculation of the total cost, more of a minimum cost.

Mayor Norman commented on the statement in the report which reads, "It does not take into consideration the outdoor pool in North Queens and how it would continue to operation in tandem with a new pool." Normally, the North Queens and Milton pool share workers. It is very important that staff carefully consider how the North Queens pool is going to continue to operate. Councillor Amirault stated the committee have not discussed any closure of the North Queens pool.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

8.4 Greenfield Rec Community Investment Fund (CIF) – Councillor Brown

Councillor Brown stated the Greenfield Recreation received grant funding from the Province and through the RQM's Community Investment Fund to renovate a park in Greenfield. This was a very large project. They ran into problems while completing the project due to price increases. The increases are not allowed within the Community Investment Fund process.

Also during the project there was a shortage of contractor and time restraints so the work was performed themselves. The CIF only allows for \$1,000 for in kind labour.

When the final report was submitted, the 80% that was funded, and additional money was spent. Some of the money could not be accounted for on the CIF, so RQM are now asking the Greenfield Rec to pay back \$2,047.43.

Councillor Brown noted that many community members contributed cash donations to finish the project.

Greenfield Recreation are not asking for the remaining 20% of the CIF, but these costs are going to put a strain on them. They are asking Council to refund them the money.

Councillor Brown further stated he is not asking for a change to the policy or for Council to override the policy to forgive the amount, but is asking for the money to be refunded to them in order for them to continue to build the project to the next phase.

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Amirault:

THAT this issue be referred to Staff for a recommendation to refund Greenfield Recreation \$2,047.43 at its earliest convenience.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

9.0 In-Camera Items

It was moved by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Hawkes that the proceedings go In-Camera at 11:a.m. to discuss the following:

9.1 Contract Negotiations

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

It was moved by Councillor Amirault and seconded by Councillor Gidney that the proceedings exit In-Camera at 11:42 a.m.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned 11:42 a.m.



Mayor Darlene Norman, Chair



Cody Joudry, CAO


for ANGELA GREEN, ADMIN ASST - ADMINISTRATION
Christine Watson, Administrative Assistant – Planning & Development

Date Approved: MARCH 26, 2024