

Bridgewater, NS
Monday, April 30, 2007

A Special Budget Meeting of **MUNICIPAL COUNCIL** was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Administration Building on the above date at 9:00 a.m. with the following in attendance:

Warden Jack Wentzell
Councillor Diane Tanner
Councillor Sherman Palmer (arrived 9:15 a.m.)
Councillor Don Zwicker
Councillor Milton Countway
Councillor Sandra Statton
Councillor Cathy Moore
Councillor John Veinot
Councillor Arthur Young
Councillor Lee Nauss (left at 9:52 a.m. and returned at 11:15 a.m.)
Councillor Martin Bell

Absent from the meeting were:
Deputy Warden Elmer Garber
Councillor Karen Dempsey

Also in attendance were:
Ms. Tammy Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer
Pierre Breau, P. Eng., Director of Engineering & Public Works
Gordon Pettipas, Director of Financial Services & Municipal Treasurer
Carroll Randall, Recreation Coordinator
Brian Keizer, Manager of Protective Services
Sherry Conrad, Administrative Assistant

Warden Wentzell called the meeting to order. He advised that the purpose of the meeting was to continue the discussion of the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal Budget.

Ms. Wilson noted that discussion ended at the last meeting with the review of the Public Drop Off Depot Project. She asked Councillors to keep in mind that when reviewing the flagged items in the proposed Capital Budget that deletion of projects will not have a significant affect on the tax rate as most of the funding for capital projects will be borrowed, as opposed to funding through the tax rate.

It was noted that somewhere down the road, the Municipality will have to pay its debt.

A brief discussion was held with regard to the Public Drop Off Depot Project. It was asked what the Municipality's share would be for the Public Drop off Depot Project. Mr. Pettipas advised that the Municipality's share would be \$80,000.

Councillor Palmer arrived at 9:15 a.m.

Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Countway that Council remove the Public Drop Off Depot Project from its 2007-2008 Draft Capital Budget and that the Public Drop Off Depot Project be re-evaluated in the next fiscal year's budget deliberations; and further, that we recommend same to the Waste Management Committee.

It was noted that the tender for the Public Drop Off Depot Project was sent out and replies were received. The tender was over budget, therefore, it does not have to be awarded.

It was noted that the RRFB grant monies would have to be returned if the project was not done this year.

It was asked what the consequences would be if the Public Drop Off Depot Project was not carried out this year. Mr. Breau explained that there were a number

of reasons staff recommended the Public Drop Off Depot Project be carried out this fiscal year. The reasons are as follow: health and safety (traffic flow and volume); cost saving with less 'wear and tear' on equipment; and more convenient for the public.

It was asked if relocating the bins to the location of the proposed Public Drop Off Depot would eliminate the concern for safety problems as the public would not have to drive back to the present location.

Mr. Breau advised that if the Public Drop Off Depot Project does not go forward, he would talk to staff about relocating the bins to the location of the proposed Public Drop Off Depot.

Motion on the floor to remove the Public Drop Off Depot Project from the 2007-2008 Municipal Capital Budget was voted on and carried.

Council reviewed the 2007-2008 Capital Budget items that were flagged at a previous meeting.

Moved by Councillor Countway, seconded by Councillor Palmer that we remove the Protective Structure for the Generator from the Draft 2007-2008 Capital Budget in the amount of \$16,000. Carried.

A discussion was held with regard to whether or not the Architectural Space Study was required this year. Ms. Wilson explained that the Study was intended to look at what the Municipality's options are and what space requirements are needed. This part of the Study would be required to do if a new Municipal Building was built or a decision was made to renovate the existing Administration Building.

It was noted that Council needs to be very informed when making a decision about the upgrade of this building or the building of a new office building. This decision will have to be made within the next few years. Council needs this information as soon as possible.

Ms. Wilson noted that this Study will help Council make that decision. The Municipality cannot work with the current layout in the long term. It is difficult to work in the short term — it affects productivity and performance of staff. It is not conducive to efficiency.

It was commented that Council will have to have a discussion on its vision before a study can be done. Council needs to determine the services to be offered and at what level. It was also noted that the current discussions on amalgamating services will have an affect on this.

Further comments were made in favour and against leaving the Study in the Draft Budget.

Moved by Councillor Veinot, seconded by Councillor Zwicker that we remove the Architectural Space Study out of the Draft 2007-2008 Capital Budget in the amount of \$25,000.

Councillor Statton noted that Council has to get control of the budget and give direction to staff before it comes to Council.

Ms. Wilson commented that more input / guidance from Council on drafting the Budget would be beneficial. She noted that the Draft 2007-2008 Budget was prepared in line with the Municipality's approved Strategic Plan which identifies

Council's priorities. She explained that it is difficult for staff to decide what goes into a draft budget when there is a strategic plan and Council gives direction to staff to bring in a budget at a certain tax rate. Council needs to set its priorities in this case and not direct a tax rate without considering what impact in services this would have.

The motion on the floor to remove the Architectural Space Study from the Draft 2007-2008 Capital Budget was voted on and carried.

It was asked if the \$40,000 allocated in the budget for flooring and painting was necessary.

A number of Councillors spoke with regard to the condition of the flooring and the health and safety issues that arise from same (mold downstairs, etc.). It was noted that \$40,000 does not go very far when renovating.

Councillor Nauss left the meeting at 9:52 a.m. for an appointment.

Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Statton that an amount up to \$40,000 be left in the Draft 2007-2008 Capital Budget for Flooring and Painting with a priority being given to get this work completed within this budget year. Carried.

Councillor Bell noted that he believes there was an amount of \$10,000 allocated in the budget to be used for national events in this area. The Dog Show was provided a grant out of this money.

Mr. Randall noted that the PR Committee had suggested that the Municipality allocate \$10,000 to cover costs of major events coming to this County. The \$10,000 figure was an arbitrary figure that was chosen. Over the last few years, contributions have been made towards curling and 4-H events. This year a request has come in for a dog show. The Dog Show had a budget of \$10,000 and received a \$4,800 grant from the Municipality. He noted that he has not heard of any other major events coming this fiscal year. If there were, he would have heard by now.

Councillor Bell noted that a request was made from Fire Services for funding in an amount of \$10,000 for an event organized by the Atlantic Maritime Fire Chiefs coming to Lunenburg County in 2008. With honouring the money allocated for dog show, there should still be \$5,000 available in this account.

Mr. Randall reported that he had not received a request from the Fire Services.

Mr. Keizer reported that the \$10,000 request was received and put in the budget under training. Fire Services is requesting the money to assist in providing the training to the fire fighters that will be attending this session.

Councillor Bell suggested that if \$5,000 was put towards this year's budget for the Fire Services request and the remaining \$5,000 was taken out of this account in next year's budget, the Fire Services budget could be reduced by \$10,000 this year.

No action was taken with regard to this discussion.

Councillor Young noted that an indication was made at a previous meeting that some items may not need to be done this year under the Cookville Wastewater Treatment Plant account.

Mr. Breau commented that it was suggested approximately \$14,500 could be

removed.

Ms. Wilson listed the following suggestions that were made:

- reduce Industrial Shelving for First Floor Dewatering Room from \$7,757 to \$5,000;
- remove Curbing and Asphalt for Back Entrance - \$3,620;
- remove Improve Tank/Parking Lot Lighting - \$2,586;
- reduce Appliances from \$1,034 to \$200; and,
- remove allocation for Laboratory - \$4,654.

Moved by Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Tanner that we remove the items from the Draft 2007-2008 Capital Budget that were suggested by Matt Davidson, Assistant Engineer, that did not have to be done this year at the Cookville Wastewater Treatment Plant. Carried.

The allocation of money for the Indian Falls and Saw Pit Wharf Projects were earmarked. Ms. Wilson commented that the funding for the Indian Falls Project is being pulled from the Open Space Reserve and, therefore, will not have an affect on the tax rate.

It was noted that work has to be done at Indian Falls to address issues with regard to insurance liability. With regard to Saw Pit Wharf, it was cautioned that if the money is not spent to do some repairs this year on the wharf, the repairs will cost more in a few years.

Mr. Randall explained that the issue of liability at Indian Falls is risk management. The Insurance provider is requiring that the Municipality control the risk at the cliff in order to carry out due diligence. In regard to Saw Pit Wharf, the Municipality is in the process of having an engineering company evaluate the wharf to determine what needs to be done to bring the wharf up to a functioning wharf that can handle a 1/2 ton truck. The Study is not at the point where the company can tell us what work needs to be done. If, however, the Study identifies that the wharf is unsafe, it will have to be closed down if there is no money allocated to address these issues.

It was noted that within the last two months, two piles have gone. Mr. Randall advised that they just had to remove one of the piles.

It was noted that if the Municipality is going to provide open space, Council has to be willing to support funding to keep it functional for the public. It was further noted that the maintenance of public open space may be something that Council may want to consider the next time an opportunity to acquire public open space arises.

No action was taken on these items.

Under Transportation Services - Capital, Municipal Road Aprons in the amount of \$80,000 was flagged. For clarification, it was asked how far the paving would be for the aprons.

Mr. Breau advised that money has been allocated for 100 feet of apron on Municipal roads.

Moved by Councillor Veinot, seconded by Councillor Young that we remove the Municipal Road Aprons from the Transportation Services account

of the Draft 2007-2008 Capital Budget in the amount of \$80,000.

Councillor Statton spoke with regard to allocating money in a reserve to assist with cost-sharing for the paving of municipal roads.

It was noted that 50 feet for an apron would seem reasonable to help with preventative maintenance.

The motion on the floor was voted on and carried.

Councillor Young left the meeting at this time to attend a funeral.

A brief discussion was held with regard to the proposed positions of IT person, Economic Development Officer, and the Clerk/Deputy CAO.

It was asked what the benefits would be to have an IT person on site and how much it would cost versus contracting out the service.

Mr. Pettipas reported that it costs \$23,000 a year to contract out the service. The estimated salary for an IT person is between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year plus benefits.

Ms. Wilson noted the main benefit of having an IT person on site is to have someone available right away to correct any IT problems. At present, Mr. Pettipas and Mr. Merrill are the two staff members that are contacted to trouble shoot IT problems that cannot be addressed immediately through the service contract. This creates a problem with using valuable staff time from other positions to address these issues. In considering the cost of a service contract, there is the basic service contract as well as the Municipal staff time that would be accumulated to address in-house IT services. There are also other savings in preventative maintenance. An in-house IT person could do routine maintenance on all the computers. The computer hardware is getting old and an IT person could maintain to keep the hardware functioning instead of replacing it.

It was asked if the contract service was ever tendered locally. Mr. Pettipas advised that it was in the past. The tender that the Municipality has now is with Fundy. It was noted, however, even with a local company, service calls are not immediate. He noted that the Town of Bridgewater is hiring their own IT person. Kings County has three IT people on staff.

It was asked if there would be the possibility of sharing the Town of Bridgewater's IT person. Ms. Wilson advised that the sharing of that person was discussed with the Town of Bridgewater and the Town feels they need a full time IT person.

It was suggested that staff could be trained to use the programs and equipment to maintain their own computers. Ms. Wilson noted that staff have had some training, however, if a person does not use it on a daily basis, it is forgotten. In addition, not all maintenance is basic ScanDisk or defragment and, as such, a specific skill set is required.

Moved by Councillor Statton, seconded by Councillor Veinot that the position of IT person be removed from the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal Budget and that this service be contracted out; and further, that perhaps some exploration could be done to contract locally for IT service.

Further discussion was held.

The motion on the floor was voted on and carried.

The Economic Development Officer position was discussed.

Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Zwicker that the Economic Development Officer position be left in the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal Budget. Carried.

The Clerk/Deputy CAO position was discussed.

Ms. Wilson reported that she had identified this position as a resource that is needed and has been needed for a couple of years. This position would be assisting with the direction that comes out of Council and Committee meetings. She explained the work that is being carried out at present and that she does not have the time to get some of the things done that Council wants in a timely fashion. She noted that due to other important positions this year, she felt the position could go until next fiscal year, however, the Administration Focus Group put this position forward as a recommendation for this fiscal year.

It was asked if this position is something that an Economic Development Officer or an IT person could do as well. Ms. Wilson noted that the skill sets for each position are somewhat different. She noted that the Economic Development Officer will have tourism duties as well. A number of years ago the Municipality tried to find an accountant that had IT services and we couldn't get anyone.

Councillor Nauss returned at 11:15 a.m.

It was asked where this person would work from if the position was filled. Ms. Wilson noted that one of the cubicles was earmarked for the IT person. As well, there is space in the trailer or space in the civic addressing room downstairs.

Councillor Zwicker asked if some of the duties of a Clerk/Deputy CAO could be carried out by the competent individuals already on staff. Ms. Wilson noted that those individuals already have duties with their present jobs and overtime is required now to do those jobs. She would not see such an option on the surface, however, the suggestion could be explored further. She noted that there are skills required that would have to be developed (i.e. research, report writing, and policy development).

It was noted that perhaps the position could be delayed until we see what affect the position of Planner being filled now and a new Economic Development Officer position have on the current CAO's workload.

Warden Wentzell noted that during a meeting between the CAO and the CAO Evaluation Committee, a discussion was held with regard to streamlining municipal operations. It was suggested that perhaps minute taking was one of the operations that could be streamlined. He noted that one thing that needs to be done is that money has to be allocated in the 2007-2008 to allow for some equipment that may be needed to streamline minute taking (i.e. recording device, lap top, etc.).

Ms. Wilson noted that she understands Council's direction and even just to look at ways to streamline minutes takes time that is not there now. If this position is not approved, it will take longer to get this done.

Moved by Councillor Veinot, seconded by Councillor Statton that we remove the Clerk/Deputy CAO position from the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal

Budget. Carried.

Councillor Young returned to the meeting at this time.

Moved by Councillor Statton, seconded by Councillor Tanner that we put \$6,000 in the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal Budget for the equipment, if and when necessary, to streamline minute taking. Carried.

Councillor Bell noted that Council rejected the request for money for the South Shore Regional Library Book Mobile, but it did not allocate any alternative for funding for the public library. He asked if money should be allocated in another account in case money is required to assist with the book mobiles should other municipal units approve same and for renovations for another building.

Ms. Wilson noted that there was some discussion that money be put in a reserve as opposed to a mobile branch.

Councillor Zwicker spoke in support of the South Shore Regional Library's request for funding towards the two mobile branches.

Moved by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Nauss that we establish a reserve fund for the purpose of library upgrades. (Defeated)

A brief discussion was held with regard to the library building and the services provided by a mobile branch.

The motion on the floor was voted on and defeated.

The Remuneration Study was questioned. It was noted that the figure went from \$16,000 last year to \$36,000 this year.

Ms. Wilson commented that she was not sure how the original amount of \$16,000 was determined. She explained that the Scope of Work that was set by Council came back at \$55,000. Staff reviewed the RFP that was received and cut the Scope of Work down to \$36,000.

Clarification was requested with regard to the contingency of \$20,000 allocated for the Remuneration Study. Ms. Wilson noted that the contingency amount is to implement the salary adjustments that may be identified and approved by Council for the various positions identified in the Study.

It was questioned why this money was allocated this year when staff already received the CPI increase and there is a request coming forward for an additional .9 percent increase.

Ms. Wilson explained that staff received a 1.6 percent increase for CPI as dictated by the Personnel Policy. Staff had included an allocation for a .9 percent raise in the draft budget to keep the Municipal staff raise in line with what was bargained during negotiations for the Union employees at LRCRC. The .9 percent allocated for all employees is not the same as the \$20,000 contingency for the Study.

In reply to the question of whether or not the Study RFP has been awarded yet, Ms. Wilson advised that due to the price received for the Study, it has not been awarded as yet.

A discussion was held. A number of comments were made with regard to the necessity of having the Remuneration Study carried out. It was suggested that the Study be carried out this year and any salary increases could be implemented in the

next fiscal year.

Moved by Councillor Statton, seconded by Councillor Bell that we remove the \$20,000 Contingency for the Remuneration Study from the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal Budget. Carried.

Clarification was requested with regard to Contingency A & B under employees' salaries and benefits. Ms. Wilson explained that Contingency A is the .9 percent salary increase for all employees to bring them up to the 2.5 percent increase received by the Union and Contingency B is the four positions that was discussed In Camera.

It was asked if Council has approved the .9 percent increase yet. Ms. Wilson advised that the contingency was in the budget for approval and was discussed In Camera at last week's budget deliberations.

A brief discussion was held. It was commented that Union Employees at LRCRC are a separate entity from the Municipal employees and, therefore, the Union increase should not have a bearing on Municipal employee increases.

IN CAMERA

At 1:07 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Nauss, seconded by Councillor Zwicker that Council go In Camera to discuss a labour relations issue under Section 22(2)(d) of the Municipal Government Act. Carried.

Council In Camera in session.

At 1:30 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Young, seconded by Councillor Zwicker that Council come out of In Camera and return to open session and approve the decisions made while In Camera. Carried.

Council in session.

Moved by Councillor Veinot, seconded by Councillor Zwicker that we remove Contingency A being the .9 percent salary increase from the Draft 2007-2008 Municipal Budget. Carried.

The Fire Protection accounts were reviewed.

Councillor Countway commented that a Study was completed on fire services which came back with recommendations for Council to consider. One of the recommendations was for the Municipality to pay the insurance costs for each fire department. He asked if the \$57,800 allocated for fire departments under Municipal Grants could be removed from that account and put in the Insurance Relief account.

Mr. Keizer noted that last year's total insurance cost for fire departments was \$178,000. The insurance is up for renewal in October 2007.

Councillor Countway noted that currently the Municipality is paying \$97,800 between Insurance Relief and the Municipal Grant. He noted that if the Insurance Relief amount could be increased to \$100,000 and the Municipal Grant reduced to 0, it would go along way to assisting with insurance costs.

It was noted that fire departments have the option of using their area rates to help cover this cost.

Further discussion was held. It was noted that fire departments should be advised if we are going to take away from one line item to add to another.

Moved by Councillor Countway, seconded by Councillor Veinot that we increase the Insurance Relief account for Fire Protection Services in the Draft

2007-2008 Municipal Budget from \$40,000 to \$60,000 to help fire departments cover their insurance costs. Motion defeated.

The Dog By-law Signage account was questioned. Ms. Wilson advised that the allocation for signage is due to the amendment to the Dog By-law to require Dog owners / guardians to pick up dog defecation. The sign is to assist with public education to help with the compliance of the amendment.

The allocation of funding for the Regional Housing Authority was questioned. Mr. Pettipas advised that the amount allocated is to cover the Municipality's share of their deficit. The Municipality is responsible for a portion of their deficit.

Ms. Wilson advised that a \$10,000 contingency will be added to the Recreation budget for staff relief as agreed to In Camera. She also noted that Council had discussed a number of other positions at a previous In Camera meeting.

Moved by Councillor Veinot, seconded by Councillor Bell that we accept the salary adjustment for the Tax Collector, Assistant Engineer, Junior Planner and Maintenance Worker/Custodian positions as discussed In Camera.

Carried.

It was reported that the Draft 2007-2008 LRCRC Budget will be referred back to the Waste Management Committee with Council's suggested changes.

It was agreed that the next Council Budget meeting would be held on May 28, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

There being no further business at 2:15 p.m., it was moved by Councillor Nauss, seconded by Councillor Tanner that the meeting adjourn. Carried.