

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Minutes of a Meeting of Policy & Strategy Committee

Via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, May 18, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Deputy Mayor Martin Bell, District 2, Chair
Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8, Vice-Chair
Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, via Teams
Councillor Leitha Haysom, District 1
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3
Councillor Pam Hubley, District 4
Councillor Cathy Moore, District 5
Councillor Sandra Statton, District 6
Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7
Councillor Reid Whynot, District 9
Councillor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10

Staff:

Alex Dumaresq, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Sherry Conrad, Municipal Clerk
Joanne Powers, Executive Assistant

Regrets:

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer

Via Microsoft Teams

Sarah Kucharski, Communications Officer
Byung Jun Kang, Planner
Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation Services
Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance
Dave Waters, Director of Business Development, Tourism & Infrastructure

1. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people, and that the meeting was being held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, RECOGNITION

Councillor Haysom recognized Valerie DeLong, a recipient of the Nova Scotia Education Week 2021 Teacher Award. Ms. DeLong teaches at Petite Riviere Elementary School and is a member of the School Advisory Committee. She also volunteers her time to teach yoga and art to students and is active in the community.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor DeLong, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of April 20, 2021

Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Haysom that the Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Policy & Strategy Committee meeting be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Councillor Oickle reported that regarding a recent letter from Council to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) and the Provincial Government in support of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging and Paper Products (PPP), an update was given at the NSFM Conference. It was stated that ERP is in a Mandate Letter from both the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of the Department of Environment. She explained that a Mandate Letter outlines the objectives that each Minister will work to accomplish, as well as the pressing challenges that they will address in their roles.

6. PRESENTATIONS**6.1 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Ariella Aburto, Community Outreach Worker NSTAY & TESS, YMCA Halifax**

The presenter was unable to attend the meeting, therefore, the presentation was postponed to a later date.

7. REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL - NIL**8. STAFF REPORTS****8.1 Finance Department****8.1.1 Proposed Amendments to MODL Policy 003 Council Members' Remuneration and Expenses**

Ms. Wentzell explained that Council, at its meeting on April 23, 2021, passed a motion to extend pension and health and dental insurance benefits programs to elected officials. Therefore, amendments were required to MODL Policy 003 "Council Members' Remuneration and Expenses", to accommodate that direction. Council members will have the option to opt out of the health and dental benefits upon proof of registration in another plan but are required to participate in the retirement and pension plan.

Moved by Councillor Veinotte, seconded by Councillor Statton that the Policy & Strategy Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the proposed amendments to Section 1 of MODL Policy 003 Council Members' Remuneration and Expenses, as presented, to allow for health and dental benefits and for inclusion in the retirement and pension plan; and, hereby gives seven (7) days' notice that Council will consider the proposed amendments to Policy 003 at the May 25, 2021 Council meeting. Opposed – Councillor Moore. Motion approved.

8.1.2 Proposed Amendments to MODL Policy 049 Property Tax Rebate

Ms. Wentzell explained the Property Tax Rebate Program. She noted that the existing Policy requires a Statutory Declaration to be signed and witnessed by a Barrister or Commissioner of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia; or Mayor or Councillor; or Notary Public of the Province of Nova Scotia. This requirement presents a barrier for some homeowners, especially during a pandemic, and staff believe that a certification by the taxpayer is adequate and would remove the barrier.

Moved by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the Policy & Strategy Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the proposed amendments to MODL Policy 049 Property Tax Rebate as follows:

- 1. Section 7 be amended by replacing "Statutory Declaration" with "Certification";**
 - 2. Change the title of the application form to "Certification" from "Statutory Declaration";**
 - 3. Section 1 of the application form be amended by replacing "solemnly declare" with "certify";**
 - 4. Section 9 of the application form be amended by replacing "solemn declaration" with "certification";**
 - 5. Section 8 be amended by replacing the word "if" on the first line with the word "of".**
- and, hereby gives seven (7) days' notice of Council's intention to approve the proposed amendments to Policy 049 at the May 25, 2021 Council meeting.**

A request was made that an ad be placed in the local newspaper as well as in the Municipal Matters, advising of the changes.

Motion carried unanimously.

8.2 Administration Department

8.2.1 Proposed MODL Policy 091 Dealing with Difficult Customers

Ms. Kucharski provided a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Customer Service Policies" (attached to the original minutes), which dealt with both MODL Policy 091 Dealing with Difficult Customers, and MODL Policy 092 Customer Complaints Handling.

Ms. Kucharski explained that the goal was to create policies that dealt with the handling of complaints and also, how to deal with difficult customers. Existing informal MODL practices, policies from other municipal units, as well as the Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia's (AMANS's) model complaints policy were reviewed in the drafting of these policies. The draft policies were reviewed by the Safety Committee, frontline staff, senior managers, and the Municipal Solicitor.

Moved by Councillor Greek, seconded by Mayor Bolivar-Getson that the Policy & Strategy Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the proposed MODL Policy 091 Dealing with Difficult Customers, as presented, and hereby gives seven (7) days' notice of Council's intention to approve the proposed Policy 091 at the May 25, 2021 Council meeting. Carried unanimously.

8.2.2 Proposed MODL Policy 092 Customer Complaints Handling

Moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Veinotte that the Policy & Strategy Committee recommends to Council that Municipal Council approve the proposed MODL Policy 092 Customer Complaints Handling, as presented, and hereby gives seven (7) days' notice that Council will consider approving the proposed Policy 092 at the May 25, 2021 Council meeting.

There was some discussion around Section 4.2 and the six-month deadline for complaints, but it was explained that if a complaint was received after the six-month mark, it would still be investigated.

Carried unanimously.

8.2.3 Review of MODL Policy 023 Municipal Flag Protocol

Ms. Conrad noted that Municipal Council, in session on March 23, 2021, approved housekeeping amendments to the Municipal Flag Protocol Policy. During that review of the amendments, staff were asked to confirm if other flags could be taken down instead of the Municipal Flag, when requests were made by community groups to fly their flag.

Ms. Conrad referenced several websites that had standards for flying flags, and stated there were 18 municipalities throughout Nova Scotia identified as having flag policies that included flying flags of community groups. Following discussion, the majority of Council Members supported keeping the existing practice of removing the municipal flag when special requests were received, and leaving the existing policy as is.

9. MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S/COUNCILLORS' MATTERS - NIL

Mayor Bolivar-Getson encouraged everyone to continue to adhere to the Provincial COVID-19 restrictions and to stay safe.

10. ADDED ITEMS - NIL

11. IN CAMERA - NIL

12. NEXT MEETING – June 15, 2021 – 9:00 a.m. – MODL2040 Workshop (Instead of a Policy & Strategy Committee Meeting)

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business at 10:02 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Hubley that the meeting adjourn. Carried.