



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee Of The Whole (COTW) Meeting  
Wednesday –April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

---

## 1. Meeting, Date & Time:

The COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council was called to order on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 1:00pm in the Council Chambers Sherbrooke, N.S.

## 2. Attending:

Warden Mosher

Councillor Smith (via teleconference)

Councillor Findlay (via teleconference)

Councillor Baker (via teleconference)

Councillor Kaiser-Kirk (via teleconference)

Councillor Malloy (via teleconference)

## Also Attending:

Marvin MacDonald, CAO

Marissa Jordan, Municipal Clerk

Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (via teleconference)

## Absent with Regrets:

Deputy Warden Dort

## 3. Approval of Agenda:

*On motion of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Findlay, Council approved the agenda with the following additions:*

*6.e-Correspondence from Giffin's Funeral Home*

*Motion carried.*

## 4. Approval of Minutes:

*On motion of Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.*

*Motion carried.*

## 5. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)- Councillor Smith updated Council that the conference has been cancelled and the Municipality is in the process of receiving the funds back from the deposits made.
- Fences Arbitration Committee- Councillor Findlay asked if there were any updates for this committee. The CAO said due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been no recent meetings but one will be called when restrictions from COVID-19 are dropped
- Councillor Kaiser-Kirk asked for a correction on page two of the March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes where the motion for the Before and After Program reads "form" and not "from". Staff will adjust the office copy to reflect this change.

## 6. Other Matters of Business:

### a. Streetscapes Update

- The CAO updated Council that staff has started work on the building at 16 Main St. to install a public washroom. Also the Municipality will be doing landscaping and planting trees (shrubs) along the north side next to the boundary between parking lot and Shoppers. We are looking at pricing out lighting standards, electrical and curb work as a phase 2 project that could be done this year.
- Councillor Smith wanted clarification that these are the two phases that were discussed and approved as a part of the original budget. The Director of Finance clarified that phase one was what was presented to Council previously and was covered under the 2019/2020 budget, but phase two will be done under the 2020/2021 budget. The Municipality will also be applying for a grant through the beautification fund for phase two.

### b. Covid-19 Update

- The CAO updated Council that staff continues to work from home or in the office on a rotational basis, limiting the number of staff in office to three at a time. Public Works and Transfer Station staff is working on their regular schedules.
- We have created a separate page on our website for Covid-19 information which can be found at <https://www.saint-marys.ca/covid-19.html>. This site provides information on federal and provincial resources and local information on the municipal and community events, actions and cancellations.
- Recreation staff is exploring on-line methods and activities that can be used to encourage residents' participation and where possible physical activities that do not go against the physical and social distancing requirements put in place to fight the spread of the Covid-19 virus.
- Councillor Findlay made suggestions that the Facebook page should have a clearer link to the website that is easily accessible as well as making the COVID-19 link on the website more noticeable. Staff will make these changes where possible.

### c. Tax & Utility Dates

- Property Taxes – Warden Mosher updated Council that on Wednesday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, himself and CAO Mr. MacDonald and other municipal units participated in a Zoom conference with the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM). The Municipalities were asked if possible, to work in cooperation with the NSFM in an effort to create a province wide tax billing strategy in response to the financial burden caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSFM would like all municipalities to support them if possible in a universal approach province wide eliminating a possible patch work of tax billing strategies across the province. The NSFM is working in partnership with the Association of Municipal Administrators to create a proposal to the province, which will prevent a duplication of efforts.
- St. Mary's Municipality tax bills are not normally send out until the end of May and not due until the end of July. Warden Mosher opened up the floor to discussion on whether or not Council will support the NSFM in a province wide strategy.

- Councillor Smith and Councillor Baker agreed that presenting a cohesive approach to tax billing strategies would be desirable, in the same way the Municipality shares information on COVID-19 cohesively and in conjunction with the province.
- Councillor Kaiser Kirk asked if Council will be able to know what the strategy will be before agreeing to it. Warden Mosher said he believed there will be updates on the strategy before Council agrees to it and the CAO said it will be a voluntary approach for the Municipality. Council asked when they can expect further correspondence from the Province. The CAO said it is uncertain at this time. Once information is given, it will be discussed at an appropriate upcoming meeting of Council.
- Sherbrooke Water Utility- The CAO presented the Staff Report with three options for billing and due dates of the water utility:
  - 1) Status Quo
  - 2) A one month extension to due date for paying water bills without interest charges added. (Estimated to cost the water utility about \$100)
  - 3) Allow the water billing ended March 31/20 to go to the end of the next quarter (June 30/20) without interest charges. (Estimated to cost the water utility about \$300)
- The Utility and Review Board was contacted to ensure permission of various options. A one month extension was approved, but there is a possibility for flexibility with the length of the extension.

*On recommendation of Councillor Findlay and seconded by Councillor Kaiser-Kirk, Council agreed to apply no interest on the fourth quarter water utility bill until the next billing is due (first week of August).*

***Recommendation adopted.***

- Councillor Smith asked for clarification on which interest will be waived, just on the new 4<sup>th</sup> quarter bills, or the previous balances as well. The Director of Finance said the interest would only be waived for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter bills, not for any previous balances or arrears on the account.

d. In Camera Session- Contract Negotiations

***On motion of Councillor Baker and seconded by Councillor Findlay, Council moved into an in camera session for contract negotiations at 1:28pm.***

***On motion of Councillor Baker, Council reconvened to regular session at 1:54pm.***

*On recommendation of Councillor Kaiser-Kirk and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council agreed not to accept the Cost Sharing J-Class Streets Provincial Program at this time due to the high cost in excess of the amount budgeted for this fiscal year.*

***Recommendation adopted.***

e. Correspondence from Giffin's Funeral Home

- Councillor Findlay spoke to Council in regards to a letter that all Councillors received from Lewis MacIntosh. Councillor Findlay spoke to Mr. MacIntosh who had said because funeral homes are not declared an essential service, if someone were to pass away in their home, the funeral home

would not be able to go in and remove the individual. This also affects their ability to receive protective equipment because they are not an essential service.

- The CAO said he did speak with Mr. MacIntosh as well and clarified that Mr. MacIntosh was writing on behalf of the Undertakers Association of Nova Scotia.
- Councillor Smith asked if there was clarification from the Province as to why funeral homes were not declared an essential service. The Warden and CAO had no clarification on this, but Councillor Findlay said that as per Mr. MacIntosh, Ontario and Quebec do have funeral homes listed as essential services.

*On recommendation of Councillor Findlay and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council agreed to write a letter to the Minister in support of changing funeral homes to an essential service if, upon further investigation, there is no apparent reason for funeral homes to be excluded as an essential service.*

- Council expressed the importance of further investigation to make sure there is no apparent reason for funeral homes to be excluded as an essential service before writing a letter of support. Staff will find out more information and report back to Council.

*Recommendation adopted.*

## **7. Adjournment**

*On motion of Councillor Malloy, there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 2:03pm.*



Recorded By  
Municipal Clerk/Special Projects Coordinator



Approved By  
Warden Moshier