



**TOWN OF SAINT ANDREWS  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES**

**October 18, 2021, 6:30 p.m.  
Electronic Meeting**

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**A. RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE**

*A Special Meeting of the Town of Saint Andrews Council was held on Monday, October 18, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:*

*Mayor Brad Henderson, Deputy Mayor Kate Akagi, Councillor Marc Blanchard, Lee Heenan, Jamie Hirtle, Steve Neil.*

*Chris Spear, CAO/Treasurer, Paul Nopper, Clerk - Senior Administrator, Terry Acton, Asset/Operations Manager, Emily Noddin, Assistant Treasurer, Alexander Gopen, Senior Planner, Southwest New Brunswick Service Commission.*

*Absent: Councillor Kurt Gumushel*

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion: Motion: 380 - 10/21**

**Moved by Councillor Heenan  
Seconded by Councillor Neil**

*That the Agenda be approved as presented.*

**5 – 0**

**Carried**

**C. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

*Councillor Neil Wharf Project Final Design and Discussion - PW210806*

*Councillor Blanchard Wharf Project Final Design and Discussion - PW210806*

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

**E. INTRODUCTION, CONSIDERATION AND PASSING OF BY-LAWS AND MOTIONS**

**1. Budget Workshop Discussion #3 Background Documentation, FA211001**

*CAO Spear provided an overview of the budget for October 18, 2021. Changes to Version 2 include:*

**Assessment base finalized:**

- *Originally estimated at 5% and finalized at 11%. At \$1.26 tax rate = \$476,000 extra revenue over the 2021 budget.*

**General Government Revenue:**

- *LSD Fire Share increase to \$139,700.*
- *Tax revenue increase \$267,000.*
- *Equalization grant decreased by \$5,000 to \$58,000.*

**General Government Expenses:**

- *Regional Service Commission increased from \$10,680 to \$59,810.*

- *New Recreation Cost Sharing Model with LSD's return to TSA along with LSD portion to \$109,000, subject to RSC Board Approval.*

**General Capital Added:**

- *\$10,000 for a new vehicle to be electric.*
- *Removed additional parking at the corner of Parr and King Street \$13,500.*
- *Moved paint machine ahead 1 year, moved Langmaid Park walking paths paving to 2023.*
- *Eliminated Recreation Director Office \$16,000.*
- *With increased revenues and fewer projects, debt was reduced by \$395,000. This is primarily due to tax increases.*

*Councillor Blanchard - The recreation allocation under the LSD, increasing from \$59,000 to \$109,000, so are we positive \$50,000?*

*CAO Spear - Correct.*

**Mill Rates assuming we maintain a \$1.26 mill rate based on an 11% increase:**

- *2020 increase over 2021 at \$200,000 and \$287.00 increase.*
- *\$300,000 would be a \$431.00 increase.*
- *\$500,000 would be a \$718.00 increase.*
- *\$600,000 would be an \$862.00 increase.*

*Estimated most resident's property range between \$300,000 and \$500,000*

**Challenges with New Brunswick Property Taxes**

*The Town of Saint Andrews is not the only taxing authority. The following categories of taxpayers bills by GNB:*

- *Commercial properties (\$3.0354).*
- *Non-residential owners (\$1.1233).*
- *Rental properties (\$1.19).*
- *Municipalities (\$1.2367).*

*Due to complex rate structures, not all owners are treated equally as Council adjusts the mill rate. No matter what we do, most people and businesses will see increases across the board.*

**Realities of Increased Property Tax Revenues**

- *The Town still working towards:*
  - *Asphalt.*
  - *Buildings and facilities.*
- *New infrastructure:*
  - *Sidewalks.*
  - *Downtown washrooms.*
- *New Services:*
  - *Housing*
  - *Economic Development.*
  - *Environmental Initiatives.*

- Reduce overall debt requirements. Therefore, lower overall costs.

**Realities of Property Taxes Residents, Now and Potential:**

- Increasing assessments and rates increase the cost of homeownership:
  - New entrants.
  - Long-term property owners.
- Impact on the cost of doing business in Saint Andrews.
- Perception that we are a high-tax municipality.

**Potential to Decrease Tax Rate:**

- As of September 30, 2021, inflation predicted to be 2.2%, general wage increases predicted 2.5% - 3% nationwide.
- For the Town of Saint Andrews, the mill rate is only one component of total tax revenue.
  - that is Total Warrant Means.

**Impact on Tax Rates Assuming X% Increase in Tax Revenue:**

- 0% increase to Warrant - new mill rate 1.135
- 2% - 1.16
- 3% - 1.165
- 5% - 1.19
- 11% - 1.26

For homeowners as primary residents, if we asked a 3% increase would be 1.165.

Council discussed the potential of a new mill rate with a decrease from 1.26 to 1.20 or 1.21. It was noted that Previous Councils have supported an increase of 5% to support asset management. Council supported the concept of a rate of 1.20 or 1.21 but a further discussion was warranted to occur after review of the Utility rates. Council understands the need to provide some relief to the property owners of Saint Andrews and all avenues need to be considered.

**Utility Rates:**

- Currently budget is \$1 million to 1.3 million for recapitalization.
- Currently based on suggested useful life.
- \$5.8 million in backlog projects that could be completed.
  - Water is safe but the risk of failure to certain portions of town is higher.
- High volume users significant rate increase in 2018. As much as 200%.

**Debt Repayments:**

- \$1 million - \$84,000 in payments per year.
- \$3 million - \$251,000.
- \$5 million - \$418,000.
- If we did all the work necessary, it would be a dime a year increase.

Example effects of extra capital on a rate of \$5.8 million were provided to Council on a single year, 5-year, and 10-year payback example for Council to understand the impacts to the Utility rates.

**Example Effects of Extra Capital on Rates \$5.8 Million Next Year:**

- 2022 residential rate is \$580. by 2026 will be \$927.00 - 55% increase
- Fiscal Services increase \$261,000 to \$1.1 million
- Debt service load by 2026 would be 69%

Staff noted that Council might not want to take a large leap in Utility rates for 2022. Staff are working to find granting partnerships and cost-sharing initiatives to help offset capital costs and keep the debt load lower for 2023. The goal is to get \$3.00 with of support from \$1.00 submitted by the Town.

Council identified that the Utility rates and Capital debt load are important issues for this Council to tackle. Council agreed that staff should try to attain as many granting opportunities and funding partnerships as possible. Only limited property tax funding can be transferred to the Utility under current financial restrictions by the Province of New Brunswick. Council suggested that a long-term strategy with the Province needs to occur and that consultation with the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick should occur and that discussions with neighbouring Municipalities should happen to see how Saint Andrews Utility systems compare.

Staff indicated that this would be the final year for Council to consider small increases to the water rates and that staff are looking at alternative options including meters. Staff noted that to take too large of a jump in rates would be harmful to not just residential users but commercial users who had significant increases in 2018. Staff presented Council with the average Utility rate in New Brunswick as \$634.78.

Council discussed the idea of reducing the mill rate to 1.20 or 1.21 and increasing the Utility rate from \$580.00 to \$634.78 for residential users, to align with the average Utility cost for municipalities in New Brunswick. Due to the large increases in the commercial operators in 2018, it was noted that a small increase should be made at 3%. Council came to a consensus on a mill rate of 1.20, an increase in residential Utility rates to \$634.78, and an increase in commercial Utility to 3%. By providing a reduced mill rate will help to offset the increases in the Utility rate. Staff wanted to clarify that the public would still see an increase in their Property Taxes, although the Town has reduced their portion, the taxation from the Town is not the only taxation on Property Tax as stipulated earlier in the meeting. The new rates will be reflected in budget 4.

A presentation from staff on the budget will be held on Wednesday, October 27th, 2021 prior to the Regular Council Meeting on November 1st, 2021 to allow the community to provide any additional feedback and pose questions.

Council also discussed the COVID-19 plan for the arena and the options for viewing proof of vaccination. Members of Council had seen other communities operate and noticed it was more efficient with a paid staff member checking identification versus onus on the user groups. Council asked staff to budget for a position to review identifications and modify the COVID-19 plan accordingly.

Staff brought forward a proposal to purchase new commercial Christmas lights. Staff asked for an increase in the budget by \$5800 plus tax for 2021. Commercial snowflakes would be purchased to replace the current lights used on the Wharf. Council provided consensus to this purchase.

**2. Wharf Project Final Design and Discussion - PW210806**

Councillor Blanchard and Neil left at 7:47 p.m.

Council Blanchard and Neil returned at 8:11 p.m.

CAO Spear provided an overview of a three-phased power station for installation along the Wharf to accommodate the Viola Davidson research vessel for the Saint Andrews Biological Station and the Canadian Coast Guard. The purpose of the power station is to provide electricity over the winter for the vessel to maintain its systems. The Federal Government is willing to fund the project and have the Town manage it. Issues that still need to be addressed are the locations for the power building, issues of blocking street ends, getting power from shore to the end of the Wharf, and what happens during the construction of the Town Wharf. The SABS Wharf is out of commission and will be rebuilt in the next 3 - 5 years. If accommodations cannot be met for the Viola Davidson, the vessel could be ported elsewhere and may not return. The addition of the Viola Davidson to the Wharf has been beneficial not just for Wharf revenues but for tourists and residents.

Council acknowledged the importance of Viola Davidson in the community, for the SABS station, and that we should look at creative solutions to maintaining the vessel at the Town Wharf. Council wants to support this initiative as it supports scientific discovery as we are a core marine science experience and supports our business community. Council discussed placement options for the street end at King Street, discussions with private landowners, and placement at the end of the Wharf. Staff noted that the King Street street-end is an area used for snow clearing and removal. Blocking this section would cause additional costs for snow clearing. Additionally, this area is where fuel trucks park in the summer for tour boat operators. Council discussed how power would be run from shore and a submarine cable was brought forward as an option to attaching power to run along the Wharf, as this will be under construction in 2022. Staff noted that the Town is working with the engineers from Public Works Canada on solutions for when the Wharf is under construction to ensure power can be maintained. Council acknowledged that any building to protect the power would need to fit within the esthetics of the community. Council asked staff to find out if the power station would create ambient noise and if this had been taken into consideration. Staff noted to take these comments back to Public Works Canada to make them aware and find solutions. The hope is the building it would be located in would be soundproofed and insulated. Council directed staff to find the best possible location for the power station, either on land or on the Wharf, but to make sure this project goes ahead.

**3. TSA 2021 – 08 Request for Proposal Champlain Avenue Housing Development Scoring Matrix Discussion, PED211003**

Clerk Nopper provided an overview of the scoring matrix based on the documentation released in the Request for Proposal to the Champlain Avenue Housing Development initiative. The scoring matrix included land use, building design/function, business profiles, and financials. Staff seeded Council's input into the scoring matrix and if changes were required. Staff noted that affordable housing was a key component of the RFP and will be scored as such.

Council discussed the scoring matrix with suggested changes to add more points to energy efficiency, reduction in an attractive design, increase the points to rental fee costs, and that a little more weight on the financials would have made the scoring matrix stronger. Staff noted that these changes would be made and sent out to Council. Each member of the Council will score the RFP's and staff will work to score them as well and compare results. Results will be brought forward to Council with recommendations.

**F. NEW BUSINESS**

**G. QUESTION PERIOD**

**H. COUNCILLORS' AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

**I. MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

*Mayor Henderson - Thank you to staff for the three drafts of the budget. A lot of work goes into the development of these budgets and understanding what it takes for quick turnover. Mr. Spear, is this a record in the last 5 years to complete the budget?*

*CAO Spear - One year I had 14 drafts, and all were vitally different. We have fine-tuned the budget process and thank you Council for efficiency.*

**J. CLOSED SESSION**

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: Motion: 381 - 10/21**

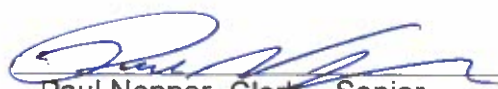
**Moved by Deputy Mayor Akagi  
Seconded by Councillor Heenan**

*At 8:28 p.m. that the meeting be adjourned.*

**5 - 0**

**Carried**

  
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Brad Henderson, Mayor

  
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Paul Nopper, Clerk - Senior  
Administrator

