



TOWN OF SAINT ANDREWS
PUBLIC HEARING OF OBJECTIONS MEETING
MINUTES

December 12, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
W.C. O'Neill Arena

A. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

A Public Hearing of Objections on By-Law No. 22-07, A By-Law Relating to the Town of Saint Andrews Council Remuneration of the Town of Saint Andrews Council was held on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

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

Chris Spear, CAO/Treasurer, Paul Nopper, Clerk - Senior Administrator.

B. LAND RECOGNITION OF THE PESKOTOMUHKATI NATION

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: 463 - 12/22

Moved by Councillor Heenan

Seconded by Deputy Mayor Akagi

That the Agenda be approved as presented.

6 – 0

Carried

D. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

E. PRESENTATION

1. Presentation by Chris Spear, CAO/Treasurer on Background to Council Remuneration

Chris Spear, CAO/Treasurer provided a presentation to Council on the processes used to formulate the Council Remuneration. It was noted that adequate compensation for Councillors helps to attract quality candidates, provides balance for high stress and many hours a Councillor puts into the community, and provides opportunities to be more inclusive and open to more people to participate. The province has adjusted 56 Council entity's remunerations through Local Governance Reform. Those communities that only had by-elections, 6 communities, have to change their own remuneration as there is an active Council able to make decisions. Compensation was compared between the current Council compensations to the new Eastern Charlotte, St. Stephen, Shediac, Fundy-St. Martins, and Shippigan. Council remuneration was determined by using a calculation matrix created by the Association of Francophone Municipalities in New Brunswick and provided by the province for use. It compares several criteria including population, services provided to the public, number of institutions, infrastructures, and other government services, average tax base per resident, and size of the territory. The recommended ranges from the matrix include:

Mayor - \$34,400 - \$42,650

Deputy Mayor - \$14,792 - \$20,472

Councillors - \$13,072 - \$18,339

Council, through the First Reading of the By-Law, noted to go with the lowest pay in the ranges of \$34,400, \$14,700, and \$13,100 respectively. This range of remuneration is comparable to the communities identified and the average provided across the province.

F. HEARING OF OBJECTIONS

1. By-Law No. 22 – 07, A By-Law Relating to the Town of Saint Andrews Council Remuneration, FA221115

Mayor Henderson noted that in the discussion to follow for Council consideration, that he is proposing to reduce the Mayor's salary and contribute the extra funds to the Firefighter stipend. This would be a good initiative to support.

Clerk Nopper noted that they had received 1 letter to the Public Hearing of Objections and were provided with the Council package.

Mr. Guy Groulx, 50 Ernest Street - I just like to add a few items for Council's consideration for this By-Law. Mr. Spear pointed out and at the November 21st meeting, the CAO identified the need to attract quality candidates and problems with acclamation as justification for a remuneration review, but the results of the last election and the recent by-election indicate that Saint Andrews has an abundance of high-quality candidates willing to stand for office signaling that there does not appear to be a problem in this area. Council was aware of the scale of remuneration when they ran for office and knew that this is a part-time job. It does not seem fair to the taxpayer and the new residents of Chamcook and Bayside to have a significant pay increase when the job description has not increased. The additional three new Councillors should lighten the workload of the Council.

Council remuneration has always been a sensitive subject for Council and the public. It is important this process be done in as transparent and fair a manner as possible and that the process be consistent with neighbouring communities. Let's do a comparison of neighbouring communities. Saint Andrews has a population of 2,686 and is primarily a seasonal tourism resort with an influx of tourists from May to September. Saint Andrews is a destination resort and visitors are generally people visiting the town for recreational purposes. St. Stephen has a population of 8,119 and is a regional hub with three international border crossings, a major highway, regional recreation facilities, a shopping centre, large building supply outlets, car dealerships, a regional hospital, numerous gas stations, multiple fire stations, Service Canada and Service New Brunswick locations, Land Registry Offices for the Province and many other amenities that are consistent with a regional hub. St. Stephen has an influx of hundreds or thousands of people each day either crossing the border, shopping in town, seeking medical attention, or obtaining government services. Eastern Charlotte has a population of 6,674 and like St. Stephen is a small regional hub with a major highway, crossing to Grand Manan, large building supply outlets, multiple recreation facilities, numerous gas stations, salmon aquaculture industries, multiple governments departments, the regional RCMP detachment, Service New Brunswick, multiple fire departments, multiple sewage and water treatment plants, and many other amenities that are consistent with a regional hub. Eastern Charlotte also has an influx of hundreds of people each day seeking policing services, banking, gas, shopping in town, obtaining government services, and transiting along the highway, and to Grand Manan. Eastern Charlotte is also a major staging area for incidents at Point Lepreau. The larger residential populations and thousands of visitors to St. Stephen and Eastern Charlotte on a continuous basis significantly add to the complexity of managing these regional hub towns requiring a greater level of emergency preparedness, increased infrastructure requirements, more citizen interaction, and higher levels of risk. In contrast, Saint Andrews is relatively dormant for a significant portion of the year with few outside visitors and many residents that leave town during winter months. This means the level of complexity is not the same.

As part of the Municipal Reform initiative, the salary of the Mayor of St. Stephen was increased to \$37,000 and the Mayor of Eastern Charlotte to \$33,000. The salary for the Mayor of Saint Andrews was left at \$13,525 and was not changed by the province. One important metric in comparing salaries for different-sized communities is the salary per person or cost per taxpayer. If you look at St. Stephen, the Mayor's salary of \$37,000 works out to \$4.56 per person. Eastern Charlottes Mayor's salary of \$33,000 is \$4.94 per person. Saint Andrews' current Mayor's salary of \$13,525 equals \$5.04 per person which is more than St. Stephen and Eastern Charlotte on a per-taxpayer basis. The proposed increase of the Mayor's salary to \$34,000 would equal a cost of \$12.66 per person which is almost three times that of St. Stephen and Eastern Charlotte on a per-person basis. This may explain why the province elected not to change the salary base for Councillors in Saint Andrews.

The Local Governance Act, Section 96, states that it is prohibited conflict for Council to use their position for personal gain. Clearly, a significant pay increase would be a personal gain. To overcome this, the traditions of Councils in the past have been to delay remuneration changes so that they apply to the new incoming Council to avoid an obvious conflict of interest caused by Council voting in a pay increase. It is also important to keep in mind that the Town of Saint Andrews Council's remuneration by the Consumer Price Index, amounts to a 6.3% increase this year. Councillors have access to taxpayer-funded daycare services which are not available to most taxpayers. Therefore, out of fairness to the taxpayers of Siant Andrews and for the reasons stated above, I am opposed to a 254% in the Mayor's salary, a 66% increase in the Deputy Mayor's salary, and a 74% increase in the Councillor's salary, especially when many in our community are struggling with the effects of high inflation, interest rates, high fuel prices, and spiralling fuel costs. My recommendation is that Council appoints an independent committee with no ties to Council or staff and hold public meetings on Council remuneration. The committee can gather input from the public to prepare and present a recommendation to Council to adjust the remunerations for the next Council. This would avoid the obvious prohibited conflict under the Local Governance Act that voting on an increase in personal compensation would cause and defuse any concerns of the public over this issue. Especially with new residents joining our community. Thank you for your time.

G. QUESTION PERIOD

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 464 - 12/22

Moved by Deputy Mayor Akagi

Seconded by Councillor Blanchard

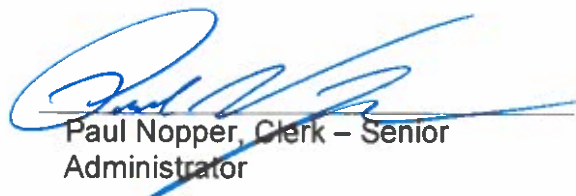
At 6:52 p.m. that the meeting be adjourned.

6 – 0

Carried



Brad Henderson, Mayor



Paul Nopper, Clerk – Senior
Administrator

