



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

**August 28, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
W.C. O'Neill Arena Complex Council Chambers**

A. RECORDING OF ATTENDANCE

A Special Meeting of the Town of Saint Andrews Council was held on Monday, August 28, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Mayor Brad Henderson, Deputy Mayor Kate Akagi, Councillors Mark Bennett, Marc Blanchard, Annette Harland, Lee Heenan, Jamie Hirtle, Steve Neil, and Darrell Weare.

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

Absent - Councillor Kurt Gumushel.

B. LAND RECOGNITION OF THE PESKOTOMUHKATI NATION

Welcome and we recognize we are on the unceded traditional territory of the Passamaquoddy (Peskotomuhkati) (Besko-toe-moo-gati), people.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: 258 - 08/23

Moved by Councillor Hirtle

Seconded by Councillor Heenan

That the Council of the Town of Saint Andrews approved the Agenda for the 230828 Special Council Meeting on Monday, August 28, 2023, as presented.

Amended

Motion: 259 - 08/23

Moved by Councillor Heenan

Seconded by Councillor Harland

That the Council of the Town of Saint Andrews amends the Agenda for the 230828 Special Council Meeting to include a Closed Session under the Local Governance Act Section 68(1)(c) information that could cause financial loss or gain to a person or the local government or could jeopardize negotiations leading to an agreement or contract and (d) the proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land.

8 – 0

Carried

Motion: 260 - 08/23

Moved by Councillor Hirtle

Seconded by Councillor Heenan

That the Council of the Town of Saint Andrews approves the Amended Agenda for the 230828 Special Council Meeting on Monday, August 28, 2023, as presented.

8 – 0

Carried

D. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mayor Brad Henderson declared a Conflict of Interest on the Closed Session.

E. PRESENTATIONS

1. Chris Spear, CAO/Treasurer Regarding the 2024 Budget for the Town of Saint Andrews

CAO Spear provided a presentation to Council on the Pre-Budget Consultation for the 2024 Town of Saint Andrews Budget. The presentation overview highlighted the current financial status of the Town, debt service levels, the 2023 Tax Rates and how they were calculated, and a look at potential projects for 2024. As of January 1, 2023, the Town of Saint Andrews was amalgamated with the communities of Bayside and Chamcook. The new population of the Town is 2,953 with an assessment base total of \$601 million; \$187 million for Bayside and Chamcook and Saint Andrews \$413 million. The timeline for the 2024 Budget to be completed is as follows, staff are currently working on the preparation of the budget, anticipate that the first draft of the budget to be before the Council near the end of September, asking community groups to have larger requests of \$2,000.00 into Town Hall by September 22, and the budget needs to be finalized by November 10th and submitted to the Province of New Brunswick by November 15th. The total assets of your local government from the 2022 Audited Financial Statements are cash and investments of \$3,920,000, accounts receivable including government grants of \$947,000, net Capital assets (cost) of \$31,045,000 with a total asset amount of \$35,912,000. Outstanding liabilities from 2022 include short-term at \$2,534,000, long-term at \$5,302,000 with general long-term debt at \$2,241,000 and utility at \$2,846,000. This debt has a total of \$7,836,000. Estimated new debt for 2023 includes in the General Fund \$195,000 for asphalt and \$125,000 for trail construction with a total annual debt payment of \$29,000. For the Utility Fund \$600,000 for in-ground infrastructure with a total annual debt payment of \$40,000. Based on the Provincial Debt Servicing Ratio, our current General Fund is at 5% debt load. Anything below 10% is rated good by the Province. Anything between 10% and 20% is questioned, and anything above 20% total debt load, the Province asks for further regulations and reviews of budgets. The Utility Fund is currently at a 17% debt load and can go up to 50% based on Provincial regulations. Note the Utility Fund is based on user fee costs and is not part of the General Fund as it is only paid by those who use the service. Your taxes in 2022 went to the following general government, police protection, fire protection, transportation, recreation, culture, debt servicing, and economic development. It is important to note that with Local Governance Reform, the 2023 Budget has input from staff and a Steering Committee, it was primarily prepared by the appointed Facilitator, the tax rates were calculated by the Facilitator, the budget was approved by the Minister of Local Government, and Council did not have a say in the budget. Projects that were completed in 2023 included the purchase of a new sidewalk plow, road and parking lot resurfacing, the outdoor exercise park, and in-ground main replacement on Queen Street and Alexandra Crescent. Projects delayed included the washrooms along the Van Horne Trail, trail extensions, Champlain Avenue in-ground work, and Prince of Wales Street widening. The reason for the majority of delayed projects was based on the high cost of tenders. Upcoming major projects include the new ladder truck for the fire department at a cost of \$1,500,000 which was ordered in 2022 and the Wharf at \$7,800,000 with an estimated start date of late 2024. In addition, there are new services that are being implemented at the Regional Service Commission through Local Governance Reform. The new mandates added include Economic Development, Community Development, Tourism, Regional Transportation, Public Safety, and Recreation. A portion of the tax rate will be sent to the Regional Service Commission to help cover costs associated with the new mandate. This was in the 2023 Budget. Mayor Henderson will be providing further information in the coming weeks as per the proposed budget from the RSC. The total cost of RSC services in 2023 was \$231,532 including Planning Services. This is an approximate Mill Rate of \$0.038. The basic tax rate calculation is based on total expenses less

total funding sources and property tax revenue. The new local government is divided into two tax zones, Bayside and Chamcook, and Saint Andrews. For the tax rate, there are two types of costs, Local and Shared. Local is only charged to the property owners in that tax zone and Shared is allocated among all property owners. Local costs include policing, by-law enforcement, solid waste and recycling, animal control, transportation, and debt repayment. Shared costs include Council and Town Hall, fire protection, recreation and culture, the Wharf, and debt repayment (post-2022). Bayside and Chamcook have a population of 905 with an Assessment Base of \$187,054,950. Policing costs were \$564,558, Transportation paid to the Province of New Brunswick at \$769,731, and Solid Waste and Recycling at \$174,189. In comparison, Saint Andrews has a population of 2,048, with an Assessment Base of \$413,041,550. Policing costs were \$549,560, Transportation \$975,618, and Solid Waste and Recycling at \$147,378. It should be noted that Bayside and Chamcook pay a higher rate for most services than Saint Andrews. In a breakdown of Mill Rate, Bayside and Chamcook paid \$0.96 in 2023. \$0.25 went to Policing, \$0.41 went to Transportation, \$0.07 went to Solid Waste, and \$0.23 went to shared costs. Saint Andrews Mill Rate was \$1.14 with Policing at \$0.11, Transportation at \$0.19, Solid Waste at \$0.03, Debt Servicing at \$0.05, Capital at \$0.12, Other at \$0.09, and Shared at \$0.55. Moving forward, staff are looking at expanding recreational offerings including a Recreation Master Plan, revitalization of the Bayside Community Hall, increased opportunities for youth to seniors, economic development and a model for cultural services. Upcoming Capital discussions include the Wharf, upgrades to Dock Road, Phase 2 of the Trail, upgrades to the Water Treatment Plant, widening of Prince of Wales Street, Trail Washrooms, Bayside Hall Renovations, and continued upgrades to infrastructure.

F. INTRODUCTION, CONSIDERATION AND PASSING OF BY-LAWS AND MOTIONS

1. Preliminary Discussion on the 2024 Town of Saint Andrews Budget, FA230821

Council thanked CAO Spear for his presentation. Council asked about the Local costs and Shared costs and how those contracts would get renegotiated and if it would be done at the Regional Service Commission or the Province. CAO Spear noted that it is to be determined. It would be good to get Bayside and Chamcook under the MPSA contract for Policing as it does not run out until 2032 and the contract is more advantageous for costing versus the PPSA. The Federal Government has noted the difficulties of separate contracts. Staff are meeting with them in the fall and will need to identify ways to move forward. Need input from both the Provincial and Federal agencies. It was noted that the RSC does not have much to do with the Policing contract. The RSC handles the solid waste and municipalities tender out garbage collection. This will look to come forward in 2024 and have a combined tender with Bayside, Chamcook, and Saint Andrews. Mayor Henderson noted that he will be vocal on trying to get Bayside and Chamcook into the MPSA contract based on the better deal in place. CAO Spear noted that the Federal Government is contractually obligated to maintain the contract until 2032. Council asked about Animal Control and the differences between Saint Andrews, Bayside and Chamcook. CAO Spear noted the Town has contracted Animal Control services. Many areas of the Province are under the SPCA. Our services, for the most part, are up to the local staff to identify animals and owners. The contracted services is based on a retainer type basis. It is reactive versus proactive. Council asked with the newly mandated services from the RSC, the Town used to fund some other organizations but now funding is being diverted to the RSC, is there an appetite for negotiations with the RSC, i.e. the Welcome Centre and funding? Where is the boundary on this and how it will roll out? CAO Spear noted that the RSC is still working on their scope and mandate. It is going to take time to find efficiencies as they

have a new board and they are still figuring out their next steps. Mayor Henderson noted the advocacy for a regional fund to support regional organizations. Saint Andrews has many in our community and if the RSC had a fund, would be good to direct them to that opportunity as all communities are contributing. The RSC will be working on a policy for the future and the Mayors do not want any more mandated fees to the Municipalities until they see some wins. Council asked to keep pressure on for a regional fund. Mayor Henderson noted that the RSC Budget is looking at hiring a grant writer and hopefully Municipalities get some time with them and ask for more funding for regional trails. The Town is paying for trails in Town and understanding the costs are difficult. The Budget will be brought forward to Council. CAO Spear noted that for decisions by Council on debt service loads, we need to be aware of the costs against future payments. Council spoke about the aggressive property tax assessment increases and spike protection over the next three to four years. Concerns were raised about the prime interest rates being high that we have to be cautious about borrowing at a higher rate. CAO Spear noted that the next steps of the budget will be to develop a draft 1 budget but still need information about the assessment base, and RSC costs, and then we can provide the Operational and Capital budgets for review. We have multiple major projects ahead and need to provide a 5-year plan for review so Council knows the debt rates. Council asked about the Strategic Plan of the Town and how that would be approached. CAO Spear noted most priorities were accounted for. One item that will be time-consuming but included in the Planner contract is the Municipal Plan and Zoning By-Laws. We will address the priorities of the Strategic Plan at the budget. We will need to discuss housing and how to allocate funds. One strategy to aim for is the use of the Housing Accelerator Fund which we are currently waiting to hear back on. If the Council wishes to use more taxpayer funds for housing, that is a Council decision but needs some substantial investment. Also, note that we have to repair and replace our current infrastructure. Council brought up staffing levels and noted the additional workload that staff and the need for additional support since Local Governance Reform. CAO Spear noted that the budget will represent changes to staffing levels to ensure we are offering proper services. Council asked if staff knew what the Provincial Prime Rate is for borrowing. CAO Spear noted he did not know but would inquire. CAO Spear also noted that future Capital costs to be aware of is a new Water Tower and the expansion of services along Bayview Drive.

G. NEW BUSINESS

H. QUESTION PERIOD

I. COUNCILLORS' AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S COMMENTS

J. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

K. CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Henderson left the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Motion: 261 - 08/23

Moved by Councillor Bennett

Seconded by Councillor Blanchard

At 7:41 p.m. that Council moves into Closed Session as per the Local Governance Act, Section 68(1)(c) information that could cause financial loss or gain to a person or the local government or could jeopardize negotiations leading to an agreement or contract and (d) the proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land.

8 – 0

Carried

Motion: 262 - 08/23

Moved by Councillor Harland

Seconded by Councillor Bennett

At 8:28 p.m. that Council returns to Open Session.

7 - 0

Carried

L. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: 263 - 08/23

Moved by Councillor Heenan

Seconded by Councillor Blanchard

At 8:29 p.m. that the meeting be adjourned.

7 - 0

Carried



Brad Henderson, Mayor



Paul Nopper, Clerk - Senior
Administrator

