



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MINUTES**

January 30, 2023, 6:00 pm

Members Present: Mayor Robert Campbell
Councillor Phyllis Bannister – joined at a later time
Councillor Sarah Colwell
Councillor Joe D'Ettore
Councillor John-Wiebe Dykstra – joined at a later time
Councillor Jason Gallant
Councillor Nathan O'Blenis
Councillor Stephanie Thorne

Staff Present: Austin Henderson, CAO
Dianne Ayles, Clerk/Treasurer
Scott Landry, Assistant Clerk
Bradley MacLeod, Fire Chief

Staff Absent: Lorie Paterson, Administrative Assistant
Trevor Douthwright, Manager of Infrastructure and Public Works
Jarrett Crossman, Reg. Director of Recreation and Wellness

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: The Agenda be approved.

Moved by: Councillor O'Blenis

Seconded by: Councillor D'Ettore

Motion Carried

3. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflict declared at this time.

Councillor Dykstra joined the meeting at 6:04 pm.

4. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Fire Department Presentation**

Fire Chief MacLeod joined Council for a detailed presentation that touched on Salisbury Fire Rescue calls in 2022, its needs and successes, current membership, and plans for 2023. It was noted that former Chief Bannister has now marked his 40th year with the fire department and will be retiring from the department by year's end.

Challenges - Discussion of challenges included access to water, space needs in the fire hall, the fire hall's location in the community, and the ability to secure ambulances for some calls. Also, discussion of vehicle and equipment needs included the department's push for a new fire pumper-tanker to replace their current 30-year-old tanker. Meantime, the department acquired a new side-by-side all-terrain vehicle in 2022.

Turning 50 - Salisbury Fire Rescue's various methods of community outreach were also discussed, also noting that the department will mark its 50th anniversary this year.

Questions during the presentation:

Remote access to water - Councillor Dykstra asked about the possibility of remote hydrants or similar set-ups throughout the wards, located at waterways. Chief MacLeod explained that tank systems would need to be installed at these locations to ensure accessibility, adding some tanks have already been acquired.

First Response - Councillor D'Ettore asked for maps that show the first responding department for the various sections of the wards, noting that in some areas the first call might be to the fire departments in Riverview, Moncton, or Petitcodiac. All, along with Salisbury and others, are part of the same Mutual Aid response network.

Membership - Councillor D'Ettore also asked about staffing and recruiting, to which Chief MacLeod explained that there are only two vacancies right now. They are limited for membership due to space needs, underscoring their need for a new fire hall. Chief MacLeod added that they don't necessarily need more people, but it is critical that they have enough people at the right times, saying only four of their members were able to attend 50 per cent of the calls in 2022 due in part to their day jobs and other commitments. Councillor Dykstra questioned if the financial incentives to being a volunteer firefighter are enough. Councillor Thorne questioned if there is a need for a paid fire department.

Councillor O'Brien asked if having a hybrid model is the solution with some full-time paid members complimenting the volunteer membership. CAO commented on existing membership models throughout New Brunswick, including some hybrid options, also noting the increased costs associated with having any number of full-time firefighters.

Council thanked Chief MacLeod for his department's efforts and his presentation.

Chief MacLeod left the meeting at 6:44 pm.

Councillor D'Ettore left the meeting at 6:44 pm.

Councillor D'Ettore joined the meeting at 6:47 pm.

2. Introduction of RTIPPA Policy

RTIPPA stands for Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which is New Brunswick legislation governing the right of citizens to have access to government records upon request. In essence, all records produced while carrying out any municipal business is considered public record. This municipal policy was recommended in light of increasing RTIPPA requests to Salisbury in recent years, and clearly outlines the internal process in accordance with the Act.

MOTION: Council approve/amend the proposed Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy for ratification at a future Regular Council Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Gallant

On the Question, Councillor D'Ettore asked about ways to mitigate RTIPPA requests. Clerk explained the importance of continuing to make as much information as possible accessible on the website or simply upon request at the municipal office with the goal of making such formal RTIPPA requests unnecessary due to existing transparency. Not downplaying the importance and willingness to honour public requests for information, the CAO elaborated on the added workload on administration such requests can create, noting that since July, 2022, the Clerk had dedicated over 60 hours, nearly two weeks of full-time hours, specifically to RTIPPA requests.

Councillor O'Brien requested clarification on personal devices. CAO explained that personal devices are subject to the Act, but only content related to municipal business or one's duties as an elected official. It was noted by Councillor Thorne that this policy is simply formalizing existing legislation that the municipality must adhere to.

Motion Carried

MOTION: Council take a brief recess.

Moved by: Councillor Colwell

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

RECESS

MOTION: Council return to the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Moved by: Councillor D'Ettore

Seconded by: Councillor Dykstra

Motion Carried

3. Introduction to Sewer Policy

CAO presented Council with a proposed updated policy on the sanitary sewer collections process, seeking direction to proceed with updating the former By-law to reflect the policy changes and bring the proposed Policy, with any amendments, and the By-law to Council for future approval.

It was noted that the Policy and By-law apply to the municipal wastewater system that serves Ward 3, the former Village of Salisbury. There is a wastewater system in Ward 1 serving the Spring Garden subdivision in Boundary Creek, but that particular system remains under provincial jurisdiction and is not the responsibility of the municipality.

CAO detailed for Council the sewer collections process in the case of accounts in arrears, including the process for court judgments/liens and disconnections in lieu of pre-arranged payment plans that are honoured. The Policy sets out various thresholds for Administration to authorize customer payment arrangements. Administration would report quarterly to Council on the collections process.

Councillor Phyllis Bannister joined the meeting at 7:29 pm.

MOTION: Council approve/amend the proposed Policy for Sewer Collections for ratification at a future Regular Council Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor O'Blenis

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

On the Question, Councillor D'Ettore asked if court judgments should be pursued at an earlier stage rather than at the three-years-in-arrears point, to which the CAO replied that proceeding to court judgments is a considerable cost to the municipality and it is a matter of finding the right point at which said cost can be justified.

Councillor Thorne questioned if using a collections agency should be considered.

Meantime, on the matter of approving adjustments to sewer accounts in special circumstances, Councillor Thorne objected to principal balances ever being adjusted, because the annual municipal utility budget for wastewater operations and maintenance is based on the principal charges.

Motion Carried

4. 33 MacDonald Rd. and Salisbury ~~275~~ 250

CAO explained the possibility of applying for a Canadian Heritage grant to allow for the required upgrades to the duplex residence located at 33 MacDonald Road.

The property was purchased by the municipality in 2021 for the purpose of securing access as well as securing a public parking area for the adjacent Wetland Trail and Highland Park. The residence on site, according to an engineered structural analysis, would require a significant financial commitment for the substantial upgrades needed to bring it to a standard acceptable for public use, as opposed to residential-use for which it is currently zoned.

Possible Grant - The building, while having undergone several renovations since, was originally built in 1900 on the Henry MacDonald homestead, which may open the property to eligibility for a Canadian Heritage Legacy Funding grant given the fact that the community's settlement by British loyalists will mark its 250th* anniversary in 2024 (* not 275 – correction).

Other Options - Beyond any major investment, options also include:

- demolition of the structure, which could include the fire department's involvement using a controlled burn as a training exercise;
- selling the portion of the property on which the building sits to an organization that is able to invest the necessary funding to bring it up to an acceptable standard for use beyond residential;
- selling the portion of the property on which the residence sits, subject to terms and conditions set by the municipality;
- or continuing to maintain the vacant building, including utility and insurance costs.

MOTION: Council direct Administration to work with Canadian Heritage on a potential funding application for the property at 33 MacDonald Road as part of the Legacy Fund, and should a favourable response not be secured by July, return to Council with a recommendation to award a contract to proceed with demolition.

Moved by: Councillor Gallant

Seconded by: Councillor Bannister

On the Question, lengthy discussion acknowledged the overall need in Salisbury for cultural and historical programming, but also touched on the importance of investments that align with the municipality's strategic vision, while keeping in mind the financial impact on the taxpayers.

Motion Carried

5. Introduction of Expense Policy

CAO explained that this policy for the new governing entity combines two previous expense policies for the former Village of Salisbury.

The bulk of the discussion touched on expense reimbursement, primarily mileage rates, as well as cellular phone costs for elected officials. Regarding mileage, it was noted that the current municipal rate is significantly lower than provincial and federal rates.

MOTION: Council approve/amend the proposed Policy for the Re-Imbursement of Expenses for ratification at a future Regular Council Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Colwell

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

On the Question, discussion focused mainly on the larger geography of the new entity. CAO acknowledged that this is a new challenge for municipalities province-wide and most will be looking at one another to determine the most effective approach when it comes to mileage reimbursement.

Motion Carried

MOTION: Council take a brief recess.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Colwell

Motion Carried

RECESS

MOTION: Council return to the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Gallant

Seconded by: Councillor O'Blenis

Motion Carried

MOTION: Council take a brief recess.

Moved by: Councillor O'Blenis

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Second recess due to technical difficulties with the presentation for Item 4.6.

Motion Carried

RECESS

MOTION: Council return to the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Colwell

Seconded by: Councillor D'Ettore

Motion Carried

6. Town of Salisbury Branding

CAO provided Council with an update on the recent municipal logo refresh, in light of inquiries made to elected officials and Administration.

The reasoning for the logo refresh was an identified need for consistency in its use in the municipality. As opposed to a more in-depth rebranding, a "refresh" is defined as using elements that are already in place -- in this case, using the original Village of Salisbury logo as the basis. A wide-reaching full rebrand is something that would only be explored at a later date after there is a better sense of wider community connectiveness.

The logo refresh, complete with style-guide, was budgeted for by the transition facilitator, and came in under budget.

Councillor Phyllis Bannister left the meeting at 8:35 pm.

Councillor Phyllis Bannister joined the meeting at 8:36 pm.

7. FCM Conference Attendance

CAO sought direction from Council on its preferred approach for whether or not the Municipality would send additional representatives; that is, the CAO or Councillors, to attend the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference in addition to the Mayor.

It had already been budgeted for the Mayor of Salisbury to attend FCM this year. It was noted that many municipalities send multiple elected officials and/or a CAO/City Manager or equivalent. Mayor Campbell stated his preference that it become standard practice for the CAO to attend as a matter of consistency for the municipality.

Following discussion, Council reached the consensus that the Mayor and CAO would attend FCM in Toronto this year. CAO would also attend the nearby conference of the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA), which takes place immediately following FCM.

5. COUNCILLOR ITEMS

Strategic Planning - Councillor D'Ettore raised a point regarding Council's recent strategy planning sessions, commenting that many of the ideas, while all good, would be difficult to accomplish in the short term, and asked if their next such session would be focused on setting priorities. CAO confirmed that the next step is to condense the information and prioritize, while also working on an economic development plan with the aid of a consultant. Meantime, Councillor D'Ettore also credited the work and support from the CAO and Administration.

Employment - Councillor Colwell asked about the level of interest in Summer jobs and with the Department of Infrastructure and Public Works Skilled Labourer position. CAO explained that interviews for the latter will take place in the coming week with four of the candidates.

6. ADJOURNMENT

8:58 pm

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor O'Blenis

Motion Carried

Chair

Clerk