



**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MINUTES**

Monday, September 25, 2023, 6:00 pm

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

Staff Present: Austin Henderson, CAO
Dianne Ayles, Clerk/Treasurer
Scott Landry, Assistant Clerk
Massimo Caracristi, Director of Recreation and Wellness
Bradley MacLeod, Fire Chief

Staff Absent: Lorie Paterson, Administrative Assistant
Trevor Douthwright, Manager of Infrastructure and Public Works

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Councillor John-Wiebe Dykstra joined the meeting at 6:04 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: The Agenda be adopted.

Moved by: Councillor O'Blenis

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts declared at this time.

4. NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation: Quad NB

Mayor Robert Campbell joined the meeting at 6:07 pm. Deputy Mayor Bannister left the Chair and returned to her Council seat.

Bradley MacLeod, Fire Chief joined the meeting at 6:22 pm.

Jacques Ouellette of QuadNB appeared before Council for a presentation concerning the possibility of Salisbury permitting street access for all-terrain vehicles. He spoke of how theirs is a fast-growing sport, and how the local club, Albert County Trail Blazers, is the third largest in New Brunswick with 5,405 members with an estimated annual economic impact in the region of \$21-million. He says most members are 45-65-years-old, earning an average \$85,000/year. He explained that enabling street access in the Salisbury region would provide important connectivity with ATV clubs to the north, generating more interest and more tourism, which helps businesses. According to QuadNB, 29 municipalities in New Brunswick already grant some degree of street access, with 15 others considering it. As for critics, he argues that ATVs are not as loud as snowmobiles and some street vehicles, adding most ATVers are responsible adults and most ATV traffic is on the weekend.

Next steps in this process include a public information open house to be held at Salisbury Lions Club on Thursday, October 19.

Following his presentation, Jacques Ouellette excused himself saying he had another event to attend that evening, and was thanked by Council for his presentation. Asked by a member of the public in attendance if he would answer some questions outside, Ouellette responded that any questions would be addressed by local trail representatives at the public consultation on October 19 and left the meeting.

2. Presentation: Southeast Regional Service Commission - 2024 Budget

Southeast Regional Service Commission Director Roland LeBlanc provided an introduction, explaining their goal is an increased partnership with member municipalities without duplication of services. SERSC Chief Financial Officer Stephanie Thorne then made a presentation after removing herself from her role at the Council Table as Ward 3 Councillor.

CFO Thorne's report detailed SERSC's proposed \$8.38-million budget for 2024, of which Salisbury would cover \$461,794.10, which is a 4.85% increase from 2023. Pre-existing mandated services paid for by Salisbury are solid waste management/ECO 360 (\$179,712.00, which is an increase of \$1,576 from 2023 (It was noted that the \$56 per unit rate is

unchanged)), all planning-related services/PLAN 360 (\$254,457.12, up \$210), and Regional Collaborative Services (\$6,511.36, which is \$1,535 lower than the year prior); while new mandated services for Salisbury are Regional Transportation (\$5,409.50), Regional Social and Community Development (\$14,793.68), Regional Sport, Recreation and Cultural Infrastructure Cost Sharing (\$5,942.22), Regional Economic Development (\$(-11,351.04) * this is received by Salisbury from SERSC), Regional Tourism Promotion (\$4,348.68), and Public Safety (\$1,970.57).

Following Agenda Item No. 2, Stephanie Thorne returned to her seat at the Council Table as an elected representative for Ward 3.

3. Presentation: Salisbury Fire Rescue - Update (Chief MacLeod)

Chief MacLeod joined Council to provide a report and was immediately thanked by Mayor Campbell for his fundraising and participation, in full firefighter gear, in the September 24 Salisbury Terry Fox Run.

Chief MacLeod's overview of the year to date included a Salisbury Fire Rescue membership update, an attendance report, and a breakdown of the calls to date, noting that the number of calls is significantly lower than in 2022 due to the generally wet weather this year. As for ongoing issues, access to water remains a concern, noting they need more dry hydrants at natural water sources. Other issues include what approach to take for regional fire dispatch, as many Mutual Aid partners have now signed on with Codiac Dispatch, and aging equipment. Further to the latter, Chief MacLeod said the new fire truck is due to be delivered in late November or early December.

MOTION: Enter into a recess. (7:43 pm)

Moved by: Councillor Bannister

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

Bradley MacLeod, Fire Chief left the meeting at 7:43 pm.

RECESS

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting. (7:48 pm)

Moved by: Councillor Bannister

Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

4. Overview of ParticipACTION Prize Public Consultation (Director of Recreation and Wellness)

Salisbury Director of Recreation and Wellness Massimo Caracristi joined Council for a presentation on the findings of the recent online ParticipACTION survey, in which residents of Salisbury were asked for their thoughts on how to invest the winnings from the ParticipACTION Community Challenge. Following the 2023 competition, the Town of Salisbury has received a \$100,000 first-place prize, in addition to a \$15,000 prize from 2022. In September, the Town released a survey to solicit input from residents on priority projects for the funding. There were 340 responses, mostly from respondents with E4J postal codes. The survey validates that trail connectivity is the primary request for large infrastructure and the Town continues to actively work with funding partners in hopes of constructing a connection element in 2024. Numbers two and three in the overall ranking were a New Outdoor Rink and Additional Court Space at Highland Park, while a Highland Park Amphitheatre, the project with the fourth highest score overall but still the second-most first place votes in the survey, continues to be pursued through other funding avenues without a ParticipACTION contribution. The option scoring fifth overall was Outdoor Fitness Equipment at Highland Park. Meantime, the survey's ranking of preferred passive infrastructure was led by Playground Equipment in former Local Service Districts, followed by: Acquiring more Rental Equipment, Concrete Ping Pong Tables, and a Shuffleboard Court. Other projects mentioned include Pool Enhancements, Lawn Bowling, and Gym Flooring at Salisbury Regional School.

Following the report, Mayor Campbell commented that the data is great to have. Councillor D'Ettore cautioned against investing everything in Ward 3 (village). Deputy Mayor Bannister suggested also finding other funding sources for trail development, perhaps through SERSC, to which the CAO commented that SERSC's Trail Coordinator has already been assisting Salisbury with trail visioning and also has a larger regional approach in mind with regards to trails. Federal and Provincial funding sources are being explored.

5. August Financial Statements (Clerk/Treasurer)

Clerk provided Council with the Financial Statement updates (Profit & Loss vs. Actual statements) as of August 31, 2023, which represents 66 per cent of the Fiscal Year.

The percentage of the Operating budget spent is as follows:

- General Government Services is at 67.3%

- Protective Services is at 56.3%
 - *Firefighting Equipment* – Unfortunately, due to an accident attended by Salisbury Fire Rescue in August, several members' bunker gear were damaged and require replacement. CAO has authorized the Chief to proceed with replacement. This is an unbudgeted expense; however, some re-imburement is being pursued.
- Transportation Services is at 46.2% (This includes culvert renewal applications.)
- Environmental Health Services is at 57.2%
- Public Health Services is at 52.5%
- Planning & Development Services is at 49.2%
- Recreation & Cultural Services is at 79.2%
- Fiscal Services is at 62.3%

Clerk pointed out that work has begun on the proposed 2024 Budget and the hope is to issue Councillors' budget books one week in advance of the first working session in October. The finalized budget is not approved until the November 14 Council meeting, so there will still be plenty of time to make adjustments. At this time, it is still anticipated that there will be a transfer for the reserves.

With regards to the Utility Operating Fund report, as of August 31, the percentage of the utility (that is, sewer) budget spent is as follows:

- Salary/Expenses Transfer is at 58.3%
- Administration/General–Other is at 195.9%
- Collection System (Repairs/Main) is at 37.7%
- Lift Stations is at 95.8%. This is high due to unexpected repairs.
- Treatment & Disposal is at 581.5%
 - Some sewer repairs, two in particular, were very expensive, including asphalt reinstatement and traffic flaggers for a job on Fredericton Road. It was clarified that the actual dollar value for this particular line item is \$5,000, which is a less intimidating number than the very high percentage value.
- Billing & Collections is at 103.1%
- Interest on Long Term Debt is at 100%
- Principal-Long Term Debt is at 100%

- Capital Fund Account Transfers is at 0%

It was further explained that the Town has received 84.9% of the budgeted sewer rate charges. Staff continue to prioritize collection efforts. A review will also be undertaken of the non-residential clients to ensure that their billable units are accurate based on the updated By-law.

Upon questioning, CAO commented that on the Operations side they are still trending to be under budget with most projects. Meantime, Councillor Colwell suggested including projections in future fiscal updates.

6. Request for Funding - Petitcodiac/Salisbury Minor Hockey

Austin Henderson, CAO left the meeting due to a pre-declared conflict of interest at 8:13 pm.

Clerk sought direction from Council on moving forward with the grant to the Petitcodiac/Salisbury Minor Hockey Association.

Background:

Petitcodiac/Salisbury Minor Hockey Association is an association that governs the minor hockey program for players aged 4-18 at Petitcodiac Arena. These children come from the surrounding communities of the Town of Salisbury and the Community of Three Rivers. The Association's main goal is to offer the hockey experience while keeping operational costs low. A grant request was received to help cover the cost of replacing jerseys for the Petitcodiac/Salisbury U18 Flyers. Total estimated cost of these jerseys is \$4,325 plus tax. Sponsorship of these jerseys, one of their biggest recurring costs every 3-4 years, would help keep operational costs down. If funding was provided, the Town of Salisbury logo would be placed on the jerseys. Based on that request, Council passed a motion at the August 14 Council meeting to provide a \$5,000 grant to the Association to help with costs to purchase new jerseys. While the motion read that "Council approve a grant of \$5,000 to the Petitcodiac/Salisbury Minor Hockey Association" and does not specifically mention the jerseys, that was the intent. However, after this meeting it was brought to the Town's attention that the Association had already ordered the jerseys in order to receive them by October 1 and, therefore, there will be no Salisbury logo on the new jerseys. The Association says it would like to hold several clinics for players this season and are inquiring if Council would be willing to use its donation to sponsor those clinics (for example, female-only clinics, goalie clinics, power skating clinics).

Following discussion by Council, direction was given that the stipulation of the \$5,000 grant is that it be used for the entire Petitcodiac/Salisbury Minor Hockey Association and not just the U18 team.

Councillor Joe D'Ettore left the meeting at 8:22 pm.

Councillor Joe D'Ettore rejoined the meeting at 8:24 pm.

Austin Henderson, CAO rejoined the meeting at 8:24 pm.

7. Off-Road Vehicle Proposed Street Access By-Law

The purpose of Agenda Item No. 7 was to seek direction from Council on a proposed street-access by-law for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and the proposed public consultation process.

Background:

In 2022, a group of Councillors from the former Village Council began work on a proposed ATV road access by-law. This by-law was drafted by QuadNB and a public survey was issued. In late Summer 2022, in light of New Brunswick Local Governance Reform, it was recommended to Council that further work on the proposed by-law not continue until the new governing entity came into effect. This would enable Administration to proceed with consultations with legal counsel and insurance, as well as provide the opportunity to determine if there were additional connector points to enable access to the trails. At the Committee of the Whole meeting in May of this year, Council was presented with a proposed plan for the review of municipal by-laws. It was determined at that time that Council would like to prioritize the ATV By-law for consideration. As such, the Town has prepared this report and has been working with QuadNB to identify street access locations. It is important to note that the by-law has been formatted to the Town's standards and been updated to reflect input from the Town's insurance provider and legal counsel.

As a summary, the following are the recommendations of Administration based on suggestions from QuadNB, should it be the will of Council to proceed with permitting ATV access on streets:

- The local ATV Club (Albert County Trail Blazers) had initially proposed a similar route to the former proposed by-law, consisting of Fredericton Road and portions of Main Street. This, however, would require a formal crossing of the TCH-2 highway, which reduces the approval timeline and is not a preferred crossing route for NBDTI due to safety concerns;
- Following additional discussions, QuadNB has recommended access on Fredericton Road onto Homestead Road or Taylor Road;
- Administration is recommending Homestead Road, since it is a provincially-regulated road and is paved to the additional access point (Griffin Road). On Taylor Road, there are portions unpaved, and after a certain point it becomes former railbed and privately-owned (see risk analysis section from municipal insurer IPE);
- The Town has also recommended including a section of Route 112 between New England Drive and the existing trail to enable a permitted connection between the Riverbend Subdivision and the trail network;

- While initial access was suggested on Main Street between the Independent grocer and The Pizza Mill, it has been updated to permit it between the trail access point on Route 106 near Larsen Lane, enabling access between Larsen Lane and the Independent;
- In-lieu of permitting access on all residential streets in the former schedule, a clause in the by-law has been added to only permit access on other residential streets within Ward 3 when accessing their own property to the trail system and not for leisurely travel.

Council discussion touched on topics including speed, specifically that of regular vehicles compared with the proposed maximum of 40 km/h for ATVs sharing the road and the potential for collisions as a result; and permissible hours of ATV operation on streets. There was also concern about the intersection of Route 112 and Homestead Road, noting it is an area where awareness must be raised that much more.

Council expressed that it is in favour of proceeding; however, this was not a formal motion.

Information on the proposed by-law will be posted online in advance of an Open House on the topic scheduled for October 19 at Salisbury Lions Club.

First reading of the proposed by-law can take place at the October 10 meeting of Salisbury Town Council. The three readings will be spaced over three months, rather than the usual two months, in order to allow more opportunity for public feedback.

8. Updated Housing Accelerator Fund Application

During its regular meeting in August, Salisbury Council authorized the submission of the Town's Action Plan to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for the Housing Accelerator Fund. Two days before the deadline, CMHC extended the application period until September 28 for all small and rural communities (that is, under 10,000 people). This provided the Town time to work directly with a CMHC contact, who advised that due to a much higher than anticipated number of applicants, they are working with communities to amend applications. While it remains up to each entity, the CMHC contact is recommending taking their feedback to reflect the priorities of CMHC. As it relates to Salisbury's application, the former annual growth percentage change was over 200%. The amount for full points in the application is 20%. The contact advised that anything over 30-40% is being flagged by CMCH and scrutinized as likely not possible, given development costs, interest rates, labour availability, etc. The motion of Council is specific to the action items, not the specific targets and/or amount of potential funding. The items in the action plan remain unchanged, other than amending wording and milestones at the suggestion of CMHC. This means Council can

provide direction on the application at a Committee of the Whole meeting since it does not change the essence of a previous motion/application. However, Administration would like to seek confirmation from Council that they would like to still submit an application, since adjusting the target numbers affects the amount of funding that would be received. Based on recent announcements that have taken place, it is recommended that we still submit an application but adjust the numbers; otherwise, we risk receiving no funding. If we submit and receive funding, we will also likely be eligible for top-ups through the program if we meet our milestones and our targets. While Council also passed a motion in August to authorize the Mayor/Clerk to enter into an agreement with CMHC if we were to receive the funding (to expedite the process), the Town will bring the contribution agreement to Council regardless, since it is likely that funding will not meet the initial projections/hopes for our initial application.

The initial action plan identified a Projected Annual Growth Rate percentage change of 218.84 per cent. This equated to an applicant estimate of HAF funding of \$5,377,200.00 based on 151 HAF-incented units.

The updated numbers based on CMHC's feedback would be as follows (note: this will likely still be scrutinized, but Administration is confident it can justify the additional percentages over 30% due to Salisbury's proximity to the city): a Projected Annual Growth Rate percentage change of 44.74 per cent. This would equate to HAF funding of \$1,487,800.00 based on 34 HAF-incented units.

For comparison, the Federal Government announced an investment in the City of London, Ontario under the HAF program, the first public announcement under the program. London received \$74-million. London has a population of 404,699. To provide a comparison based on Salisbury's population, a per-capita amount can be taken from London. \$74-million divided by their population equals \$182.85 per resident. With Salisbury's population (7,800), this would mean a HAF amount of \$1,426,230. Where this is very close to the amount that would be received under the amended numbers for the application, the Town is recommending we proceed using CMHC's feedback, despite the amount being significantly lower.

MOTION: Council direct Administration to submit the Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan, as approved by Council in August, with the updated Annual Growth Projections, as recommended by CMHC.

Moved by: Councillor Bannister

Seconded by: Councillor O'Blenis

Motion Carried

5. **CLOSED SESSION - Contractual (68(1)(c) Local Governance Act)**

MOTION: Enter into a Closed Session.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Bannister

Motion Carried

CLOSED SESSION

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Bannister

Motion Carried

6. **MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS' STATEMENTS/INQUIRIES**

No statements or inquiries were made.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting. (9:41 pm)

Moved by: Councillor Thorne

Seconded by: Councillor Bannister

Motion Carried

Chair

Clerk