COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

MINUTES

Monday, April 22, 2024, 6:00 pm

Members Present:	Mayor Rob Campbell Deputy Mayor Jason Gallant Councillor Phyllis Bannister Councillor Sarah Colwell Councillor John-Wiebe Dykstra Councillor Nathan O'Blenis Councillor Stephanie Thorne
Members Absent:	Councillor Joe D'Ettore
Staff Present:	Austin Henderson, CAO Dianne Ayles, Clerk/Treasurer Brad Doucette, Coordinator of Protective Services Brad MacLeod, Fire Chief Scott Landry, Assistant Clerk

_____

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: The Agenda be adopted.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne
Seconded by: Councillor Colwell

Motion Carried

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts declared at this time.

4. NEW BUSINESS

1. Salisbury St. John Ambulance

Members of the Salisbury St. John Ambulance (SJA) Brigade met with Council to announce their decision to stand down after 50 years of dedication to the community. Dave Rye explained that the requirement for their service has diminished in recent years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has been difficult to attract new members. After offering some history of the local organization, he mentioned that they have some funds available to donate back to the community, and proceeded to present a cheque for $2,000 to Salisbury Helping Hands Food Bank, accepted on behalf of the Food Bank by Councillor Thorne.

Noting that it was Volunteer Week, Mayor Campbell said volunteers make the town, and thanked SJA for everything they've done for the region over the years and for their kind gesture for the Food Bank.

Councillor John-Wiebe Dykstra joined the meeting at 6:07 pm.

MOTION: Enter into a Recess.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne
Seconded by: Councillor Bannister

Motion Carried

RECESS

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Gallant
Seconded by: Councillor Colwell

Motion Carried

2. Q1 Update – Salisbury Fire Rescue

Chief MacLeod of Salisbury Fire Rescue joined the meeting for a presentation on both 2023 year-end and the first quarter of 2024.

There were changes in fire department personnel last year with one departure and two additions.

After a very busy 2022, call-volume reverted back to the average last year. Chief MacLeod noted that 60% of their calls were for car accidents.

Attendance improved in 2023 from the year prior with more members now meeting the minimum number of responses. Chief MacLeod said he believes increased training opportunities have helped with that, resulting in members being more engaged. Most calls are daytime calls between Monday and Friday, for which it is more difficult to get members to respond due to work commitments; therefore, when new members are brought on it is in mind with a goal to increase daytime response numbers.

Space needs remain a concern, but the new fire hall will address that.

The department received a new tanker last Winter, for which 16 members are now trained to drive.

2024 Q1 is on par with 2023, with January calls high due to medical calls. Also, attendance continues to improve. He also provided an overview of upcoming events and outside training opportunities, as well as their Open House event scheduled for May 5.

3. Fire Prevention By-Law

Salisbury Coordinator of Protective Services Brad Doucette appeared before Council to give an overview of the three new by-laws being proposed to replace existing versions, also providing an overview of how by-laws and enforcement are permitted under the Local Governance Act. The schedule for the by-law approval process was also provided.

The purpose of Item 4.3 was to present a proposed By-Law related to the Prevention and Extinguishment of Fires and the Salisbury Fire Rescue Department.

Background:
The Department of Protective Services is a new department within the Town of Salisbury that was created in January of 2024. One of the responsibilities of this role is to create, update, implement and enforce the by-laws of the Town of Salisbury. Since the amalgamation of the former Village and the rural Local Service Districts, it was determined that the by-laws of the former Village need to be updated to conform to the new territorial boundary which is now “Town of Salisbury.” This process will be the beginning of updating all of the by-laws from the former Village.

At Committee of the Whole in 2023, Council identified the Fire Prevention By-law as one of the first by-laws to replace.

MOTION: Council direct Staff to bring the by-law titled By-Law No. 11, A By-Law Relating to Salisbury Fire Rescue and the Prevention and Extinguishment of Fires in Salisbury as drafted for first and second reading at a future council meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Colwell
Seconded by: Councillor O'Blenis

On the Question, lengthy discussion by Council touched on the use of fireworks and bonfires.

Some on Council suggested expanding the fireworks ban beyond Ward 3 to include any subdivisions that may be located in the other wards, arguing that the fireworks ban should apply to anywhere where houses are in close proximity to one another.

As for the approach, the Coordinator of Protective Services explained that the approach will be: conversation, education, and implementation.

As for bonfires, it was noted that the proposed by-law includes the same Provincial regulatory rules as were in effect before in the rural area; that is, Wards 1, 2 and 4, noting that these are "common sense" style regulations that are driven by safety. It was pointed out by staff that the purpose of this initiative is to also get these same provincial-rural regulations into the municipal by-law, as the by-law would be a tool to deal with any incidents, if needed. It was clarified that key to the text will be: distance (from homes), monitoring and extinguishing, as well as defining what an enclosure or appliance is with regards to bonfires and how they factor into it.

Staff will now take Council's suggestions and return to preparation of the draft by-law.

Motion Carried

MOTION: Enter into a recess.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne
Seconded by: Councillor Dykstra

Motion Carried

RECESS

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Gallant
Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

4. Animal Control By-Law

NOTE - Items 4.4 and 4.5 were switched in order, with this now becoming item 4.4.

The purpose of this item was to present a proposed By-law related to Animal Control, as it was identified by Committee of the Whole in 2023 as one of the first by-laws to be updated.

The changes from the former Village of Salisbury By-law can be summarized as: removing any breed-specific ban; increasing the age of puppies being vaccinated from three months to six months; adding flexibility for different animal control service agreements, such as in-house and the contract with New Brunswick SPCA; standardizing the by-law to apply to the full Town and not just Ward 3 (former Village); streamlining the Dangerous Dog process; and identifying penalties as $100 for first offence, $250 for second offence, and $500 up to a maximum of $1,500 for a third offence.

MOTION: Council direct Staff to bring the by-law titled By-Law No. 10, A By-Law Relating the Establishment of Control of Animals in Salisbury as drafted for first and second reading at a future council meeting.

Moved by: Councillor O'Blenis
Seconded by: Councillor Dykstra

On the Question, lengthy discussion by Council touched primarily on the process for dangerous dog declarations, including the technicalities of the appeal process. Staff will follow up on Council's input as it returns to the process of drafting the by-law.

Motion Carried

5. Dangerous and Unsightly Premises By-Law

At Committee of the Whole in 2023, Council identified the Dangerous and Unsightly Premises By-Law as one of the first to be replaced.

The process and requirements for Dangerous and Unsightly Premises are governed in Sections 128 to 160 of the Local Governance Act. The proposed by-law is, for the most part other than Town-specific formatting, an exact copy of this section of the Act, but having the Town assume enforcement responsibilities for the Provincial requirements/regulations.

The Protective Services Coordinator outlined the proposed steps for dealing with a dangerous or unsightly property, including the inspection and follow-up assessment for hazardous conditions that could result in an emergency order. It was clarified for Council that this proposed by-law focuses on dangerous or unsafe situations, not on aesthetics, even though the term "unsightly" may lead one to assume that it touches on aesthetics, which have been at the root of many complaints to the municipality in the past.

To that end, Council was asked if it also wanted a Residential Occupancy Standards by-law created with aesthetic-driven complaints in mind; that is, a desire to have a homeowner clean up garbage or mow tall grass, for example.

MOTION: Council direct Staff to bring the by-law titled By-Law No. 9, A By-Law Relating to Dangerous and Unsightly Property as drafted for first and second reading at a future council meeting.

Moved by: Councillor Dykstra
Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

On the Question, brief discussion around the Council Table addressed the "personal opinion" version of what is unsightly versus what is legally considered unsightly in accordance with Provincial regulations, which focus on dangerous or unsafe situations, which is the focus of this by-law.

On the matter of aesthetics, while some on Council expressed concern about overreaching, Council came to the general agreement that they would also eventually like to see a by-law created that would focus on Maintenance and Occupancy Standards for Residential Properties.

Motion Carried

6. Q1 Financials

Clerk provided Council with the first quarter financial update.

As of March 31, we are 25% through the year. In the General Account, the Town is at 28% of anticipated revenue and 19.8% of budgeted expenses:

- General Government Services is at 18.8%
- Protective Services is at 25.8%
- Transportation Services is at 24.6%
- Environmental Health Services is at 10.2%
- Public Health Services is at 22.5%
- Environmental Development Services is at 15.6%
- Recreation & Cultural Services is at 25.2%
- Fiscal Services is at 1.5%

With the scale of capital projects, staff are reviewing projected cash flow and anticipated invoicing/claim schedules to ensure this does not present any issues. As of now, staff do not have concerns regarding projected expenses.

With regards to the Utility Operating Fund report, as of March 31, the percentage of budget spent is as follows:

- Salary/Expenses Transfer is at 25%
- Administration/General – Other is at 64%
- Collection System (Repairs/Maintenance) is at 6%
- Lift Stations is at 21%
- Treatment & Disposal is at 50%
- Billing & Collections is at 8%
- Interest on Long Term Debt and Principal-Long Term Debt are all confirmed debentures that are scheduled post-dated payments throughout the year
- Capital Fund Account Transfers will be completed at year-end

Regarding outstanding sewer accounts, several letters have been sent out, and staff will work diligently toward collecting these outstanding accounts moving forward.

5. CLOSED SESSION - Land (68(1)(d) Local Governance Act)

MOTION: Enter into a Closed Session.

Moved by: Councillor Thorne
Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Gallant

Motion Carried

CLOSED SESSION

MOTION: Return to the Regular Meeting.

Moved by: Deputy Mayor Gallant
Seconded by: Councillor Thorne

Motion Carried

6. MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS' STATEMENTS/INQUIRIES

Library Board - Councillor Thorne reported that she attended a Library Board meeting the week prior and that the board decided to purchase some books in memory of the late Margaret Harriman, a former library board member.

Volunteerism - Councillor Gallant reported that he attended the Tri-Community Volunteer Breakfast the previous week, put on by the Volunteer Centre of New Brunswick, noting the strong community representation from Salisbury.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting. (8:17 pm)

Moved by: Councillor Thorne
Seconded by: Councillor Dykstra

Motion Carried

_____

Chair

_____

Clerk