

March 3, 2014

The Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building on Monday, March 3, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Dist.	1	Clr. Sally Fraser
	2	Clr. Deborah Wadden
	5	Clr. Robert Parker
	6	Clr. Jim Turple
	7	Clr. David Parker
	8	Clr. Leonard Fraser
	9	Clr. Larry Turner
	10	Clr. Jamie Davidson
	11	Deputy Warden Andy Thompson
	12	Clr. Chester Dewar
	13	Clr. Randy Palmer
	14	Clr. Scott Johnston

**ABSENT**

Dist.	3	Clr. Edward MacMaster
	4	Warden Ronald Baillie

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Donn Fraser, Solicitor, MacIntosh, MacDonnell & MacDonald  
Brian Cullen, CAO/Municipal Clerk-Treasurer  
Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Municipal Clerk  
Jane Johnson, Recording Secretary

**BY APPOINTMENT**

Kevin MacDonald, CA, Kevin MacDonald & Associates Inc.

**PRAYER**

Deputy Warden Thompson opened the meeting with a prayer.

**AGENDA**

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Davidson that the agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

**MINUTES**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turple that the minutes of February 3, 2014 be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence was received and acknowledged from the following:

- (a) Minister of Education – Advising that the Department has received a request from the CCRSB for capital assistance to carry out projects for the Frank H. MacDonald Elementary School & the Dr. W.A. MacLeod Elementary School (no submissions were received for River John or Thorburn). The Department’s 2014-15 Capital Plan includes the request for MacLeod.
- (b) NSUARB – Detailing the requirements for an application in 2014 to the Board to confirm or to alter the number and boundaries of polling district and the number of councilors.

**MOTION – CCRSB CAPITAL UP-GRADES**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turple that a letter be sent to the Chignecto Central Regional School Board questioning the Board’s rationale for not requesting any capital assistance for upgrades to the Thorburn and River John schools.

Motion carried.

**RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL & GROUPS – DAVE GUNNING (7:10 P.M.)**

Clr. Turple recognized and congratulated Dave Gunning from Lyons Brook on his musical accomplishments and success.

“Dave Gunning is the next big thing in the True North of Song, an artist as compelling, as assured and attentive to every nuance of the writing process as Lightfoot, Cockburn and Stan Rogers before him.

There are stories that wash over you like a tide, and then there are stories that grab you by the heart. Dave Gunning has made a point of finding the latter and wrapping them up in song since he broke upon the East Coast music scene in Canada back in 1997. The Pictou County, Nova Scotia born and bred singer-songwriter and working class hero has built up from humble beginnings to a point where his name is regularly included in conversation with artists such as David Francey, James Keelaghan, Ron Hynes, Stan Rogers, Bruce Cockburn and Gordon Lightfoot. Writing from a sonic menu that includes flavors of Irish, Scottish, folk and country musical styles.

A seasoned performer and entertainer, Dave has toured extensively both solo and with his band, performing to sold out venues, festivals, house concerts and theatres throughout Canada, the U.S., the U.K., Ireland, Denmark and recently Afghanistan, entertaining the troops.

This year Dave has been nominated for:

- Fan’s choice of the year
- Fan’s choice Video of the year for These Hands
- Solo Recording of the year for No More Pennies
- Songwriter of the year for These Hands (written with George Canyon)
- Gordie MacKeeman & His Rhythm Boys
- Roots/Traditional Group Recording of the year for Pickin N Clicken

Then around the first of the year, Pictou County, N.S. - social media exploded with news that Pictou County, Nova Scotia native Dave Gunning had won the Hockey Night in Canada’s Song Quest with “There a Game Going’ On.”

Multiple Juno award winner David Francey co-wrote the song and performs with Dave on the song that was submitted. On his Twitter account, Dave reacted to the news on Twitter. “Thank you so much to you folks and everyone who voted. I’m blown away. A big hug to co-writer David Francey.”

CBC says “close to 1000 original songs were submitted to Hockey Night in Canada’s Song Quest. They came from every Canadian province and territory. With the help of Song Quest judges Sara Quin, Theo Fleury, Joel Plaskett, Chantal

Kreviazuk and P.J. Stock, the songs were narrowed down to the top 50, then to the top 10. A final public vote determined the winner. Over the 3 stages of the contest, hundreds of thousands of Canadians cast votes for their favorite songs and our Dave Gunning won.”

On behalf of Council Clr. Turple and Deputy Warden Thompson presented Dave Gunning with a certificate on behalf of the Municipality for his musical achievements and his success in Hockey Night in Canada’s “Song Quest”.

### **2012/13 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (7:15 P.M.)**

Mr. Kevin MacDonald, C.A, Kevin MacDonald & Associates Inc. reviewed the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality for the period ending March 31, 2013 and reported that the statements have been prepared in accordance with the Canadian Accounting Standards for local governments and found no limitations with respect to the scope of the audit. As a result, he is presenting a clean audit opinion without reservation.

In reviewing the Consolidated Statements of financial Activities, Mr. MacDonald reported that the total revenue for the reporting period was \$15,189,102; total expenditures for the period were \$13,962,560 and the change in the fund balances for the year was \$1,105,249.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out that the Municipality has done well in managing its finances and to consider doing the same in the future.

Clr. D. Parker asked Mr. MacDonald if there was any evidence of misappropriation of funds or misuse of funds and Mr. MacDonald responded that there was nothing found in respect to either scenario.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. L. Fraser and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that Council approve the 2012/13 Financial Statements as presented.

Motion carried.

### **FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT**

Clr. Palmer presented the report of the Financial Services Committee as follows:

#### **FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT**

For information purposes the Financial Services Committee submits the following report on the activities of the Committee for the month of February:

1. Met with representatives of the Property Valuation Services Corporation to receive an overview on the Corporation’s operations and ask questions relative to issues that have arisen in various municipal districts.
2. Considered several applications for funding. (Resolution to follow)
3. Selected Lorraine Blakeney from MacPherson’s Mills as the Municipality’s “Volunteer of the Year”.
4. Reviewed the list of Accounts Paid for the month of January.
5. Selected Clr. Sally Fraser, Chair of Council’s Heritage Advisory Committee, to represent the Municipality on the Planning Committee for the 2014 NS Heritage Conference which is being hosted by the Pictou County Region.
6. Discussed the Municipality’s funding policy for fire departments which was adopted by way of resolution in 2005, and its impact on the funding provided annually to the East River St. Mary’s

Fire Department. Staff will be converting the resolution into policy format for presentation at the April meeting of Council and will classify the East River St. Mary's department as being eligible for full funding rather than its current status of receiving only partial funding.

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2014.

(Sgd.) Randy Palmer  
Chester Dewar

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Dewar that the report of the Financial Services Committee be received for information purposes.

Clr. Dewar referred to Item #1 and pointed out that Committee members did not receive many answers of questions that were asked.

Clr. R. Parker commented the only thing the residents gained was a notice from PVSC indicating they would be visit or call any resident in regards to changing farm or forest land to resource property.

Clr. Dewar suggested a notice be put in the newsletter so that residents will be aware that the PVSC may be changing properties from farm land to resource property.

Motion carried.

### **PROPERTY SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT**

Clr. D. Parker presented the report of the Property Services Committee as follows:

#### **PROPERTY SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT**

For information purposes the Property Services Committee submits the following report on the activities of the Committee for the month of February:

1. Reviewed the report of the Building Inspector, By-Law/Dog Control Officer and Warden for the month of January.
2. Agreed to recommend execution of an agreement between the Municipality and Branch 108 of the Royal Canadian Legion for the extension of the River John Wastewater System to service the River John Legion. (resolution to follow)
3. Approved the installation of 3 street lights on the Stewart Road in Lyon's Brook in front of civic addresses 738, 712 & 686.
4. Considered a request from the Hillside Cemetery to purchase the former Hillside School property for auxiliary parking space. The Committee is prepared to recommend the sale of the property to the Cemetery for the sum of \$1.00 + expenses and is awaiting a response from Cemetery officials on approval of those terms. In the interim administrative staff has arranged to have a title search completed on the property to ensure it can be migrated. At a future meeting a recommendation will be forthcoming to declare the property to be surplus to the needs of the Municipality and to sell the property to the Hillside Cemetery.
5. Considered an offer to purchase property in Saltsprings adjacent to the school. As the property in question offers no strategic value to the Municipality, the Committee will not be recommending purchase.
6. Agreed to write Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal asking for the installation of "Deer Crossing" signs in Plymouth.

7. Agreed to convene a meeting of the Committee of Council as a Whole to discuss the final report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy which has been circulated to all members of Council.
8. Agreed to invite the developer proposing to install a wind turbine on the Tower Road in Millsville and land owners in the area to the next meeting of the Property Services Committee to hear from both parties on this proposal.
9. Agreed to write to the local MLA's and MP seeking their support for the adoption of Bill C442 calling for a National Lyme Disease strategy.
10. Gave instructions to staff on the technical requirements to be used for the up-grading of MacIntosh Drive.
11. Met in closed session to discuss matters relating to the security of public property.

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2014

(Sgd.) David Parker  
Jim Turple

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turple that the report of the Property Services Committee be received for information purposes.

Clr. Wadden referred to Item #10 and reported that she would not be able to support the Property report for February as she was opposed to Item #10 which she felt affects the Private Road Policy. She stated that:

“A few years ago, with our previous Council, the concern with roads in the county and in particular private roads was constantly being raised at our meetings so a decision by Council to have an ad hoc committee look at the whole situation and see if a better practice could be achieved for residents living on these roads. I was on this committee and we worked hard to come up with a new policy for council to handle these roads and after much deliberation, travelling out to various areas looking at some of our private roads and speaking with developers we came to the conclusion this could be a costly item to our ratepayers across the county and came back to council with the conclusion of keeping the status quo - developers would have to bring their road up to our specs and the county would take over the road - that was our policy. We never solved the problems for the 2 roads that really were looking for solutions Macintosh Drive and Maple Estate Drive. On a motion by the Council of the day, that solution was not good enough and recommended we go back to the table and work out a better policy for our private roads status quo would no longer work.

So we did go back and we came up with our current policy which I think is fair to all residents in the county as long as we follow the policy. When we make exceptions, we are setting ourselves up for failure. Macintosh Drive is the first road to go through our new policy so the County can take over the road and what do we do - make an exception. I know there is a long history with this road but facts are facts and to the best of my knowledge, this road never reached the requirements originally laid out by previous Councils concerning private roads and is still not attaining the requirements to be taken over by the County with our newest policy so what are we the current Council doing, we are making an exception.

We pay a good salary to our Public Works Manager to make sure our policies are followed to ensure in this case, the road is up to code for us and even though we do not want to take over roads as they can be quite costly, we are being fair and reasonable to

those residents who do bring their road up to our standard. If the topographical survey as recommended by our Public Works Manager based on the engineering report filed to him had been done and the rest of our policy followed, and this road was taken over by the County, the developer or whoever originally paid for this survey would be reimbursed for 50% of the cost. I do not think that is unreasonable to make sure this road will not cost all the residents of Pictou County needless additional costs further down the road if problems do occur because we failed to follow our policy.

Secondly where does this exception leave or lead us. We know Maple Estates is currently in the process of trying to have the Municipality take over their road. How can we make them pay to follow our procedure if we just made an exception for another road in the County? When I make decisions in Council, I do try my best to make it fair for all residents. When we have policies and follow our own rules, we can achieve this fairness but when we fail to adhere to our own rules we open the door to problems. That is exactly what I feel we have done here. If all it takes is one of the Councillors to take a tape measure out to a private road and do some measurements why wouldn't we change our policy to reflect that - we wouldn't because we need to know "officially" and "legally" this road passes the specs required so as not to be a future burden to the ratepayers of Pictou County and we need the rules to keep things fair.

I know this motion for Macintosh Drive received a majority of support from this Council at our Property Meeting but I could not at that time support the motion and after much deliberation on this issue, I still cannot with a clear conscious support this motion for Macintosh Drive. So therefore I will not be supporting our Property report for February.”

Clr. Palmer reported that he also cannot support the Property Services Report for reasons similar to those expressed by Clr. Wadden..

Clr. Turple asked the only conflict with MacIntosh Drive was the width of the road and Deputy Warden Thompson replied that there is a width requirement in the policy but there was an interpretation by Council members that the road was the correct width to be taken over by the Municipality.

Clr. D. Parker referred to the policy where it states the travelled portion of the road shall be 10 m. wide and pointed out that the Warden, Deputy Warden and he measured the road from shoulder to shoulder and found it to be 10 m. wide. He also noted that the Engineering Report interpreted the travelled portion to mean only that portion that the gravel wore off was 8 m.

Motion carried. (Nay Votes: Clrs. Wadden and Palmer)

**RESOLUTION – MUNICIPAL GRANTS**

Clr. L. Fraser presented a resolution to Council as follows:

**RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that Council approve the payment of the following Municipal Grants:

**Recreation & Cultural:**

Ladies Aux. to Merigomish Fire Hall\$	\$ 150.00	D1 Clr. Allotment - Kitchen Items
Seniors Outreach Lunch & Learn	150.00	D2 Clr. Allotment – Program Expenses
Millbrook Community Club	150.00	D8 Clr. Allotment – Seniors Program
Sutherland’s River 4-H Club	150.00	D13 Clr. Allotment –

		Club Expenses
East River Valley Recreation	150.00	D14 Clr. Allotment – Walking Trail Expenses
New Glasgow Minor Hockey Association	300.00	Program Expenses
Pictou Co. Minor Hockey Assoc.	1,200.00	Program Expenses
Pictou Minor Hockey	1,900.00	Program Expenses
Stellarton Minor Hockey	300.00	Program Expenses
Thorburn & Dist. Minor Hockey Association	3,360.00	Program Expenses
Trenton Minor Hockey	460.00	Program Expenses
Westville Minor Hockey	1,280.00	Program Expenses
Heather Skating Club	2,360.00	Program Expenses
East Pictou Silver Blades Skating Club	700.00	Program Expenses
Kanokai Judo Club	300.00	Program Expenses
Night Hawks U13 Volleyball Club	100.00	Program Expenses
Pictou Soccer Club	720.00	Program Expenses
Pictou County Gymnastics Club	945.00	Program Expenses
Highland Derby Dolls	100.00 100.00	Program Expenses Training Clinic Expenses
Albion Boxing Club	100.00	Boxing Card Expenses
<u>Council</u>		
Pictou Co Health Authority	\$ 300.00	Gala Expenses in support of Mental Health Awareness & the Families Matter Education Pgm.
2014 NS Provincial 4-H Show	1,500.00	Hosting Expenses
Chignecto East Regional Science Fair	250.00	Hosting Expenses
Genealogical Assoc. of NS	100.00	Conference Sponsorship
River John Action Society	<u>1,000.00</u>	River John Farmers Mkt. Expenses
	\$18,125.00	

Municipal Services:

Bayview Community Hall	\$ 3,500.00	Approval to extend the completion of this project (originally approved on October 7, 2013) to March 31, 2015
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DATED at Pictou, NS this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2014.

(Sgd.) Leonard Fraser  
Larry Turner

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. L. Fraser and seconded by Clr. Turner that the preceding resolution be adopted as presented.

Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION – RIVER JOHN SEWER AGREEMENT**

Clr. Dewar presented a resolution to Council as follows:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS Branch 108 of The Royal Canadian Legion requires upgrades to the sanitary sewer services located on its property at 2506 River John Station Road in Welsford;

WHEREAS the Legion has requested that the Municipality provide certain municipal services in order to complete the requirements to have functioning sanitary sewer service at the Legion property;

WHEREAS the Property Services Committee recommends that the Municipality provide the infrastructure required to provide these municipal services, subject to the successful negotiation of mutually agreed upon terms;

WHEREAS the Municipality has provided a draft agreement between both parties for the completion of the aforementioned infrastructure work and has been advised by the Legion that the terms, as presented, are acceptable to the Legion;

WHEREAS copies of the draft agreement have been circulated to all members of Council for review;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that the Municipality enter into an agreement with The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 108 for the provision of municipal sanitary sewer services at the Legion property located at 2506 River John Station Road in Welsford.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Warden and Municipal Clerk be authorized to execute the aforementioned agreement on behalf of the Municipality.

DATED at Pictou, NS this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2014.

(Sgd.) Chester Dewar  
Jamie Davidson

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Dewar and seconded by Clr. Davidson that the preceding resolution be adopted as presented.  
Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION – VEHICLE TENDER**

Clr. Palmer presented a resolution to Council as follows:

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS tenders have been called for the purchase of a new 2014 full size 4 x 4 pickup truck for the Public Works & Development Department;

WHEREAS a total of 3 tenders were received as follows:

	<u>TENDER AMOUNT</u> <u>(Including HST)</u>
Highland Ford Sales Ltd.	\$27,947.70
Atlantic Dodge	32,439.00
Herron GM	32,113.60

WHEREAS the Director of Public Works & Development and the Committee of Council as a Whole recommends the acceptance of the lowest tender;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that Council accept the tender submitted by Highland Ford Sales Ltd. in the amount of \$27,947.70 for the purchase of a 2014 vehicle as detailed above.

DATED at Pictou, N. S. this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2014.

(Sgd.) Randy Palmer  
Chester Dewar

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Dewar that the preceding resolution be adopted as presented.  
Motion carried. (Nay Vote: Clr. Johnston)

**RESOLUTION – DIST. #1 STREET LIGHT**

Clr. S. Fraser presented a resolution to Council as follows:

**RESOLUTION**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that Council approve the installation of one 40 Watt LED Street Light on the Shore Road in Lismore on an existing pole located between the Lismore Community Hall and the St. Mary’s Church on the basis of the following:

Installation costs to be paid by the Lismore & Area Community Centre;

Annual operating costs to be paid from the District 1 Municipal Services Grant Allocation

DATED at Pictou, NS this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2014.

(Sgd.) Sally Fraser  
Deborah Wadden

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. S. Fraser and seconded by Clr. Wadden that the preceding resolution be adopted as presented.

Motion carried.

### **RECREATION GRANT REQUESTS**

Clr. Palmer reported that two additional requests for recreation program grants had been received since the last meeting of the Financial Services Committee and asked that Council consider granting these request since this is the last opportunity to approve funding prior to the end of the fiscal period. The requests are from the Pictou County Basketball Association and the Heatherbell Pipes & Drums with 25 and 10 participants from the Municipality respectively.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Palmer and seconded by Clr. Turple that Council approve a Recreation Program Grant for the Pictou County Basketball Association in the amount of \$187.50 and a Recreation Program Grant for the Heatherbell Pipes and Drums in the amount of \$100.

Motion carried.

### **SAVE OUR SHORES COALITION**

Clr. S. Fraser asked Council's next step regarding the Saves our Shores resolution and Deputy Warden Thompson suggested further discussion could be taken to the next Committee meeting.

Clr. D. Parker reported that Dr. Wheeler of Cape Breton University is accepting input until the end of the month so Councillors can submit their opinions.

Deputy Warden Thompson reported that the issue will be put on a future agenda of the Property Services Committee for debate.

### **FUTURE EMPLOYMENT – PICTOU COUNTY**

Clr. R. Parker reported that Michelin Tire has been a major employer in Pictou County for 40+ years and today there was an announcement that hundreds of jobs have been cut from the Granton plant which will have a negative impact on many small businesses in the county because there will be less money to be spent. There are other major industries in the county that also have aging infrastructure and are running out of raw product. The public is looking to the municipalities for leadership and it is time to have an emergency working group to see where we are going. The Municipal Councils of this County should take the leadership to look at where to from here and there needs to be a plan developed. We should send a message to the people of Pictou County that this Council plays a part in looking at a plan for this County. He suggested that this group should have Council representatives, the 3 MLA's and business representatives as part of the group. Michelin is closing down part of the Granton Plant that is almost redundant but the rubber plant will remain in Pictou County and there may be future expansion but in a different area. We have to get the right people involved so we can do something about it.

## **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. R. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turner that Council support the immediate establishment of an emergency working group within the next month to look at future employment opportunities in Pictou County and to ask the other Municipal Councils and MLAs to join the group.

Deputy Warden Thompson reported that there is leadership going on but it is very quiet at this point but we are working strategically with our municipal partners to create opportunities for new businesses to develop in Pictou County but as of today the economy in Pictou County is in a transition period.

Clr. R. Parker replied that the public needs to hear that the Municipality is doing something to try and turn this situation around.

Deputy Warden Thompson reminded Council that the Municipality and the Town of New Glasgow together have advertised for a Business Development Officer

Clr. D. Parker commented that a way to observe that businesses are thriving is the amount of capital reinvested in their plants. We need to not only be doing something but to be seen doing something because it is time to pull together some of our civic and business leaders to look at what can be done to improve the business climate in Pictou County. We are going to have to look at the business and residential tax rates and Council may be able to make a significant cut in the tax rate. Clr. D. Parker expressed his opinion that it may not be wise to carry large surpluses at a time when our businesses are really struggling.

Clr. L. Fraser noted that when a business downsizes and their inventory is redundant then their building is going to depreciate in value so that means their assessment is going to decrease and the Municipality will receive less taxes from that business.

Clr. Johnston referred to the MacGregors Group in MacLellan's Brook and suggested they could provide Council with some good business advice and insight due to the global nature of their business.

Clr. R. Parker reported that Mr. MacGregor would be an excellent person to be involved in the working group and suggested that Council find a plan and a pattern to start working on that would include municipal representatives, business representatives and the MLA's.

Clr. Turner reported that it is important to have a time frame to start this process because there is urgency to this situation. It should be started immediately so the public will have confidence that the municipalities will actually do something.

Clr. Wadden commented that it was important for all Councillors to read the Ivany Report and how it can help the municipalities.

Motion carried.

## **ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY STUDENT**

Clr. R. Parker reported that everyone was very saddened over the last week to hear about the death of a young woman from an Inuit Community who attended St. Mary's University and informed Council that he is attempting to set up another meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Violence Against Women to find out what role Council can play regarding this issue. The rape culture at universities is out of control so now the government is being petitioned to have a national inquiry on finding young native women who are disappearing.

## **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. R. Parker and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that Council send a letter to Peter MacKay, MP in support of the late Loretta Saunders family who went to Ottawa to petition the Government to hold a national inquiry on the disappearance of young native women.

Motion carried.

## **PVSC PRESENTATION**

Clr. D. Parker reported that he felt the Property Valuation Services Corporation was not forthcoming with information or open to suggestion when representatives from that organization recently met with Council and pointed out that their process does not reflect the unfortunate demographics of rural Nova Scotia. He asked what percentage of their budget is spent on salaries, honorarium for the Board and individual salaries for senior executives.

Deputy Warden Thompson reported information will be provided at the next Finance Services Committee meeting if possible.

## **MAPLE ESTATES- ABERCROMBIE**

Clr. Turner reported that he had a request from a resident on Maple Estates in Abercrombie wanting to know the status of the polling letter and the CAO replied the letter polling the residents on the area rate has been sent.

## **MOTION – REMOVAL OF TAX ON FUNERALS**

It was moved by Clr. Dewar and seconded by Clr. L. Fraser that a letter be sent to the Premier of Nova Scotia with a copy to the Minister of Finance asking when the 15% sales tax is going to be removed from funerals.

Motion carried.

## **THORBURN POST OFFICE**

Clr. Palmer reported that he received a letter from Canada Post stating that mail volumes are declining and that the Thorburn Post Office receives a very small number of customers on Saturday. Canada Post is going to focus more on week-day service and closing the Post Office on Saturday which is only open for 3 hours. Clr. Palmer reported that he recently received a telephone call from the Thorburn Post Master informing him that there was going to be a change of hours from 39 hours a week to new hours of 29 hours a week. He suggested that if this is being done at the Thorburn Post Office then it will probably be done at the other rural post offices as well.

Clr. L. Fraser reported that he already received that type of letter and brought it to Council and pointed out that Canada Post will cut the hours in all post offices.

Clr. Turple reported that he also received the same letter and Canada Post is going to do whatever it wants to reduce costs.

Clr. R. Parker reported that the decision has been made to lose the rural post offices on Saturday and it will only be political pressure that will keep them open through the week. He suggested that we should be putting pressure on the MP's to keep the post offices open in our rural communities.

Clr. D. Parker reported that Canada Post is losing money and other government services also lose money. Canada Post made a profit for many decades and that profit went into general revenue and it was not retained by the business to improve technology. Clr. D. Parker pointed out that there are impacts when job hours are reduced such as entitlement to benefits and it destroys family-supporting jobs and in many instances this means that some people may have to look for a second job.

## **PROPERTY ASSESSMENT – NOVA SCOTIA**

Clr. Johnston reported that in 2008 responsibilities for property assessment in Nova Scotia transferred from the Assessment Service to the Property Valuation Services Corporation. The PVSC is a municipally-owned not-for-profit organization that determines the market value of properties as legislated by the Assessment Act. Clr. Johnson pointed out that the Municipality has a CAO who sits on the PVSC Board and he asked the CAO the advantages for the Municipality to have him on that Board.

The CAO replied that it gives the ability for input to the Board's strategic direction.

Clr. Dewar pointed out that the residents who live from Brule all along the northern shore to Big Island should not have to pay taxes for their view from the months of October to April because there is no

advantage of living there in the winter. Those people who live along the shore should not have to pay extra taxes just because they have a view during the months of May to September.

Clr. S. Fraser reported that some Councillors seem to be confused with some of the answers they received when meeting with the PVSC. Clr. S. Fraser suggested any issues or questions could be sent to the PVSC for clarity.

Clr. Wadden reiterated that it was very important that all Councillors read the Ivany Report.

### **INCREASING ELECTRICITY COSTS**

Clr. Turple pointed out that the power bills are increasing and Nova Scotia has the highest taxes in the country making it very difficult for people to live here.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT - INDUSTRY IN STELLARTON (MEDICAL MARIJUANA)**

Clr. D. Parker reported if the new industry does come to Stellarton he was hoping that they actually hire people from Pictou County and not bring in foreign workers who often displace jobs that we should have in our economy.

Clr. R. Parker explained that foreign workers are brought in because many businesses cannot find local workers that will do the work.

### **ADJOURN**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. Turple that the meeting adjourn.

Motion carried. (8:50 p.m.)

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WARDEN

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MUNICIPAL CLERK