

April 4, 2016

The Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Dist.	2	Clr Deborah Wadden
	4	Warden Ronnie Baillie
	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**

	1	Clr. Sally Fraser
	3	Clr. Edward MacMaster

**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

**BY INVITATION**

Faye Kinney & Don Butler, District 1

**BY APPOINTMENT**

Eric Stackhouse, Secretary & Chief Librarian, Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Council observed a moment of silence and remembrance in memory of the Late Clr. Edward MacMaster.

**WELCOME**

Warden Baillie welcomed Karla MacFarlane, MLA for Pictou West and former Clr. Eileen MacKinnon to the Council Chambers.

**REPORT OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK – DISTRICT 3 SEAT VACANCY**

The CAO reported that the Municipal Elections Act and the Municipal Government Act are the two primary pieces of legislation that deal with Council related items. In accordance with Section 12 of the Municipal Elections Act a Councillor's term of office is "from the time when he takes his oath of office until

his successor is sworn into office, if there is no successor, until the meeting at which the successor would have been sworn into office if there was a successor.”

Section 13 of the Municipal Elections Act elaborates further on terms of office. This section of the Act deals specifically with vacancies on Council and defines such vacancies as (a) an insufficient number of candidates are nominated to fill the vacancies at a regular or special election; or (b) a Councillor dies, resigns, becomes disqualified or forfeits office.

With the passing of Clr. Edward MacMaster on March 28, 2016 the CAO stated that it was his solemn duty as Municipal Clerk to report that the District 3 Council member position is vacant, and request that Council accept this report and confirm the seat as vacant.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Deputy Warden Thompson and seconded by Clr. Turple that Council declare District 3's Council seat to be vacant.

Motion carried.

### **AGENDA**

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

Motion carried.

### **MINUTES**

It was moved by Clr. L. Fraser and seconded by Clr. Wadden that the minutes of February 4, 2016 be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

### **CORRESPONDENCE REQUIRING ACTION**

Correspondence was received from the Salvation Army asking if Council wishes to purchase tickets or a table for the Kick Off of their Red Shield Campaign.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Turple and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that the Municipality purchase a table of 6 for the Salvation Army's Red Shield Campaign.

Motion carried.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence was received and acknowledged from the following:

- a) Service NS & Municipal Relations – Outlining the Department's efforts to investigate whether or not alternative service delivery is the best option to modernize registries in the Province.
- b) Letter of Appreciation (uncirculated) – for financial assistance were received from Saltsprings 4H (breakfast program)

Clr. Dewar referred to correspondence received from SNSMR in regards to outsourcing registry services and reported that he is worried these services will no longer be provided in Nova Scotia. Clr. Dewar asked how do we stop this from happening and Warden Baillie replied that the Provincial Government has been looking into alternative service delivery for the past several months.

## **RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS – FAYE KINNEY & DON BUTLER**

On behalf of Clr. Sally Fraser who was unable to be present this evening, Clr. Wadden advised that tonight we are recognizing two distinguished volunteers from District One, Faye Kinney from Baileys Brook and Don Butler from Lismore. Let me begin by saying that rural communities and small villages are facing tremendous challenges today. Volunteers like Faye and Don are helping to keep rural Pictou County alive and vibrant. Through their zest and hard work, they help to create a place that people are proud to call home.

District One is lucky to have these two citizens as community leaders. They are the lifeblood of Lismore and surrounding areas. Their work has a ripple effect. The results of it affects many members of our community through the Fitness Challenge, the Action Society, the Seniors Outreach Program, the dinner theatre, the recreation programs, and the list goes on! Another benefit of their work is that the younger generation respects them. Following in their footsteps they too are taking on volunteer roles in the community. Their tireless dedication to community life is improving the quality of the lives of so many of our residents. Don't ever underestimate how valuable you truly are. We do not take you for granted. Your community thanks you and the Municipality of the County of Pictou thanks you.

On behalf of the Municipality Warden Baillie, Deputy Warden Thompson and Clr. Wadden presented certificates to Faye Kinney and Don Butler in recognition of all the volunteer work they do in their communities.

## **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Clr. R. Parker informed Council choir singers from churches in western Pictou County will be having a concert on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Scotsburn United Church in support of the Canadian Food Grains Bank.

Clr. R. Parker reported a variety concert sponsored by the Durham Ladies Guild will be held on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. at the Durham Church Hall.

Clr. R. Parker reported a special meeting will be held on April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in Antigonish regarding Highway Twinning.

Deputy Warden Thompson reported that the North Nova Education Center Gryphons boys' hockey team recently won the NNSAF (N.S. School Athletic Federation) Division Championship.

## **PRESENTATION – PICTOU-ANTIGONISH REG. LIBRARY ERIC STACKHOUSE (7:15 P.M.)**

Mr. Eric Stackhouse, Secretary and Chief Librarian with the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board met with Council to discuss the provincial funding issues of the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library. The Library Board is entering its 7<sup>th</sup> fiscal year with no significant increases from the province and it has been underfunded for many years. The Board has eliminated 3 positions, increased its fundraising through outside grants and requested increases only when needed from municipalities. The Province will be reducing Community Access Program (CAP) funding by 66% in the next fiscal year. The Library Board requested that the Province strike a funding review committee to make public library service sustainable. Cabinet agreed to move forward in 2015 but they were informed by the Province that it be done with no new money. A report to be implemented over 3 years has been completed and is before Minister Ince but with no new funding over the 3 years plus 10 years of no grant increase there is no easy solution. The staff prepared several scenarios on how to deal with the situation for the next fiscal year as follows:

1. Reduction of branch open hours, services and programs in all libraries. This requires staffing cuts and eliminates access to benefits for many. Users will lose significant access to library facilities, meeting rooms, internet services, literacy programming, and more.
2. Request a municipal funding increase to maintain open hours, services, and programs. The Board would also make reductions to the book and materials budget. As no cost-of-living increase was provided this year the Board asks municipalities to add a 1% increase cost-of-living for staff.

Mr. Stackhouse pointed out the Province is downloading costs to the municipalities but there will be little action unless supported by the Municipal Councils. Mr. Stackhouse reported that the Board is asking the Municipal Councils to voice their concerns to all 4 MLAs, Minister Ince and the Premier.

Mr. Stackhouse reported the Regional Library Board requests consideration of the proposed municipal increase for 2016/2017 with a 1% cost of living increase for staff.

Clr. R. Parker reported that libraries do not seem to attract public support like they should and he pointed out that he has a concern if the Municipality gives the library an increase would that send a message to Government.

Mr. Stackhouse informed Council that the Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Board will be putting out a press release tomorrow inviting everyone across the region to drop by the Antigonish Town and County/People's Place Library for a Library Appreciation Event on Saturday, April 16, 2016 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Clr. D. Parker referred to the increase plus the cost-of-living and asked if the figures are based on population and Mr. Stackhouse replied that all municipalities have to share in the costs.

Clr. D. Parker asked if the provincial portion of library funding is under 2/3 and Mr. Stackhouse replied the Province pays 70% of the total funding.

Clr. Dewar asked if there were Pictou County numbers going to libraries and Mr. Stackhouse responded that there are more people going through Pictou County branches.

Clr. Turner asked if there was any federal money for libraries and he also asked the percentage of private funding.

Mr. Stackhouse replied the Province contributes 71%, the municipalities contribute 26% and 3% from other sources that include government grants and corporate.

Clr. Turner asked the number of staff and Stackhouse responded there are 55 employees with 34 being full-time.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. L. Fraser and seconded by Clr. Turple that the library funding request be forwarded to budget deliberations.

Motion carried.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Deputy Warden Thompson and seconded by Clr. Palmer that a letter be sent to Minister Ince stating the Municipality's disapproval of further downloading of library costs and to fund public library services adequately.

Motion carried.

Warden Baillie thanked Mr. Stackhouse for the presentation and excused him from the balance of the meeting. (7:35 p.m.)

### **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 March:

1. Reviewed the report of the Building Inspector, By-Law/Dog Control Officer and Warden for the month of February.
2. Met with representatives from Cat Rescue Maritimes for a program overview on their efforts volunteer efforts to trap, neuter, and return feral felines to their cat colonies.

3. Considered a request from the Board of Directors for the Riverview Home Corporation to extent the sidewalk on the Stellarton-Trafalgar Road from the driveway at Valley View Villa to the driveway at Riverview, and discussed the financial estimates for this project. (Resolution to follow)
4. Reviewed correspondence from Transportation & Infrastructure renewal advising that the Department has approved Prince, Wellington and Queen Streets in River John (a total of 0.47 km) for cost-shared paving in 2016/17 at an estimated total cost of \$150,000. The Committee has instructed that staff confirm the acceptance of the cost estimates, with the Municipality's share being \$75,000.
5. Met in closed session to discuss matters relating to contract negotiations.

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

(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.

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 March:

1. Reviewed the list of Accounts Paid for the month of February.
2. Met with Rob Assels who presented a proposal for an application to Invest Nova Scotia for funding to create and operate an Export Portal & Innovation Centre in the former River John School. The Committee will require additional information in support of the proposal before considering any possible recommendations to Council.
3. Considered numerous applications for financial support. (Resolution to follow)
5. Selected recipients to receive awards at the Municipality's Volunteer Appreciation Banquet.
6. Considered recommendations from staff on amendments to the Tax Exemption & Tax Reduction Policy. (Resolution to follow)
7. Agreed to purchase a table for 8 at the DEAN's Gala Awards Dinner.
8. Agreed to the establishment of an Aquaculture Development Working Group to work with communities where lease developments are proposed. The Committee will be comprised of 3 Council members and 3 Non-Elected members. Advertising has begun to fill the non-elected positions. Once Council has chosen the successful applicants, a recommendation will be forthcoming on the membership of the Working Group.
9. Agreed to write to the Minister responsible for Canada Post expressing disappointment with the concept of instituting different postal rates for customers living in rural locations.

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

(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.

Motion carried.

### **MUNICIPAL ALCOHOL PROJECT**

Clr. Wadden informed Council that the Intergenerational Forum on Feb 4<sup>th</sup> was a huge success and thanked the Warden for taking the time to attend. We had over 100 participants and the response from the youth was excellent. An Inter-generational night is being planned on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Y to view "Girls Night Out", a film about binge drinking again we have the invitation out to include all generations. I e-mailed copies of our last minutes to you, so if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP**

Clr. R. Parker reported the Economic Development Working Group has been looking at a business incubator and he spoke with Dave Freckleton at the NSCC who informed him the NSCC bought a house to use as a prototype for start-up businesses. On Friday he will be meeting with officials from Dalhousie Agriculture who have created "Sandbox", a place for budding entrepreneurs to bring their ideas and possible create business opportunities. Clr. R. Parker informed Council that he attended the Silver Economy Summit where discussions were held on the aging population and that seniors want to be part of the solution and not the problem.

Clr. Turner reported that the Working Group has 2 sub-groups working on an event that will focus on people looking for work and they would like to involve the banks, the Chamber of Commerce, NOBL, NSBI as well as non-profits. They discussed a trade show format for the event and they were looking at Glasgow Square and Summer Street Industries for a location. The date of the event is still to be determined at this point.

Clr. Wadden asked if there was a budget for this event and Clr. R. Parker replied that they may go to the Councils at some point.

Clr. Johnston reported that there are people in Pictou County who are talented and trained but do not know where to go to look for prospective jobs.

Clr. Wadden pointed out that Career Connections in New Glasgow provides employment opportunities for residents.

### **RESOLUTION – RIVERTON SIDEWALK EXTENSION**

Clr. Dewar presented a resolution to Council as follows:

#### **RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS the Board of Directors for the Riverview Home Corporation has requested that Council consider extending the sidewalk on the Stellarton-Trafalgar Road from Valley View Villa to the Riverview Home, a distance of approximately 118 m;

WHEREAS the Property Services Committee agrees that this infrastructure extension is warranted to provide a safe surface for residents of Riverview who walk or take their wheelchairs into Stellarton;

WHEREAS the Director of Public Works & Development estimates the cost to carry out this work to be \$45,000 - \$50,000;

WHEREAS the Property Services Committee recommends that this work be done;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that Council approve the extension of the Riverton sidewalk from Valley View Villa to the Riverview Home in the 2016/17 fiscal period.

DATED at Pictou, NS this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

(Sgd.) Chester Dewar  
Randy Palmer

**MOTION**

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

Clr. D. Parker reported that he sits on the Board of Directors of Riverview and he considers this sidewalk favorably for the residents of Riverview.

Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION – MUNICIPAL GRANTS**

Clr. Turple 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:

Municipal Services:

D06 Bethel Presbyterian Church	\$ 10,000.00	Basement Drainage Repairs & Floor; Rear Entrance Door
D06 Scotsburn United Church	6,900.00	Improved Disabled Access to Basement
D06 Scotsburn Fire Department	<u>8,000.00</u>	Flooring Repairs in Hall Area
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 24,900.00</b>	
D07 West River Fire Department	\$ 3,500.00	Extension of the Deadline to utilize the unspent balance of funds originally approved by Council on July 6/15 for Kitchen Cabinets, Sinks & Ventilation
D08 West River Fire Department	\$ 5,000.00	Extension of the Deadline to utilize the unspent balance of funds originally approved by Council on July 6/15 for

		Countertops, Sinks, Cabinets & Relocation of Dishwasher
D04 Royal Can. Legion, Bch. 108	\$ 1,683.03	Repurposing of unspent funds originally approved by Council on July 6/15 for a New Cooler & Deck Replacement to the cost of the Sewer Lateral Connection
D13 Dist. 13 Red. & Plan. Comm.	\$ 3,000.00	Extension of the Deadline to utilize unspent balance of funds originally approved by Council on July 6/15 for Summer Recreation & Ballfield Mtnce.

Council:

Autism Pictou County	\$ 1,000.00	Event Sponsorship
North Nova Education Centre	1,000.00	Graduation Expenses
Northumberland Reg. High School	<u>1,000.00</u>	Graduation Expenses
TOTAL	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>	
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b><u>\$ 27,900.00</u></b>	
Pictou Co. Council of Seniors/Outreach	\$ 5,000.00	Extension of the deadline to utilize unspent funds originally approved by Council on July 6/15 for Lunch & Learn Pgms.
Dist. 13 Rec. & Plan. Commission	\$ 8,137.75	Repurposing of remaining unspent funds originally approved by Council on July 6/15 at for roof repairs for repairs and painting of the Zamboni

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016

(Sgd.) Jim Turple  
David Parker

**MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. Turple and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that the preceding resolution be adopted as presented.

Clr. Wadden referred to the Pictou Co. Council of Seniors grant and asked the amount of the unspent balance and the Deputy Municipal Clerk replied it was less than \$2,000.  
Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION – TAX EXEMPTION & TAX REDUCTION POLICY AMEND.**

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's Policy #2016-02-12 with respect to Tax Exemption & Tax Reduction be amended to add the following properties to "Schedule A":

<b>AAN</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>PROPERTY</b>	<b>EXTENT OF APPLICATION</b>	<b>CHARITABLE #</b>
03388328	Pictou Island Community Association	Lands & Buildings at 53 Wharf Road, Pictou Island	The whole of the lands & buildings at Pictou Island of the owner	
10628385	West River Fire Department	Lands & Buildings at Gates Road, Central West River	The whole of the lands & buildings at Gates Road of the owner	

DATED at Pictou, NS this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

(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 – SHEEP VALUER APPOINTMENT**

Clr. Turple presented a resolution to Council as follows:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS Section 9(1) of the Sheep Protection Act provides for the annual appointment of Sheep Valuers;

WHEREAS appointments to this office have been made throughout the various districts of the County of Pictou;

WHEREAS in accordance with the aforementioned Statutes of Nova Scotia, these appointments require the approval of Council;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council for the Municipality of the County of Pictou that Council approve the appointment of the following Sheep Valuers for 2016/17:

DIST. # 3      William Ferguson

DATED at Pictou, N.S. this 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016.

(Sgd.) Jim Turple  
David Parker

## MOTION

It was moved by Clr. Turple and seconded by Clr. D. Parker that the preceding resolution be adopted as presented.

Clr. L. Fraser asked the number of sheep valuers in the County and the Deputy Municipal Clerk replied that there are approximately 6 – 7.

Clr. L. Fraser asked who would respond in a district where a sheep valuer has not been appointed.

The Deputy Municipal Clerk replied that in that circumstance the sheep valuer in the closest district would be asked to act.

Motion carried.

## EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

There were no emergency resolutions.

## ABERDEEN HOSPITAL RENOVATION PROJECT

Clr. Turple reported that he recently had an accident with his power saw and went to the ER in New Glasgow. The ER was full but he was attended by a nurse within 10 minutes and had x-rays and stitches within 2½ hours. During this time period he was observing the nurses and thinking about the renovations that are presently underway. Clr. Turple pointed out that there will be the same number of nurses and patients after the renovations are complete which made him question the improvements this expansion will bring.

Warden Baillie reminded Council that the renovations were based on the recommendations from the previous Health Board.

Clr. Turple pointed out that there will be the same number of nurses regardless of the \$32 million expansion.

Clr. R. Parker stated that he was in support of the hospital renovations because changes need to be made and the system needs to improve.

Clr. L. Fraser suggested that the Walk-In Clinic needs to extend its hours as well as the doctors but we need improvements everywhere.

Clr. Palmer reported that hopefully it will be better for the patients and he pointed out that the health care overall does need improvement.

Clr. D. Parker pointed out that the people working at the Aberdeen Hospital are doing their best under difficult work conditions.

## DISTRICT 3 REPRESENTATION & SPECIAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS

The CAO reported that with the passing of Clr. MacMaster on March 28, 2016 and the seat being declared vacant, the Municipal Elections Act outlines the process by which the Municipality shall fill the vacancy.

13 (1) **Subject to subsection (8)**, within four weeks after a vacancy occurs on a council because

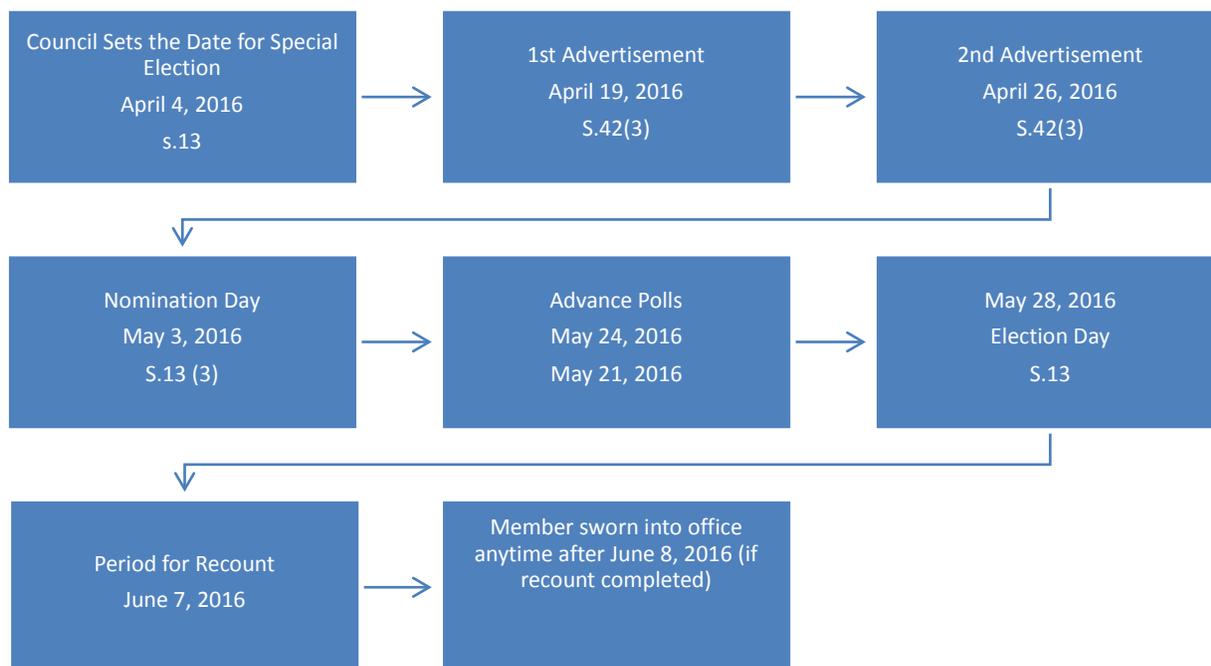
(a) an insufficient number of candidates are nominated to fill the vacancies at a regular or special election; or

(b) **a councillor dies**, resigns, becomes disqualified or forfeits office, **the council** or, where there is no council, the Minister **shall name a day for a special election to fill the vacancy** and, if no regular meeting of the council is to be held within that time, the clerk shall call a special meeting for the purpose.

8) **No special election shall be held** for a vacancy on a council within the six months preceding ordinary polling day for a regular election **unless otherwise determined by** the Minister or **the council**.

The decision to hold a special election is for Council to make. The Election Act defaults to there not being an election within six months of normal polling day. The municipal elections are scheduled for October 15, 2016. The earliest date that a special election could be held is May 28, 2016 in order to meet the requirements of the Act for advertising and scheduling of events. May 28, 2016 is the date set aside for the plebiscite on amalgamation and is clearly within six months of ordinary polling day.

### **Schedule of Events**



The timetable established above is aggressive. In speaking with the Chief Elections Officer for Nova Scotia the act is designed to have an election within 11 weeks, not the 8 weeks contemplated above. There is no margin for error in the process. The timeframes are fixed and cannot be deviated from as prescribed in the Act.

It should be noted that in the event that a recount is required, it is unlikely that the candidate would be in a position to take office in a short time period. The recount is undertaken by a judge of the Supreme Court or Provincial Court. In 2012, a recount was ordered in the Halifax Region and the recount did not place until November 28<sup>th</sup>, which was six weeks past the normal Election Day.

The decision to hold a special election in District 3 is for the Council to decide. Should the decision be to hold the election on May 28, 2016, Council by resolution should establish the election calendar including the dates for the advance polls.

The CAO pointed out that it will be a decision of Council to fill the vacancy.

Warden Baillie reported that Council has 6 months to choose not to fill the vacancy until the October election and if so the Election Day will be May 28, 2016.

Clr. D. Parker expressed his opinion that it is vital that the people in District 3 be represented and have their voice heard by having an election of a Councillor.

### **MOTION**

It was moved by Clr. D. Parker and seconded by Clr. L. Fraser that a special election be held in District 3 for Councillor on May 28, 2016 and the advance polls to be held on March 21<sup>st</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Motion carried.

## **MOU UPDATES & QUESTIONS**

Clr, Wadden reported that she knew from the get-go "Amalgamation" is not only a difficult word to say in this county but is extremely controversial.

After our presentations the last couple of weeks and after 15 months of very dedicated service not only as a Councillor but also as your Steering Committee Rep, I really felt I deserved a night off. I attended The Asset Management workshop in Halifax on Friday and decided to spend a relaxing evening in Halifax away from e-mails, websites and Letters to the Editor. I had a great supper and opted to go back to our room to watch the Blue Jays and Boston ball game. For the life of me I do not know why but I thought I would catch up on what was happening at home so went on-line and read the New Glasgow News. I made another mistake of reading "Real Consultation Helps Build Trust" – a Letter to the Editor submitted by our very own Councillor Robert Parker.

Being a member and representing our Council on our MOU Steering Committee is a commitment I take very seriously and felt my colleagues on Council would respect my decisions I was making on their behalf or in the event they didn't agree with what I was doing, I would hear from them at some point. Silence to me indicated they were approving our decisions.

Mr. Chair, I have a difficult time understanding why a colleague of our Council would feel a "Letter to the Editor" would be more beneficial than a debate at Council. What is this? A re-election ploy, after all Councillor Parker has come out publicly to let anyone who was listening know he is re-offering in our October Municipal Election. I refer to our Chamber of Commerce breakfast March 3, 2016.

"There must be a deep respect for each other's point of view whether we agree or not" – a very honorable perspective by Councillor Parker, but isn't this a two-way street? So far at any presentations I have attended, and if we are taking attendance, his attendance is few and far between compared to all I have attended, they have not been so one-sided as he seems to determine. The visible "No" side are most often loud, disruptive and do not respect those who are presenting the facts or those who would like to ask questions. People are visibly intimidated by the antics of a few.

I recently presented at a ratepayers meeting in Scotsburn that Councillor Parker invited me to attend to present the MOU as he wanted his residents to get both sides. I assumed they were already aware of his negative side but I agreed both sides have to be presented. At no point during that meeting did I feel I gave any kind of negativity because people were appearing to disagree with what I was presenting. I felt I was very understanding to both sides. I will say I was told to keep quiet as I tried to answer questions in particular to one gentleman who had a list of questions and I was only trying to make sure I didn't miss something he asked me. After the meeting ended one woman came up to me and said I was a "bold faced liar". A very hurtful and unnecessary comment but I took it in stride. Councillor Parker came up to me and indicated how respectful he felt the meeting was but I certainly felt differently but again I felt people deserve their chance to vent and if he was happy with their actions I could live with that although a part of me was extremely disappointed that he failed to see this negativity from who he perceived to be the "No" side.

Then we had our presentation in Eureka. Again, our Warden and myself tried to answer questions as honestly as we could, again respecting we did not have room full of MOU supporters. We took all questions, comments and abusive remarks. Again, we did not show disrespect for any in that room. We on the other hand were told we did not deserve to be Councillors as we were elected by acclamation, but for me, the worst comment was from a gentleman, and I use that word lightly, who deemed I was incapable of answering a question, I was not to answer his question or even attempt to answer his question. So to say there must be a "Deep Respect" for each other's point of view, well I do not feel that disrespect is coming from the Steering Committee as Councillor Parker indicates in his letter.

Secondly "the Media is being unfair". Really, Councillor Parker submits a letter with no substance, it is published and he has the nerve to tell the press they are being one-sided. Personally, I would like to thank the press for trying to publish both sides of this issue as well as publishing those who are still trying to decide the issue.

Mr. Chair, we as Councillors should still use debate as a means of communicating and that is the path I will follow. Use the press as you feel but give me a face-to-face discussion using facts any day.

"The MOU has morphed into Amalgamation" said Councillor Parker. Where has he been for the past 15 months? I realize he has not attended Steering Committee meetings even though he was more than welcome to attend, he chose not to attend the extra sessions we had to inform Councillors and let them ask questions to better help them understand the details of the MOU. I am somewhat surprised as I

know he attended our Council meetings but was he paying attention? At our Aug 5, 2015 meeting one of his comments was "We do not have to worry about the 2016 Election acting as a referendum because we would have a plebiscite beforehand?" Obviously at some point he was aware a plebiscite was in the offing - he chose not to acknowledge it at his convenience.

Councillor Parker stated "Taxpayers of all four units will pay a big bill for lawyers, accountants and promoters for this process". I have no idea who he is referring to when he references promoters but then what do I know, I only attended every Steering Committee meeting and never heard the word "promoters" until his Letter to the Editor. Again I will refresh his memory, this Council approved \$25,000, as did the other 3 units for our 2014 budget and another \$25,000 each in our 2015 budgets, to pay for our MOU expenses. These were approved by our respective Councils. As well, we approved our staff to work on plans that were needed to fulfill our requirements on the MOU. I have so little respect for the comments he made about paying professionals for the results we wanted – these professionals he so dismissively refer to are currently the professionals we depend on to help us get through our day-to-day processes of running our county. Is he saying the accounting firm we depend on each year to do our books can be bought off and give us the results we want as opposed to the actual results for our county; our legal team is not following the law but because we are paying them, they will give us the advice we tell them we want? Just how dis-credible is our current council based on his assumptions? Mr. Chair, Councillor Parker owes not only Council but our whole team an apology. We are very proud of how we run the day-to-day activities of this Council and in no way, shape or form would we settle for any less as Steering Committee representatives.

Council Parker goes on in his letter about just gathering facts and information that could lead to governance proposals – we never indicated we were looking for governance proposals with the emphasis on the plural proposals. Again I will draw your attention to a resolution passed by this Council on July 27, 2015 – UARB JOINT Application with the following clause included:

"WHEREAS provided the pre-conditions can be met, the fact-based analysis will be used to form an implementation plan for the incorporation of a new and merged municipality comprising the Participating Municipal Units;"

So, yes, Councillor Parker is correct, we only have one proposal to vote yea or nay on.

Councillor Parker says "Therefore if voters chose to vote against the take-it-or-leave-it proposal, it is not the end of the world". - Our Steering Committee has never said that during a presentation – we encourage residents to vote – full stop!

Councillor Parker says "We do not have to accept the status quo nor do we have to move away" - our Steering Committee is working to keep people here and hopefully at some point as we as a unit get stronger, we can bring people back home – we have never encouraged people to move or indicate they either accept this proposal or leave now. This is about building a stronger Pictou County.

Councillor Parker says "we stay to fight for a better proposal". Shouldn't we be working together as opposed to FIGHTING. Councillor Parker says "one built on trust" – is he saying our Warden, our CAO, our staff, our hired professionals and a colleague of his who sits beside him every time we are at this Chamber (and that person Mr. Chair, would be me) – we are not to be trusted?

Councillor Parker says "one built for everybody" – again I draw your attention to the motion we passed on July 27<sup>th</sup> – our "voluntary" application – everyone who wanted to be at our table was there and welcome to be there.

Councillor Parker says "one built from the bottom up"; that Mr. Chair is what we say at our presentations – whether he believes it or not, our proposal was built from the bottom up and we are very proud of the work we have achieved by working together with all staff, elected officials and qualified professionals at our Steering Committee table.

As I said in the beginning "Amalgamation" is a very controversial word especially around our Chambers, and I certainly agree good debate is essential to our working together as an elected body. But when one of our own chooses to disrespect his fellow colleagues without an opportunity for them to respond to his accusations, that is not good debate. Yes Mr. Chair, we can disagree on our MOU proposal but please stick to the facts when presenting your side.

I will close by saying this is not one of my finer moments on Council but I do feel I was very wrongly portrayed to the public by Councillor Parker and quite unexpectedly. I have always spoke highly of

Councillor Parker and have certainly appreciated all his input and hard work he does for his residents. I hope we can be adults not only Councillors in dealing with this issue. Mr. Chair, I just wanted Council to realize the damage Councillor Parker has accomplished by his need to be vocal in the paper.”

Clr. R. Parker stated that he was sorry they took this personally but he just wanted to present a different point of view. He pointed out that he could not attend many of the Steering Committee meetings because he works in the daytime and cannot get away. There is a lack of trust from people in the County because there is not much information on the MOU. Clr. R. Parker informed Council that the residents are unhappy and want answers to their questions.

Clr. D. Parker asked if we are still committed to have on-line tax bills and Warden Baillie replied that there is a problem with the Diamond program at present but they are still working on it.

Clr. D. Parker asked where he would find the rules for conducting a plebiscite and the CAO replied it is in the Municipal Elections Act.

Deputy Warden Thompson reported that this issue first rose in 2010 and he informed Council that he too is very disappointed with the lack of respect.

Clr. R. Parker reported that we want to get as many people out to vote as possible but does it really matter because Council will make the final decision anyway. Clr. R. Parker asked if the people vote, no will the Councillor vote no?

Clr. Palmer pointed out it could be the same way if the people vote yes for amalgamation.

Clr. L. Fraser asked if the vote is no, will the Province step in and force amalgamation?

Warden Baillie replied that the Province will not force amalgamation on any municipality.

Clr. L. Turner asked when the UARB will deliver its preliminary decision and the CAO replied that it will come out to the applicants at the end of April, 2016.

Clr. Dewar reported that there were 131 people in attendance at his meeting and there were people who spoke against amalgamation but there was nothing about opposition.

Warden Baillie reported that Council did support the plebiscite and he pointed out that he will take responsibility for the meeting in Eureka.

#### **REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES & NOTICES OF MOTION**

Clr. L. Fraser asked for an update on the proposed sidewalk from Stellarton to the County and the CAO replied that the study was done last year and the design work has been completed.

Clr. L. Turner asked that Mr. MacMillan explain the design at the next Property Services Committee meeting.

#### **ADJOURN**

It was moved by Clr. Turple and seconded by Clr. L. Fraser that the meeting adjourn.  
Motion carried. (9:00 p.m.)

Ronald Baillie  
Warden

Carolyn MacIntosh  
Deputy Municipal Clerk