

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL MEETING

February 5, 2015

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room, in the Administrative Centre, in Barrington, N.S., with the following members present:

- Lindsay (Eddie) Nickerson, Chair
- Jody Crook
- Shaun Hatfield
- Donna LeBlanc-Messenger

Absent was member George El-Jakl who is away on vacation.

- Brian Holland, Municipal Clerk
- David Kendrick, Fire Services Coordinator
- Cynthia Scott, Municipal Solicitor

Also present were:

- Gordie Ross, District 1, Fire Chief
- Michael Swim, District 2, Fire Chief
- John Nickerson, District 3, Fire Chief
- Walter Scott, Station 2, Fire Chief (7:35 p.m.)
- Paul Thomas, Station 4, Fire Chief
- Brian Crowell, Station 6, Fire Chief
- Troy Stoddard, President, Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department

There were also seven (7) other fire department members present for the discussion.

ADDITION TO AGENDA

Members agreed to add one additional item to the agenda:

- Town of Clark's Harbour Request for use of Medical Equipment.

FIRE SERVICES

Members sought advice from the Municipal Solicitor regarding the legality of the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department withdrawing from the Barrington Fire and Emergency Services and the Fire Services Advisory Committee.

It was the advice of the Solicitor that the fire department could withdraw from the administrative body of the Fire Services, and that they could still remain registered as a fire department by the Municipality providing they meet all the requirements for registration.

Neither the Municipal Government Act nor the Municipality's policy requires participation in order to maintain registration. The authority of the MGA does not require participation in the administrative structure. Council would still have authority over the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department through its registration even if it withdraws from the administrative structure.

The Fire Services Coordinator could still be the liaison between the fire department and the municipality. The reporting and accounting requirements would still be in effect but may not be the same as the current administrative setup. Section 296 of the Municipal Government Act deals with the registration requirements that are contained in the Municipality's policy. A budget could still be required from the fire department by the Municipality. It would also be possible to continue with Area Rate funding for the fire department in District 1. The standards for fire protection would still be required to the extent that they are necessary to provide the service. It was also indicated that the Municipality must register a department if it meets the requirements of the Municipality. The policy may require some amendments in regards to administration requirements should the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department continue to be registered but not part of the administrative organization.

Having completed their consultation with the Municipal Solicitor, Ms. Scott retired from the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

The Chair then read the letter from the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department requesting withdrawal, and the email from the President of the Fire Department indicating the Department would continue to provide fire services and mutual aid in District 1 and within the Municipality.

There then followed much discussion regarding the current situation with the Fire Service Advisory Committee and the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department. The Station Chief indicated the department feels that they must withdraw from the Fire Services administrative bodies as many of the firefighters in that department have indicated they would quit if the fire department withdrawal was not allowed. The President of the fire department indicated that a special meeting had been conducted on a Saturday morning at which 14 members were present. The 14 members discussed the matter and unanimously approved a motion to withdraw. He indicated that the members felt that they were not trusted, that there was stress at fire scenes, that there was conflict and low morale within the Fire Service, and that there should be one Fire Rate applied across the entire Municipality. Both the Station Chief and the Department President indicated they did not think reconciliation over these matters was possible. It was indicated that the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Department members would prefer to go back to the fire system that had been in place in the Municipality prior to the institution of the Barrington Fire and Emergency Services.

Other departments were asked if they had also been considering withdrawal. The response to this question was that this depends on future discussions within the fire departments at their next meetings. The Port Clyde Volunteer Fire Department has a meeting scheduled for Monday night at which they will be asked to discuss the morale of the Fire Services and other issues brought up this evening. The District 2 Chief indicated that all departments must be treated fairly. He also felt that morale had been rebounding lately in the Island & Barrington Passage Volunteer Fire Department and that their members were satisfied with the operation of the FSAC. In District 3 there has been further amalgamation of the Barrington and Port LaTour fire departments. Although the combination of these two departments had been going slowly the members are now coming together in a unified effort to provide fire service for their district. The District 3 Chief indicated that there has been some internal issues in the district however these are being worked on and gradually being overcome. He also indicated that the members in their area would like to see the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department stay within the Fire and Emergency Services organization and work out their problems. The President of the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department indicated that the individual members of fire departments were not being heard, that their concerns were not being expressed to the Fire Services Committee, and he suggested that an anonymous questionnaire be sent to all members to obtain their opinions.

There then followed some discussion regarding trust among the members, the morale of the fire services members and the number of members who have left the service.

It was suggested that the issues brought up by the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department do not justify withdrawal from the Barrington Fire and Emergency Services. The current system has made departments more responsible and the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department was requested to reconsider their withdrawal. It was suggested that Policy 54 be reconsidered in future.

There was then some discussion regarding the lack of explanation of the purchase order process and the lack of communication with that issue and subsequent issues.

There was some general discussion that this matter should go back to the Fire Service Advisory Committee for more discussion.

The President and Station Chief of the Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department were asked to go back to the fire department meeting and ask their members to reconsider their decision to withdraw from the Barrington Fire and Emergency Services. They were also requested to ask their members to have the Fire Service Advisory Committee attend a meeting of their department to discuss the withdrawal motion and other issues which have lead up to this point. The Woods Harbour Shag Harbour Volunteer Fire Department has a meeting scheduled for Monday night and their members will be asked to discuss the withdrawal motion and other issues at that time.

Having completed their discussion of these matters, the Fire Services members then retired from the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

TOWN OF CLARK'S HARBOUR REQUEST

A request has been received from the Town of Clark's Harbour for the use of medical equipment owned by the Municipality. Members were informed that Dr. Blair will be working out of the Town Hall in Clark's Harbour on a part-time basis a few days a week. As a result he will reduce his hours in the Community Health Centre in Barrington Passage to a few days a week as well. The Town of Clark's Harbour is requesting the Municipality to provide the equipment necessary to outfit an office within the Town building for Dr. Blair. At the present time there are two offices in the Community Health Centre that are completely furnished which are not currently being used. Dr. Blair would continue to serve municipal residents and would most likely consult his patients from the Municipality at the new location in the Town of Clark's Harbour.

Resolution COW150201

Moved by S. Hatfield and seconded by D. Messenger that it be recommended to Council that the request of the Town of Clark's Harbour for the use of medical fixtures and equipment owned by the Municipality be approved.

Motion carried unanimously.

KIDNEY DIALYSIS

Members then also discussed the provision of dialysis services within the Municipality. A community group will be approaching Council in the very near future for this purpose.

Resolution COW150202

Moved by S. Hatfield and seconded by D. Messenger that representatives of the South West Health District Authority be requested to attend the meeting at which the community group is making a presentation regarding dialysis in the Municipality. In this way the representatives from South West Health can participate in the discussion and become familiar with the concerns of the public.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by mutual consent of members at 9:27 p.m.

Chair

Secretary for the Meeting

On website February 6, 2015.