

VILLAGE COMMISSION OF NEW MINAS
REGULAR MEETING
January 10, 2005
7:00 p.m.

The regular monthly meeting of the Village Commission of New Minas was held at the Civic Centre on January 10, 2005 at 7:00 p.m..

In Attendance

Chair Dave Chaulk
 Vice-Chair Linda Lockhart
 Commissioner Marvin Messom
 Commissioner Sherry Swanburg
 Commissioner Ted Nicholson
 Clerk Treasurer Terry Silver

Recreation Director Jennifer Coolen
 Superintendent of Public Works Peter Pothier

Resident Blair Coldwell
 Resident Casey Mooy
 Resident Pat Saulnier
 Resident Gordon Silver
 Snow Plough Contractor Bill Milligan

Regrets

Eric Smith, Councillor District 11

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Chaulk called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 13, 2004

It was moved by Commissioner Nicholson, seconded by Commissioner Messom that the Regular Commission minutes of December 13, 2004 be approved as circulated.

MOTION CARRIED

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: January 10, 2005

It was moved by Commissioner Messom, seconded by Vice-Chair Lockhart, that the Agenda for the regular commission meeting of January 10, 2005 be approved with the following additions:

- **New Business: (c) Union Agreement**
- **New Business: (d) Request for Payment – Rick Ramsay**
- **New Business: (e) Cuff's Guide – Commissioner Swanburg**

MOTION CARRIED

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

(a) Sidewalk Snow Clearing – Report of Superintendent

The Commissioners viewed a report from Peter Pothier, Superintendent of Public Works, with regard to the sidewalk snow clearing during the December 27th snowstorm (copy of report attached to the original minutes). Commissioner Messom asked Mr. Bill Milligan speak on the issue. Mr. Milligan gave an overview of the two major storms of the 2004/2005 season, as well as the subsequent storms since December 27th, 2004. He stated the following points:

- He encountered a major breakdown of his snow clearing equipment at the beginning of the storm on December 26th.
- Ordinary snow clearing equipment that could be provided by local businesses will not work to clear heavy snow on sidewalks; therefore to rent equipment locally would not be a possibility
- The Town of Kentville will not rent equipment to private contractors; only to other municipalities and when it was determined that the part for the broken snow blower would not be forthcoming immediately (due to the holiday), Peter worked with the Town of Kentville to have their men and equipment plough the sidewalks in New Minas that were not already. The cost of this service from Kentville will be deducted from Mr. Milligan's monthly bill.
- It is not financially feasible (for the Village) for Mr. Milligan to have a backup machine for break down times.
- In 2000/2001 the snow removal contract was \$79,000; he has been able to keep the cost down to more than \$20,000 per year less than that and provided better service. Despite the two problems he encountered this season, he feels the sidewalks in New Minas have been in excellent condition.

Vice-Chair Lockhart stated she feels Commercial Street should be cleared first because there is so much foot traffic. Commissioner Swanburg asked Peter Pothier what he meant in his report by saying he, "would like to submit several options", referring to the upcoming tender specs. Peter stated that the specs for the tendering of sidewalk snow removal in previous years was very vague, and he feels it would be a better process to call for proposals and to be much more specific when stating the Village's requirements. This was agreed by the Commission. Commissioner Swanburg said there were many complaints and she would like to continue to hear from Peter. Vice-Chair Lockhart asked if Mr. Milligan also cleared snow from the hydrants, and he stated he does.

(b) Petty Traders Bylaw – Recommendation to County

It was moved by Commissioner Swanburg, seconded by Vice-Chair Lockhart that a request be made to the Municipality of the County of Kings to amend the Land Use Bylaw to include temporary sale of Christmas Trees as a permitted use by petty traders. MOTION CARRIED

(c) Esso Property – Update

The Clerk gave an update on the vacant Esso Property in New Minas (copy of report attached to original minutes). She stated that, although Irving in Wolfville have allowed the Town to maintain the vacant piece of land known as the “Clock Park”, the owners of the Esso property in New Minas have no intentions of doing anything with their lot except clear it environmentally and keep it aesthetically maintained. Commissioner Swanburg stated the Commission should be updated periodically on the progress of the Esso property. The Clerk stated that she will follow up with Mr. Macgregor of Devon Estates in the spring as to the status of the property, and will keep the file open for periodic updates.

(d) Purchasing and Tendering Policy – Vice-Chair Lockhart

The Chair advised that revision of the Purchasing and Tendering Policy will be worked on and brought back to the Commission at a later date.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Recreation Advisory Committee – Commissioner Nicholson

Commissioner Nicholson advised that again, due to there being no quorum, the RAC meeting for December was not held.

He read a report from Recreation Director Jennifer Coolen outlining details of funding for a proposed Skateboard Park.

It was moved by Commissioner Nicholson, seconded by Commissioner Messom, that the Commission commit \$10,000 towards a Skateboard Park in the 2005/2006 Capital Budget. MOTION CARRIED

A letter will be forwarded to the Rotary Club of New Minas, who has offered to fund the Skateboard Park in the amount of \$20,000 over three years, plus provide signage, advising them of the Commission’s commitment of \$10,000.

Commissioner Nicholson advised that the Recreation Director was planning an adult dance at the Fire Hall in February, and there would be an open bar, which would be the sole responsibility of the Fire Department. He stated that discussion had taken place on this and there were no objections to there being an adult dance with liquor as a Village fund raiser, to be held on a non-Village owned property. Chair Chaulk asked if there would be any financial risk for this type of function. Jennifer Coolen stated that advance tickets would be sold, and if there was not enough interest, the event would be cancelled.

The Commissioners viewed a letter from Mike Trinacty with regard to the area’s application to host the 2011 Canada Winter Games.

It was moved by Commissioner Nicholson, seconded by Commissioner Swanburg that the Village take part in the preliminary process for the 2011 Canada Winter Games and that Commissioner Nicholson and Jennifer Coolen represent the Village.

Commissioner Nicholson expressed concern that so many of the Recreation Advisory Committee meetings had to be cancelled due to lack of quorum. He said the Commission should review the guidelines and consider changes to the membership.

It was moved by Commissioner Swanburg, seconded by Commissioner Nicholson that the Recreation Advisory Committee be abolished, that the Recreation Director provide a report to the Commission in written form monthly, and that the Commission, in conjunction with the Clerk Treasurer determine the specifics of the report. Further that ad hoc committees be struck as necessary for special recreation projects. MOTION CARRIED

Jennifer Coolen was advised that there would be no requirement for her to attend the Commission meetings. She asked who would determine if and when an ad hoc committee would be required. Commissioner Swanburg stated it was her opinion that this would be required for major projects, and it was agreed. Jennifer asked the Commission to send “thank you” letters to the members of the RAC for their hard work and dedication.

It was moved by Commissioner Nicholson, seconded by Commissioner Messom to accept the report of the Recreation Advisory Committee. MOTION CARRIED

(b) Water Commission – Commissioner Messom

Commissioner Messom advised that the Water Commission did not hold a meeting in December by choice, therefore there was no report.

(c) Area Advisory Committee – Commissioner Swanburg

Commissioner Swanburg read the following statement:

“As Chair of the Area Advisory Committee for approximately the last 18 months, I have conscientiously and diligently worked to support and promote the will of New Minas to the County. During this time, I have witnessed the county take information in from this sub committee and totally disregard that feedback. I have become frustrated and disillusioned with this process. I am willing to accept the fact that New Minas may not have a voice when it comes to matters such as these, however I am not willing to spend precious time (limited such as it is) on matters that will ultimately be decided by the County. In other words, I believe as a Commissioner for New Minas, I can be more effective with my time and therefore I submit my resignation as Chair of the New Minas

Area Advisory committee. Furthermore, I move that the Area Advisory Committee for New Minas be abolished as it is my belief, that we could make better use of our time.

Commissioner Nicholson stated that over the years the Planning Advisory Committee have been very interested in the input of the AAC, and there was a high level of interest in the AAC by not only the PAC and County Council, but the people of New Minas as well. He stated he is not ready to consider a motion to abolish the AAC.

Commissioner Messom stated that to disband the AAC would be a mistake. He stated that, although it seems that County Council does not always take the recommendations of the AAC, the residents of New Minas have the opportunity, through that Committee, to voice their concerns and opinions to the County Councillors. He stated that Commissioner Swanburg did a good job as Chair of the AAC.

Commissioner Swanburg said she felt that the Commission can act as this liaison, and she stated that it is her opinion that the residents are not well represented through the AAC.

Chair Chaulk stated that he shares Commissioner Swanburg's frustrations. He said he appeared before the Planning Advisory Committee and voiced his frustrations, stating that the AAC is third on the list of considerations. He felt that the AAC does provide a vehicle for residents' representation. He stated that he was not aware of Commissioner Swanburg's intention to move to abolish the AAC at this meeting, and would not feel comfortable making a "snap" decision on such a motion without further thought and consideration.

Commissioner Nicholson stated that when the AAC was formed, there was also a very active and effective Economic Development Commission who had representation on the AAC. He stated over the years the AAC has been very effective and has done very good things for the Village of New Minas, and just because the County Council did not accept the recent recommendations of the AAC, this does not mean that the Committee's input is not valuable.

It was moved by Vice-Chair Lockhart, seconded by Commissioner Messom that Commissioner Swanburg's resignation as Chair of the New Minas Area Advisory Committee be accepted, with regret. MOTION CARRIED

(d) Wellness Facility Committee – Commissioner Swanburg

The Wellness Facility Committee is no longer in existence; therefore there was no report. Commissioner Swanburg inquired as to whether any response had been forthcoming from any of the former Committee members with regard to the Commission's decision to not partner with the School Board to develop a Wellness Facility at this time. The Clerk Treasurer advised that she had sent a letter to the Chair of the former Wellness Facility Committee and to the Director of Finance for the School Board, and did not receive a

response from either. She was requested to also advise Sport and Recreation Commission for the Province of Nova Scotia.

NEW BUSINESS

(a) Policies for consideration - Training and Development Policy

It was moved by Vice-Chair Lockhart, seconded by Commissioner Swanburg that the Training and Development Policy, as presented to the Commission, be approved with the following addition: Page 6, second paragraph, add after the word “development,” “which has been approved by the Commission”. MOTION CARRIED

(b) Area Advisory Committee – Commissioner Swanburg

There were no further items to discuss with regard to the Area Advisory Committee

(c) Union Agreement

It was moved by Vice-Chair Lockhart, seconded by Commissioner Swanburg that the terms of the International Union of Operating Engineers Contract, as negotiated, be approved. MOTION CARRIED

The amended Contract will be reviewed, and if all is in order, the Commissioners will be advised of the date of signing

(d) Request for Payment – Richard G. Ramsay

Discussion took place on the Wellness Facility Study and subsequent request for payment of the contract. The Commission expressed concern that the report was delivered six months late, and other concerns were expressed as well.

It was moved by Vice-Chair Lockhart, seconded by Commissioner Swanburg that the Commission pay \$5,000 plus HST for the consultant’s Wellness Facility Study. MOTION CARRIED

It was moved by Commissioner Swanburg, seconded by Vice-Chair Lockhart, that a request be made to Mr. Ramsay for a list of references for the information contained in the Wellness Facility Study. MOTION CARRIED.

(e) Cuff’s Guide

Commissioner Swanburg stated that in the October, 2004 minutes the Commissioners were requested to all read, by December 2004 *Cuff’s Guide* as provided by the Clerk Treasurer. She stated this was a very good guide for Commissioners and we all need to be constantly upgraded in our knowledge of municipal government. The Commissioners who have not yet read the book, agreed to try and do so by March, 2005.

CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Judy (Ward) Parker – Tree Lighting Fundraiser

The Clerk made reference to a letter to the Commission from Judy (Ward) Parker the previous month with regard to a fundraising project that Mrs. Parker thought the Commission might be interested in. Terry stated she has since spoken with Mrs. Parker and was advised that Mrs. Parker has contacted the Rotary Club, who seems to be very interested in taking on this project. They will keep the Commission informed.

(b) Donald Teed – Highway Clearing

Commissioner Swanburg stated that she had received an email from Mr. Teed inquiring about the poor service New Minas has received this year for highway clearing. She stated she had thought originally that his complaint was intended for sidewalk snow clearing. Mr. Teed has been advised that the roads in New Minas are the responsibility of the Department of Highways. The Clerk advised she had given Mr. Teed phone numbers for both DOT and Nova Scotia Power (responding to his inquiry about street light problems).

PUBLIC DISCUSSION PERIOD

Mr. William Milligan – Mr. Milligan stated he has served on the Planning Advisory Committee for the Municipality of Kings for two terms, and can understand the frustrations expressed by the Commission this meeting. He stated that the PAC and the County place a lot of value in the recommendations from the AAC, and the Commission should maintain that Committee to continue to provide a necessary service to the people and businesses of New Minas.

Mr. Casey Mooy - Mr. Mooy stated he is a former County Councillor, and stated that the Commission needs to have a strong voice at the County Council sessions. He said New Minas has the largest tax base of all of Kings County and receives virtually nothing for the taxes being collected by the County. He asked what percentage of the County mill rate comes to the Village of New Minas. Vice-Chair Lockhart stated that they do not hand money over to the Village; the Village has a village rate it charges on top of the County rate. She said that the County provides a grant to the Fire Department, as well as a yearly recreation grant. The Clerk Treasurer stated that being a Village means that there are certain expenses which the County has to pay that the Village of New Minas does not; examples were: road maintenance, policing services, assessment services, school board funding, social assistance funding.

Mr. Mooy asked what could be done about the deplorable condition of Aalders Avenue. He stated there are a great number of senior citizens who must walk and drive on that street and it is very dangerous – there is no sidewalk, the street is in very poor condition. He requested the Commission to consider constructing sidewalks. Chair Chaulk stated

that there are funds in the budget for this year which will be matched next year for sidewalk construction. Peter Pothier advised that Aalders Avenue was on the list with Commercial Street.

The Clerk will write a letter to the Department of Transportation expressing concern about the pot holes in all of the streets in New Minas and requesting that they repair all these pot holes.

Jennifer Coolen, Recreation Director for the Village of New Minas

Asked permission to sit on the team to revise the Purchasing and Tendering Policy. Everyone agreed this would be necessary.

She stated that with regard to the Wellness Facility Contract, she has recently studied “Breach of Contract” in a Municipal Law Course, and offered her course material to the Commissioners for reference if they wished to view it.

Jennifer thanked the Commission for the Recreation Advisory Committee motion.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Commissioner Messom, the meeting adjourned.

Dave Chaulk, Chair

Terry Silver, Clerk Treasurer