

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 21, 2009**

Present: Mayor Ben Cleveland
Deputy Mayor Mike Bartlett
Councillor Brian Manzer
Councillor Jean Brittain
Councillor Danny Harvieux
Councillor Peter Turnbull (arrived 5:42 p.m.)

Others Present: Tom Ossinger, CAO
Matthew Raymond, Director of Finance
Susan Rice, Administrative Assistant

Regrets: Councillor Ron Matsusaki

A. Call to Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

B. Agenda – December 21, 2009

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Harvieux and seconded by Deputy Mayor Bartlett that the agenda for December 21, 2009 be approved as presented.

Motion Carried

C. New Business

C.1 Medical Centre

The Mayor stated that this special meeting is to discuss the proposed medical centre. The Digby Area Charitable Health Foundation would like the Town Council to give a letter of support to a Medical Centre and also financial support in the amount of \$250,000.

There will be a Joint Council meeting in the New Year but wanted the Town Council to discuss and make a decision before we go to

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 21, 2009**

the Joint meeting. A question was raised; if Council goes to Joint Council meeting and sees why we should not do it can we change our mind and discuss it again. The CAO stated yes Council can change their mind if they so desire.

Council stated that they will not cover any operational cost for the building. The building will be owned by the District Health Authority. The Digby Area Charitable Health Foundation will be giving a million dollars to the project. If the Town and Municipality support the project as well as the Hospital Foundation then the District Health Authority will support as well.

A question was asked is a Medical Centre going to attract doctors. Council stated that the doctor incentive package is not working so therefore we should try a different approach. Councillor Manzer stated that we need to build infrastructure and \$250,000 for a \$2 ½ million building is a good investment, that is only 10%.

There is a doctor magazine that is out that puts ads in looking for doctors and Digby is not mentioned. An ad should also be added to our website looking for doctors. The Southwest Health website needs to be done better.

The incentive package has been going on for approximately three years and has only had one doctor. Council stated that it is not our role as councillors to recruit doctors but if we agree to invest in a medical centre that we might get some doctors here. Shirley Watson-Poole knows that Digby needs doctors and she is working very hard to recruit doctors to this area.

The Council stated that if we accept giving the \$250,000 that we do not give it to them until the building is started or is finished.

The Director of Finance stated that if Council agrees to give them the funding for the next 20 years the tax rate will have to go up by two cents. Councillor Manzer stated what can we do not to

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 21, 2009**

see the tax rate go up. The administrative staff would have to look into that to see what we can do not to raise the taxes. One of the Councillors stated that if people want certain level of services in Town the tax rate has to go up it can't stay the same.

The Director of Finance stated that it is a good investment but has a fear of the operating deficit coming back on to the municipal units.

Councillor Brittain read a letter from Dr. Black from June 2009. The District Health Authority stated that they will operate the building but will not operate it if there is a deficit. ~~The Hospital Foundation will look after the building for five years or up to \$20,000.~~ **The Hospital Foundation will look after the deficit for \$20,000 per year up to \$100,000 for five years.**

The CAO informed Council on who owns the hospital land. The Town of Digby owned it but in the 1970's the Trustees took it over.

~~The Town budgets \$100,000 for doctor recruitment every year~~ **The current funding of \$100,000 jointly funded from the Town and Municipality**, but the Mayor stated that \$100,000 is not a lot of money to doctors. This year we budget \$23,750.00, which would include the package for Dr. Matsusaki and the lady from Saskatchewan.

Council gave a list of requirements/conditions:

- Not cover any operating costs
- Letter of agreement with DHA or Foundation to run it
- No longer support the incentive package as of December 21, but will continue to honour our packages that we agreed to.
- Let the Municipality know that we are not offering incentive packages as of December 21.

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

DECEMBER 21, 2009

Motion:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Harvieux that Council agree to offer \$250,000 for the Medical Centre and will cease to support incentive package with some conditions – not accept any operational deficits, no ownership of facility, District Health Authority will take ownership and will operate the facility.

Motion Carried

Motion:

Moved by Councillor Brittain and seconded by Councillor Manzer that in order to support the development of a new medical facility, Council agrees to discontinue the incentive package for physician recruitment, effective immediately.

Motion Carried

The Mayor stated that he will contact Shirley Watson-Poole tomorrow to let her know Council's decision. The CAO will notify Warden Thurber and CAO Linda Fraser on Council's decision.

D. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Deputy Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor Manzer at 6:52 p.m.

MAYOR

CLERK