

**Town of Digby
Committee of the Whole
March 17th, 2025
Council Chambers**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Mike Bartlett
Deputy Mayor Paul Saulnier (Chair)
Councillor William McCormick
Councillor Rick Foote
Councillor Shane Weir

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Ossinger, Chief Administrative Officer
Leslie Brinton, Executive Assistant
Ed McCormick, Director of Public Works
Matthew Raymond, Director of Finance
Rob Hartmier, Grant Coordinator

REGRETS: Laura Lee Milner, Special Constable

A. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Saulnier called the meeting to order at 5:01pm

B. AGENDA

B.1 Additions/Deletions

B.2 Approval

MOTION:

Moved by Mayor Bartlett and seconded by Councillor McCormick that the agenda for March 17, 2025, be approved as presented/amended.

Motion Carried

C. DELEGATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

None

D. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

D.1 February 18, 2025

By consensus, the Committee of the Whole approved the Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2025 as presented

E. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

E.1 None

F. STAFF REPORTS

F.1 Chief Administrative Officer

The Report was submitted with the package. Development Officer: Two smaller development permits issued. One for an addition and one for a garage addition which creates a new suite. Development agreement between Digby Area Housing Coalition (81 Montague Row) and the Town was executed and sent to legal council for Registry of Deeds submission. NSUARB Planning appeal is still ongoing. No decision made yet on eligible appellants, which was last meetings focus. NSUARB encourage discussion between the Town and the Appellant to come to an agreement on eligible appellants. Meeting on March 13th was had between appellants and Towns legal counsel. This process as a whole is time consuming. Two building permits submitted. 4 Fire inspections. NSUARB Fire inspection appeal by Fundy Restaurant limited has been postponed at the request of the appellant. No fire Department report was submitted. Office of the CAO: Tax sale tenders were received. Raquette road property was sold with a bid of \$2,500. 10 Carleton Road had a bid but it was under taxes owed so was rejected. Plan moving forward is to readvertise the property ASAP. CAO is looking for direction from Council on whether Council wants to place a bid on the property in the upcoming Tax Sale for Tender process. Motion was put on the floor by Councillor Weir. Question asked by Councillor McCormick as to whether that would affect the Orders that are in place on the property. CAO communicated that he was unsure and would have to check with By-law enforcement. Anybody buying the property would still need to remedy any order that is on place of the building. The PCAP grant is now open for 2025/2026. CAO is wishing for COTW to make a motion to Council to create two resolutions for application to the PCAP for Engineering Pre-design for Carleton Street and for Engineering design for the Harding Memorial Lookoff.

Motion

Moved by Councillor Weir and seconded by Councillor Foote that the Committee of the Whole recommends to Council that Council place a bid on PID #30231906 - #10 Carleton Street equaling the taxes owed on the property so that, at the end of the redemption period (6 months), the property would be demolished.

Motion Carried.

Motion

Moved by Councillor Foote and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to approve the applications for the PCAP pre-design application for Carleton Street and approve the applications for the PCAP design for the Harding Memorial Lookoff.

Motion Carried.

F.2 Director of Public Works

Report included in the package. Wastewater Annual Report was sent into Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change for Digby Regional Wastewater Facility. Currently working with DOF on Capital Investment Plan. Working on building accessibility inspections and cost estimates for upgrades, DWC annual report, recommendations for Tractor, Digby station codes changed. Cleaning of heat pump filters in Town buildings. Snow Removal was done for 22 days in the month of February. DOPW is working with the Municipality and looking at testing three new test wells and capping on current well. New guidelines have been presented that treated lumber must now be sorted separately. Final site visit of Mount Street with Municipal Affairs was

completed. Guard Rail on Shore Road has been completed. Doing fall risk and confinement course will be had in March. DOPW is looking at adding a summer student into the budget for 8 weeks in the summer. Councillor Wier asked if that student had already been identified and the DOPW stated there could be a returning student and if not, it would be advertised. Deputy Mayor Saulnier asked how much salt was purchased this year. DOPW stated there was three loads added to our purchase this year. Deputy Mayor Saulnier asked that Jennie O'Brien be contacted so that she knows that the issue with her local sidewalk is being addressed.

F.3 Director of Finance

Reports included in the package.

Operating and Capital Budget: Variances are located in deed transfer tax (up) and costs for snow removal (up) are the two largest variances. The splash park costs are quite high and there is coverage by the Municipality at the time. However, those costs for the park are over what was budgeted. Questions were asked over whether the park could be set and adjusted for use. DOPW can look at doing that as well as Mayor Bartlett communicated that DARC was also looking at having the usage times adjusted.

Finance Report: Insurance applications have been completed. Slip and fall incident reported on West Street parking lot adjacent to the Health Centre, waiting for more information. Broker has been contacted. Property is owned by town but is not maintained by town. DOF suggests that we should be doing something about that area as it is a risk. Councillor McCormick suggested a signage option should be taken up right away to mitigate risk. CAO communicated that signage does not stop the public from suing. CAO suggestion is that the lot could be blocked off. There is still a possibility of liability but it is a greater mitigation. The mayor suggested that the parking spots be properly angled lined and painted and communicated that there is a lack of signage. Councillor Weir made the suggestions of moving that area back to grass. DOPW agreed that the angle parking painting could be done. Deputy Mayor communicated that it doesn't matter what is done, there is still a liability. Councillor Foote suggested that we simply take over the plowing. COTW would like Town Hall staff to come up with a list of recommendations about this issue to be presented at a follow up meeting. Employee benefits renewals are in the report. Health and dental rates increased by 10%. Rough capital budget is almost ready for input. Operating budget prep work has been done. Rents are up to date. Notice sent out to employees on benefits, increase in Health and Dental, but not a big increase. WCB audit was done with one company that the town has had work done for not being in good standing with WCB to a cost of \$900. This company was invoiced for this amount. Senior Safety budget was put together and submitted.

F.4 Special Constable

a) Dangerous and Unsightly - The Report was submitted with the package.

Report included in the package. Meeting set for discussion on retaining wall between two home owners on West Street. February 26th, 2025 notice was not collected and was returned to office for 10 Carleton Street. March 3rd, 2025 an Order to Remedy was posted on the property. They have 30 days to complete all repairs or face proscribed penalties and the Nova Scotia MGA. Out building torn down on Maiden Lane but cleanup is taking longer than thought. Will be monitored for removal. Water Street property had site inspection many deficiencies have been resolved. Still at issue is a tree growing through the foundation and may need structural engineer to look at it. Fire on Birch Street, building will be demolished on March 11th, 2025

b) Protective Services – The Report was submitted with the package.

Report included in the package. Request for footage of MVA on water street from RCMP. Also asked to do a security review after recent town fire however no footage was helpful. Issue brought forward over handicap parking in front of Scotiabank. Dealt with infraction individual and de-escalating situation. Making recommendation to remove any painted spaces to help with communication in that parking spot. Moved forward with some civic address changes and got assistance from Spatial Metrics Atlantic unlimited on the file. Helps RCMP assist with catching dog as RCMP conducted a search of residence in downtown. Also received a complaint about dog off leash. Unable to find dog or owner so file will remain open until info found. Dealt with solid waste issue at 176 queens street and educated renters as well as property manager on by-law and fines.

F.5 Grant Coordinator Report

Report included in the package. Research is beginning on Transit Feasibility study. Progress reports for current approved grants continues as well as grants that are closing need to have final reports done. Subbed in for Executive Assistant while on holidays and absences. Working on co-op initiative for summer student help.

Motion

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Committee of the Whole approve the reports as submitted.

Motion Carried.

G. CORRESPONDENCE

G.1 None

H. NEW BUSINESS

H.1 Communication – Alertable and newsletter

The Deputy Mayor spoke to the newsletter and is looking at adding information to the back of the newsletter, adding engagement information, meeting information and the Service Provider event as well as Digby 135. These are done every quarter. Question is how Committee wishes to distribute this to property owner. Rough cost would be \$300 per quarter. Looking at creating the newsletter to 11x17 for a single fold. Councillor Foote suggested the direct mail is the best avenue to take, in his opinion.

Alertable demonstration for communication tool through a cell phone app. Deputy Mayor Saulnier spoke to the online demonstration that was presented to staff and Councillors. There are a number of great options available for the app and spoke to the struggles in communication that no newspaper or in-town source of communicating is currently available. There is a cost to this application as the package shows.

Motion:

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Councillor Weir that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that Council approve the spending of \$1000 for a new distribution model for sending the newsletter in the mail.

Motion Carried.

Motion

Moved by Councillor Weir and seconded by Councillor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council that Council approve the purchase of the Economy version of the Alertable app at a cost of \$3,950 plus taxes per year on a one-year trial basis.

Motion Carried.

H.2 Digby Home and Lifestyle Expo

Letter from Rick Allwright in regards to the Town of Digby putting a display table into the Digby Home and Lifestyle Expo in June. The mayor spoke to the fact that the Town has been involved in these expos previously. CAO communicated that the District CAO may be considering attending. Councillor Foote has a question whether there is a fee at the door. Deadline to sign up is May 16th, 2025. Direction was to ask staff to get more information on this event. Councillor McCormick thinks it would be a great opportunity for the Town and to be seen.

I. IN-CAMERA

I.1 Personnel

Motion

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole meeting be moved to In-Camera

Motion Carried

Motion

Moved by Councillor McCormick and seconded by Mayor Bartlett that the Committee of the Whole meeting be moved out of In-Camera

Motion Carried.

J. Adjournment

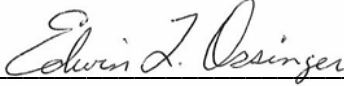
Motion

Moved by Councillor McCormick that the Committee of the Whole meeting be adjourned as there is no further business at 7:23 pm

Motion Carried.



Deputy Mayor



Clerk