

A regular monthly meeting of the Committee of the Whole of Middleton Town Council was held in person, via ZOOM and on Facebook Live on Monday, November 6, 2023.

PRESENT

Chairing the meeting, Mayor Sylvester Atkinson; Deputy Mayor Gail Smith; Councillors John Bartlett, Michael Fairn, Chad LeBlanc, and Gary Marshall; Chief Administrative Officer, Ashley Crocker; and Recording Secretary, Krista Grear.

Regrets: Councillor Bernadette Knapp

Also, in Attendance: Planning Services Coordinator, Sharon McCauley

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Atkinson called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

231106.01 It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

3. PROCLAMATIONS

3.1. Municipal Awareness Week

Mayor Atkinson proclaimed November 6-12 as Municipal Awareness Week in the Town of Middleton.

3.2. Fall Prevention Month

Mayor Atkinson proclaimed November as Fall Prevention Month in the Town of Middleton.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

4.1. Committee of the Whole Meeting – October 3, 2023

231106.02 It was moved and seconded that the minutes of October 3, 2023, be approved as circulated. **Motion carried.**

5. ANYTHING BY CITIZENS

No citizens present.

6. ACTION ITEMS**6.1. RFD 062-2023: Fire Protection Rate and Policy**

CAO Crocker noted that this and the following agenda item regarding rate calculations were to have been a part of the annual budget process. This was unknown to the new staff at the time. All the related documentation pertaining to rate determination was included in the agenda package. In 2019 the Fire Protection Rate was enacted to cover the cost of the fire hydrants. Resulting calculations indicated an over charge or \$0.01 which will be credited on the interim tax bill next May. The policy has been updated to include more clear language.

231106.03 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Council set the 2023/24 Fire Protection Area Rate at \$0.16 cents per hundred dollars of assessment to recover the Town's share of the estimated fire protection (hydrant) charges of \$260,021. **Motion carried.**

231106.04 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Council set the 2023/24 Fire Protection Charge to the County of Annapolis at \$18,594 to recover the County's share of the total fire protection (hydrant) charge. **Motion carried.**

231106.05 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Council approve the updated Fire Protection Rate Policy, policy number A 1.32. **Motion carried.**

6.2. RFD 053-2023: Tax Rate Resolutions

CAO Crocker noted that current staff are working to bring all financial processes and requirements up to date. Two required resolutions are included today, and one will be presented in December. CAO Crocker also outlined the determination of sewer rates, including the Sewer Service Charge Bylaw. Process for the return or credit of any over charges are being developed and will be applied as necessary.

231106.06 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Town Council estimates that the sum required for the lawful purposes of the Town for the year 2023-2024, after crediting probable revenues from all sources, other than the rates for the year, is the sum of \$4,217,734 and;

that Town Council hereby authorizes the levying and collection of a rate for the current year of \$4.290 per \$100 on the value of the property assessed in the assessment roll as Commercial property and Business Occupancy and \$1.810 per \$100 on the value of the property assessed in the assessment roll as Residential and Resource property, the rate of \$3.14 per acre for property assessed in the assessment roll as Farm Acreage, and the rate of \$3.218 per \$100 on the value of the property assessed in the assessment roll as Seasonal Tourist Businesses, and a

sewer service charge of a flat fee of \$250 plus an additional rate of \$0.13 per \$100 on the value of the property assessed in the assessment roll as taxable Residential

and Commercial property on which any building is connected to the sewage system of the Town, and a fire protection rate of \$0.16 per \$100 on the value of all properties assessed in the assessment roll, these being the rates the Council deems sufficient to raise the sum to defray the expenditures of the Town for the current year and;

that the rates and taxes be due and payable the last business day of September 2023 and;

that an interest rate of 24% per annum, compounded, be charged on the 2023-2024 final tax bills still outstanding after the last business day of September 2023 and;

that a sewer usage rate of \$0.873 per one cubic meter of water consumed by tax exempt properties, which are not paying full grants in lieu of taxation, be levied in accordance with the Sewer Service Charge Bylaw for the year 2023-2024. **Motion carried.**

231106.07 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Council approve the five-year Town General Capital budget for the years 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27, and 2027/28 in the amount of \$9,213,051. **Motion carried.**

231106.08 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Council approve the five-year Capital budget for the Town Water Utility for the years 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27, and 2027/28 in the amount of \$6,792,422. **Motion carried.**

6.3. RFD 061-2023: Committees of Council Policies

CAO Crocker noted that the need for clarification for committees was discussed amongst staff and various committee members. The new Committees of Council Policy outlines the overall structure and general requirements for all committees of Council as well as the minimum requirements for all committees' individual policies/terms of reference. She further outlined the contents of the policy and the rationale for its development.

231106.09 It was moved and seconded to recommend that Council approve the updates to the following policies: policy # A 3.6 Committees of Council Policy, policy # A 3.11 Accessibility Advisory Committee, policy # A 3.8 Audit Committee, policy # A 3.9 Community Centre and Fire Hall Committee, policy # G 1.3 Planning Advisory Committee, and policy # A 3.10 Source Water Protection Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

It was noted that gender neutral language will be updated and that item 6.0 for in-camera – the words ‘for one of’ will be replaced with ‘for the following’.

6.4. Electronic Voting Bylaw review

CAO Crocker noted that the bylaw was included in the agenda package and that it was most recently updated in 2020. As a result of discussions with colleagues at the recent AMANS conference, it was recommended to have Council review the policy ahead of next year’s election. No decisions are needed tonight. CAO Crocker also noted that EA Grear is willing to take training and be the Returning Officer. It was shared that at the last election all members were acclaimed and thus no method of voting was needed. There have been by-elections that were effectively run electronically, as well as the election in 2016. Voter turn-out was higher than the provincial average.

Mayor Atkinson noted that during the by-elections he was allowed to be present with the Returning Officer. It was simple and quick and appeared to have no issues.

7. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1. Dangerous and Unsightly Status Report for October 2023

CAO Crocker noted that there’s not a lot of updates to report and that she will be meeting with DPW Borden this week to go through the active files. There is one new complaint for which they must do the initial inspection. Legal has reviewed the order for 82 Victoria St. Building/Fire Inspectors will be going through 50 School St. and presenting recommendations.

8. ANYTHING BY MEMBERS

An open floor opportunity for members of Council resulted in the following points of interest:

- Increasing concern regarding damage, accessibility, and personal risk associated with the Harvest Moon Trail. Can the Town investigate the designation of the parts of the Trail that go through the Town as non-motorized use only, or other appropriate solutions?
 - Ownership/leases of the Trail needs to be determined.
 - New legislation allows for off-road vehicles to use main roads to access other trails as well as to access services.
 - There would likely be a significant cost to the Town to maintain that section(s) of the trail.
 - Be cognizant of the potential impact on businesses that regularly serve ATVs
 - Annapolis Valley Trail Society recently upgraded sections of the trial

- Education and signage would be key.
- Enforcement is an issue – DNR and RCMP

ACTION: investigate ownership, who is leasing, and the term of the lease(s)
RESPONSIBILITY: Staff
DATE: November 20

9. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Mayor

Recording Secretary