



Minutes of Northeast Avalon Joint Council Meeting
Town of Pouch Cove
February 15, 2012

The Northeast Avalon Joint Council met at the Town Hall in the Town of Pouch Cove on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Executive Members Present: Sterling Willis, Chair
Joe Duggan, Vice Chair
Don Drew – Past Chair
Sarah Patten - Secretary
Sharon Cobb – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Lucy Stoyles, Avalon Director
Sandra Baggs, Treasurer

Members: Walter Butt- Town of Pouch Cove
Michelle Martin – Town of Flatrock
Jim Joy – Town of Holyrood
Jerry Hearn – Town of Petty Harbour
Stan MacDonald – Town of Wabana
Chris Dredge – Town of Bauline
Brian Whitty – Town of Torbay
Eileen Hatch – Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove
Aiden Maddox – Town of Bay Bulls
Andrew Ledwell – City of Mount Pearl

Note: Jerry Hearn left prior to start of meeting.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 with a welcome and introductions. Kevin Parsons, MHA for Cape St. Francis was in attendance

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion #302

Moved/Seconded

D. Drew/J. Duggan

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

Motion carried.

3. **Adoption of Minutes of January 18, 2012**

Motion #303

Moved/Seconded

S. Patten/Walter Butt

That the minutes of the NEAJC meeting of January 18, 2012
be adopted as presented.

Motion carried.

4. **Business Arising**

i. **Senior discount**

S. MacDonald commented on previous discussion of the issue of tax discounts for senior citizens. D. Drew noted that based on previous court case, a senior discount can be considered an age discriminatory issue. In order for a taxing body to offer a discount, it has to be available to everyone. J. Joy suggested that representatives of all municipalities within NEAJC be requested to provide their policies on payment methods with applicable discounts (seniors). J. Joy agreed to make the information available when it has been collected.

S. Willis noted that the Municipal assessment agency had researched the issue of senior discounts in a global review, including the issue of low income taxation and prepared a report which was presented to the late Diane Whelan. S. Willis offered to obtain a copy of the report to be included with the review of information from all municipalities. J. Joy agreed that this would be a worthwhile project.

J. Joy requested that all representatives of the municipalities within NEAJC provide their policies for payment methods with applicable discounts (senior) and he will make available when all information is collected.

ii. **Bell Aliant**

The committee reviewed a letter issued on February 1/11 to Don Drew from Bell Aliant. D. Drew noted that he was not aware of this letter, which had been found in the NEAJC files. S. Willis advised that upon being provided a copy of this letter at the executive meeting of February 9, 2012, he contacted Dale Grimes of Bell Aliant and arrangements are being made for Mr. Grimes to attend an upcoming meeting with NEAJC to discuss the fees charged from community calling.

iii. Review of committees

S. Willis advised that a special executive meeting was held on Feb 9/12 to discuss the option of combining “policy” and “communications” committees into a “strategic action” committee. It was noted that the waste management committee would remain separate.

J. Joy agreed with the strategic action committee proposal noting that it would be important to ensure that identified issues referred to the committee would be kept in view until all appropriate action has been taken. In particular, issues which are referred to the Minister of Municipal Affairs are considered to be priority and need to be followed up on.

S. Willis advised that it is imperative that all municipalities provide their lists of concerns prior to the next meeting with the Minister. A letter was tabled by S. Willis, issued on February 1/12 inviting the Minister to a meeting with NEAJC.

J. Joy advised that there has to be a systematic approach to getting answers to the municipalities from the Minister and this may best be addressed by a strategic action committee.

J. Joy stated that it may be worthwhile to consider hiring a facilitator to conduct a strategic planning session.

It was suggested that Gerard Lewis (former committee member and Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Mount Pearl) be considered to head the strategic planning committee. D. Drew agreed. S. Willis inquired if there were any volunteers for the committee. J. Duggan volunteered and will serve as chair and liaison with waste management committee.

D. Drew advised that an advisory be issued to all municipalities to state that there are available positions on the strategic planning committee.

Motion #304

Moved/seconded – D. Drew/S. Macdonald

5. **Discussion with Kevin Parsons, MHA for Cape St. Francis**

K. Parsons thanked the committee for the opportunity for discussion and advised that he is willing to provide any assistance necessary to bring issues of concern from NEAJC to the Provincial Government. He recognizes that there are a number of issues of concern for municipalities on the Northeast Avalon, particularly in terms of waste management. He noted that he has been made aware of concerns for senior citizens and issues of financial difficulty, noting that there are a number of emergency programs which offer assistance to seniors.

In regard to capital works funding, Mr. Parsons advised that the provincial government has approved \$85 million dollars to cover all municipal requests.

Mr. Parsons reiterated his availability for consultation whenever required by NEAJC.

S. Willis thanked Mr. Parsons for meeting with the committee.

6. **Issues to be addressed by Minister of Municipal Affairs**

The committee was provided with a copy of a letter issued by S. Willis on February 1/12 to Minister O'Brien, however, there has been no reply to date.

D. Drew advised that the items noted in the list dated December 2010 (tabled at the NEAJC meeting with the Minister in June 2011) were addressed at that time, however, members were encouraged to forward any items that they feel may still require additional action. These items would be included on a general listing of concerns to be compiled for the Minister's review prior to his meeting with the NEAJC.

S. Willis advised that he has been speaking with the Minister's office and is in the process of arranging a meeting with either the NEAJC or the Executive for NEAJC. Committee members will be advised when the meeting is confirmed.

7. **Capital Works funding**

J. Joy advised that there are numerous projects requiring capital works funding, i.e., in Holyrood there are a large number of ongoing projects specific to water/sewer which have been delayed due to a lengthy application process. It was noted that projects are often delayed in going to tender, which results in escalating costs and negative impact on the project.

J. Duggan agreed that it would be beneficial to raise the issue with the Minister. This item will be included on the discussion list.

8. **Premiers' comments – recent meeting with St. John's Board of Trade**

J. Joy raised the issue of the Premier's comments in terms of references to fiscal restraint during a recent meeting with the St. John's Board of Trade.

J. Joy noted that a lot of capital funding requests are based on the upgrade of essential services and although fiscal restraint is being discussed, municipalities must be provided with a way of correcting situations which are inadequate and unacceptable.

9. **Avalon Director – meeting with Municipalities Newfoundland Labrador**

S. Willis advised that he had received an email from Lucy Stoyles, Avalon Director advising of an upcoming meeting she will be attending on March 30/12 with Municipalities Newfoundland Labrador. D. Drew suggested 2 items:

- i. Capital works red tape/timeframes
- ii. Northeast Avalon Regional Plan (NEAR)

E. Hatch noted that the MNL website is very difficult to work with. She has been trying to reach someone at MNL to obtain meeting minutes, however, this has not been successful. This matter will be referred to L. Stoyles. A copy of the NEAJC meeting schedule will also be forwarded to L. Stoyles for referral to the MNL executive.

If committee members have any items, they should be included in an email to S. Willis for referral to L. Stoyles.

10. Update from Municipal Affairs – (status of NEAR)

The committee was advised that Councillor Paula Tessier (City of Mount Pearl) was unable to attend this evening's meeting but had forwarded an email from Sandra Barnes, Dept. Municipal Affairs as an update to Councillor Andrew Ledwell to present to the NEAJC.

It was noted that Councillor Tessier may be available for the next meeting to offer further explanation of the email from Sandra Barnes, Dept. Municipal Affairs.

11. Letter of condolences – George Walsh

It was noted that a letter of condolence was issued on February 15/12 to Mrs. Millie Walsh on the passing of her husband George.

12. Expense claim – S. Cobb

An expense claim was tabled for S. Cobb for expenses for the period of December 14/11 – Feb 9/12 for the amount of \$522.58.

Item approved.

Motion #305

Moved/seconded D. Drew/J. Duggan

13. Inquiry – “fall zones” for communication towers

E. Hatch inquired whether there were regulations for “fall zones” for communication towers. S. Willis advised that the Town of Paradise had installed a communication on McNamara Drive and provided Alton Glen (782-1400) as the contact for more information.

S. Willis thanked Sarah Patten for hosting the meeting at Pouch Cove town hall.

Motion to adjourn #306

Moved/seconded J. Duggan/D. Drew