

**Village of Bible Hill
Commission in Committee Meeting
April 13, 2021**



The Village of Bible Hill Commission in Committee meeting was held on April 13, 2021 in Commission Chambers, at the Village Office, 67 Pictou Road. Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg called the meeting to order at 6:59pm; the meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Call to Order: Chair Kennedy
Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg
Commissioner Burke
Commissioner Pitcher
Commissioner Shea
Clerk and Treasurer Bell
Recording Secretary Chandler

Guests: Councillor Eric Boutilier, District 1 – Municipality of the County of Colchester

Call for new or other business and review and approval of agenda

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg called for new or other business, and no other business was called.

Moved by Burke and seconded by Kennedy, that the agenda be approved. Motion carried.

Call for declaration of conflict of interests

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg called for any declarations of conflict of interest and none were declared.

Miscellaneous business including delegations

Councilor Eric Boutilier – District 1 Municipality of Colchester

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg welcomed Councilor Boutilier to the meeting and invited him to address the Committee. The Committee discussed.

Municipal Affairs: Changes Support Making Nova Scotia Barrier Free

Clerk and Treasurer Bell spoke of a recent announcement regarding Bill 47, describing changes are being proposed to the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter that will better enable local governments to help businesses become more accessible, supporting Nova Scotia's goal of being barrier free by 2030. The Committee discussed.

Municipal Affairs: More Accountability for Local Governments

Clerk and Treasurer Bell spoke of a recent announcement regarding Bill 50, describing changes are being proposed to the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter that provide more transparency

and increased accountability for Nova Scotians by their local government. Bell added that these changes require local governments to have a code of conduct for elected officials. The Committee discussed.

Municipal Affairs: Change to Legislation Modernizes Municipal Operations

Clerk and Treasurer Bell spoke of a recent announcement regarding Bill 98, describing changes are being proposed to the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter that modernize local government operations, by permitting virtual meetings. Bell added that these changes allow local governments to introduce a bylaw that permits holding meetings virtually. The Committee discussed.

It was decided by consensus to bring Bill 98 to attention at the upcoming April 23rd Association of Nova Scotia Villages meeting.

Sanitary Sewer Study Report

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg invited Clerk and Treasurer Bell to discuss the Sanitary Sewer Study Report. Bell discussed recommendations from the recently completed sanitary sewer study including recommendations for development of an asset management program, inventory and data management practices, condition assessments/inspections, financial planning, and conclusions/deficiencies from the report. The Committee discussed.

Canada Community Building Fund

Clerk and Treasurer Bell informed the Committee that the Federal Government has announced that they will be doubling the Gas Tax Funding in the current year and will be renaming the fund the “Canada Community Building Fund.” Bell further discussed how the fund, intended for communities of all sizes, does not reach all incorporated municipal governments as it does in most other Provinces. Bell discussed correspondence between the Village and the MP on the subject and an offer of support from the MP’s office and recommendation that the Village reach out to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, requesting they more equitably include incorporated villages for funding when the agreements are soon renewed. The Committee discussed.

Moved by Kennedy and seconded by Shea that the Commission in Committee recommend Village of Bible Hill write a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, requesting incorporated Villages be more equitably considered for funding from the Canada Community Building Fund when the agreements are renewed. Motion carried.

It was further discussed that the Village could suggest interested members of the Association of Nova Scotia Villages also write letters, with support of their local Members of Parliament, and that the Association also submit a letter as a unified body.

New business

Budget development: review of operating, capital, and reserve budgets

Clerk and Treasurer Bell described changes to the budget since the last meeting. The Committee discussed.

It was agreed by consensus to keep \$5,000 budgeted for the Bible Hill Fire Brigade's 75th Anniversary celebration.

Budget development: setting of tax rates

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg opened the floor to discuss setting the tax rates for the 2021 – 2022 fiscal year. Bell informed the Committee that Village tax rates have remained the same for several years, noting revenue that would be generated with the same rate accordingly. He further added that the cost of overall expenses is expected to increase. The Committee discussed. Committee members considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, while also questioning the long-term financial stability of the Village if tax rates are not increased. The Clerk and Treasurer was asked of the impact of maintaining tax rates over a long period of time, responding that, maintaining the same rate is only successful so long as increases in Bible Hill property assessment provides for the revenues required to deliver service and infrastructure needs. Bell noted if annual costs outpace assessment increases and the Commission wished to further maintain tax rates, the Commission will need to consider reduction in spending or alternative revenue sources to fund the budget as desired – such as reserve funds and the Village Commission's recent request for gas tax funding. Bell recommended the Commission consider the long-term and ensure the rates are achieving the budget goals while also maintaining a sufficient level of reserve funding for future needs and emergencies.

It was decided by consensus that the 2021 – 2022 tax rates would be decided at the next Regular Commission Monthly Meeting, on April 20, 2021.

Insurance premiums

Clerk and Treasurer Bell presented cost information for insurance premiums, which are set to increase by over 30 percent. The Committee discussed.

It was decided by consensus that Clerk and Treasurer Bell research alternative pricing for insurance coverage.

Engineering services: College Road sidewalk renewal

Clerk and Treasurer Bell spoke on the ongoing College Road sidewalk renewal project noting that Phase 1 engineering was awarded to CBCL, and now the Village is looking to award Phase 2 and 3 accordingly. He presented the pricing for Phase 2 and 3, as presented from five proponents. The Committee discussed.

Moved by Pitcher and seconded by Shea that the Commission in Committee recommend Village of Bible Hill award Phase 2 and 3 of the College Road Sidewalk Project to CBCL at the proposed cost of \$18,126.10 plus HST. Motion carried.

Call for special meeting

Clerk and Treasurer Bell noted that a special meeting was originally thought to be necessary for awarding of the College Road sidewalk project but that, alternatively, recommended the Committee move to provide authorization to the May Commission in Committee to award the project.

Moved by Pitcher and seconded by Kennedy that the Commission in Committee recommend Village of Bible Hill authorize the Commission in Committee to award the College Road Sidewalk Renewal project during the May 2021 meeting. Motion carried.

Localized flooding: Meadowland, Forest Hill, Retson areas

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg spoke of residential properties in the Meadowland, Forest Hill and Retson Drive areas that have regular flooding on their properties. The Committee discussed.

It was decided by consensus that the Commission defer this topic to the April 20, 2021 Regular Monthly Meeting, to bring to the Solicitor for advice.

Dangerous and unsightly premises complaint

Clerk and Treasurer informed the Committee of a recent anonymous complaint he received regarding dangerous and unsightly properties within the Village. The Committee discussed.

It was decided by consensus that the Commission in Committee instruct the Clerk and Treasurer raise the concern with the Fire Marshall. Motion carried.

Adjournment

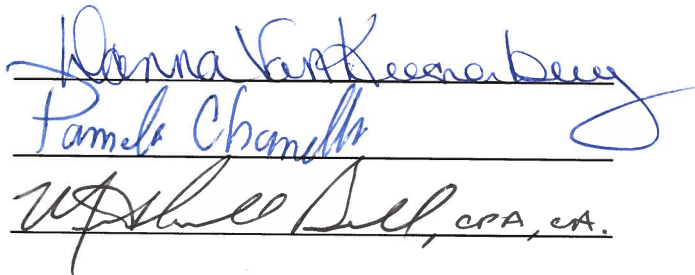
Moved by Kennedy that the April 13, 2021 Commission in Committee meeting of Village of Bible Hill be adjourned. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Deputy Chair Van Kroonenburg

Recording Secretary Chandler

Clerk and Treasurer Bell


Hanna Van Kroonenburg
Pamela Chandler
W. Phillip Bell, CPA, CA.