

Northeast Avalon Joint Council Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, April 19, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
Summit Centre, Mount Pearl, NL

ATTENDEES:

- Mr. Craig Williams, Conception Harbour
- Mr. Steve Tessier, CBS
- Mr. Joedy Wall, Pouch Cove
- Mr. Art Puddister, St. John's
- Mr. Brian Whitty, Torbay
- Mr. Sterling Willis, Paradise
- Mr. Sam Whalen, Colliers
- Mr. Jim Joy, Holyrood
- Mr. Pat Doyle, Avondale
- Mr. Randy Simms, Mount Pearl
- Ms. Peggy Roche, Torbay
- Mr. Bradley Power, Eastern Regional Service Board

REGRETS:

- Mr. Joe Butler, PC-SP
- Ms. Teresita McCarthy, Wabana
- Mr. Bert Hickey, LB-MC-OC

PROCEEDINGS:

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Craig T. Williams at 6:40 p.m.

2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Wall, that the Agenda of the NEAJC meeting of April 19 be adopted as tabled. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2017-010

3. **DELEGATION**

There was no delegation.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Joy, seconded by Mr. Puddister, that the Minutes of the March 15, 2017 meeting be adopted as tabled. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2017-011

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- a) Advocacy Calendar: The coordinator was asked to provide a copy of the advocacy plan at each meeting as a reminder for the group.
- b) Library Closures: The Chair noted that library closures have been seemingly prevented for this fiscal year. He noted that the group would still like to sit with Minister Kirby and discuss the issue. Mr. Power will send a meeting request to the Minister.

Action Item(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
Distribute advocacy plan in each meeting package.	Brad Power	Ongoing
Send a meeting request to Minister Kirby	Brad Power	Ongoing

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) Plastic Bag Ban Support Letters: The Chair asked that communities prompt their councils to respond if they have not done so already in regard to our request for input on a provincial ban on one-use plastic bags.
- b) Cost-Sharing Ratios: Details of the recent Provincial Government announcement regarding cost-sharing ratios was distributed to the group. The Chair noted that a letter will be developed that will outline any concerns/issues joint council members have about the new cost-sharing ratios. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Williams noted that his town in particular will undoubtedly run into issues with the new cost-sharing ratio for roads. The 50/50 ratio to be utilized through the Municipal Capital Works program will be prohibitive for many communities in his opinion.

Mr. Tessier noted that the change came as a surprise to many in the municipal sector. There was no advance notice.

Mr. Simms noted that he had heard about the impending change in general conversation with other municipal leaders.

Mr. Wall noted there was no consultation on the changes that he was aware of.

Mr. Williams noted the issue of cost-sharing ratios did not come up at the Premier's Forum on Local Governance last year.

Mr. Whalen stated that he feels the new ratios will mean many communities will receive zero support for local projects. Many communities are going to have to do roadwork on their own it seems.

Mr. Simms noted that Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador was part of a provincial press release where the President was quoted as providing support for the new ratios. He didn't feel as though the comments by the President of MNL represented the opinion of the entire MNL Board. Clarification should be sought on the MNL position, possibly at the upcoming MNL Municipal Symposium in Gander.

Mr. Puddister noted that he sits on the Board of MNL and he hadn't heard about the press release. He is interested in seeing how these changes will impact communities that qualify for multi-year municipal capital works.

Mr. Joy noted that new cost-sharing ratios may impede communities in the Conception Bay Centre region from constructing a new regional recreation centre as they were planning to do. The new ratios bring this project from a possible 90/10 cost-sharing ratio to 60/40. Much more money will be needed from the communities if this project in particular is to come to fruition.

Mr. Williams noted that in 1990 many communities took over ownership of many provincial roads. The cost of upkeep on these roads is enormous and the new cost-sharing ratios may mean repairs and upgrades will be shelved. This is truly unfortunate as there are many roads in hard shape in his region.

Mr. Wall noted that the statement by MNL in the provincial press release was very general in nature.

Mr. Puddister noted that he is not surprised by the change to cost-sharing ratios, especially considering the province is in hard financial shape. The answer to our problems is more money, but that's not available at any level. The money we see being distributed now is federally leveraged funding.

Mr. Tessier suggested that the Provincial Government could have phased in the new ratios. This would have been less of a hit to smaller communities. He believes roadwork is a big employment generator. With the focus of provincial funding being on water and sewer, he would like to see an analysis of which projects provide more jobs – water and sewer or roads.

Mr. Whalen noted that roads impacted by the 2016 Thanksgiving Day Storm are still in disrepair in his area. There were major washouts which are still impeding traffic safety. These issues will hopefully be addressed during summer road maintenance, but he is unsure at the current time if that's definitely the case. Something needs to be done to improve maintenance on provincial roads.

Mr. Joy noted that the 50/50 ratio for roads would be easier to accommodate if there was more money available for the projects in the first place. Communities would have to certainly prioritize, but at least work would get done. More money in the pot is what is needed in this regard.

Mr. Roche note that the cost-sharing ratio will affect her community for Torbay, too. She noted that there seems to be more favourable cost-share ratios for projects of regional importance. This likely has much to do with government's work to regional communities in the coming years.

Mr. Power noted that many communities throughout the Eastern region are looking at doing more group tendering. This proved to be more cost-effective for the Provincial Government when they looked at roadwork back in 2016 (province and municipalities tendered work together and saw cost savings as a result).

Mr. Willis noted that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a wide range of funding opportunities available to municipalities. He commented specifically on the infrastructure bank FCM coordinates. Interest on these loans is lower than a standard bank loan. Mr. Willis also comments on the Sustainable Communities Fund. He encouraged everyone to visit the FCM website for more information.

Mr. Joy stated that in his opinion the situation is dire from a provincial funding perspective. He feels everyone must do what they can to protect infrastructure through innovative means. He suggested that communities open a dialogue with one another in this regard. He suggested communities look at road painting and paving first.

- c) RESPONSE: Appeal Board Appointments: The Chair noted that a response had been received from Minister Joyce's office regarding our letter requesting that appointments be made to the Eastern Appeals Board as soon as possible. The response said:

“...the Department has been through the Independent Appointments Commission and will be appointing three new members to the appeals board within next day or so. In addition, the existing chair and member have been asked and agreed to stay on until appointments are finalized for their re-appointment or replacement as may be the case. As a result, before the end of the week we expect the full 5 member complement to be achieved.”

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Tessier provided a financial update to the group. The current bank balance for the NEAJC is \$7,845.00. Invoices have been sent to member communities and are now coming in.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Wall, seconded by Ms. Roche that the NEAJC adopt the financial report as presented. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2017-012

Mr. Simms said he feels larger member communities might be willing to pay more for membership moving forward. He suggested the group look at hiring a student this summer to do a research project on one-use plastic bags. The Chair and Mr. Power will look into potential funding sources. Mr. Williams will consult with the MNL committee responsible for advocating on behalf of municipalities for a ban on one-use plastic bags to see if this might be an opportunity to partner.

Mr. Tessier suggested that the NEAJC ask member communities to pay for the cost of doing the research suggested by Mr. Simms.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Ms. Roche that the NEAJC hire a summer student for the purpose of completing research on one-use plastic bags. This will be done in consultation with MNL and pending identification of funding. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2017-013

Action Item(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
Hire a summer student for the purpose of research on one-use plastic bags.	Mr. Power/Mr. Williams	Report for next meeting.

Mr. Wall left the meeting at 7:44 p.m.

8. EASTERN REGIONAL SERVICE BOARD UPDATE

Ms. Roche delivered the following report on behalf of the ERSB:

- The last meeting of the Eastern Regional Service Board was held on March 29. Detailed minutes from the February meeting are now posted online.
- At the recent meeting, the Board awarded a number of operational tenders. They were:
 - Waste collection for Conception Bay Centre, at a cost of \$538,200, including HST, for a period of 36 months. This contract was awarded to T2 Ventures Ltd.
 - Collection of recyclables at Waste Recovery Facilities for \$52.50 per metric tonne for 36 months. This contract was awarded to Newco.
 - Household Hazardous Waste collection for \$36,784.25, including HST for 36 months. This contract was awarded to Enviro-systems Inc.
- The CBC collection and HHW tenders represent a reduction in costs for the service. This is encouraging, and might be on account of the current business environment and state of the economy. Either way, it is positive news for the Board.
- The Board also discussed video surveillance guidelines for its facilities throughout the region. Surveillance at ERSB sites is necessary for safety and security of both staff and the facilities.

- Finally, the Board discussed a remote attendance policy for meetings. We landed on individuals having to be physically present at meetings in the future. Additional discussion will take place at the upcoming Board meeting.
- The next meeting of the Eastern Regional Service Board is May 11.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Update on Family/Consumer Firework Issue: Mr. Power noted that work by the Northeast Avalon Fire Chiefs Association on this issue is still ongoing, with an update expected any day now from their Chairperson, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Fire Chief Fred Hollett.
- b) Tour of Robin Hood Bay: Mr. Power noted that a tour of Robin Hood Bay is being explored. We will aim to have the tour happen over the summer break for those interested.
- c) Visit to Bell Island/Town of Wabana: Whereas the Wabana representatives were not present, this item was deferred until the next meeting. Mr. Power will reach out to Councillor McCarthy to discuss the opportunity further.

10. MEETING REQUESTS

- a) Members of Parliament: Mr. Williams noted these requests are ongoing. There hasn't been any response yet.
- b) NF Power: Mr. Power is working with Mr. Lorne Henderson from NF Power to coordinate a presentation at a future NEAJC meeting. Mr. Henderson may not be available for May, but possibly in June. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

11. ROUNDTABLE

- a) Federation of Canadian Municipalities Update: Mr. Willis provided a brief update on his work with FCM on behalf of the province. He provided a handout which will be distributed to all members following the meeting. He also encourages all municipalities to review the material and call him if they have any questions.
- b) Utility Taxation: Mr. Simms distributed a Memo from the City of Mount Pearl regarding utility taxation. The memo outlines how the current legislation governing the taxation of utilities is old and antiquated. He requests that the joint council lead the charge on having the legislation updated. The group agreed to distribute the memo to all members along with a form letter that can be sent to the Departments of Finance and Municipal Affairs which are both responsible for the *Taxation of Utilities and Cable Television Companies Act*. A discussion will also take place with MNL to determine the process for having this issue made into a resolution for an upcoming conference.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Simms, seconded by Ms. Roche that the NEAJC advocate for changes to the taxation or Utilities and Cable Television Companies Act per the tabled memo on the subject. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2017-014

Action Item(s)	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
Distribute the Mount Pearl memo regarding utility taxation to all councils.	Mr. Power	Immediately.
Develop a form letter for utilization by all member communities to advocate to the Provincial Government.	Mr. Power	Immediately.
Meet with MNL representatives to discuss a resolution at an upcoming conference	Mr. Williams/Mr. Simms/Mr. Power	TBD

12. NEXT MEETING – The next meeting will take place on May 24 in the Town of Conception Bay South.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Whalen, seconded by Mr. Tessier that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2017-015

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.