

## JOINT MAYORS ASSOCIATION OF TRINITY-BAY DE VERDE

# MINUTES

Wednesday, February 21, 2018 @ 8:00 p.m.  
New Perlican, NL

### ATTENDANCE:

There were 20 people in attendance, representing 6 communities.

### PROCEEDINGS:

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Clayton Branton at 8:00 p.m.

He welcomed guests to the Town of New Perlican.

#### 2. GUEST SPEAKER(S):

**Sean Martin, Municipal Assessment Agency –**

Mr. Martin introduced himself and passed along regrets on behalf of Mayor Betty Moore, the Avalon Director of the Municipal Assessment Agency (MAA), who was unable to attend as planned.

Mr. Martin handed out a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted his role with the MAA.

In 2016, assessment values were up in many areas. MAA is scheduled to deliver a new assessment in the fall of 2018. Staff are busy working on it now. The numbers noted in the presentation tonight are preliminary and represent a broad estimate of the anticipated results. The MAA wants to have a reasonably solid number for assessments for municipalities in June 2018. They are also looking at changing the date.

The Provincial Government completed a province-wide consultation on the *Assessment Act*, and changes are anticipated soon.

Previous assessments were provided in October. Starting next year they are hoping to mail out the notices in June instead. That will allow the MAA to deal with residents in advance of town budgets needing to be submitted.

The legislative changes are uncertain, but could pose other issues. We will have to wait and see.

Numbers are showing a good recovery now, but sales volumes are not going up – they seem to be plateaued. The assessments shouldn't see a large increase overall throughout the province in 2018.

The region saw a small dip in sale prices in 2016, but it is increasing now into 2018. There was a 2% appeal rate between 2014 and 2017, which is not a big number. Most municipalities reduced their mill rate as a result of the increase in assessments in that period, which reduced the impact on residents. The average tax bill went up about \$50 per household.

There are very few sales in the TBDV region compared to the rest of the province. Mr. Martin then outlined Sales versus Assessments from 2014-2017.

Mr. Burrage noted that most assessments are higher than average sale price. He attributes it to homes being on the market for \$80,000, but they sell for \$40,000. He doesn't think the assessed rates are relevant to the region. Mr. Martin said MAA takes sale prices into account, not listing price. The actual sale price is the number used to set assessments.

The TBDV assessment doesn't take into account other communities like Bay Roberts, Harbour Grace, etc. It is specific to the community itself.

Mr. Cumby noted New Perlican's specific case, whereas assessed value was \$70,000, but most properties sold for \$79,000, which is \$10,000 more than expected.

Ms. Coombs asked why assessed value and market price is so far apart? Mr. Martin said they use a base date, and they don't have a stake in the real estate market. Real estate agents often list for more than they'll sell for at the end of the day. MAA sets a market price for a reasonable sale in a reasonable situation by a reasonable buyer. Marketing and selling the property – the second part - is what MAA is interested in.

Mr. Hiscock said that a property is only as valuable as what a person is willing to pay it. Mr. Martin said that's the number MAA is looking for. Mr. Hiscock then asked if the assessed value is an indicator of where future values will be? Mr. Martin said no. It's a snapshot in time.

Ms. Martin asked if MAA assesses all properties. Mr. Martin said MAA only assesses properties that are covered under the legislation. Communities that charge poll tax are not included.

Mr. Martin said MAA has 244 municipal clients. 150 are small communities (500 or less parcels).

Mr. Murphy asked whether the assessment process includes everything on a property. Mr. Martin said it doesn't include vacant land in the assessment process - they are assessed and sorted separately. The numbers he presented tonight were residential sales, a residential property only (house and shed, etc.)

Mr. Martin said there are 5 primary economic zones used for the assessment process. There are sub zones as well.

The Chair asked about assessments on homes that are partially completed but "shelled in". Mr. Martin said they get assessed and then get reassessed when the people move in. The Chair said there's a long process to have the second assessment done. There's tax dollars being lost because of the time it takes to get the assessment done. He asked if there will be any improvements to the process and timeline. Mr. Martin said the long turnaround is not acceptable. He will look into it.

Mr. Martin said they take responsibility for the delay and apologized. He noted there is new staff in place and the process for a request has changed. The process in 8 weeks now moving forward. Sean said to call if the timeline doesn't improve. He assured everyone it would change.

Mr. Hiscock said councils have preconceived notion that everything (renovations, etc.) should be sent to MAA. Mr. Martin said they should be, but towns can set what they want to have contribute to the assessment. Towns need have to have a clear policy – can say the renovations need to be more than \$10,000 in value for a new assessment to go out. MAA is willing to work with communities to ease the burden.

Mr. Cumby noted the preliminary value changes noted in the presentation seem to be a negative. Mr. Martin said staff have work to do to verification, but if they are reflective of the current market they are likely to go down. The numbers provided tonight are preliminary. Staff are digging in now to finalize the numbers.

Mr. Martin said new construction will always have an impact, as well as renovations. That said, there's minimal change anticipated in the region for tax structures.

Mr. Martin thanked everyone for their input and said he is always available to chat with anyone. His direct line is 709-724-1533.

Mr. Martin noted MAA can hold off on mid-term assessments, and wait until the next year to issue a new bill. That's up to the towns. He said everyone should consider if that works for their respective town.

Ms. Doucet asked how many staff are at the MAA and where the offices are located. Mr. Martin said there are 3 offices – St. John's, Corner Brook and Gander. There are 9 Field Offices – Carbonear, Grand Bank, Grand Falls-Windsor, Stephenville and Deer Lake, among others. Staff from Gander do a lot of work in the TBDV area. Field work is done by staff in Carbonear.

Mr. Martin again thanked everyone for their time and attention.

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The minutes from the meeting of January 18, 2018 were presented for review and approval.

***MOTION: Moved by Mr. Hiscock and Mr. St. George that the minutes of January 18, 2018 be adopted with noted errors and omissions. All in favour. Approved.***

### **4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:**

**4.1. Review of Draft Letters** – Mr. Power read out the letters that were sent out following the last meeting. They were to Bell Mobility and Municipalities NL.

**4.2. UNESCO** – Mr. Cumby said work is still ongoing for the UNESCO designation for the Heart’s Delight Cable Station. It will take some time. The Minister of Tourism from Ireland recently visited the Cable Station, as well as the Irish Ambassador. They were very impressed.

**4.3. Roadwork Update** – Mr. Power provided info regarding the 2018 Edition of the Provincial Government Roads Plan.

**4.4. Melvin Harnum Request** – Mr. Hiscock provided some clarification on the request from the regional fire training group. The request is in support of the facility, which is separate than the operation of fire departments. Mr. Mahoney asked whether fire departments get specific budgets. Do the others who utilize the site contribute? Mr. Hiscock noted that Seaside Fire Department and LSDs don’t. Mr. Cumby said a follow-up with Mr. Harnum is warranted. Mr. Mahoney said all LSDs should pay, too. The group agreed that everyone should contribute. Ms. Snelgrove noted it was probably just an error. Mr. Mahoney said all communities should be billed equally. The Chair will contact the Fire Association and ensure they bill everyone.

***MOTION: Moved by Mr. Mahoney and seconded by Mr. Burrage that a letter be written to the Fire Association suggesting that all LSDs and other communities utilizing the site should contribute to the costs of the regional training grounds equally.***

## **5. FINANCIAL REPORT:**

The financial report was delivered by Ms. Kimberly Coombs (Heart’s Desire).

The bank balance as of January was \$957.69.

Since then there were two cheques written for \$75 for Executive Travel.

The association also paid bank fees of \$6.75, as well as previous fees of \$6.75.

The current bank balance as of February 21 is \$894.19.

Invoices for 2018 membership fees were sent out and some cheques are coming in. Members are asked to follow-up with their individual towns.

***MOTION: Moved by Ms. Coombs and Mr. Randall that the financial report be adopted. All in favour. Approved.***

## **6. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **Request from RecNL for Future Presentation** – The group agreed to having Ms. Charlotte Warford in to present on RecNL at the next meeting. The Chair will follow-up with Ms. Warford.
- b. **ACOA/MNL Project re: Functional Region Analysis** – Mr. Power distributed a news release highlighting a new project between MNL and ACOA and suggested the region should consider this project in the future.
- c. **MMSB Yard Composting Program** – For information purposes only. Mr. Power asked that the info be brought back to councils.
- d. **Roads Plan 2018 Edition** – The Chair noted there's not much for the region included in the Roads Plan from the Province, but can guide future advocacy. The Chair suggested that towns setup meetings with Minister Crocker to discuss local roadwork. The Minister was receptive to it the last time he met with us.

## **7. COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE:**

**7.1.** Mr. Cumby noted the upcoming **Planning Session** on April 14, 2018. Session will go ahead no matter how many confirm. Winterton wants to meet on the 28<sup>th</sup> Heart's Content, Old Perlican, Hants Harbour and Winterton to discuss partnering on service.

**7.2.** Mr. Branton asked about the **50th Anniversary Celebration** for Ms. Alice Cumby on March 1. He asked the group if we should get her a plaque? The group agreed.

***MOTION: It was move by Mr. St. George and Mr. Randell that the Joint Mayors Association present a plaque to Ms. Alice Cumby for her 50 years of municipal service. All in favour. Approved.***

Mr. Cumby added that there's an open house for Ms. Cumby at 2-4PM at the town hall. A reception at the recreation centre will take place at 7-10PM. The reception is open to the public.

**7.3** Mr. Power informed the group of the new website **FairWaste.ca**. He suggested everyone have a look and see how the Eastern Regional Service Board sets its fees.

**8. NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 21, 2018, in Salmon Cove.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:**

Seeing no further business before the group, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

*Secretary/Treasurer Kimberly Coombs*