

Northeast Avalon Joint Council Meeting

MINUTES

*Wednesday, February 21, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.
Town of Paradise, 11 McNamara Drive, Paradise, NL*

ATTENDEES:

- Joedy Wall, Pouch Cove (Chair)
- Bill Antle, Mount Pearl (Vice Chair)
- Sam Whalen, Colliers (Treasurer)
- Patrick Martin, Paradise
- Madonna Stewart-Sharpe, Portugal Cove-St. Philips
- Michelle Martin, Flatrock
- Mike Doyle, Harbour Main-Chapel's Cove-Lakeview
- Kevin Costello, Holyrood
- Owen Mahoney, Avondale
- Jamie Korab, St. John's
- Mary Thorne-Gosse, Torbay
- Bradley Power, Eastern Regional Service Board

PROCEEDINGS:

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joedy Wall at 6:33 p.m.
2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Whalen, seconded by Mr. Antle, that the agenda be adopted as tabled All in favour. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2019-006

3. **DELEGATION(S)**

a) MHA Ches Crosbie, Leader of the Official Opposition:

MHA Ches Crosbie began by introducing his newest colleague in the House of Assembly and former Paradise Town Councillor Paul Dinn.

MHA Crosbie said his focus for municipalities will be supports for population growth. He said population decline ultimately means a decline in tax revenue for communities throughout the province.

MHA Crosbie said the Provincial Government is now focused on the Atlantic Accord. He is worried that Newfoundland and Labrador may no longer be the principle beneficiary as a result of the negotiations.

Next MHA Crosbie spoke about equalization and health transfers from Ottawa. He said these programs need to be revisited. Newfoundland and Labrador is not getting its fair share.

MHA Crosbie posed the question “how do we adapt?” in relation to the changing face of the province. He suggested that government must work to keep young people here at home and increase the number of immigrants. In regard to the aging demographic specifically, they will begin drawing down more and more on government programs such as healthcare, etc. MHA Crosbie said we all need to bring young and active people into the economy. This can be achieved by having a thriving economy that creates jobs. We also can accomplish it by having a good cost of living. Low taxes, etc.

MHA Crosbie ended his comments by reiterating that the biggest challenge for towns and cities is the demographic challenge that currently exist. We need an affordable cost of living and an attractive job market. He said we have to instill confidence in the future and he has a vision and a plan.

Mr. Antle asked MHA Crosbie how he would address the spending problem that exists in Newfoundland and Labrador. MHA Crosbie said it’s a problem and an opportunity. He explained that 20% of the Public Service will retire over the next 5 years. The spending problem began in the second term of Danny Williams’ era. They didn’t make the adjustments we need now to live within our means. MHA Crosbie said he would digitize government, like vehicle registrations and license plates. He said we should be the leading jurisdiction in the world to provide service to the public. He also said the UK and Ireland are doing it very well and there are cost savings and advantages. He also said healthcare needs to get a hard look because there is lots of money being wasted.

Ms. Sharpe as about MHA Crosbie’s position on young people and immigration. She said young people are not finding jobs. Unions and government support the skilled trades, but the young people can’t even get a volunteer work term. Industrial engineering and electrical engineering are examples she referenced. MHA Crosbie said it’s not surprising that people are having difficulty finding jobs in the trades where all the large projects are concluding. He said there’s very few IT personnel being trained and we need more of them. Verafin is a prime example he said. They can’t find people with the training they need. He said we should reorganize our priorities differently in terms of the labour market.

Mr. Korab noted the significant amount of negativity in the media in recent years. He asked MHA Crosbie what he would do to tackle the negativity if he was elected Premier. MHA Crosbie said there is a great loss of confidence in the Province’s

future. He said however that we do have a great future, especially considering the enormous possibilities offshore. There's a bill currently going through parliament called Bill C69. It's an assessment act. It will displace the jurisdiction of exploration. It will take full control of offshore environmental issues. This bill will kill the sector we so desperately need. The Senate committee will be here in a few weeks. MHA Crosbie said we will hear about it no doubt. By 2050, we will be looking at new ways to utilize our resources. We need confidence and it starts with leadership.

Mr. Whalen said we all need to start thinking differently. We need to stop doing what has already been done. MHA Crosbie agreed and said we need to face the facts and truth – we need to do something other than what we've done in the past because we simply have no other choice. He said he would look at how best to deliver services in rural areas, so not to have larger centres always subsidizing other areas.

Mr. Martin said taxes are too high. He would like to see a plan to have taxes reduced. The much bigger issue in his opinion though is the cost of power. MHA Crosbie said he agrees and will reduce taxes. He will also release his rate mitigation plan soon to address the rising cost of power on account of Muskrat Falls. He will also get rid of the Liberal-imposed levy and the tax on insurance.

Chairperson Wall thanked MHA Crosbie for his time and wished him luck in the upcoming provincial election.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Doyle, seconded by Mr. Mahoney, that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, January 9, 2019 be adopted as tabled. All in favour. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2019-006

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) **Presentation by Mayor Mike Doyle re: Guiderails and Road Safety:**

Mayor Doyle is a certified registered safety professional. He said that employees of his town brought forward concerns about their safety related to the deplorable condition of guide rails throughout their community on provincially-maintained roads.

Mayor Doyle and Council contacted the Department of Transportation and Works and expressed their concern. They wanted the repairs addressed as soon as possible. The department's response was that there were no safety concerns or integrity issues to be addressed. Mayor Doyle and Council did not accept that answer and the pictures in his presentation show why – the guiderails were grown over, knocked down, bent up, etc. They were very clearly unsafe.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act the Town as an employer has a responsibility to keep employees safe. The council, as supervisors, also have a legislative responsibility. The OHS legislation is very clear in this regard. Therefore, Mayor Doyle and Council had to find a way to have the repairs made or at least have the Provincial Government acknowledge the situation.

There was an extensive amount of back and forth between the Town and the Provincial Government. He kept quoting legislation, OHS guidelines and the like. He also used the Provincial Government's own Master Specification Guide to make his case. Finally, after much debate, the Provincial Government took responsibility and made the repairs.

Mayor Doyle said that sometimes issues like these do not require mass media attention or political action. We simply need to know the legislation and know where liabilities lay. He was very proud of their accomplishment on this initiative and wants all other towns to know how they went about addressing a very serious safety issue in their community. A copy of Mayor Doyle's presentation is attached to these Minutes.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Whalen tabled the financial report for February:

- The current bank balance is \$8,127.35.
- There are no outstanding payables.
- There are over \$3,000 in outstanding membership fees, but they are trickling in day by day.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Whalen, seconded by Ms. Sharpe, that the Treasurer's Report for February 2019 be adopted as tabled. All in favour. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2019-007

7. EASTERN REGIONAL SERVICE BOARD UPDATE

Mr. Whalen delivered the ERSB report for February 2019:

The Eastern Regional Service Board met on January 30 in St. John's. The Board received presentations on monthly finances and the Robin Hood Bay Budget for 2019. The Board is in a good financial position. Robin Hood Bay is on par with last year as well.

The Board also received an update on the recently completed public engagement process. Over the course of three months, 543 surveys were collected from the Board's 30,000 clients. The results of the survey will be released toward the end of February. We will provide a more detailed presentation to the joint council on this initiative next month.

In addition to those items, the Board also approved a tender for three new pick-up trucks to support waste collection throughout the region. The value of the tender was \$114,733.20 including HST.

The Board also received an update regarding new joint councils. There is one new one in operation in Clarendville as of the end of 2018. There are three more soon to be established.

Finally, the Board discussed the ongoing issue with waste collection in cabin areas and for seasonal properties. Government has provided direction to the Board in this regard, which the Board is currently working through. A public announcement on the issue is forthcoming.

Joint Council members were reminded that monthly Board meetings are open to the public. The next one will take place Wednesday, February 27 at 7PM at the Holiday Inn Express near the airport.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **MNL Symposium:** The Chair reminded everyone that the Municipalities NL Symposium will be held on May 2-4 in Gander, NL. Everyone is encouraged to attend. The communities of Avondale, Pouch Cove and Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove indicated they will be in attendance.
- b) **Provincial Student Summer Jobs:** The Chair distributed a news release from the Provincial Government regarding summer job funding. A brief discussion took place about whether or not the joint council will bring on a student in 2019. Some ideas were presented and Mr. Power was tasked with looking into it.
- c) **Job Creation Partnership Program:** The Chair distributed a news release from the Provincial Government regarding the JCP Program. Those looking to apply are encouraged to get their application in as soon as possible.
- d) **Provincial Solid Waste Management Strategy Review:** Mr. Power distributed the Terms of Reference of the ongoing Solid Waste Management review process. He encouraged everyone to make a submission. Mr. Power also briefly referenced an upcoming meeting on waste management being coordinated by the Eastern Regional Service Board. He said additional information will be sent out in the coming weeks.

9. ROUNDTABLE

- a) **School Bus Issue:** Ms. Sharpe noted that her community is advocating to the Provincial Government to abolish the 1.6 kilometre bussing rule which says students within that distance to a school cannot avail of a school bus. Mr. Martin said he is also working on this issue. A letter from the joint council supporting the elimination of the rule will be considered in the future.
- b) **Insurance Companies and Guiderails:** Mr. Doyle reminded members present that if a motor vehicle accident damages a guiderail in a community, the insurance company for the owner of the car is liable for the damage. Mr. Power confirmed the same, and said many communities have great success receiving funds to fix guiderails through this process. Insurance companies typically pay for the damages quickly.
- c) **Regional Firefighter Training Facility:** The Chair noted that communities on the Northeast Avalon are exploring the possibility of constructing a regional firefighter

training facility. He will provide more details as they become available, but he's looking now for communities to show support for the initiative.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, in the Town of Conception Bay South.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Antle, seconded by Mr. Korab that the meeting adjourn. All in favour. Motion carried.

Ref#: NEAJC2019-005

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:58 p.m.