

Carberry Town Council, April 21, 2020

The council of the Town of Carberry met, widely spaced around the council table in the Municipal Offices, on Tuesday April 21, 2020, with Mayor Olmstead in the chair, and all members except Tolton present. Technology is now in place to attend meetings remotely, and was being tested during the meeting.

Once the meeting was called to order, Mayor Olmstead called for a period of silence in memory of Constable Heidi Stevenson, killed in the line of duty in Nova Scotia.

Finance and Accounts:

With the agenda and previous meeting's minutes approved, the financial statement for March 2020 was referred to council, and accounts totaling \$198,917.70 were approved for payment. Surpluses from 2019 were transferred to the Building and Equipment Reserves for use in 2020.

Planning Matters:

As discussed at the previous meeting, a Variation Order was passed to vary the lot size and area of a parcel at 233 Selkirk Street to enable the construction of a two-family dwelling in the Residential District.

By-Laws:

By-Law No. 4/2020, to amend the Reduced Speed School Zone by-law to extend the area covered to surround the schools and include Ottawa Street and Second Avenue, was given its first reading and referred to Council.

Unfinished Business:

As agreed at the last Joint Councils' meeting, Council agreed to pay NCL's ACAO to complete the payrolls for Town employees, Council, and Joint Staff. This amounts to half a day per week of her salary.

Council also agreed to hire Zaine McConnell as the Joint Utility Employee, with a starting date of November 24, 2019. (A housekeeping catch-up, of course)

Council has long been concerned about the state of Main Street, which is supposed to be maintained by the province. It is in poor shape, and in the present financial climate very likely to remain so. Because it is our Main Street, its condition reflects poorly on the town, and Council is considering asking to have it returned to the Town's care, despite the fact that this would be a downloading of responsibility from the province to municipal government. In consideration of this, the hope is to get some compensation for the state into which it has fallen when the transfer is enacted, or to get permission to spend Gas Tax funds on it as a special measure. A meeting has been arranged with Denise Jubenvill from Manitoba Infrastructure to get some answers about what can be done.

On the bright side, Council rescinded a previous resolution creating a debenture for the Fire Hall Extension Project. It will no longer be necessary as the funds are on hand. Administration and Council have worked on the budget several times over the past few months to achieve this.

The lot on Fourth Avenue that is owned by the town and used by an adjacent property owner is being studied. The property owner will be finding out from their lawyer whether the problem is lapsed paperwork or some such error. If they cannot produce proof that the land was purchased, the lot will have to be disposed of in a proper manner, as the adjacent owner on the other side has expressed interest in it as well.

The Lagoon Project has received some good news. The engineering study submitted to the province has already begun to receive some attention, so the advertisement by Conservation and

Climate asking for public comment will be in the next issue of the Banner. With the process that far along, the project may well catch the eye of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program [ICIP] granting body.

One of the necessities for by-law enforcement is the naming of a 'screening officer,' who is the first line of arbitration for objections to tickets and compliance orders offered by the Commissionaires or any by-law enforcement officer. An ad was placed, and two offers received. The candidates are both well-qualified, and their proposed fees are similar. The CAO was asked to do some negotiating to determine the best hourly price and minimum hourly callout. Without any experience to go on, it nevertheless seems likely that the job could be done on a one day per month schedule, and cases could be grouped together to take the least time. Only experience will tell; both applicants will be asked if they would accept a short initial contract, to be adjusted when the demands of the job are better known. Given the likelihood in a small community of occasional conflicts of interest, there is also the possibility of offering the second choice candidate the chance of performing as an alternate officer. The CAO will present his recommendation to the next meeting.

A letter from Erik Forbes asks Council to waive back taxes on the old bank at 33 Main Street, and to accept ten years of taxes at \$500 per year, in consideration of the repair and renovation of the site. Council discussed the matter of tax incentives generally, and along Main Street in particular, and agreed that to ensure fairness, reduce haggling, and provide sanctions for failure to complete undertakings, a policy for tax incentives should be crafted. They then agreed to offer Forbes a letter of assurance that he will get his tax break when the policy is drawn up.

The Development Agreement with Simon Ryan has been amended, and is now registered with the Land Titles Office in Brandon.

Council took time to discuss details of the COVID-19 pandemic as it affects us locally. Councillor Muirhead reported that he is hearing of some very serious gouging by profiteers in the PPE market, but that overall it seems that the isolating efforts everyone is going through are keeping "the curve" pretty flat around here. Councillor Anderson was concerned as to the finances locally, the layoffs and restraints are going to cause many people difficulties, and we will probably have to face ratepayers needing to defer their taxes. What provisions are in place? Because the town taxes are due in September, we won't see as much hardship, assuming that things ease up before then. Interest charges and penalties will be waived for a while, and staged installment payments of taxes perhaps accepted if necessary.

McCain has just sent out word that because the bulk of their sales from Carberry's plant are to the hospitality and foodservice sector in the United States, which is all but shut down, they have issued temporary layoffs to a large proportion of their staff, and are looking at reduced contracts for the next crop year.

Muirhead wondered if the EDO could be encouraged to assist local businesses under stress to access all the federal aid to which they may be entitled.

Councillor Sudak agreed that the EDO has been active and effective in getting word out through the Facebook page and the pixel board, and congratulated her on her timely response to questions and suggestions. She has been very effective in working from home. He also noted that the Fire Department's drive-by birthday greetings have been a bright spot for the kids enduring isolation, and have got a lot of praise in the community. He also gave a shout out to all the front line workers — in health care, transport and distribution; to which Councillor Anderson added that he is fed up with being called a "hero" and like all the workers is just doing his job in difficult times. He asked that people be just as thankful of all who keep at their work, including cleaning

staff and store clerks.

CAO Stephenson agreed that thanks are due to all employees continuing with their work. The office is for the most part still working in place, and the Public Works are down to two staff who are managing to keep up with their workload well.

Mayor Olmstead gave praise to the Financial Officer, whose work has been much complicated by the pandemic, and offered that the Chamber of Commerce, who had to skip this year's Award Night, will be returning next year. There was talk of specially recognizing those who have made it possible to get through this time of isolation so much easier. He reminded everyone to stay home, stay safe, and socially distance as required. It can be hard, especially with loved ones isolated in care, but this will pass. If you need help, reach out; there are many kinds of support available.

General Business:

A firm called Safe Sidewalks has made a presentation to Public Works about their service to level sidewalks to reduce tripping hazards and facilitate the movement of wheelchairs and scooters. For a retainer of \$5000, they offer to fix 30-40 tripping hazards around the town. They have specialized equipment to lift or lower sidewalk panels on a piecework basis, and can work until the budget figure is used up. Council agreed that this sounds like a good idea and approved the foreman to accept the offer of a \$5000 Trip Hazard Removal Program.

A resident has requested the removal of a boulevard tree along Second Avenue to allow some light into their garden. Normally, the town will not remove a healthy tree with no safety concerns, but in this case the tree is one of six close-spaced conifers, and will not be missed. They will allow Public Works to do the job.

AllNet has proposed to upgrade the municipal web site. The package they are offering has many very useful features including document handling, forms creation and management, security, polling, calendars and directories. The firm has prepared sites for many Manitoba municipalities, and they manage to keep each one unique; the similarities are in features, not in style and presentation. The cost of \$4,800/yr. is well within the range available. The EDO will be approved to go ahead; it will take about 12 weeks from order to unveiling. In the absence of a Carberry newspaper, a web site like this is more and more necessary to reach constituents.

The Seton Centre sent its financial statements for the past year, and requested a grant for 2020. Council agreed to grant them \$750 for the year.

The Agricultural Society also sent its financial statements for the year, and requested their annual grant. It was noted that the pandemic will take a toll on the Society's income for the year. Council approved their customary annual grant of \$3000.

The Friends of Camp Hughes sent a financial statement and their plans for the steady improvement of the site, which is now a provincial and federal heritage site, and indeed a unique display of the conditions and techniques of trench warfare in the First World War. They consider the support of the town and NCL as central to their ability to access other grants. They asked and received a grant of \$2000. As some of Council had never been to the site, they were urged to check it out, while taking proper social distancing measures of course.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, council moved to close the Art Sear Park playground equipment until the public risk is reduced and Council can re-open the park by resolution.

An important component of an animal control policy is the ability to house animals collected by an Animal Control Officer. Council was pleased to hear that Carrie Baron has agreed to act as a holding kennel, and has offered reasonable fees for the service. Further on the subject, the applications for the post of Animal Control Officer will close very shortly, and the post can be

filled.

The financial hardships and uncertainties of the pandemic have caused the council to defer any further Tax Sale Interest and penalty charges until the pandemic is resolved, or at a maximum August 31, 2020. The sale itself is not cancelled.

In consultation with the lawyer, a draft general service agreement contract has been drawn up, to be used wherever services are offered to the Town. It provides for and describes the obligations of the service provider and the Town, and the conditions that apply. The contract would be for lesser contracted services, but for larger projects such as the fire hall extension, a considerably more detailed contract would be entered into.

It has been usual to hold a free pool day and Barbecue on Canada Day staffed by Council, but owing to the pandemic, it is likely that it can't be held at that time this year. It is hoped that the event can be moved to a time in late August, by which time it will be even more appropriate and beneficial. It was also mentioned that the Staff Appreciation BBQ should also take place sometime in August to celebrate all the hard work and dedication of Town, Joint, and NCL staff put into their work for our community.

Council agreed to continue to support Carberry Collegiate with a \$500 scholarship for a graduating student. The 2020 Grad will be held, one way or another, on June 25, 2020.

Council agreed to adopt the Evergreen Environmental Construction and Demolition Waste Disposal Policy.

Communications:

Way to Go Consulting offers services as SEO. Council declined the offer.

The Minister of Municipal Relations sent out a notice about the Flood Preparedness Program and the Disaster Financial Assistance program.

She also sent a letter outlining the government's efforts under the Pandemic to realign expenses to trim non-essential services and shift funding to front-line services especially in Health. She asks all government bodies to cut back as much as possible, and consider how their work will be done once the pressure to isolate is eased.

The Construction Association of Rural Manitoba has created a tender platform called PlanPoint, which is a local version of MERX, the national tender platform. It can seek quotes, RFPs and tenders for work in this area.

McCain Foods advises that because their product is primarily used by the foodservice/hospitality sector which is all but completely shut down, they have been forced to issue temporary layoffs until things ease up. They will need less raw stock too, so contracts for potatoes will be smaller. Apparently they have completely closed several plants, but Carberry remains in operation though only for one product line. Capital projects and purchases are on indefinite hold.

The McCain Clear Lake Classic has been postponed at least until July 28. A cancellation date of July 16 has been set if the pandemic response measures have not been cleared.

MPI sends word that it has increased the refund sent to Fire Departments called out to motor vehicle accidents effective March 1, 2020.

Around the Table:

Councilor Sudak reported that the Manitoba 150 celebrations scheduled for June 20 are cancelled. He thought it possible that if there are any contracts that oblige the committee to use the entertainment companies and individuals, that it might be possible to add them to an event late in the year to celebrate (hopefully) the easing of the isolation requirements, and hold a local

ceremony with the popular local amenities like “Touch a Truck,” the Fire Department’s Junior Firefighter program, local vendors and the like. Proceeds could be passed back to the MB 150 committee to run the rescheduled event. It was agreed to bring the idea up at the Joint Meeting. Councilor Muirhead asked how the interaction with the Neepawa Banner is going. They have accepted any press releases offered, but it isn’t sure that people are looking each week expecting a Carberry/NCL page of goodies. The amount of advertising the Banner is getting from Carberry isn’t known.

Muirhead also asked what the status of the old shop was. He was advised that until some more cement work is done outside the new Fire Hall, there are still some things in storage there. The building will be handed over to Robert Smith when it’s empty, and he will need a winter to complete what he wishes to do.

He asked what had become of the pictures taken of the councils, and was advised there was a slight delay due to Covid-19.

He also noted that there had been two letters, respectively from Brad Graham and Steve Denton, which were sent to the town and circulated as part of the Council package, and were not read aloud into the record of the meeting. Council apologized for the oversight.

Lastly, he raised the question of NCL’s lack of response to Carberry’s recent proposal for the funding of the office expenses, specifically in regards to wages. With the rest of Council’s approval, he suggested taking a hard line at the upcoming joint meeting to insist on an answer — whatever it may be. The answer bears on the budgeting process which can’t be further delayed. A resolution will be prepared to present to the Joint Councils to force a vote.

Councilor Anderson noted that in a recent letter from Edith Anderson and Bill Kalinowich was a suggestion that made a lot of sense. Though the issue of a public bathroom has died down, it would still be possible to put a bathroom in the building to the east of the municipal office, where there is plumbing and hydro. The facility would serve the Farmers’ Market and other events held in the CP/Pioneers’ Park. A cost will be worked out to see if the idea is practical.

The reporter pointed out that he had a letter from NCL advising him that his services would not be required for their meetings. He asked if he still had a job, as the letter also advised him that he would be sent the agenda and correspondence for the meeting of Joint Councils on April 28. Council assured him that as a Joint Employee, he still had a job reporting on town and joint meetings, and that the matter of the unilateral laying off of a joint employee would be raised at the Joint Councils’ meeting on the 28th.

Mayor Olmstead reported that he had been asked if the walking path was still a go. It’s still unconfirmed, but it should be possible; Zenith hasn’t said that it will cancel the early summer project.

CAO Stephenson announced that it looks as though the Commissionaires will be able to start work by early May.

The Community Foundation has granted MADD the funds for a memorial bench, and would like to determine an appropriate location. Public Works will be consulted for their input.

A meeting will shortly be held to determine the number of Animal Units the feedlot to the west of town on 351 will be allowed to house. The historical level was extremely high, but the reduction shouldn’t prevent the use of the land for a feedlot. Regardless, any figure over 300 AU will require a manure management plan. It will be an interesting compromise.

The Andersons also have land to the north of the Oliver subdivision they are looking in to dividing into building lots. The likelihood is that they will ask to join the town’s sewer system.

The Isolation requirements of the Medical Officer of Health are to be continued for another period, and testing will become more available.

The town's insurance will rise by 8.92% to about \$91,000.

The hole created by subsidence between the Credit Union and 43 Main has been filled. Apparently it was in fact draining into the crawl space of 43 Main.

Stephenson reported that he has completed the first of his CMMA courses, and has started on another two. He was heartily congratulated.

The budget has been nearly approved, there will be a meeting on Thursday the 23rd to finalize so that notice can be sent to the Banner for Friday.

Two properties on Simcoe St. were discussed, one is to be demolished this year and the other has been closed due to safety reasons. Council will further discuss options as they arise.

People are advised that there has been a rash of break-ins and rifling of cars. Lock your car and your doors. Quads have been stolen; there are people taking advantage of the empty streets to cause problems.

Council then went in-camera to discuss personnel issues. After coming out of in-camera they adjourned the meeting at 11:25 PM.