



Special Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 16, 2020 5:30 PM
County of Essex Civic Centre,
360 Fairview Avenue West
Committee Room "C"
Essex, Ontario

1. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Larry Snively
Deputy Mayor Richard Meloche
Ward 1 Councillor Joe Garon
Ward 2 Councillor Kim Verbeek
Ward 3 Councillor Chris Vander Doelen
Ward 3 Councillor Steve Bjorkman
Ward 4 Councillor Sherry Bondy

Regrets: Ward 1 Councillor Morley Bowman

Also Present: Chris Nepszy, Chief Administrative Officer
Doug Sweet, Director, Community Services/Deputy CAO
Jeffrey Morrison, Director, Corporate Services/Treasurer
Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services
Heather MacDonald, Manager, Finance and Business Services
Peter Mullins, Assistant Manager, Finance
Robert Auger, Town Solicitor, Legal and Legislative Services, Clerk

A Special Council Meeting was held for the purpose of updating Council on the Town of Essex's continuing response to measures related to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

2. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

3. Adoption of Published Agenda

a) Special Council Meeting Agenda for March 16, 2020

Moved by Councillor Bjorkman

Seconded by Councillor Bondy

(SP20-03-001) That the published agenda for the March 16, 2020 Special Council Meeting be adopted as presented.

Carried

4. Adoption of Minutes

There were no adoption of minutes.

5. Public Presentations

6. Reports from Administration

- a) Chris Nepszy , Chief Administrative Officer

CAO Verbal Report re: Update to Council on the Town of Essex continuing response and measures related to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

Chris Nepszy, Chief Administrative Officer informed Council that the Town of Essex's operations remains the same and the message to the Town is that business is continuing as usual except for the rental of recreational facilities. Inspections and permits are being approved. Administration is trying to think of the reasons why people would attend Town Hall, such as purchasing dog tags, paying taxes, obtaining marriage licences and not limit those services but handle them in different ways. Signs have been placed on the facilities which encourage residents to do their business by using the drop box or online, etc. There has been nothing from the Province to date, but administration is trying to prepare for what will happen when Council may not be able to meet and what that means for Town business, such as getting tenders approved and keeping the work going.

Currently Council is able to meet with social distancing, but the use of the County Council Chamber is dependent on how long the County building will be open. Decisions are being made for the Town and Administration is trying to plan for that accordingly. There may be some difficulty ahead such as staff working from home and layoffs.

Mayor Snively stated that he did not want the tendering process affected as he did not want planned road work held up.

The C.A.O. assured Council that he is working with the Town Solicitor to see if something that can be done with an amendment to the Procurement By-law, and if so they will have something for the next meeting.

Councillor Verbeek stated that there was potential for phone meetings and discussions to bring Council together for discussion purposes.

The C.A.O. noted that IT is bringing additional training on Microsoft Office 360 which allows for video conferencing. If the matter cannot wait for a meeting to be set up for information to be passed on we will set up these options.

Mr. Nepszy advised Council that a lot of time is being put into handling the COVID-19 matter, and asked for Council's patience and they will complete what needs to be done.

b) Jeffrey Morrison, Director, Corporate Services
Verbal Corporate Services Report

Mr. Morrison, Director, Corporate Services informed Council he had three items to bring before them tonight in response to measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

i) By-Law Appoint a Deputy Treasurer

Mr. Morrison reported that currently we did not have a deputy-treasurer and that the position should be filled in light of the current situation.

ii) Cost Centre to Track Costs Associated with COVID-19

Mr. Morrison noted that down the road we may need to analyze the costs associated with COVID-19 and come back to Council for approval if we are not able to absorb those costs in the general operating funds. Human resources have been keeping up to date on changes that are a reflection of COVID-19 and they have been piggy backing emails to staff to Council so they will be aware of what is going on.

iii) Tax Payments by Telephone

In order to keep people out of the building he wished to be given the authority to assess the situation and determine whether tax payments by credit cards would be needed and for how long. He noted that they had removed the option of paying for taxes by credit

card over the phone two years ago and was reluctant to reinstate it but it does allow another level of service for people.

Councillor Bondy questioned whether there was a way the Town could charge those using the credit cards or encourage them to use a cheque instead.

Mr. Morrison stated that a fee could not be added at the terminal, but we might be able to add a 4% fee to their bill. First he would have to see if it was feasible and set the rate at a certain percentage. The Town currently provided opportunity to pay through online banking, virtual city hall, cheques, and through the drop box, so it was not necessary to implement credit card payments immediately.

After discussion Council decided to keep the payment options as it and revisit the matter if needed at a later date.

7. Adjournment

Moved by Deputy Mayor Meloche

Seconded by Councillor Steve Bjorkman

(SP20-03-002) That the meeting be adjourned at 5:51 PM

Carried

Mayor

Clerk