


TATAMAGOUCHE WATER UTILITY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee was held at the Tatamagouche Library on August 22, 2019 at 10:00am.

Present:	<p>Councillor Mike Gregory, Chair Mayor Christine Blair Deputy Mayor Geoff Stewart Gloria Randall, Citizen Representative Willett Stevenson, Citizen Representative David Scharf, Citizen Representative Heather Maddigan, Finance Manager Michelle Newell, Director of Public Works</p>
Approval of Agenda:	<p>Moved by Willett Stevenson Seconded by David Scharf</p>
Approval of Minutes:	<p>The Minutes of the meeting on November 13, 2018 were approved by the Committee.</p> <p>Moved by Mayor Christine Blair Seconded by Gloria Randall</p>
Business Arising:	<p>The application for abandonment of the water line on Highway 246 has been submitted to the UARB. No response from the board at this time.</p> <p>The Tammie Wall property has been sold to David Scharf's daughter so he will be in conflict with any future votes regarding this property. The new owner is aware of the current water issue.</p>
Operating Budgets:	<p>Heather Maddigan reviewed the utility budget.</p> <p><u>2018/19 Fiscal Year</u> An audit of the County financials for fiscal year 2018/19 was completed by Grant Thornton and approved by Council. This review included comparison to the water utility budgets. The Tatamagouche Water Utility had a small deficit of \$1,740. Expenses remained consistent when compared to previous years. All was in line as expected with the exception of \$21,000 more in extra water treatment expenses due to the unexpected repair to old equipment/sensors. This was however offset by additional revenue. The Utility debt was paid off and an additional \$12,300 was added to the filter reserve to bring the balance to \$94,000. With no capital projects in fiscal 2018/19, and without the annual debt payment of \$14,000, we should end fiscal 2019/20 in a better position.</p> <p>Internal statement/Grant Thornton documents were included in the package as distributed to the committee prior to the meeting.</p>

	<p><u>Three Year Budget</u></p> <p>2019/20: the current rate study was used as a base to set rates for this year. This is the final year of the current rate study. Councillor Gregory posed a question about the water tower condition (inspected 3-4 years ago) and was informed it is in good shape. Expenses will remain fairly consistent over the next 3 years, with slight increases for inflation. We are also anticipating the revenue will increase (approximately \$8,500) due to higher rates. In general, the expenses have been budgeted to be consistent with last year. Heather noted that \$15,000 has been included for Legal Services in relation to UARB hearing 246 for 2019/20. For 2020/21 the \$15,000 budgeted for Legal Services will be replaced with a \$10,000 budget for a rate study. The expectation is that the outcome on the Highway 246 water issue may trigger a rate review. We have also kept the water treatment expenses at the current year level as our equipment continues to age. We also need to repair a waste storage tank which is leaking. For 2021/22 we are not expecting any large expenses. With the elimination of the debt payment we will be saving \$14,000 annually. The balance of the capital reserve is \$474,000 which could fund the 246 water line. Gas tax funds could also be used, upon approval of Council. There were no other questions/comments.</p> <p>The Committee approved the 3-year operating budget with the following motion:</p> <p>That the Committee recommends to Council that the 3-year operating budget for the Tatamagouche Water Utility for years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 be approved”.</p> <p>Moved by Willett Stevenson Seconded by David Scharf</p> <p>All in favour</p>
<p>Utility Bill Write off Request</p>	<p>Kim Langille submitted a request to have the consumption portion of her water bill for January to March 2019 forgiven. The total amount is \$1284.12. Her property was vacant, and although she had turned her water off inside her home, the pipe between her water meter and shutoff froze, resulting in a leak. She was under the impression that would be sufficient and had not contacted the water utility to coordinate a shut off at the curb. Her previous water bills included only a flat rate for the connection but zero consumption, as the house was vacant. Upon reviewing the history of similar situations, the following cases were found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2018: request from Acadian Beverage Room to forgive a bill due to water leak was denied. The complaint was that utility staff had broken a pipe when replacing the meter, but the owner repaired it before an adequate investigation could be done • September 2016: request from Creamery Square to forgive bill due to water leak was approved. Staff hadn't shut off the water at the curb as requested. • August 2013: The consumption portion of a water bill on Queen Street was forgiven. A leak in the building had gone undetected for quite some time, and the elderly gentleman who had been renting the space had not seen the leak. <p>The following motion was made:</p>

	<p>That the TWUC recommends that the water bill for 215 Main Street, covering the period of January 12, 2019 to March 28, 2019, be reduced by the usage amount of \$1,284.12 to reflect water lost during an undetected plumbing leak.</p> <p>Moved by Willett Stevenson Seconded by David Scharf</p> <p>All in favour</p> <p>The next round of water bills will include guidance to the public regarding contacting the Public Works office to disconnect water services to vacant buildings.</p>
<p>Fire Department water use for resident pool filling:</p>	<p>The Tatamagouche Fire Department is using water from the system to fill private swimming pools and keeping any proceeds. This practice must be discontinued as the Utility is not receiving the proceeds for the value of the water, and because the large water demand created by filling the fire truck make it difficult for utility staff to track water leaks. Utility staff to meet with the fire chief to discuss.</p>
<p>Next Meeting:</p>	<p>Next meeting date TBD pending response from UARB on Highway 246 waterline.</p>
<p>Adjournment:</p>	<p>Moved by David Scharf</p>  <p>Michelle Newell, Recording Secretary</p>