



Minutes

The Blue Mountains Special Meeting of Council

Meeting Date: April 29, 2019
Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Town Hall, Council Chambers
32 Mill Street, Thornbury, ON
Prepared by Corrina Giles, Town Clerk

A. Call to Order

Mayor Alar Soever called the meeting to order with all members in attendance.

Also in attendance Interim Chief Administrative Officer Shawn Everitt, Director of Finance and IT Services Ruth Prince, Director of Infrastructure and Public Works Reg Russwurm, Director of Human Resources Jenn Moreau, Director of Planning and Development Services Nathan Westendorp, Acting Director of Community Services Ryan Gibbons.

Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Odette Bartnicki

Seconded by: Peter Bordignon

THAT the Agenda of April 29, 2019 be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda, being the inclusion of a Closed Session at Agenda item D., Carried.

▪ Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and general nature thereof

NOTE: In accordance with the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* and the Town Procedural By-law 2018-20, Council Members must file a written statement of the interest and its general nature with the Clerk for inclusion on the Registry.

None

B. Public Comment Period

B.1 Public Comment Period (each speaker is allotted three minutes)

NOTE: In accordance with the Town Procedural By-law 2018-20 fifteen minutes is allotted at the Council Meeting to receive public comments regarding Town matters. The speaker shall provide their name and address, and shall address their comments to the Chair. Comments shall not refer to personnel, litigation or potential litigation matters, or regarding matters that are a follow-up to a Public Meeting.

None

C. Presentation

C.1 Chris Loreto and John Matheson, Strategy Corp, Re: Service Delivery Review, Initial Approach

John Matheson of Strategy Corp spoke providing Council with the background of the first report prepared for The Blue Mountains two years ago, further noting that a problem was identified years ago that The Blue Mountains pays 26% of the Grey County levy, but that only 7% of the County's population lives in The Blue Mountains. Mr. Matheson noted that this is not favourable for the Town, but that this is how the system is supposed to work

under the *Municipal Act*, it is not the most satisfying for the Town. Mr. Matheson noted that at the time the initial report was written, that there were two broad ways that the Town could approach this inequity, including looking at the County structure and the other was to change the way the County was operating. Mr. Matheson noted that this is still a concern.

Mr. Matheson noted that in January 2019, the new provincial government, with a focus on fiscal reform and structural reform, indicated that it will consider a regional review. The Province's report will focus on defined regions, districts and counties, but this review may impact other areas and will be available in June 2019.

Mr. Matheson noted that the provincial review does not bear directly on The Blue Mountains or Grey County, but the subject of the report can only be influential in the immediate term, but also in the years ahead for subsequent rounds of municipal reform. The report will focus on a specific area of regions and districts and Simcoe County.

Mr. Matheson noted that the initial report focused on four options, which are relevant, including changes to contribution model, influence expenditure budget of the County, change portfolio of services provided by the County ie. download Grey County Roads within The Blue Mountains to The Blue Mountains, and change the funding tools. Mr. Matheson noted that Council has requested StrategyCorp to update the initial report, and incorporate into the report and provide additional options.

Chris Loreto then spoke noting that the objective is to develop a preliminary framework for facilitating a successful public consultation that will provide The Blue Mountains with guidance as to how to improve service delivery to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to provide recommendations on service delivery governance options. Mr. Loreto provided a broad approach to the assignment, including public engagement, a session with neighbouring municipalities administrative and elected officials and to consider input and potential governance models and present a final report to Council on June 24.

Mr. Loreto spoke regarding strategic considerations, include a well facilitated forum that is supported by strong foundational information on current service delivery responsibilities and arrangements.

Mr. Loreto spoke regarding their recommended approach for citizen dialogue and reviewed the proposed session agenda. Mr. Loreto noted that the engagement will include a citizen dialogue approach, including the areas of discussion including planning, transportation, recreation and cultural services, and economic development. Participants will be solicited through public announcement, posting on the website, an eblast from the Town, and including key stakeholder organizations. Mr. Loreto noted that it will be a one-day session. Mr. Loreto noted that in speaking with staff, they decided on these four areas based on the fact that the service can be delivered locally or regionally, or services that have a high-level service interaction and/or geographic attachment.

Mr. Loreto spoke regarding the briefing materials for public consultations, including who does what and why, and to provide information on spending, scope of services, legislative parameters, and service levels, delivery models, evolution and trajectory of The Blue Mountains.

Mr. Loreto spoke regarding the next steps, including the citizen dialogue to be held on May 11, 2019 at the Beaver Valley Community Centre, at 11:00 am.

Councillor Potter spoke questioned why roads and transportation are separated, Mr. Loreto spoke in response noting that there will be a focus on public transit.

Councillor Potter questioned if affordable housing will be discussed, Mr. Loreto spoke noting that transportation, planning or economic development may include affordable housing and service areas. Mr. Matheson noted that there are ways that The Blue Mountains can optimize its dollars at the County, including what the County pays for or how it pays for it.

Mayor Soever spoke noting that the current value assessment system is problematic for The Blue Mountains as assessments continue to increase faster than other areas of Grey County. Mayor Soever noted that the amount of revenue The Blue Mountains has to spend has an impact on its residents, further noting that The Blue Mountains sends more money per household to the County than any other municipality in Grey County. Mayor Soever encouraged StrategyCorp to include current value assessments in the discussions. Mr. Matheson spoke in response noting that the report will deal with revenue generation, and that this can put out to the public, but he feels that the consultation will be a user group perspective. Mayor Soever spoke noting that he does not believe that current value assessment is working.

Councillor Matrosovs spoke noting that the session scheduled for May 11, 2019 is very soon and questioned if an alternative is available should anyone be unavailable to participate on that day. Mr. Loreto noted that comments can be provided online as well, and confirmed that the materials will be publicly available. Councillor Matrosovs noted that there are casual users and experts, and that there are many residents that are both casual and experts and they should be permitted to comment on all. Councillor Matrosovs questioned if Council can attend the session, Mr. Loreto spoke in response noting that yes Council can attend and participate.

Deputy Mayor Bartnicki spoke expressing concern with the selected date, noting that there are two significant events in The Blue Mountains scheduled for May 11 and noted the public may be unable to attend due to previous commitments. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki also expressed concern for the 40 – 60% of taxpayers that do not reside in The Blue Mountains and questioned how they will be reached to provide comment.

Deputy Mayor Bartnicki then spoke expressing concern that the direction being taken is not in keeping with Council's motion, and questioned if the direction taken by StrategyCorp is consistent with Council's direction. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki noted that StrategyCorp has indicated that one way for The Blue Mountains to recoup some of the 26% paid to Grey County was through political means. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki noted that both she and Mayor Soever have visited just about every Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Grey County and have indicated that there is a \$9 million dollar difference in what The Blue Mountains pays versus what others pay to the County and that The Blue Mountains will get that back, and when this happens, the eight other municipalities will have to bear that load primarily. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki noted that they have received positive comments from the County and the other municipalities. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki asked if Grey County has been included in this session, and questioned why roads is not included as it is the largest expenditure at the County. Mr. Loreto spoke in response noting that StrategyCorp's plan is consistent with Council's motion, and they will be updating and building on the report they provided in the past. Mr. Loreto noted that the report will note how we can improve services and what tools are within the Town's control to deliver services more efficiently.

Councillor Bordignon spoke noting that May 11 is fast approaching and noted that we need to ensure attendance at the event. Mr. Loreto spoke noting that the invitation will be e-blasted out and that stakeholders and e-subscribers will be made aware, further noting that there is an opportunity for the public to provide written comments as well. Mr. Loreto noted that StrategyCorp is to report to Council by the end of June.

Councillor Sampson spoke questioning if there is an alternate date in May available, further noting that joint services agreements can be considered, and that we need to consider the best model available. Interim CAO Shawn Everitt spoke noting that they will look at dates to determine if there is a better date that will provide more notice to the public.

Deputy Mayor Bartnicki spoke noting that the Communications Committee have advised that the e-blast has just 500 subscribers, and that the timing of the event will not be included in the Town's newsletter. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki noted that the Town will not receive a representative participation if the call for participants is to only those in the eblast and the citizens groups.

Councillor Uram spoke expressing concern with the timeline, noting that this requires a more fulsome review. Councillor Uram noted that social services should be included, and expressed concern that a vast amount of the public are being left out of this consultation as ¾ of the Blue Mountains taxpayers do not live here fulltime. Councillor Uram noted that with respect to planning and political issues, The Blue Mountains needs affordable housing and transportation, further noting that there is an affordability issue within this community.

Councillor Potter spoke noting that he would like to attend the event, but that he has another commitment on this day. Councillor Potter noted that the event should be scheduled on a later date to get the word out, to increase participation and allow stakeholders to participate. Councillor Potter noted that attainable housing is an economic development issue for The Blue Mountains as people cannot afford to live here. Mr. Loreto spoke noting that he agrees with respect to the attainable housing issue and noted that The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation are looking to develop affordable rentals in The Blue Mountains.

Councillor Matrosovs questioned if the timeline would permit two sessions. Deputy Mayor Bartnicki referenced the change in Provincial direction with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (“MPAC”), and questioned if this could be delayed until the fall. Councillor Sampson spoke noting that session is about services, what is wanted and how it will be funded.

Mayor Soever spoke noting that there is merit to extending the deadline, but it should not be extended to the fall, further noting that if The Blue Mountains wants to have an effect on how the Province looks at service delivery, that anything we do and submit to the Province may influence what happens Province-wide.

Interim CAO Shawn Everitt spoke suggesting that a report be included directly on the May 13 Council Meeting that will include next steps and a timeline.

Moved by: Peter Bordignon Seconded by: Rob Sampson

THAT Council of the Town of The Blue Mountains directs staff to prepare a schedule for community public engagement regarding the Service Delivery Review by StrategyCorp to receive public comment, providing 30 days minimum public notice;

AND THAT the final report deadline has been extended to September 16, 2019;

AND THAT Shawn Everitt, Interim CAO be directed to confirm the logistics of the public consultation meeting with StrategyCorp, Carried.

D. Closed Session

Moved by: Odette Bartnicki Seconded by: Rob Sampson

THAT with regard to subsection 239 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, this Council does now move into closed session in order to address matters pertaining to litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals affecting the municipality or local board, and with regard to the Town’s response to the correspondence from Scheifele Erskine and Renken dated January 7, 2019 regarding former Councillor Michael Seguin, Carried.

Council moved into closed session at 8:21 pm

Council rose from closed session at 8:52 pm

Mayor Soever reported out of closed session, noting that Council met in closed session and provided direction to staff to respond to the letter from Scheifele, Erskine & Renken dated January 7, 2019.

E. Adjournment

Moved by: Rob Sampson

Seconded by: Rob Potter

THAT this Special Meeting of Council does now adjourn at 8:53 p.m. to meet again at the call of the Chair, Carried.

Alar Soever, Mayor

Corrina Giles, Town Clerk