



MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

7:00 P.M.

This meeting was held electronically

Council Members Present:

Mayor Aaron Stone
Councillor Duck Paterson
Councillor Amanda Jacobson
Councillor Rob Johnson

Councillor Tricia McKay
Councillor Marsh Stevens
Councillor Jeff Virtanen

Staff Present:

Guillermo Ferrero
Erin Anderson
Chris Barfoot
Jake Belobaba
Geoff Goodall

Joanna Winter
Ian Paydli
Donna Smith
Mike Gregory
Sue Bouma

1. CALL TO ORDER

Council and staff showed their appreciation for the front line workers in Ladysmith by cheering, clapping and showing hearts.

Mayor Stone called this Special Meeting of Council to order at 7:00 p.m., recognizing that it was taking place in various locations throughout Coast Salish territory.

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

CS 2020-111

That Council approve the agenda for this Special Meeting of Council for April 7, 2020.

Motion Carried

3. COVID-19 e-TOWN HALL QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Mayor Stone opened the e-Town Hall Question and Answer Period by expressing his gratitude for the Ladysmith community's continuing efforts to comply with physical distancing restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He shared the following good news stories to uplift the community:

The Town is:

- creating virtual Parks, Recreation & Culture programs to assist the community as they practice physical distancing
- planting more vegetables in flower beds, with the harvest targeted for the food bank and others in need
- installing new banners and flower baskets to beautify downtown and to attract more business once the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted
- continuing with the construction of the water filtration plant

Mayor Stone also expressed his gratitude for the manner in which Council and staff at all levels of government have responded to the COVID-19 crisis, and thanked volunteer organizations and service clubs for their ingenuity and continued program delivery. He expressed his pride in the responsibility and responsiveness of the Ladysmith community.

Staff then shared questions from citizens:

1) Valerie Crossley asked the following question:

At a time when we are being implored by public health authorities to raise our levels of hygiene (hand washing, sanitizing objects being brought into our homes, more frequent laundry, cleaning our homes more frequently, etc) to reduce the risk of infection, has Council considered supporting residents and businesses by waiving or reducing water rates for the duration of the pandemic? Have other municipalities eliminated or reduced water rates because of this? Anecdotal evidence suggests to me that Ladysmith has among the highest water rates of any municipality in BC and this may be an issue relatively unique to our community.

- Mayor Stone responded that the next utility bill will reflect water consumption rates prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Current water consumption rates would affect the second quarter billing. He noted, however, that water rates would likely rise more in the warmer months due to gardening and other warm weather water use than they would

due to hygiene practices during COVID-19. He also noted that utilities can not run at a loss or a profit.

2) Jim Tallman asked the following question:

Has there been any thought of imposing fines for people who are not keeping their distance or gathering in groups (such as in Ottawa \$800, Toronto \$5,000) or dropping used rubber gloves or masks in parking lots (Mayor Stewart of Coquitlam suggested a fine of \$10,000 for that)?

- Mayor Stone responded that there is nothing in BC legislation giving local governments the authority to fine people for not following the COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions. He noted, however, that local governments would be receiving more information around this topic in the near future and the Town will continue to update residents.

3) Lori Bender asked the following question:

Would you consider designating 1st Avenue as an essential travel and walk space only? (It is not easy to manage coming out of Pharmasave and having to scoot in between people's parked cars, in order to stay 2 metres away from dog walkers and storefront window shoppers on the sidewalks.)

- Mayor Stone noted that this would be a very challenging request, as 1st Avenue is a destination of choice for many community members. He advised that an essential foot traffic designation would likely be outside the Town's authority, and difficult to enforce. Staff confirmed that the request would be difficult to enforce and suggested that businesses limit the number of people within their establishments at one time and follow the bakery's lead by marking physical distances on sidewalks. The Mayor also suggested that additional signage encouraging citizens to respect physical distances could be an option for 1st Avenue.

4) Erin Giles expressed her gratitude to Mayor and Council for making Ladysmith such a special place to live.

- Council thanked Ms. Giles for her comments.

Council recommended that, in light of recent breakins and crime in Nanaimo and Duncan, all citizens pay close attention to their neighbourhoods and contact the authorities if they see anything suspicious. The Mayor thanked the community once again before ending the e-Town Hall portion of the meeting.

4. MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held March 31, 2020

CS 2020-112

That Council approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held March 31, 2020.

Motion Carried

5. REPORTS

5.1 January to March 2020 Quarterly Utility Billing

CS 2020-113

That Council not extend the due date for the Q1 (January – March 2020) utility bills.

Motion Defeated

OPPOSED: Mayor Stone and Councillors Jacobson, McKay, Paterson, Stevens and Virtanen

CS 2020-114

That Council extend the due date for the Q1 (January - March 2020) utility bills to the end of June, with the exact date to be determined by staff.

Motion Carried

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Councillor Johnson declared a potential conflict of interest with the following agenda item due to his association with the Ladysmith and District Historical Society and recused himself from the meeting.

6.1 Quentin Goodbody, Ladysmith and District Historical Society

CS 2020-115

That Council direct the Mayor, on behalf of the Town of Ladysmith as owner of heritage resources, to provide a Letter of Authorization to the Ladysmith and District Historical Society for inclusion in their grant application for funding to continue work on the restoration of existing railway rolling stock located at the former Comox Logging & Railway Co. railyard at 614 Oyster Bay Drive, Ladysmith.

Motion Carried

Councillor Johnson returned to the meeting.

7. CLOSED SESSION

CS 2020-116

That, in accordance with section 90(1) of the *Community Charter*, Council retire into closed session at 8:12 p.m. in order to consider items related to the following:

- Human resources matter - Section 90(1)(c)
- Negotiations regarding the provision of a proposed municipal service- Section 90(1)(K)

Motion Carried

8. RISE AND REPORT - Items from Closed Session

Council rose at 9:21 p.m. with report on the following items:

- Resolution CE 2020-041
That Council accept with extreme regret the correspondence from Guillermo Ferrero, CAO, notifying of his resignation effective May 15, 2020.
- Resolution CE 2020-042
That Council direct staff to prepare a report outlining options for Council regarding filling the interim CAO position, as well as hiring the new CAO.

9. ADJOURNMENT

CS 2020-117

That this Special meeting of Council adjourn at 9:22 p.m.

Motion Carried

Mayor (A. Stone)

Corporate Officer (D. Smith)