



TOWN OF LAKE COWICHAN
Minutes of a Special meeting of Council
Wednesday, April 15th, 2020

PRESENT: Mayor Rod Peters
Councillor Carolyne Austin
Councillor Tim McGonigle (2:58 pm)
Councillor Kristine Sandhu
Councillor Lorna Vomacka

STAFF: Joseph A. Fernandez, Chief Administrative Officer
Ronnie Gill, Director of Finance
Roni-Lee Roach, Executive Secretary

No. R.0059/20
Agenda

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peters called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm

2. AGENDA

Moved: Councillor Austin
Seconded: Councillor Vomacka
that the agenda be approved with the following addition:

CORRESPONDENCE – INFORMATION OR CONSENT ITEMS

(b)(iv) Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing re: April 16th, 2020 meeting.

CARRIED.

No. R.0060/20
Special Meeting of
Council Minutes

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

(a) Moved: Councillor Sandhu
Seconded: Councillor Austin
that the minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on April 1st, 2020 be adopted, as amended.

CARRIED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

5. DELEGATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

None.

6. VERBAL COMMENT FROM THE PUBLIC ON A SUBSEQUENT ITEM ON THE AGENDA

7. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Action Items:

(b) Information or Consent Items

Councillor Vomacka declared a potential conflict of interest on the next item and recused herself from the meeting at 2:10 pm.

No. R.0061/20
COVID-19 and Social
Distancing on the
Cowichan River

(i) Moved: Councillor Austin
Seconded: Councillor Sandhu
that so long as COVID-19 directives are in place the Town of Lake Cowichan shall prohibit any tubing activity on the Cowichan River within its municipal boundaries by blocking public access to the Cowichan River with appropriate signage to be posted at access points.

CARRIED.

Councillor Vomacka returned to the meeting at 2:17 pm

Mayor Peters advised that he would speak with Aaron Frisby regarding his e-mail on the matter of the Tube Shack and 2020 tubing season.

- (ii) The correspondence item from Jane and Mark Martin regarding ongoing issues at 77 Nelson Road was referred to staff for a report.
- (iii) The correspondence item from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding municipal budgeting, taxation and financial reporting during COVID-19 was treated as information.

The Chief Administrative Officer reported that the Town was keeping its reporting schedule in place during the pandemic and that he had sent a letter to the Deputy Minister enquiring into whether the Town could move its taxation due date of July 2nd. He further advised that the letter also requested financial assistance for revenue shortfalls that would occur because of the closure of Lakeview Park and Cowichan Lake Education Centre due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council members discussed the following:

- provincial response on payment due date which is forthcoming to allow for the approval of the current budget;
- process on residents submitting homeowner grant applications;
- potential school tax reduction which will result in a taxation break for commercial property owners;
- impact on infrastructure plans for the current budget year; and
- necessity of social distancing being observed in the community.

- (iv) The Mayor reported on the upcoming conference call meeting with Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on April 16th, 2020. Mayor Peters forwarded the correspondence item to members of Council and requested their input. Items that may be addressed are BC Ferries and access by owners of recreational properties in the area.

Councillor Vomacka commended the municipality for closure of Lakeview Park and for the Town doing its due diligence to deal with the pandemic.

8. REPORTS

(a) Council and other Committee Reports

The Chief Administrative Officer reported that further budget meetings would be required. He further reported that meetings will need to be called to approve financial bylaws and grant-in-aid applications.

Council and Other
Committee Reports

- (v) Mayor Peters asked if any members of Council had any council and Committee reports.

Councillor Vomacka reported that the Board of the Vancouver Island Regional Library has called for an emergency meeting to be held on April 25th, 2020 using video conferencing.

(b) Other Reports

Councillor Sandhu reported that the Watershed Board would be holding a conference call for April 27th, 2020.

(c) Staff Reports

- (i)** The Financial Report for the period ending March 31st, 2020 was treated as information.

No. R.0062/20
On-line Banking
Authorization

Moved: Councillor Sandhu
Seconded: Councillor Vomacka
that Council approve on-line banking payments for bills and invoices that were directly paid at the bank in person prior to the pandemic.
CARRIED.

Councillor Sandhu asked for an update for Lakeview Park campground. Council was advised that full refunds for all Lakeview Park reservations up to May 31st have been processed following the Provincial closure of its parks.

No. R.0063/20
Fire Department –
Incident Report

- (ii)** Moved: Councillor Vomacka
Seconded: Councillor Austin
that Council approve the Lake Cowichan Fire Department’s incident report for February 2020 in the total amount of \$8,493.64.

CARRIED.

- (iii)** The Building Inspector’s report for March, 2020 was treated as information.

The Chief Administrative Officer advised that the Town was getting busier with permits and construction.

Councillor Austin asked if the bylaw officer was still working. The Chief Administrative Officer advised that there was not a lot happening at this time for enforcement.

Mayor Peters stated that with the need for more enforcement on Town regulations regarding tubing on the river. The Chief Administrative Officer will report back to Council on the matter as this may involve the RCMP and Fire Department.

9. BYLAWS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- (a)** The Public Meeting for May 5th, 2020 is cancelled.

- (b)** Mayor Peters called for input from members of Council on the matter of BC Ferry service as it will be a topic for discussion during the conference call with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

- (c)** The matter of opening burning was discussed. To clarify, the Chief Administrative Officer advised that open burning is banned within the municipal boundaries, but campfires are allowed. There appears to be confusion with the public on the matter.

Councillor Austin requested that a public notice board be displayed at the entrance sign. The Chief Administrative Officer agreed and suggested posting “COVID Safe Zone” with expectations in the community for visitors as there is misinformation in the public and they need to be clarified with him directly.

Councillor McGonigle arrived at the meeting (2:58 pm).

Direction was given to staff to post the updated information on campfires to the Town’s website and social media.

11. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Peters shared that he and the Chief Administrative Officer have been busy with conference call meetings and would be participating in a call with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on April 16th, 2020 at 3:30 pm.

He further shared that the Town has received some good information on the matter of tubing and that the Town is now aware of its responsibilities related to this business and activity. He advised that he plans on addressing this matter with the 2 tubing companies that are licensed in the Town.

He expressed the view that people were adhering to the COVID-19 restrictions and are being socially responsible and commended the business establishments and local grocery store for adjusting to the requirements in place for the pandemic.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

Council referred the discussion of backyard chickens to a more opportune time.

Councillor McGonigle stated that Council should be frugal when reviewing its budget closely to see what projects could be deferred. He further stated that he was concerned with the financial impact on residents and that the Town should try to extend its taxation deadline but that he does not wish to see the municipality having to borrow money to operate this fiscal year.

Councillor Sandhu raised the matter of the North Shore Road Boat launch and the lack of social distancing seen at the site over the long weekend.

Mayor Peters stated that the sani-dump station was not open, and that the Town had no plans to open the site as camping is not being encouraged in the outlying areas around the Cowichan Lake.

Councillor Sandhu voiced her concern with the theft that was being experienced in the community and asked that the new RCMP Sergeant give Council an update, in particular, the problematic home on North Shore Road.

Council members requested that the Fire Department, RCMP and Building Inspector attend the property with a report back on matter.

The Chief Administrative Officer advised that at this time he would deal with this issue through the Fire Department and Building Inspector and also the RCMP.

Councillor Vomacka asked that the Town also speak to the RCMP on the matter of policing the Cowichan River this year. Mayor Peters stated that he would try to arrange for a meeting with representatives of the RCMP.

13. QUESTION PERIOD

14. IN CAMERA

15. ADJOURNMENT

No. R.0064/20
Adjournment

Moved: Councillor McGonigle
Seconded: Councillor Vomacka
that Council adjourn (3:22 pm).

CARRIED.

Certified correct _____.

Confirmed on the _____ day of _____, 2020.

Mayor