

TOWN OF WATSON LAKE

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEETING NO. 22  
November.5,2019

ATTENDANCE

ABSENT

CHERYL O'BRIEN – MAYOR  
THOMAS SLAGER – COUNCILOR  
LAUREN HANCHAR – COUNCILOR  
ERIN LABONTE - COUNCILOR  
CHRIS IRVIN – ACTING MAYOR

PUBLIC  
G.Amann G.Bruce  
A.Durante I.Welsh  
C.McGrath J/R Holt  
L.Dickneother S.Sierra

ADMINISTRATION

CAM LOCKWOOD - CAO  
TERRI CLOSE – Municipal Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Acting Mayor Irvin.

**AGENDA**

**MOTION 019-22-279**

Moved by Councilor Slager, seconded by Councilor Hanchar  
that:

The Agenda be amended to move item #6, the 2019 O/M Provisional budget to  
#15 on the agenda.

- CARRIED –

**MINUTES**

Council reviewed the draft minutes of the last regular meeting of October 15,  
2019.

**DELEGATION**

Mr. Gerald Bruce discussed the Watson Lake district heating system and enquired whether Council had given any consideration to expanding the system and utilizing the system to its maximum, as there is support in the community to pursue the expansion. Councilor Slager addressed previous plans to expand the system to provide heat to both the Elementary School and the Hospital. Council informed Mr. Bruce that they had not given any consideration to expanding the District Heat system at this time, however agreed to discuss whether this is a priority and reintroduce in January, 2020.

**REPORTS**

CAO REPORT

Administration provided an update on the following items:

- District heat – Education is still working towards finalizing the District Heat program and have ordered the BTU meter.
- Work on the fire hall site is complete.
- Challenger is surveying all water and sewer lines in order to upgrade the infrastructure.
- Work at the Admin building is proceeding.

**NEW & UNFINISHED**

ACCOMMODATION LEVY  
POLICY

Council was in receipt of the draft Accommodation levy policy. Mayor O'Brien suggested that Council initiate conversation in order to provide direction to Administration in finalizing the policy.

Councilor Irvin believes that the policy is vague in certain areas and needs to clarify that the funds generated will be used for tourism opportunities as opposed to recreation. Councilor Labonte suggested that the policy be reworded to identify specifics outlined in the Tourism strategy. Councilor Hanchar agreed the Town needs to maintain integrity on what the funds are used for and be specific. Council suggested a portion of the 30% of the net revenue be available through a matching program to improve the business façade, property capital investment and infrastructure projects.

## TOURISM STRATEGY

Council reviewed a draft Tourism Strategy that was prepared by a group of YG Tourism & Culture representatives that visited Watson Lake. The plan provides comments and identifies various tourism strengths and weaknesses and opportunities to assist the community in moving forward to promote tourism. Mayor O'Brien suggested a member of Council take the lead on this project to work towards a marketing and tourism plan that is attainable and feasible for our community. Councilor Labonte agreed to work on this project and have a report available to Council in February, 2020.

## RECREATION REVIEW

Mayor O'Brien addressed concerns that have been raised in the community regarding utilizing space in the Recreation Centre. Council needs to take a look at what the Recreation Centre is currently providing including costs, and what is Council's vision and goal for the future direction of Recreation in the municipality, and maximizing the use of present facilities. Council agreed that community consultation is important in going forward. Mayor O'Brien requested that a member of Council take the lead to work on a recreation review and provide feedback at the March, 2020 Council meeting. Councilor Hanchar agreed to work on this project.

## WL SKI CLUB AUCTION

Council discussed a letter from the WL Ski Club requesting a donation for their annual Christmas auction planned to take place December 7th.

### MOTION 019-22-280

Moved by Councilor Slager, seconded by Councilor Labonte  
that:

The Town of Watson Lake donate \$500.00 for the Watson Lake Ski Club Auction.

- CARRIED -

## POLICY – USE OF HEARSE

Council reviewed a policy to establish regulations for the use of the hearse. As the hearse has been out of commission for a number of years, Council agreed to rescind the policy.

### MOTION 019-22-281

Moved by Councilor Labonte, seconded by Councilor Hanchar  
that:

The policy regarding the use of the hearse be rescinded.

-CARRIED-

ANIMAL PROTECTION  
& LEGISLATION

Council received a letter from YG Animal Health Unit requesting a meeting with Council on November 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm to obtain input toward the development of new animal protection and control legislation. Council agreed to meet on the date specified.

WCB PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT

Council addressed the public engagement on modernizing the Workers' Compensation Act and Occupational Health & Safety Act, and an invitation for Council to participate as a member of the external advisory group. Councilor Irvin agreed to attend on behalf of the Town.

AYC BOARD  
MEETING

Administration informed Council of the AYC Board meeting being held in Whitehorse December 7<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Slager expressed an interest in attending the meeting on behalf of the Town of Watson Lake.

2020 PROVISIONAL  
O/M BUDGET

Council was presented with the draft 2020 provisional O/M budget. Administration informed Council that due to the assessment increase in property values of \$4.5 million, there will be no tax increase proposed for 2020. Council agreed to review the budget and any questions to be directed to Administration. The provisional budget must be passed by resolution no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**COUNCILOR OPEN FORUM**

Mayor O'Brien informed Council that she will be away as of November 17<sup>th</sup> returning to the Council meeting of December 19<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Irvin is Acting Mayor in her absence.

Councilor Slager expressed concern with the District Heat Agreement and the length of time being taken over minute changes to the agreement. Administration advised that Education is holding things up at their end, however anticipate the agreement to be implemented as of January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Councilor Hanchar addressed discussion that was previously held with Premier Streicker regarding extending street lights to 2 & 21/2 mile and suggested a letter be sent advising that this is still a priority.

Councilor Labonte addressed the following items:

- Staff Christmas party – November 30<sup>th</sup>
- Recplex hours – Suggest the facility be open on weekends until a full recreational review is complete
- Snow removal policy – Request that the policy be in the Newsletter
- YG Wildland fire – Community dinner is December 5<sup>th</sup>
- Town Christmas tree – Suggest the tree at the Administration building be done with a type of decoration that will not be untidy upon dismantling.

**GALLERY  
OPEN FORUM**

It was suggested that a sound system in Council Chambers would be beneficial for the members of the public attending the Council meeting.

Isabelle Welsh and Cheryl McGrath representing the Big horn Hotel addressed the accommodation levy, and how the revenue would benefit the community. They believe that creating another Tourist attraction in the community will not encourage tourist traffic to stay any longer.

Anais addressed the increase in property assessments and that it is not acceptable as it will create another hardship on the citizens. She also felt that better communication with business owners would be beneficial to assist in promoting tourist traffic in the community.

Gerry Bruce believes that Watson Lake is a fragmented community and needs unity to move forward. Suggest more opportunity from residents to collectively encourage all opportunities to provide input and ideas on what direction the Town is going and what resources are available. It is important to target clients to come to Watson Lake.

Gerry Amann stated that there is no economy in Watson Lake. All the new rules and regulations in place are causing issues. We need to deal with what we have in a depressed economy.

Mr. & Mrs. Holt discussed the importance of getting ahead by marketing and advertising to better build and promote the community. It is important to get information out to the public. There have been many attempts and tourism strategies done over the years to attract tourists to the community. There need to be fundamental changes made for the community to thrive, there are limited resources, land claims have not been settled and the community is suffering. More action needs to be taken to provide industry to WL.

Sandie Sierra agrees that everyone wants the same thing and creating a marketing strategy to promote economy in Watson Lake and getting people involved could prove beneficial. He believes that a strategy needs to be developed before moving forward on the accommodation levy. He addressed the property assessments being based on Whitehorse prices, and questioned where are the statistics for the Yukon.

Mayor O'Brien thanked the public for attending the meeting and appreciated their comments. Council supports the business owners and will continue to lobby on their behalf.

**IN-CAMERA**

**MOTION 19-22-282**

Moved by Councilor Hanchar, seconded by Councilor Slager  
that:

Council go In-Camera.

-CARRIED-

**MOTION 19-22-283**

Moved by Councilor Labonte, seconded by Councilor Slager  
that:

Council revert to an Open meeting.

-CARRIED-

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION 019-22-284**

Moved by Councilor Irvin, seconded by Councilor Hanchar  
that:

There being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 8:45 pm.

- CARRIED -

  
Cheryl O'Brien – Mayor

  
Terri Close – Municipal Clerk